

# Greenland's post-colonial identity formation: a new perspective

About the effects of Greenland's political and socioeconomic  
dependency on Denmark, and its consequences for  
Greenland's post-colonial identity formation



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## **Abstract**

Contemporary academic research on Greenland's post-colonial relationship with Denmark is mainly done from the perspective of post-colonialism. As a result, there is a significant focus on Greenland's post-colonial identity formation in relation to Denmark. However, post-colonialism often fails to take into account political, and socioeconomic factors especially, with regards to the post-colonial identity formation of former colonies. In this study, it is argued that dependency theory can provide a valuable complement to post-colonialism. Through an analysis of the effects of Greenland's political and socioeconomic dependency on Denmark, on the former's post-colonial identity formation, this study aims to provide a new perspective on how the effects of the colonial history between both countries still resonate within Greenland. In addition, interviews have been conducted with officials from the Greenlandic Representative Office in Copenhagen to support the claims that have been made. This study has found that while the reduction of Greenland's political dependency on Denmark has strengthened the formation of a national Greenlandic identity, Greenland's ongoing socioeconomic dependency on Denmark seems to have more adverse consequences. It is argued that while Greenland's socioeconomic relationship with Denmark engenders the formation of a hybrid identity that offers possibilities for agency within Greenlandic identity politics, Greenland's dependency on especially the Danish block grant perpetuates the Greenlanders' subaltern position in relation to the Danish Other.

## **Foreword and acknowledgements**

You are reading the final product of my two years of studying Development and International Relations at Aalborg University in Denmark. The primary goal for me to move to Denmark, has been to fulfil a dream that has gradually taken shape over the last five years; to get an internship at the Netherlands Embassy in Copenhagen. After many uncertainties and struggles, I managed to achieve this goal. This led to an incredible experience with the organization of the state visit for the Dutch King and Queen in March 2015 to Denmark, in which the Embassy played a major role. Meanwhile, I also worked on a project about the potential for Greenland's natural resources, which greatly increased my interest for this unique and extraordinary country. As such, I decided to write my master thesis on Greenland, with a specific focus on the country's (post)colonial relationship with Denmark. This work is the result of a long process of thinking, analyzing, writing and rewriting, and during the last couple of months I have directed all of my energy and attention towards making this work a success.

Most of all, I would like to show my gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor Helene Pristed Nielsen, who gave me invaluable advice during the writing of this thesis. Moreover, I would like to thank the people working at the Greenlandic Representative Office in Copenhagen for their cooperation and the information they have provided me with for my research. I would also like to thank my roommates and friends Frida Christensen and Tonny Christensen for supporting me all the way. Finally, I would like to thank Michael Tannery for proofreading and correcting everything I have worked on.

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## **1. Introduction**

In 1953, Greenland's status as a colony was abolished when the country officially became an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark (Ørvik, 1975). This change in status entitled the native Greenlandic population to Danish citizenship, officially granting them the same rights as the rest of the Danish population. Consequently, Denmark's involvement with the development of its former colony increased as the Danish government intended to transform the native Greenlandic Inuit society according to the same modern lines as those of the rest of the Kingdom. Large processing plants for the fishing industry were built and new methods for fishing were implemented to stimulate Greenland's economic growth and production capabilities (Goldbach, 2000). Furthermore, extensive housing programs were undertaken, the educational system was modernized and social and healthcare services were expanded.

The development initiative was a success in terms of modernization through increased welfare and a higher living standard for the majority of the Greenlandic population. However, the radical change of the traditional Inuit society into a modern society according to European standards, also bore significant social costs. For the native population "[c]ulture shock, alienation, and an experience of powerlessness became – together with other civilization diseases – a usual part of daily life" (Goldbach, 2000: 263). Furthermore, the main decisions were still taken in Copenhagen, which fueled the discontent of native Greenlanders with regards to their political situation, and led many to pursue independence from Denmark (Dahl, 2010). This discontent in the 1960s, eventually culminated into increased political autonomy of Greenland through the establishment of the Home Rule Act in 1979 (Larsen, 1992), and the Act on Self-Government in 2009 (Danielsen, 2013).

However, with the establishment of the aforementioned Acts, the discussion on Danish involvement in Greenland did not end. For example, in 2014, Greenland's administration issued the organization of a special commission to make an inquiry into the extent of Danish colonial abuses in the 1950s (Jacobsen, 2014). While there is no outcome from the commission as of yet, it shows the determination of the Greenlanders to confront the colonial past of their country. This development illustrates the ever complex relationship between Nuuk and Copenhagen, and the field of tension that is portrayed here is of great interest to this thesis. Moreover, while the influence of Copenhagen is currently not as strong as it used to be, some scholars argue that the relationship between Greenland and Denmark is a typical case of a 'post-colonial' society with its former colonial 'master' (Gad, 2014). Within this context, the term post-colonial is generally used to refer to societies which

“are still subject in one way or another to overt or subtle forms of neo-colonial domination [...] The development of new élites within independent societies, often buttressed by neo-colonial institutions; the development of internal divisions based on racial, linguistic or religious discriminations; the continuing unequal treatment of indigenous peoples in settler/invasor societies—all these testify to the fact that post-colonialism is a continuing process of resistance and reconstruction” (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1995: 2).

It can be posited that this process of resistance and reconstruction is still taking place in Greenland and that although the aforementioned divisions have been diminished significantly, they have not disappeared. For example, Greenland is in many instances relying on the use of the Danish language (e.g. for business and education) which implies a deficit for a significant part of the population that does not speak it (Gad, 2009). Moreover, Danes still occupy the most influential and highest positions in Greenland’s society (Lyck and Boyko, 2012). These examples show that through their shared colonial history, Danish influence in Greenland is still significant which sometimes leads to an unequal relationship between both countries that can be problematic.

Currently, the majority of scholarly research on the post-colonial relationship between Greenland and Denmark focuses primarily on culture and identity analyzed from within the theoretical framework of post-colonialism (*see* Gad, 2009, 2014; Jensen, 2012; Björklund, 2011; Smedegaard, 2013). I acknowledge that these conceptions are important factors within the post-colonial relationship between Greenland and Denmark, and that political developments are regularly taken into consideration within post-colonialism. However, the socioeconomic dimension of the relationship between both countries is often neglected from this perspective or does not get as much attention as it deserves. Some even argue that for post-colonialism, it “is as though interactions or ‘negotiations’ among and between coloniser and colonized are barely affected by their differential socioeconomic status” (Kapoor, 2002: 658). Within this context, I posit that Greenland’s post-colonial identity formation cannot be understood without also looking at the country’s socioeconomic relation with Denmark. Therefore, through combining dependency theory and post-colonialism in my analysis, I intend to overcome the gap between both theories and contribute to the discussion surrounding Greenland’s post-colonial status.

In this thesis, I argue that Greenland’s colonial heritage is characterized by an ongoing political and socioeconomic dependency relation with Denmark, which has a significant effect

on Greenland's post-colonial identity formation and the way that Greenlanders perceive themselves. Consequently, the question that I intend to answer with this study is:

*To what extent is Greenland politically and socioeconomically dependent on Denmark and in how far does this affect Greenland's post-colonial identity formation?*

To be able to answer this research question, my analysis essentially consists of two parts. In the first part, I investigate the political and socioeconomic relationship between Greenland and Denmark within the framework of dependency theory. As such, I examine Greenland's political dependency on Denmark through an investigation of the changes that have been made through the implementation of the Home Rule Act in 1979 and the Act on Self-Government in 2009. Furthermore, the first part of my analysis consists of an investigation of Greenland's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark, through looking at factors such as trade, the importance of Danish human capital and the Danish block grant which constitutes a large part of Greenland's expenditure budget.

In the second part of my analysis, I explore the process of Greenland's post-colonial identity formation within the theoretical framework of post-colonialism. As such, I assess to what extent Denmark still continues to shape the way how Greenlanders perceive themselves. Moreover, I also determine in how far Greenland's political and socioeconomic dependency on Denmark affects Greenland's post-colonial identity formation and the country's position within Greenlandic identity politics. While a significant part of my study is based on secondary data and third-party research, I have conducted interviews with officials working at the Greenland Representation Office in Copenhagen to substantiate the claims I make. These individuals are in a unique position to comment on the relations between Greenland and Denmark, and therefore, I have included their responses throughout both parts of my analysis.

Following this introduction, the next chapter provides the methodology that I have used to approach my problem formulation. Subsequently, the third chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks of dependency theory and post-colonialism. In the fourth chapter, I investigate Greenland's relationship with Denmark from the start of the former's colonization in 1721 up to the implementation of the Home Rule Act in 1979, as to outline the historical context for my analysis. In the fifth chapter, I examine in how far Greenland is politically and socioeconomically dependent on Denmark and to what extent the country's relationship with Denmark affects Greenland's post-colonial identity formation. In the sixth and final chapter, I discuss and conclude the findings of my analysis.



## **2. Methodology**

In the first part of this chapter (2.1), I provide an overview of my intentions with this study, how the theoretical framework from the previous chapter is applied and how my analysis is carried out. In the second part (2.2), I elaborate on the utilization of the semi-structured interviews that I have conducted with employees at the Greenland Representation Office in Copenhagen (GROC). The third and final section (2.3) concludes this chapter with some epistemological considerations and a methodological discussion about the importance and limitations of this research.

### **2.1 Applying theory**

This thesis intends to clarify the post-colonial relationship between Greenland and Denmark through an interdisciplinary approach of dependency theory and post-colonialism. Moreover, it asserts in how far these theories are reflected in the analysis, while at the same time use them as a guideline to conduct research. Therefore, this thesis is primarily deductive in nature (*see* Bryman, 2004: 8-9). Within this context, my main research question is: *To what extent is Greenland politically and socioeconomically dependent on Denmark and in how far does this affect Greenland's post-colonial identity formation?*

Both dependency theory and post-colonialism assume that the process of modern European colonialism in many cases has never come to a full stop, not even after the process of decolonization leading up to the official political independence of former colonized countries. Instead, they posit that this process has become more implicit instead. From this perspective, it is important to note that Greenland has been an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark since 1953. Moreover, Greenland has never become fully politically independent, but has gradually gained autonomy within the Kingdom since its official decolonization. This means that in comparison to other post-colonial societies, Greenland is a unique case, since its former colonizer Denmark still has political authority in some areas. In addition, Greenland also has developed significant socioeconomic ties with Denmark. Investigating to what extent Greenland is dependent on Denmark through these political and socioeconomic relationships and juxtaposing this analysis with an examination the formation of Greenland's post-colonial identity, enables me to discuss the post-colonial relationship between Greenland and Denmark. Within the context of recent developments such as Greenland's colonial probe commission which was referred to in the introduction chapter, I argue that this is a relevant exercise.

The contemporary relationship between Greenland and Denmark is embedded in a long historical process that cannot be overlooked. Therefore, paragraph 4.1 of the historical

background chapter provides a succinct overview of Greenland's colonial history that began in 1721. Subsequently, the changes that occurred in the relationship between Greenland and Denmark during the period of 1953-1979 (the official decolonization of Greenland until the establishment of Greenlandic Home Rule) are investigated in paragraph 4.2. This chapter that covers the historical process of the relationship between both countries, is primarily based on third party research (e.g. Dahl, 1986; Petersen, 1995; Jensen *et al*, 2010; Sørensen, 2006; Rud, 2009; Gaviria, 2013). The emphasis here is on the attitude, motivation, justification and socioeconomic and political intention of Denmark towards Greenland and its population.

Following the historical background chapter, the analysis chapter focuses on two different dimensions of Greenland's contemporary relationship with Denmark (political/socioeconomic at a state level, and cultural/identity at a more individual level) within the framework of two different theories (dependency theory and post-colonialism respectively). As such, my analysis basically consists of two parts in which each respective theory is more suitable. Furthermore, I also attempt to bring both theoretical perspectives together in the second part, with the aim to provide some new insights into the post-colonial relationship between Greenland and Denmark.

The first part of my analysis (paragraph 5.1 to 5.3) starts out with an investigation of the impact of the establishment of Home Rule in 1979, when for the first time in history, Greenland was granted official capacity to create its own policies which greatly enhanced the country's political self-determination. This is followed by an examination of the establishment of the Act on Self-Government Act in 2009 which expanded on the principles of the Home Rule Act and furthered the establishment of Greenland's status as an autonomous region. As such, the political relationship between Greenland and Denmark is investigated in paragraph 5.1 from a dependency theory perspective, as to establish in how far Greenland has gained sovereignty and how this has translated into independent decision-making on the most important policy domains. Within this context, I understand political dependency as the extent to which Greenland is able to make political decisions autonomously. Therefore, I focus this part of my analysis on the policy areas that have been transferred from Denmark to Greenland through the Home Rule Act and the Act on Self-Government. To substantiate my observations about which policy fields have been taken over by Greenland from Denmark, I also discuss some of the political processes behind the transfers.

Both the Home Rule Act and the Act on Self-Government have been formulated based on the result of long negotiations between Greenland and Denmark. Therefore, they delineate the changes in responsibilities, autonomy and sovereignty for the Greenlandic government,

during and after its implementation. Moreover, my analysis in 5.1 is based on the contents of the Acts themselves and on findings from third-party research on Greenlandic governance and sovereignty (e.g. Jonsson, 1999; Larsen, 1992 and Danielsen, 2013). Where relevant, I have also included responses from the interviews with GROC officials.

Before moving on from the analysis of the political ties to the socioeconomic ties between Greenland and Denmark, attention is given to some specific factors that define Greenland as a ‘small state’ based on its geographic and demographic situation. As such, paragraph 5.2 is concerned with the consequences of Greenland’s location in the Arctic in combination with its small population that is scattered over a large territory. Moreover, the general characteristics of Greenland’s economy, GDP and export sector are also discussed in this section, through the use of secondary data (e.g. Statistics Greenland, 2014). I posit that these factors and characteristics have to be taken into consideration when analyzing the socioeconomic dependency relation between Greenland and Denmark.

Subsequently, in paragraph 5.3, I investigate three cases in which I argue that Greenland’s socioeconomic dependency relationship with Denmark is clearly discernable. As such, I examine Greenland’s trade relations with Denmark, the role of Danish human capital and education in Greenland, and the importance of the Danish block grant for Greenland. In chapter 3, I outline some basic notions of dependency theory which presume that colonialism has not come to a definitive end but rather has transitioned into neo-colonialism. Within this context, dependency theorists posit that the socioeconomic system of former colonies is still being formulated by former colonial powers through neo-colonial dependency relations. As such, I assess the current extent of the socioeconomic dependency relation between Greenland and Denmark on the basis of the three aforementioned cases. Furthermore, I also have included Greenland’s potential for natural resource production in my analysis, as I argue that future developments could significantly influence the country’s relationship with Denmark. While there currently is no active natural resource production in Greenland, recent developments within this area are crucial to be able to understand the contemporary socioeconomic as well as political dependency between both countries. Moreover, this part of my analysis is primarily based on secondary data from e.g. Observatory for Economic Complexity (2015), but is also complemented with findings from third party research (e.g. Committee for Greenlandic Mineral Resources to the Benefit of Society, 2014; Nuttal, 2012) and where relevant with responses from the interviews.

Thus, within the framework of dependency theory, I determine how Greenland’s political and socioeconomic development has evolved during the last decade, and what

consequences this has had for the country's dependency on Denmark. As such, I make a distinction between political dependency and socioeconomic dependency. Although they are undeniably connected, making this distinction allows me to divide my focus on different aspects of the relationship between Greenland and Denmark, which I have found to be important for my analysis. Furthermore, the notion of autonomy or sovereignty as the antonym of dependency, is a relevant way to expose the 'neo-colonial' political and socioeconomic dependency structures between the two countries (for a discussion on this topic, *see* Blaney, 1996). The notion of Greenland as the satellite, and Denmark as the metropolis, is important here to delineate the dependency relation between both countries. Moreover, a question that is pivotal in the first part of the analysis is in how far Greenland is being penetrated by Danish influence, both politically (i.e., autonomy in areas of decision making) and socioeconomically (i.e., the effects of the Danish block-grant and the presence of Danish human capital).

In the second part of my analysis (paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5), I focus on the individual conceptions of Greenland's post-colonial identity in relation to Denmark within the framework of post-colonialism. I examine to what extent Greenlanders perceive their [national] identity and culture as being affected by Danish influence. For this part, I draw primarily on the interviews that I have conducted with GROG of which the results are complemented by third party research (e.g. Smedegaard, 2013; Graugaard, 2008; and Gad, 2009, 2014). As such, I investigate the position of Greenland within the field of identity politics. Especially important within this context is the position of the Greenlandic subaltern in relation to the hegemonic position of Denmark. Important questions to address here are what roles language and culture play in Greenland's relationship with Denmark, and how Greenlanders have been concerned with forming their own national identity. Special attention is also given to the notion of a hybrid identity of which I argue that it is one of the significant consequences of contemporary Danish involvement for the identity formation of a certain part of the Greenlandic population. Furthermore, in paragraph 5.5, I relate the effects of Greenland's political and socioeconomic dependency on Denmark to Greenland's post-colonial identity formation. Through the concept of the subaltern and hybrid identity, I investigate how political and socioeconomic dependencies have an influence on how Greenlanders perceive themselves in relation to Denmark.

Unfortunately, a large part of the secondary data about Greenland's socioeconomic development which I found currently available, is concerned with the period after the installment of the Self-Government Act in 2009. Therefore, the majority of my analysis that investigates the socioeconomic relationship between Greenland and Denmark, is based on the

period after 2009. All the secondary data that is used for the analysis in this study like that of Statistics Greenland (2014), are official government sources and provide a great deal of information that is relevant to this study (*see* Bryman 2004: 386-387). These sources are of high quality and there are not many concerns toward their integrity. Moreover, most of the aforementioned third-party articles and reports used for the analysis, are of academic nature. The analysis of the secondary data can also be cross-checked with the findings from third-party research and interviews with GROC officials through triangulation, which increases the reliability of this study (*see* Bryman 2004: 275). Accordingly, I argue that this various collection of primary and secondary data, supplemented with third party research, provides a coherent foundation for my analysis.

## **2.2 Utilization of semi-structured interviews**

For this study, I conducted interviews with three GROC officials. The initial plan was to do five interviews, but unfortunately, the last two were cancelled due to insufficient time from the side of GROC. Originally, I was planning to perform an extensive analysis on the interviews within the theoretical framework of post-colonialism, through which I would discern specific themes and attitudes of the respondents towards the post-colonial relationship between Greenland and Denmark. While the interviews have been conducted with this idea in mind, I found that the sample was too small to justify such an extensive analysis. Therefore, I have decided to use the interviews on a more ‘informative’ basis and to include them in my analysis whenever the responses were relevant within a given context. This has allowed me to provide extra depth to my analysis of Greenland’s political and socioeconomic relationship with Denmark and in how far it influences Greenland’s post-colonial identity formation. After all, the officials of the GROC are in a unique position to comment on these matters.

It is important to note that when I refer to ‘Greenland’s post-colonial identity formation’, there must be a distinction made between the identities of Greenlanders living for example in Nuuk or in Denmark, and those living in remote settlements. The respondents from the GROC are positioned in a very particular geographical (i.e., outside of Greenland and in Denmark) and social (i.e., high administrative functions) situation which means that their perceptions on Greenlandic identity most likely differ substantially from those of the people in remote villages in Greenland. While post-colonialism is generally more concerned with the perception of the latter group, my choice to conduct interviews among GROC officials is mainly because of practical considerations (i.e., availability, proximity, English speaking). Moreover, the respondents from the GROC offer a unique perspective from a position where Greenlandic and

Danish interests are intersecting. As such, the results from the interviews complement my findings from third party research, as to provide for as much of a complete picture on Greenland's post-colonial identity formation, through using the concepts of the subaltern and hybridity. However, it must be noted that it is by no means my intention to generalize the findings from these interviews over the entirety of the Greenlandic population.

The interview guide in Appendix 1 outlines the questions asked of the respondents, not including *ad hoc* questions that I came up with during the interviews. As such, the interviews have been set-up in a semi-structured way as to accommodate the openness of the conception of Greenland's post-colonial identity. This has allowed me to incorporate as many "representations, diverse voices, dynamic [...] revelations of culturally entrenched beliefs, assumptions and stereotypes" (Given, 2008: 887) as possible, while it has also granted me the position to steer the interviews in a relevant direction through asking pre-formulated questions. The first four questions are aimed at exploring the respondents' perception of Greenlandic language and education, and Greenland's identity in general. After that, the questions start to explicitly include the relationship of Greenland with Denmark and how the respondents look at this relationship from a personal perspective. Naturally, the independence and sovereignty question is important from the perspective of both dependency theory and post-colonialism.

Because of possible ethical implications with regards to the political position of the GROC officials, the general outline of this thesis has been thoroughly discussed with two contact persons at GROC. Furthermore, a confidentiality contract has been signed with all three respondents guaranteeing public anonymity. Finally, while the interviews have been transcribed verbatim, hesitation markers and grammatical inconsistencies have been removed as they are irrelevant for my analysis. Therefore, the relevant responses have been implemented in my analysis according to the standards of written English.

### **2.3 Methodological discussion**

To a certain extent, my analysis for this thesis is following up on Kapoor's (2002) notion that dependency theory and post-colonialism show two sides of the same medal while making up for each other's limitations. Moreover, the nature of these theories allows for a closer investigation of the aspects of domination and subordination within the relationship between Greenland and Denmark from two different perspectives. As referred to earlier, dependency theory can expose these aspects within the political/socioeconomic dimension at a state level, while post-colonialism does the same for the cultural/identity dimension but at a more individual level. However, even the combination of these two theories covers only a limited

amount of the possibilities to approach the immense field of the legacy of colonialism. For example, globalization theory (*see* Rao, 2000), modernization theory (*see* Wilkins, 1993), feminism (*see* Mishra, 2013) and gender studies (*see* Ashok, 2009) all have different perspectives on the legacy of colonialism and maintain a unique approach to study its consequences. Therefore, it is impossible to capture the definition of the ‘post-colonial’ within one theory, since it can be approached through many different angles resulting in different interpretations of the term itself.

Nevertheless, combining dependency theory and post-colonialism provides a theoretical framework that allows me to perform an analysis on two different dimensions with different types of data. While the first part of my analysis on Greenland’s political and socioeconomic dependency on Denmark is primarily relying on the utilization of secondary data which does not leave much ambiguity with regards to its interpretation, the second part of my analysis is concerned with identity, which requires a more subjective reading of the available information (*see* Bryman, 2004: 284-285). Because I am concerned with such diverse types of data - i.e., political and socioeconomic facts on the one hand, and the individual perceptions on the relationship between Greenland and Denmark on the other - my research assumes a critical realist perspective (*see* Archer *et al*, 1998). While critical realism understands that there are hard facts ‘out there,’ it posits that things are negotiable and that people have their own understanding of what is ‘real.’ It also allows for a flexible position on the interaction between different types of data and theories, and that one perspective does not necessarily exclude the other.

As mentioned earlier, my analysis of the political and socioeconomic dimension of the relationship between Greenland and Denmark is largely based on statistical data and is therefore primarily done from a positivist epistemological perspective. However, dependency theory does not explicitly state how to exactly measure dependency relations. Therefore, I argue in my analysis for what I believe to be dependency related, based on the theory I have outlined in the previous chapter. Instead of measuring the ‘amount’ of political and socioeconomic dependency, I rather point out instances that represent the dependency relation between Greenland and Denmark.

Furthermore, the individual perception of Greenlandic identity requires an approach that is subjectivist in nature and which looks at the issue from a more interpretivistic epistemological perspective. After all, the ‘post’ of post-colonialism indicates the strand’s heritage to post-modernism, which also implies a disregard for every argument aimed at identifying core characteristics and generalization. Accordingly, for some scholars who are occupied with post-

colonialism, there are no generalizable facts but only individual perceptions. However, to accommodate the purpose of my research, I also examine essentialist conceptions of national Greenlandic identity as to be able to relate the identity dimension of my analysis to developments within the political and socioeconomic dimension. Indeed, while I make several distinctions between political/socioeconomic dependency and Greenlandic identity formation, I argue that the power relations within both dimensions are narrowly intertwined with each other. As such, through a critical realist perspective, I understand Greenlandic identity as an ongoing process that is constantly being negotiated, without disregarding the political and socioeconomic facts that also constitute an important part of the relationship between Greenland and Denmark.

Through combining dependency theory and post-colonialism, I intend to contribute to the discussion on the post-colonial relationship between Greenland and Denmark by offering a unique perspective on the subject. As I stated in the introduction chapter, most of the research is primarily focused on analyzing the relationship between both countries from the perspective of post-colonialism that especially seems to ignore socioeconomic considerations. Juxtaposing the political and socioeconomic dependency relations with conceptions of Greenlandic identity, hopefully provides new insights with regards to understanding the complex and sometimes problematic attitude of both countries towards each other, while engendering an environment for the discussion that is based on equality, respect and mutual understanding.



### **3. Theoretical framework**

In this chapter, I outline the theoretical framework that I use for my analysis. In the first section (3.1), I elaborate on some of the basic assumptions of dependency theory. In the second section (3.2), I do the same for post-colonialism. In the final section (3.3), I conclude this chapter with a theoretical discussion.

#### **3.1 Dependency theory**

Dependency theory has strong roots in critical Marxist schools that challenge the existing structures assumed to be determined by the workings of capitalism, neo-liberalism and U.S. imperialism (*see e.g.* Chandra, 1998; Anderson, 2010; Kipfer and Goonewardena, 2013). As the term dependency is derived from the word ‘dependent,’ theory surrounding this term is essentially about pointing out the inequality of these existing structures. Andre Gunder Frank (1967, 1969) is generally seen as the founding father of what is currently to be understood as dependency theory. For him, the basic assumption of dependency theory is that regardless of the legal sovereignty of former European colonies, “fundamental economic and strategic asymmetries between developing states and the industrial powers ... remain (Marlay, 1979: 411). As such, the work of dependency theory draws significantly on the notion of neo-colonialism from a critical-structuralist perspective.

Nkrumah (1965) was the one who first coined the term neo-colonialism. While Nkrumah was in principle not a dependency theorist, his work shows a lot of similarities with dependency theory. According to him, rather than being fully independent, the concept of neo-colonialism indicates that the economic system and political policies of former colonies are still being formulated by external forces (Nkrumah, 1965: 315). Through financial support, former colonial powers are able to uphold the presence of their financial consortiums and interests in their former colonies, which instead of securing development, causes underdevelopment for the latter (Alemazung, 2010: 69). Former colonial states, especially the smaller ones who have to rely on external assistance (i.e., from the former colonial power) for defense and security, cannot be the master of their own destiny in their neo-colonial situation (Nkrumah, 1965: x-xiii). Consequently, dependency theorists use the concept of neo-colonialism as a term that aims to identify forms of dependency relations which presumably have not disappeared, but have rather been altered. From the perspective of dependency theory, neo-colonialism can be regarded as a continuation of colonialism that delineates the process of the concentration of the world’s capital and natural resources under the control of a small Western minority. Quijano describes the dichotomy within this development as follows:

“The ‘Western’ European dominators and their Euro-North American descendants are still the principal beneficiaries, together with the non-European part of the world not quite former European colonies, Japan mainly, and mainly their ruling classes. The exploited and the dominated of Latin America and Africa are the main victims” (Quijano, 2007: 168).

Alemazung (2010: 69) argues that the dichotomy of neo-colonialism could survive because the new leaders of the old colonies, especially those in Africa, inherited social, political and economic dependency structures which were difficult to break with.

As such, while many former colonies have gained formal political independence during the last century, dependency theorists argue that the social, political and economic structures that the colonial powers employed during their reign are in many instances still largely in place. For example, in African countries like Ivory Coast, Angola and Nigeria, this legacy is displayed, e.g., through the arrangement of their administrative systems, and the institutionalization of western modernity’s contrivances “such things as citizenship, nationalism, legal codes and cooperation in international bodies such as the United Nations” (Darian-Smith, 1996: 292). Moreover, dependency scholars observe that after the majority of African peoples won their fight for independence, the actual political and economic exploitation of these countries did not stop (Mwaura, 2005: 5). Some argue that this exploitation is not only apparent in Africa but is an ongoing process illustrated by the:

“structural dependency in the Caribbean and Latin America; continuing racial oppression and factional strife in ... much of Asia, the Pacific, and the Middle East; the global hegemonies exercised by multinational companies and information industries; favoured nation treaties and trade blocs that reinforce economic divides; a variety of internecine struggles tacitly supported by the former imperial powers” (Huggan, 1996: 19).

As stated earlier, dependency theory takes a critical-structuralist perspective on the effects of (neo-)colonialism and is homogenizing, universal and holistic in its approach (Kapoor, 2002). Through this perspective, dependency theorists critically question the political and socioeconomic domination that is caused by these developments by former colonial powers like France and Britain on the one hand, and relatively new dominators like the U.S. on the other. Accordingly, the Marxist notion of the exploitive class-conflict between the proletariat and the

bourgeoisie has not disappeared but has rather moved from a national level to an international level, between the Western world and the developing world, the ‘metropolis and the satellite state’ (see Frank, 1967) or the ‘core and the periphery’ (see Wallerstein, 1974). In this sense, dependency theory recognizes capitalism and colonialism as intertwined systems of economic and social relations based on exploitation, exclusion and oppression (Groglopo, 2013: 205). Consequently, dependency theory is concerned with the effects of neo-colonial frameworks as they perpetuate the continuing capital accumulation of the core at the cost of dependent countries in the periphery. While it is enabling Europe’s modernization, the development of Third World countries is being blocked at the same time and in this sense, “development and underdevelopment are the opposite faces of the same coin” (Frank, 1969: 4).

As a cause for these dependency relations constituted through the differences between development and underdevelopment, Frank (1969) refers to the distinction between the ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ societies. While the former “is modern because of its exposure to the outside capitalist world... [t]he latter is ‘underdeveloped’ because it has lacked such exposure; but it can be modernized through the diffusion of ‘capital, institutions, values’” (Frank, 1969: 4, *quoted in* Kapoor, 2002: 648). However, this diffusion is intentionally hampered in the colonial and post-colonial peripheries by political and socioeconomic dependency relations, condemning peripheral countries to underdevelopment (Frank, 1967).

Dependency theorists believe that the inequalities that flow out of the aforementioned imbalance are being characterized by a strong focus of satellite states on the production of primary resources, while the metropolitan states import these resources and sell manufactured goods back to the satellite (Tilton, 2012). This prohibits the satellite states to adequately develop their economies because they are locked into the production of primary resources and do not have the means to establish diversified economies (Tilton, 2012). Furthermore, with their economies being so dependent in nature, neo-colonial institutions and dependency relations cause satellite states to be financially indebted and thus organically linked to the metropolitan states (Bottomore, 2001). The former depends on the latter for investments because they do not possess enough capital themselves. This weak position is also being perpetuated because the metropolitan countries hold “a decisive advantage because of its scientific achievements, its great universities, and its economic capacity to support scholarly research and publication” (Marlay, 1979: 415). As a result, the inequalities between the former colonizers from the metropolis and the former colonized from the satellite are perpetuated through an imbalance of international trade framed within global politics and economy (Groglopo, 2013: 207).

It is through the theoretical framework of dependency theory that the political and socioeconomic relationship between Greenland and Denmark is analyzed. It is especially important to take into consideration the notion that Greenland is the satellite and Denmark is the metropolis. Subsequently, the analysis of the consequences of this relationship is juxtaposed with the process of Greenland's post-colonial identity formation from the perspective of post-colonialism.

### **3.2 Post-colonialism**

Like dependency theory, post-colonialism can be seen as a direct critique on the legacy of European colonialism. The term 'post' within post-colonialism is generally used as a 'temporal marker' that indicates the period after the official decolonization of European colonies (Abraham, 2008). However, it must also be noted that the adjective 'post' in many cases does not simply imply 'post-independence' or 'after colonialism' (*see* Ashcroft *et al*, 1995). However, while it has proven difficult to define colonialism, this seems even more so the case with defining post-colonialism. The problems that arise with defining post-colonialism lie in the epistemological orientation of post-colonial thought that "stands against what it labels 'essentialism,' the identification of central or core characteristics, particularly of peoples, societies and cultures. However, adhering to this prohibition makes it difficult to identify and discuss anything, including postcolonialism" (Salzman, 2006: 1911). As such, the epistemology of post-colonial studies converges with that of post-modernism and, through rendering everything subjective or relative, that in itself can prove to be a challenge to accurately theorize. Regardless, post-colonialism is generally perceived as a field of theory that provides "an investigation into the ways colonialism continues to shape former colonies and metropolises and [as] a new set of approaches to understanding historical colonialism" (Steinmetz, 2004: 81). As such, post-colonialism is generally referring to the critique that is focusing "on forces of oppression and coercive domination that operate in the contemporary world: the politics of anti-colonialism ... race, gender, nationalism, class and ethnicities defin[ing] its terrain" (Young, 2001: 11). In this sense, post-colonialism differs from neo-colonialism theory in that the former is a field of theory, while the latter generally refers to the structures of political and socioeconomic oppression.

Edward Said (1986, 1993, 1995) is often perceived as the scholar who laid the foundation of post-colonialism with other important theorists like Gayatri Spivak (1988) and Homi Bhabha (1994). For Said, "[o]ne way of getting hold of the commonest post-colonial debate is to analyse not its content, but its form, not what is said so much as how it is said, by

whom, where, and for whom” (1986: 46). In this regard, post-colonialism derives from literature studies and more specifically *Commonwealth* studies (see Gikandi, 1992; and Bakshi *et al*, 2009). Through analyzing literature from a critical perspective, works emanating from the colonizers can be deconstructed, exposing their underlying assumptions (e.g., about notions of justice and civilization) and revealing their colonial ideologies (Ashcroft *et al*, 1998: 192-193). However, “[w]hether from the perspective of the colonizer or the colonized, post-colonization is about people and their personal experiences: the sense of disempowerment and dislocation” (Al-Saidi, 2014: 96). Following the epistemology of post-modernism, the importance of post-colonialism thus lies in the identity and subjectivity of the individual and is generally not concerned with processes that take place outside the individual due to its post-structuralist angle.

However, for analytical purposes, I take a more flexible viewpoint on the anti-essentialist principles of post-colonialism. In this sense, I am more interested in the power relations that still lie behind the interaction between the former colonized and the former colonizer. To discuss these power relations, post-colonialism offers some useful concepts for my analysis. Furthermore, a large part of the work on post-colonialism is concerned with ‘identity politics’ (see Luttikhuis, 2014; Hilaire, 2009; Bosma *et al*, 2012). As such,

“[t]he laden phrase ‘identity politics’ has come to signify a wide range of political activity and theorizing founded in the shared experiences of injustice of members of certain social groups. Rather than organizing solely around belief systems, programmatic manifestos, or party affiliation, identity political formations typically aim to secure the political freedom of a specific constituency marginalized within its larger context. Members of that constituency assert or reclaim ways of understanding their distinctiveness that challenge dominant oppressive characterizations, with the goal of greater self-determination” (Heyes, 2012: Para. 1).

The ways that scholars on post-colonialism understand this dynamic of identity politics is very diverse. For example, to delineate the process of identity politics, Said (1995) makes the ontological and epistemological distinction between the ‘Orient’ and the ‘Occident.’ He assumes that this distinction has been used by former colonial powers as a justification for occupation and conquest, and he argues that the consequences of colonialism can still be felt in the countries of the colonized through persisting forms of corruption, coups and civil wars. Moreover, the presence of the colonizer is apparent through the imposition of language, culture,

and values on the colonized and ultimately shaping a history that is not their own (Said, 1993). Said's most significant point of critique is that all the distinctions and characteristics of various and diverse cultures of the colonized are generalized to one. As such, the Orient, or the so-called 'Other', is always brought in juxtaposition with 'Us' or the Occident (Hamadi, 2014). Furthermore, through the process of identity politics, the culture of the Orient is subject to that of the Occident in an unequal hegemonic relationship by the Occident over the Orient. This relationship has served to reinforce and justify the image of the superiority of the Western world. As such, "Westerners tend to be characterised as 'rational, peaceful, liberal, logical ... without natural suspicion' (1995: 49) and easterners as irrational, degenerate, primitive, mystical, suspicious, sexually depraved and so on" (Said, 1993: xi; 1995: 49, 172, 187–188, 190, *quoted in* Kapoor, 2002: 650). Within a more moderate context than the one described above, it is through this dynamic of identity politics that the relationship between Greenland and Denmark has to be understood. Moreover, I analyze Greenland's position within identity politics according to two concepts.

The first concept of post-colonialism that is important for my analysis is that of the 'subaltern.' Spivak (1988) uses the term subaltern to indicate the inferiority of those groups which are subject to the hegemony of the former colonizer. Spivak argues that the identity of the subaltern of the colonized is being dominated by the cultural impositions of the colonizer and as a result is internally being reproduced. Consequently, colonialism is not only something that is imposed by external forces, it is also something that "can be duplicated from within" (Loomba, 2005: 16). Since the subaltern is always subject to the hegemony of the colonizer, "they have less access to the means by which they may control their own representation, and less access to cultural and social institutions" (Ashcroft *et al*, 1998: 216). According to Spivak, the task of research that is concerned with post-colonialism, is to "investigate, identify and measure the *specific* nature of the degree of *deviation* of [the dominant indigenous groups at the regional and local level] from the ideal [the subaltern] and situate it historically" [author's emphasis] (Spivak, 1985: 27, *quoted in* Ashcroft *et al*, 1998: 218). Moreover, some scholars regard post-colonialism "as the need, in nations or groups which have been victims of imperialism, to achieve an identity uncontaminated by universalist or Eurocentric concepts and images" (Ashcroft *et al*, 1995: 125). Thus, post-colonialism represents "the competing claims and vested interests of a number of intellectuals who claim a unique, authentic and unadulterated non-West subjectivity deemed necessary to legitimize a capacity to speak for peoples formerly colonized" (Darian-Smith, 1996: 292). As such, the concept of the subaltern

is used in my analysis to refer to Greenland's subordinate position within identity politics in relation to the hegemony of Denmark.

The second concept from post-colonialism that I use in my analysis is that of hybrid identity. With this concept, Bhabha (1994) argues that the colonial power has had a severe impact on the identity of the peoples who were formerly colonized. Furthermore, he posits that they will never be able to reclaim their 'true' uncontaminated identity. Instead, they can only reclaim a 'hybrid' identity combined out of the 'colonial stereotype' and their traditional culture (Bhabha, 1994: 33). To illustrate this with an analogy, "hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. As used in horticulture, the term refers to the cross-breeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third, 'hybrid' species" (Ashcroft *et al*, 1998: 118). Sometimes, hybridity can indicate a loss of identity because people position themselves in an 'in-between' hybrid place without really having the feeling of belonging somewhere (Smedegaard, 2013). However, hybrid identity also allows for agency from the part of the once-colonized. In this sense, it is not so much a weakness as it enables individuals with a hybridized identity to challenge the oppressive conceptions imposed by the former colonizer within a binary system of the Orient subaltern and the Occident hegemony. In practice this means that hybridity

"stresses the mutuality of the process [of post-colonial identity formation]. It lays emphasis on the survival even under the most potent oppression of the distinctive aspects of the culture of the oppressed, and shows how these become an integral part of the new formations which arise from the clash of cultures" (Ashcroft *et al*, 1995: 183).

Through the concept of hybridity, some scholars "view postcolonialism as symbolic of a liberating emancipation for new nations" (Darian-Smith, 1996: 292). On the basis of this notion, these new nations can, to a certain extent, thwart the cultural impositions of European colonialism. Currently, the identity of a certain part of Greenland's population is constituted of both Greenlandic and Danish elements. In my analysis, I use the concept of hybrid identity to delineate how these Greenlanders manage their relationship with Denmark.

### **3.4 Theoretical discussion**

The distinction between dependency theory and post-colonialism has illustrated that modern European colonialism has had far-reaching and discernable consequences for the peoples of former colonies. Aside from being confronted with ongoing political and economic dependency

relations, their identity is under pressure by external cultural impositions. Moreover, dependency theory and post-colonialism investigate the effects of European colonialism and therefore “cover some similar territory and share important common concerns—a suspicion of Western liberal modernity, a historical–global analysis, and a critical politics” (Kapoor, 2002: 647).

However, at the same time both theories also point out each other’s weaknesses and as such they form a direct critique on one another. According to Kapoor:

“Dependency points to postcolonial theory’s narrow analysis and politics, and its inadequate consideration of the socioeconomic inequality and unevenness engendered by capitalist modernity. Postcolonial theory reproaches dependency for its lack of self-reflexivity, and hence for adopting a modernist framework that is totalising, ethnocentric and prone to erasing sociocultural and political difference(s)” (2002: 661).

In this sense, the advantage of dependency theory in relation to analyzing Greenland’s case is that its structural perspective enables it to recognize trends and broad patterns, an ability of which I argue that it is essential for my analysis (Kapoor, 2002). Post-colonialism generally does not allow for such recognitions, since it largely ignores the influence of political and socioeconomic structures. On the other hand, post-colonialism allows me to interpret individual conceptions within Greenlandic identity discourse and to analyze the role of, e.g. language in the post-colonial relationship between Greenland and Denmark, something for which dependency theory is unsuited. As such, I argue that a combination of both theories can be quite fruitful because they show two different sides of the same post-colonial medal. Moreover, it also enables me to bridge what I believe is a gap in scholarly research on Greenland’s post-colonial relationship with Denmark, that often fails to take into account socioeconomic developments with regards to post-colonial identity formation. In this sense, dependency theory allows me to investigate the effects of colonialism from a ‘materialism’ and ‘state’ perspective, while post-colonialism enables me to examine the consequences for ‘identity’ and the ‘individual’ (*see* Kapoor, 2002: 661).

Despite their differences, both dependency theory and post-colonialism seem to agree that the official decolonization of many countries is not marked by an ‘end’ of the effects of colonialism. As such, both theories can be seen as a departure from the confines of colonialism in that they have “broken free of [colonialism’s] lures to a point from which to mount a critique or counter-attack” (Childs and Williams, 1997: 4). Within this context, the theoretical



framework of dependency theory and post-colonialism is applied in my analysis to see to what extent Greenland has been able to determine its own political and socioeconomic course in relation to its former colonial master Denmark. Furthermore, these findings will be juxtaposed with the analysis of the Greenlanders' own perception of this relationship. When taking the aforementioned commonalities and differences between dependency and post-colonial theory into consideration and allowing them to support each other, I argue that they provide the optimal theoretical tools for my analysis of the post-colonial relationship between Greenland and Denmark.

#### **4. Historical background**

In this chapter, I provide an overview of Greenland's historic background, with the first section (4.1) starting out with the country's colonization in 1721. Subsequently, the period that led to the installment of Home Rule in 1979, is examined in the second section (4.2).

##### **4.1 The colonization of Greenland**

The official colonization of Greenland began in 1721 with the arrival of the Danish-Norwegian priest Hans Egede (Jensen *et al*, 2010: 13). Egede's mission was to evangelize the native Greenlandic population and to explore economic opportunities in trading, fishing and seal hunting. Backed by the Church and the Danish Crown, colonial settlements were erected from the South to the North along the west coast to facilitate trade. As such, the initial colonization of Greenland proceeded rather peacefully, because of the fact that the Inuit population had no organization above the household level which prevented a unified opposition (Petersen, 1995: 119). However, this did not mean that Danish colonialism in Greenland was more humane or 'un-colonial,' the 'essential core' was still to maintain difference (Rud, 2009: 39). Consequently, the amount of Danish settlers in Greenland increased gradually, though Danish law did not apply to the native population. As a result, Greenlandic society was formally split into "two distinctive ethnic groups: Inuit/Kalaallit and the Qalluaat/the Danes" (Lyng 2006: 2). With the former as the colonized group and the Danes as the dominant group, this segregation within Greenlandic society is often perceived as the 'bedrock' for contemporary social discontent (Gard-Storry, 2012).

Furthermore, in 1782, the Danish authorities ordered its missionaries and civil servants to follow specific 'Instrux' or regulations on judicial, economic and social matters (Marquardt and Caulfield, 1996). The Instrux acted as a way to organize "relations between the staff members of the mission and trade stations, and it also contained rules for proper behavior towards the Inuit of Greenland" (Petersen, 1995: 119). These rules were far-reaching and reflected "[t]he paternalistic and protectionist character of Danish colonial rule [which] 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, *quoted in* Graugaard, 2008: 10). Moreover, under the regulatory framework of the Instrux, initiatives were taken such as the improvements on housing. Inuit were also to keep their traditional hunting proficiency and the general assumption was that in combination with the aforementioned initiatives, their enthusiasm for hunting would be increased; "i.e., securing the basis for the colonial trade" (Rud,

2009: 32). Thus, while part of the Danish motive seemed to be genuinely concerned with developing and at the same time protecting traditional Greenlandic society, the Danish authorities were also aiming for its “economic exploitation, especially the trade in whale and seal products” (Petersen, 1995: 119).

The economic exploitation was for a long time regulated by The Royal Greenlandic Trade Department (RGTD) which was founded in 1776. This enterprise was established by the Danish state and “formalized colonial ruling shaped by the principle of keeping Inuit from European influence yet ‘civilizing them’ to assure social compliance to mercantile principles” (Gaviria, 2013: 16). The monopoly of the RGTD in combination with the protective attitude of the Danish administration resulted in Greenland becoming one of the most secluded colonial areas in world history (see Dahl, 1986). The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century limited economic possibilities even more through heavy curtailments of shipping (Jensen *et al*, 2010: 13). Moreover, it was only when the Treaty of Kiel was signed in 1814, that Denmark could pursue its commitment to bringing Greenlandic society to “the Danish stage of economic evolution” (Lynge, 2006: 3). Approximately fifty extra trading stations were added to the existing settlements and in 1862, so-called ‘parish councils’ were organized to represent Inuit interests and to function as a court in case of disputes (Jensen *et al*, 2010: 14). Moreover, these parish councils would mark the beginning of limited local self-governance in Greenland and would eventually transition into elected municipal councils and two provincial councils in 1920 (Graugaard, 2008: 11-12). But even with the increased authority for the Inuit, their self-determination was still limited and the ‘economic paternalism’ (Nuttall, 1992) and ‘positive isolation’ (Sørensen, 2006) by the Danes would continue to prevail until the beginning of the Second World War, when Greenland was separated from Denmark for four years due to the latter’s occupation by Nazi Germany.

#### **4.2 Greenland’s road to Home Rule**

Surprisingly, the separation between Greenland and Denmark during the Second World War, resulted in “a period of unparalleled prosperity and unheard of improvements, made possible by the unprecedented demands for Greenland cryolite, indispensable to the Canadian and American aluminium industries, and to the equally great demand for Greenland salt cod” (Porsild, 1948: 55). Consequently, after the war ended, Greenland carried “the aspiration to develop and measure up to economic and cultural standards of other nations” (Gaviria, 2013: 27). There was also increased criticism on the way that Danish rule affected its colony; “[the] restriction on population movements, the extreme poverty and various diseases, and the inferior

civil rights of the Greenlanders all amounted to potential trouble for the Danish government” (Grimsson, 1978: 325). As such, in combination with the international directive of the 1952 Special United Nations Political and Decolonization Committee of phasing out colonial possessions, Greenland was in the position to aim for equal status with its former colonizer. Because Denmark had to respond to external pressures and did not intend to relinquish its colony completely, it altered its constitution allowing Greenland to be officially incorporated into the Danish Realm in 1953, with the right to elect two members to the *Folketing*.

However, there are doubts that the integration process was fully endorsed by the entirety of Greenland’s population as many of them were not aware of all other alternatives like independence or the Faroese self-government model (Sørensen, 2006, *referenced in* Gaviria, 2013: 29). Moreover, while the Inuit officially became Danish citizens with equal rights, the process of *Danization* of Greenland’s society constituted that it in practice was “more than ever governed politically, economically, intellectually, and physically by another people” (Petersen, 1995: 121). The *Danization* process had to ensure that the standard of living would be raised through modernizing Greenland’s economy and preparing it to be competitive on a global level. However, the reforms that were necessary to constitute this competitiveness were completely planned in Copenhagen and “intensified development at such a scale that they deepened Greenland’s financial dependency on the Danish state and Danish private capital” (Gaviria, 2013: 29). Moreover, *Danization* required a large influx of Danish staff to support Greenland in its reforms, who were attracted through social and economic privileges. This created highly visible wage discrimination cases between Danes and Greenlanders, legalized in the mid-1960s through Greenland’s Civil Servants Act and the ‘birthplace-criterion’ where civil servants born in Greenland received 85% of the basic Danish salary (Petersen, 1995: 121). Situations like this, combined with persisting social cleavages and the forced relocation of some of the smaller settlements to increase economic efficiency, increasingly caused enmity by the Greenlanders towards the Danish intentions.

Another point of contention for the Greenlanders were language and education. Since Danish was still designated as the primary language in Greenland, the use of Greenlandic came under considerable pressure. Moreover, a significant amount of teachers and resources were moved from Denmark to Greenland during the 1960s. Since the majority of these teachers only spoke Danish (600 out of the required 800), this movement of human capital endangered the position of Greenlandic language (Goldbach, 2000). Furthermore, Greenland’s school system became more or less a copy of the Danish school system that reflected little to nothing of Greenlandic culture (Olsen, 2005). Also, the educational system stimulated many Greenlandic

children to attend schools in Denmark. Through these movements, many children were arguably alienated from their own culture. This, in combination with the promotion of Danish as the first language in Greenland, seemed to exert pressure on the Inuits to preserve their identity (Gad, 2009).

Both the continuing economic and political inequality, and the contentious issues surrounding language and education, spurred the opposition towards Danish policy-making. While modernization seemed to have brought some benefits, most notably with healthcare improvements, “the situation by the end of the sixties was one of a demoralized people, whose native language was quickly falling behind, whose new language had no connection with everyday life and whose skills were not appropriate for taking forward the development of their own society” (Gaviria, 2013: 32). As a result, the young Greenlandic elite who had been educated in Denmark and who envisioned a road to more self-determination, organized themselves into a Greenlandic nationalist movement (Gaviria, 2013: 33). Consequently, “the demand for equal wages and civil rights for Greenlanders and Danes in Greenland was ... expressed, and the need to preserve the uniqueness of the Greenlandic culture was emphasized” (Grimsson, 1978: 326). The momentum of the political parties that supported the intentions of the nationalist movements eventually led to the establishment of Home Rule in 1979.

In this chapter I have outlined Greenland’s historical connection with Denmark. It shows that colonialism for a long time has played a significant role in the relationship between both countries. In the next chapter, I investigate from the perspective of dependency theory and post-colonialism, in what way colonial elements continue to play a role in Greenland and the country’s relationship with Denmark.

## **5. Analysis**

My analysis essentially consists out of two parts; (1) the investigation of the political and socioeconomic relationship between Greenland and Denmark within the theoretical framework of dependency theory consisting out of paragraphs 5.1 to 5.3, and (2) the examination of Greenland's identity formation from the perspective of post-colonialism in paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5. Accordingly, in paragraph 5.1, Greenland's political dependency on Denmark is analyzed through an investigation of the policy changes that took place after the establishment of Home Rule in 1979, followed by an examination of the impact of Self-Government in 2009. In paragraph 5.2, I review some unique factors which have to be taken into consideration when studying the contemporary relationship between Greenland and Denmark. Greenland's present-day GDP and export sector are also investigated here. In paragraph 5.3, Greenland's socioeconomic relationship with Denmark is examined, including a discussion of to what extent it is possible to speak of a dependency relation between both countries. In paragraph 5.4, I investigate Greenland's post-colonial identity formation from the perspective of post-colonialism. Finally, in paragraph 5.5, I determine some of the effects of Greenland's political and socioeconomic dependency on Denmark, on Greenland's post-colonial identity formation.

### **5.1 Greenland's political dependency on Denmark**

In this first section, I identify elements of political dependency between Greenland and Denmark, through looking at the policy changes made through the establishment of the Home Rule Act in 1979 (5.1.1) and the Act on Self-Government in 2009 (5.1.2). In this sense, I am not only concerned with the amount of policy areas that has been transferred, but also with the political significance of these areas. I argue that while there is still to a certain extent a political dependency relation between both countries, Greenland has gained much autonomy over the last few decades which for a large part negates the political influence of Denmark in domestic matters.

#### **5.1.1 Reducing political dependency through the Home Rule Act**

In a referendum held in 1979, 73% of the Greenlandic population voted in favor of the establishment of the Home Rule Act, which had the main purpose of transferring "legislative and administrative powers in particular fields to the Home Rule authority" (Larsen, 1992: 200). After 200 years of colonial rule and approximately 25 years as a Danish province, Greenland became an autonomous region within the Kingdom of Denmark. This is important from a dependency theory perspective, because policies for Greenland were not solely dictated in the

metropolis of Denmark anymore. Although I have shown in the previous chapter that the political dependency relation between Greenland and Denmark largely continued after 1953, this stopped being the case after 1979. As such, I posit that the explicit political dependency relation between both countries in the form of absolute control by Denmark, came to end with the establishment of the Home Rule Act.

Following the first elections of Greenland's newly established national parliament or *Landsting*, the left-wing party *Siumut* came into power with an absolute majority of representatives, forming the first Greenlandic Government or *Landsstyre* (Dahl, 1986). With the installment of the Home Rule Act, many responsibilities were transferred from Copenhagen to Nuuk, increasing Greenland's sovereignty in relation to its former colonizer. Greenland's governmental bodies could now make their own budgets and build up the country's intellectual autonomy through its own cultural (e.g., museums) and educational (e.g., University of Greenland) institutions (Petersen, 1995).

Appendix 2 offers an overview of important policy areas such as the regulation of commercial fishing, taxes, the administration's arrangement, and trade legislation, which came under the control of Greenland's administration during the years that ensued after the establishment of the Home Rule Act. As such, the Home Rule Act literally reduced Greenland's political dependency on Denmark through an increased autonomy in the given policy areas. However, taking the timeframe of the transfers of the various fields into consideration, it can also be observed that the actual realization of the transfer of authority to the Home Rule government took quite a while. One of the main causes was that the transfers required extensive negotiations with the central Danish authorities, in addition to careful preparations to actually assuming control over the different fields of responsibility (Larsen, 1992).

Consequently, a transition period ensued for some years, sometimes causing significant tensions between the governments of the two countries (Petersen, 1995). While the Home Rule Act cleared the way for Greenland to gain sovereignty in many policy areas, Appendix 2 shows that two important fields of responsibilities were only finally handed over in 2001 (responsibility and liability in the media field) and 2009 (giving full control with regards to upper secondary educations in Greenland). Thus, while I found that Greenland's political dependency on Denmark was reduced after the establishment of the Home Rule Act, Danish influence was still very noticeable because the Act did not

“allow for the transfer of power to the Home Rule authorities over areas such as the police and the judiciary. Moreover, the Home Rule authorities [were] not [...] permitted to lay

down the rules of fundamental principles regarding the law of persons, inheritance law, family law and property law” (Larsen, 1992: 201).

Therefore, for some Greenlanders, the process towards more independence did not develop fast enough since their country was politically still significantly involved in a dependency relation with Denmark. In addition, while the introduction of Home Rule has generally been considered as the official end of the colonial period, many practices that were established during this very period were maintained (Petersen, 1995). In terms of dependency theory, this means that the colonial institutions before the Home Rule Act did not entirely disappear but rather transformed into a neo-colonial arrangement of Danish influence. While this was not necessarily always a problem – e.g., it ensured the continuation of ‘good’ institutions like the healthcare system – it also meant that Denmark essentially was still politically in charge in many areas.

The political discontent of the Greenlanders towards the continuing Danish influence surfaced very clearly when the Danish Realm became part of the European Economic Community (EEC). Becoming a member of the EEC would mean an increase of foreign labor and capital into Greenland at a moment when it was trying to transition towards more sovereignty (Larsen, 1992). Moreover, the membership of the EEC also meant a loss of control for Greenland with regards to the fishing industry, its largest export sector. One of my respondents elaborates on this clearly:

*“And it was actually also why we wanted to leave the EU, because all the decisions were taken in Copenhagen. Now they wanted to move all the decisions in the fishing industry to Brussels which was even farther away and they didn’t want to see that. They saw all the German and the Dutch and the Danish fishermen come in and take all the stock and they saw nothing, they didn’t get paid [...] it took the value out of Greenland waters but Greenland did not benefit from it” (A2).*

Because Greenland felt that its fishing industry was threatened, it held a referendum, which resulted in an exit from the EEC in 1985 as the only territory that has done so until now (Gad, 2014). However, even the ability to call for a unilateral referendum did not change the fact that Greenland was politically still very dependent on Denmark in other areas.

After the initial changes in the first half of the eighties, the progress towards more political autonomy slowed down significantly. However, it would pick up some speed again when former Prime Minister of Greenland Lars Emil Johansen started a campaign in 1991 for



an increase of '*hjemtagelse*' (A2) or taking home all of the responsibilities for the country's administration. Johansen's campaign was rewarded with the most significant change being arguably the "establishment of rules concerning the conclusion of collective agreements and other agreements, etc., for personnel employed by the Greenland Home Rule Government and the municipalities who are not covered by the general agreement for civil servants in Greenland" (see Appendix 2). This meant that the Greenlandic people finally now had complete authority on the structure and organization of their own governmental administration.

Working towards more autonomy continued, and in 1999, the Greenland Government appointed a Commission to examine possibilities to further develop the Home Rule within the Danish Realm and reduce Greenland's political dependency (Danielsen, 2013). One of the main motives to pursue such a development was the transfer of the management of natural resources, one of the most controversial areas that were still under Danish authority. Greenland has always been believed to possess considerable amounts of resources that could significantly reduce Greenland's political dependency on Denmark (see Lyck and Taagholt, 1987; and Jonsson, 1999). But with the possibilities for actual extraction increasing, it would be one of the strongest points of contention between Greenland and Denmark until the installment of Self-Government in 2009.

### **5.1.2 Furthering Greenland's autonomy through the Act on Self-Government**

In 2003, the former Prime Minister of Denmark Anders Fogh-Rasmussen made a remarkable statement with regards to the debate on Greenland's independence when he said:

"I would like to deliver a clear and unequivocal message to the peoples of the Faeroe Islands and Greenland: you yourselves determine your future and the nature of your ties to Denmark." (Statsministeriet, 2003).

With this statement, Rasmussen gave the Greenlandic people a clear mandate to decide independently on the future of their country, which was officially ratified with the establishment of the Act on Self-Government in 2009. While this Act has been based on the assumption that Greenland will remain part of the Danish Realm, it contains an express provision with regards to the country's right to full independence (Danielsen, 2013). This is significant from a dependency theory perspective, since Greenlanders now have the full constitutional authority to decide on the extent of their political autonomy themselves without Danish intervention. Furthermore, through complementing the Home Rule Act, the Act on Self-Government has

ensured that Greenland has achieved some progress in reducing its political dependency on Denmark, i.e., through the transfer of authority of the natural resource area (*see* Statsministeriet, 2009), of which the possible consequences for the socioeconomic dependency relation between both countries will be further discussed in section 5.3.4.

With the establishment of the Act on Self-Government, it was also agreed by both countries that there would be a stop put to financial compensation through the block-grant for the future transfer of policy areas (*see* Statsministeriet, 2009). As a result, the remaining areas (with the most significant being the judicial system, security and foreign affairs) that are still under Danish control, will have to be financed by Greenland itself should it want to take them over. In other words, if Greenland wants to reduce its political dependency on Denmark, Greenland has to pay for it by itself. With regards to the transfer of the judicial system, this appears to be not so much of a problem since one of the respondents at the GROC stated that because there is *“a good corroboration between Greenland and Denmark, there is no need for it yet”* (A2). Combined with the estimated costs of DKK 300 million that is required to finance the courts and the prisons, Greenland has currently no immediate plans to take over the judicial system (*see* A2).

On the other hand, there are policy areas where there is politically much more at stake, and Greenland would very much like to see its political dependency on Denmark in these areas further reduced. I argue that the most pronounced examples here are the security and foreign affairs policy areas of which the final authority currently still remains with the Danish government (*see* Statsministeriet, 2009). While Greenland has increasingly gained autonomy within these areas (e.g., Greenland controls its own police stations and can to a certain extent conduct international negotiations by itself), it is especially the matter of foreign affairs that is causing significant tensions between Nuuk and Copenhagen (*see* Søndergård, 2014).

The tensions have been illustrated for example by the ‘zero-tolerance’ uranium debate during the last couple of years, in which the Danish authorities argued that it was a matter of international security and thus falls outside Greenland’s jurisdiction (Nuttal, 2013). With uranium being a profitable resource, Greenland intends to exploit its deposits for the benefit of its socioeconomic development. However, Denmark’s zero-tolerance position on the extraction of uranium has for now thwarted Greenland’s intentions to actively extract the radioactive material. This implies that Greenland can only make a decision on the extraction of uranium when it would conduct security and foreign affairs itself. But taking over these areas would severely strain the expenditure budget of Greenland’s administration. Moreover, while there is currently no definitive outcome from the discussion on security and foreign affairs, it shows the

incongruent attitudes between Greenland and Denmark towards the role of the former at the international stage.

Appendix 2 shows that the management of the natural resources is currently the only field of responsibility which has been transferred since the establishment of Self-Governance. Therefore, I find that the impact of the Act on Self-Governance is not so much about the transfer of political authority, as it is symbolic. While the Act did not decrease political dependency through a large transfer of policy areas, it did ensure that Greenlanders can now unilaterally decide on the extent of their political relationship with Denmark. In this sense, the installment of the Act on Self-Government is the formalization of the process of decreased political dependency on Denmark that has taken place since the establishment of Home Rule.

With the above idea in mind, it can be stated that both Acts have gradually provided Greenland with a clear political authority on the majority of internal matters, and as such, have significantly reduced the country's political dependency on Denmark. Currently, there are only a couple of areas still under the control of Denmark, with security and foreign affairs being the most important ones. While Greenland would like to see these areas transferred to its own administration as to reduce its political dependency on Denmark, it simply does not have the funds yet to make this a reality. Meanwhile, important areas like education and economic regulation fall under the jurisdiction of the Greenlandic authority and it is free to administer them without Danish intervention. Moreover, Greenland is an equal partner within the Danish Realm and it can unilaterally decide to separate from the Danish Realm if it so chooses. This ultimate ability is the reason that I find it difficult to posit that Greenland is still very politically dependent on Denmark, as the decision for complete autonomy lies solely within Greenland itself. Therefore, I will continue to argue throughout the remainder of my analysis that the dependency relation between Greenland and Denmark is perhaps not so much political, as it is more embedded in their socioeconomic ties.

## **5.2 The implications of Greenland being a 'small state'**

Before moving on to the analysis of Greenland's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark, I argue that some unique factors first have to be taken into account, which are related to the country's considerable size and its disproportionately tiny population. Moreover, I also make an assessment of Greenland's economy based on the composition of the country's GDP and export sector.

### 5.2.1 Greenland's demographics and geography

Based on population criteria, Greenland can be defined as a typical small state or microstate (Ackren *et al*, 2011). Because microstates have such small populations and are usually situated in an isolated geographical location, their economies are generally characterized by a weak and monolithic export market, lack of economies of scale, relatively high transportation costs, and a lack of adequate human capital (Baldacchino, 2003). Accordingly, Greenland has a population of 56,000 that is spread over an area of roughly 2,100,000 square kilometers, which makes it one of the most sparsely populated areas in the world (Statistics Greenland, 2014). Moreover, due to Greenland's ice cap, only 350,000 square kilometers is inhabitable. While one third of the population lives in Nuuk, the remainder is dispersed along the country's coast living in remote settlements (Sørensen, 2006).

A challenge for Greenland is that the interconnectedness between its settlements is limited because of a lack of infrastructure and the sheer amount of distance between them. As a result, the only way to get from one place to another is by plane, helicopter or boat, since roads (aside from those in the main settlements) are limited, railroads are non-existent, and because the distances are simply too long to traverse over land (Goldbach, 2000). As such, the costs to provide crucial infrastructure and social and health services are high, while business is often obstructed by Greenland's "geographical conditions [and its] distance to the export markets" (Larsen, 1992: 215). To meet these challenges, Greenland has – according to international standards – a very large and expensive public sector, constituting approximately 75% of the country's GDP (Nielsen, 2013).<sup>1</sup> These factors, in combination with Greenland's extreme environmental circumstances and its remote location in the Arctic, mean that the country faces significant challenges with regards to developing its economy and sustaining a population larger than it currently has. Furthermore, these challenges have a significant impact on the dependency relationship between Greenland and Denmark. One of my respondents pointed this out quite succinctly: *"And they will still be [...] a large land but a small country. And being a small country, you are dependent on other people and other countries"* (A2). In other words, in order for Greenland to overcome its geographic and demographic challenges, it depends on external assistance, in this case, primarily on Denmark. Therefore, Greenland's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark has to be understood within the concept of Greenland being a small state, as well as the consequences that come with the country's geographic location in the Arctic.

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<sup>1</sup> In comparison, the public sector in Denmark and other European countries ranges from 40% to 50% of GDP (Nielsen, 2013).

### 5.2.2 Greenland's economy: GDP and export sector

Greenland's aforementioned demography and geographic location have significant consequences for its socioeconomic development. As such, Greenland's economy is generally characterized as small and vulnerable (*see* Lyck and Taagholt, 1987). With a GDP of US\$ 1.5 billion in 2012, it is dwarfed by that of Denmark's GDP of US\$ 331 billion, and as a result Greenland's economy constitutes only a fraction of the Kingdom's total GDP (Statistics Greenland, 2014). From a dependency theory perspective, these figures alone illustrate the huge difference in economic output between Greenland and Denmark and indicate that the former is more dependent on the latter than the other way around.

Appendix 4 shows that Greenland's GDP has been growing relatively slowly and has been fluctuating significantly within the last couple of years. While it had a growth rate of 2.1% in 2008, it contracted with 0.7% in 2009. Subsequently, Greenland had growth rates of 2.5% in 2010 and 4% in 2011, but in 2012 its GDP shrunk again with 0.9%.<sup>2</sup> However, taking Greenland's small population into account, it is perhaps more relevant to state the GDP per capita, as to be able to make a better comparison with Denmark. Appendix 3 shows that while growing slowly but steadily over the last three decades, the downward trend, mainly due to the global financial crisis in 2009, is much steeper than that of Denmark. While some reports state that Greenland has escaped the effects of the financial crisis 'relatively unharmed' (*see e.g.* International Business Publications, 2008), the aforementioned data illustrate Greenland's relative susceptibility to the volatility of the world market.

One of the primary causes for Greenland's economic vulnerability is the heavy reliance of its export sector on the fishing industry (Tomala, 2014). Appendix 5 shows the fishing industry's importance for the country, as prawns and halibut by far outrange other export products like minerals. However, the problem with the fishing industry is that the maximum sustainable output is fairly easily reached and that it is relying on heavily regulated exploitation, which cannot rise above certain quotas, otherwise, it would lead to permanent depletion of fish stocks. Furthermore, local fishermen make up for a large share of the quotas, while their way of fishing is not productive and efficient enough to be competitive on the global market (Berthelsen, 2014). Minik Rosing, an expert on Greenland, made a suggestion to create more facilities to process the fish in Greenland itself (van Kammen, 2015). According to Rosing, this would stimulate possibilities for the local communities to work in the factories for a stable form of income and could increase Greenland's export revenues significantly.

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<sup>2</sup> The figures for 2011 and 2012 are provisional.

However, even a change as suggested by Rosing, does not negate the fact that 90% of Greenland's export sector currently consists of fishing products making it monolithic and dependent on one sector. Furthermore,

“[s]uch a one-track economy bears significant risks when its primary sector is compromised [...] In the case that the fishing industry loses its potential, i.e. due to a drop in prices on the world market or because of overfishing, Greenland has currently no real alternative means of production to fall back to and could potentially lose a large share of its GDP” (van Kammen, 2015: 13).

Next to fishing, hunting is also a relatively important industry for Greenland's export sector. However, the hunting industry has to deal with the same limitations as those of the fishing industry and “Greenland can only harness hunting as a cultural heritage and as a way to support local communities, but not as a commercial export sector” (van Kammen, 2015: 12). Consequently, while

“[h]unting and fishing have long sustained Greenlanders (and have provided a cornerstone of trade and economy), and while they remain important economic and cultural activities, particularly in the small settlements scattered around Greenland's coasts, and continue to inform national debates about social and cultural identity, they cannot form the basis for the development of the national economy” (Nuttal, 2012: 116).

This shows the limitations of Greenland's fishing and hunting industries, which result in the country's economy only having a relatively low level and uniform production of goods and services for its domestic market. In the next section, I examine what consequences this has for Greenland's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark.

### **5.3 Greenland's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark**

In this section I investigate the socioeconomic relationship between Greenland and Denmark from a dependency theory perspective. Therefore, in the first three subsections – which are respectively concerned with trade (5.3.1), education and human capital (5.3.2), and the Danish block grant (5.3.3) – I aim to expose characteristics of which I argue indicate towards a socioeconomic dependency relation between both countries. Subsequently, in 5.3.4, I examine the prospect for natural resource production which has the potential to alleviate Greenland's

socioeconomic as well as political dependency on Denmark and could significantly change the relations between both countries. Finally, in 5.3.5, I conclude the first part of my analysis through tying my arguments together and discussing the interconnectedness between Greenland's political and socioeconomic dependency on Denmark. As such, I aim to offer a complete picture as possible on the political and socioeconomic dependency relationship between both countries.

### **5.3.1 Greenland's dependency on trading with Denmark**

In the previous section I have illustrated that Greenland's economy is quite small and vulnerable. At the same time, Greenland's imports (DKK 2,761.1 million) are larger than its exports (DKK 4,955.3 million), which causes a significant trade deficit (Statistics Greenland, 2014: 7). For countries with a big economy, this is not so much of a problem because there is often a big industrial or (financial) services sector to 'pay' for the import with a corresponding amount of export. For instance, the U.S. has a significant trade deficit but has such a big economy that the effects of this deficit do not really matter (*see* Valderrama, 2007). However, Greenland's traditional hunting and fishing sectors are relatively small, in which case, a trade deficit can cause economic instability if not addressed correctly (*see*, e.g., Monacelli and Perotti, 2007). This arguably puts Greenland in a vulnerable position within the world economy. Bilateral trade agreement, i.e., with Denmark and the EU, can help to alleviate some of this vulnerability through granting Greenland advantageous conditions to strengthen its economy (*see* Ackren *et al*, 2011). Simultaneously, this causes Greenland to be dependent on such agreements and the corresponding countries, something that it is trying to avoid.

As Appendix 6 shows, Greenland's largest import partner is Denmark, covering almost 55% of all import, followed by Sweden with 20%, and the Netherlands with 6%. With regards to the country's export, Denmark is also Greenland largest partner with 58%, followed by Japan with 15%, and China with 8%, as is illustrated in Appendix 7. These graphs highlight the intricate linkage of Greenland's economy with Denmark's economy. However, as was also posited in the previous section, the difference in GDP alone shows a big discrepancy in economic capacity. In this sense, it is plausible to argue that Greenland is much more dependent on Denmark than the other way around. After all, should the trade between both countries come to an end, this would have much greater consequences for Greenland than for Denmark. In comparison, Greenland is not as important for Denmark, constituting only around 0.5% of Denmark's total import and export volume (Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2015).

The composition of Greenland's trade relation with Denmark is also indicative of the socioeconomic dependency relation between the two countries. Appendix 8 shows that over 90% of its exports to Denmark consists out of fish products albeit processed or unprocessed, while Appendix 9 shows that its import from Denmark consists out of much more varied products, ranging from high-tech manufactured items to medical supplies and various edibles. The characteristics of this trade relation are exemplary for a metropolis-satellite relationship, which constitutes a diverse composition for the export of the metropolis and a focus on raw materials and primary resources for the export of the satellite (*see, e.g., Moolaert and Salinas, 2013*). It arguably also prevents Greenland from adequately developing its own manufacturing industry because it is locked into this metropolis-satellite relationship (*see, e.g., Tilton, 2012*). The proposition which dependency theory makes with regards to such a relationship, is that the satellite state – in this case Greenland – in the long run will face a downward economic trend if it does not diversify its economy and keeps trading primary products – in this case fish – with manufactured products from the metropolis (*see Toye and Toye, 2003*). Moreover, some would argue that the difficulties that Greenland faces through this situation, “cause financial and economic dependence typical of a dependent territory” (Tomala, 2014: 69).

Based on what is stated above, I posit that the trade relation between Greenland and Denmark is still characterized by a neo-colonial structure that binds the former to the hegemonic position of the latter. While it goes too far in my opinion to state that the trade relation between both countries is solely ‘extractive’ in nature, the composition and exclusiveness of Greenland's trade relation with Denmark surely indicates an uneven dependency relation that has persisted even after Greenland was officially decolonized. While Greenland could opt to break its socioeconomic dependency on Denmark and increase its trade with other countries like the U.S. or Canada, such a shift would demand much of Greenland's vulnerable economy (Jonsson, 1999; Ackren *et al*, 2011). Moreover, as I point out below, it is also difficult for Greenland to shift its trade relations due to its reliance on Danish human capital and education. In this sense, Denmark could probably do economically well without Greenland, but this appears not to be the case the other way around.

### **5.3.2 Greenland's dependency on Danish human capital and education**

Next to Greenland's trade relation with Denmark, I argue that the country's socioeconomic dependency relationship with Denmark is also characterized by a relatively large presence of Danish workers, who occupy high positions in the public administration and business sector. Out of the 56,000 people who live in Greenland, approximately 7,000 were born abroad, of



which almost all of them in Denmark (Goldbach, 2000). Appendix 10 shows that in 2013, 1,208 out of the 14,537 officials in the Greenlandic public administration were of Danish origin, which constitutes 8.3% of the total. Furthermore, Appendix 11 shows that the number of Danes who were active in the business sector in 2013 was around 481, corresponding with 18.7% of the 2,570 people working in that sector. The number of Danes working in these important sectors has been fairly consistent during the period of 2008-2013. Moreover, it is interesting to note that Greenlanders in the business sector were disproportionately affected by the financial crisis, with Appendix 11 showing a drop from 2,306 employed in 2008 to about 1,888 in 2011, while the number of Danes increased from 463 to 492 within the same period. While these numbers are too small to make any definitive conclusions, I venture to hypothesize that the Greenlanders in the business sector appeared to be more vulnerable than the Danes.

The reliance of Greenland on Danish human capital is best captured by the concept of ‘organizational dependency’ (Jonsson, 1996, 1999). Arguably, the significant amount of Danes that apparently still occupy high positions in both Greenland’s public administration and business sector, has a big effect on flows of trade which is evident through

“the fact that the Danish elite directs almost all trade towards Denmark and Danish firms. This is partly because a large part of the elite group has personal interests in directing trade and business activities to Denmark when goods and services are not available locally in order to reproduce their own business network and secure their own future career in Denmark” (Jonsson, 1999: 17).

Indeed, Greenland’s socioeconomic dependency on its trade with Denmark seems to be closely related to the presence of Danish human capital. It can even be argued that this has led to a situation where Greenland is “locked into voluntary colonial trade relations that lead to an unusually high level of outward flow of capital and low level of saving” (Jonsson, 1999: 9). Moreover, since Greenland’s state apparatus has grown out of the Danish state apparatus, this neo-colonial relationship is institutionalized to an extent that it prevents trade flows from being shifted to countries like the USA and Canada, which are in closer geographical proximity and which would probably be more beneficial to Greenland because of reduced import costs (Jonsson, 1996, 1999).

The socioeconomic dependency of Greenland on Danish human capital also shows the deficit of Greenland’s educational system, as the lack of educated workers is impeding the country’s economic growth (Kirkegaard *et al*, 2012). One of my respondents stated that “*the*

*level of education is still quite low. And even if there is a possibility to take high school or vocational training [...] there are still quite a lot of students leaving the education without a degree. [...] It's even close to sixty percent"* (A2). Moreover, Greenland only has a small university offering nine different studies with a Bachelor or Master degree ranging from journalism to management and theology. While this university is growing, it causes Greenland to rely on Danish universities for the higher levels of education of its population (see EU Commission, 2013).

Like is the case with Greenland's trade relation with Denmark, I argue that the latter – with regards to the provision of human capital and education – has quite a dominant position in relation to the former. From a dependency theory perspective, the situation indicates a certain amount of control over the creation of knowledge, which is essential for the contemporary information society (Woodhouse, 1985). While Greenland's educational system and its own development of human capital is progressing slowly but steadily, a significant amount of knowledge is still being derived from Denmark. In this sense, Danish human capital and education still play a pivotal role for Greenland's development, which perpetuates the socioeconomic dependency relation between both countries. Moreover, the current situation clearly resembles a case where the metropolis has the decisive advantage over the satellite because of its economic capacity to provide an adequate system of higher education and universities.

### **5.3.3 Greenland's dependency on the Danish block grant**

Perhaps the most significant factor in the socioeconomic dependency relationship between Greenland and Denmark is the Danish block grant. The origin of this grant can be traced back to the moment when various policy fields were transferred to Greenland's Home Rule government from 1979 and onwards (Paldam, 1997: 593). When Greenland was still a county of Denmark, the expenses made by the former's administration were paid directly from Danish tax revenue. However, after 1979, the amount previously paid to run these policy fields would be added to the block grant to ensure the continuity of the services provided. Currently, the Danish block grant amounts up to DKK 3.5 billion, which constitutes 30% of Greenland's total GDP (Statistics Greenland, 2014: 8). Due to its relative significance, Greenland's administration cannot keep providing the social and healthcare services to its population, and the standard of living for its population would go down dramatically, should the block grant be discontinued (Breum, 2014). Furthermore, "[w]hile the block grant obviously is a strong

support for the economy as a whole, it also functions as a security resort as it shields the economy from external shocks such as, for example, financial crises” (Ackren *et al*, 2011: 6).

However, the block grant is at the same time perceived by some critics as a financial mechanism through which Denmark can exert socioeconomic and political control in Greenland (Hoydal, 2006). From a dependency theory perspective, the block grant ensures that the dependency structures between both countries are kept in place both politically and economically, through this neo-colonial institution of financial support. After all, Greenland currently cannot do without the Danish block grant because it constitutes an essential part of its government’s expenditure budget. It is here that I find the dependency relationship between both countries most explicit. Many Danish politicians argue that if Greenland becomes fully politically independent, the transfer of the block grant is not justifiable anymore (*see* Howard, 2009). As a result, Greenland will probably not become politically independent if it is not able to find an alternative for the block grant. In this sense, Greenland is financially bound to the block grant and all the conditions that come with it; i.e., the block grant will only continue on the condition that Greenland stays within the Realm.

Based on the above, I argue that the block grant provides the Danish government with a strong ability to stay active in the debate surrounding Greenland’s right to self-determination. Moreover, through the grant, Denmark is still able to uphold some form of presence through which, to a certain extent, it can secure its interests in Greenland. Many Greenlandic politicians seem to think the same way as the official principal objective of Greenland’s “economic policy is to achieve economic independence of block grants from Denmark and to increase political freedom of action” (Ministry of Finance and Domestic Affairs, 2013: 17). This development coincides with efforts to complement the production generated by the fishing industry and diversify the economy, as has been mentioned earlier in this chapter. As such, the hope of many Greenlanders is primarily focused on the potential of natural resource production that might be able to generate the economic impulses the country needs and reduce both the political and socioeconomic dependency of their country on Denmark.

#### **5.3.4 Greenland’s alternative: reducing the country’s dependency on Denmark through the development of natural resource production**

Primarily due to climate change, Greenland’s natural resources are becoming increasingly more accessible. Such a development could have a significant impact on the country’s political and socioeconomic dependency on Denmark. With the Act on Self-Government having transferred the management of natural resources to Greenland’s government, the country has the

development of this economic potential in its own hands. Moreover, “Greenlandic politicians widely agree that attracting foreign investment for the development of minerals and hydrocarbons – and turning Greenland into an exporter of raw materials – is the key to economic and eventual independence” (Nuttal, 2012: 116). Through investing the revenues from natural resource production into other potential sectors like tourism, Greenland could diversify its economy instead of solely relying on its fishing industry and the income from the Danish block grant (*see* Committee for Greenlandic Mineral Resources to the Benefit of Society, 2014; Nuttal, 2012; Kæe, 2002; Lemelin *et al*, 2012).

In 2007, the *U.S. Geology Survey* published a report which estimated that Greenland possesses approximately 32 billion barrels of oil (USGS, 2007). In the last decade, some money has been made with oil exploration activities. This is significant for Greenland because with the country

*“Being so small [means that] whenever there is some activity Greenland will benefit from it. In 2011 there were a lot of oil drilling activities in the Disco Bay area. And we have calculated that Greenland earned DKK 500 million that year on the activity” (A2).*

But while these activities have certainly been beneficial, investments into oil exploration drilling have been lowered during the last couple of years, reducing short-term expectations (Ministry of Finance and Domestic Affairs, 2013). Furthermore, oil-drilling operations rely on complex procedures, of which the risks increase significantly in an unfavorable and unpredictable environment like that of Greenland’s. If these risks are not managed correctly, they may cause great ecological damage. Moreover, managing the risks appropriately would require a significant rise in the production costs of oil companies. Due to the current low oil price, Senior Arctic Advisor Jesper Brieghel from Shell has argued that the revenues currently would simply not weigh up against the required investments (van Kammen, 2015). Currently, *Cairn Energy* is the only company with a clear intention to drilling an oil exploration well in Greenlandic waters, but adequate financing partners have yet to be found (*see* Gatermann, 2013). Consequently, the prospects for income out of oil revenue cannot offer a viable or immediate short term alternative to Greenland’s fishing industry.

More hope is currently vested on the prospect for mineral extraction, which also has had more proven success over the course of Greenland’s history. For example, the lead and zinc mine in Maarmorilik in West-Greenland has produced over DKK 1.15 billion in revenues (*see* Gatermann, 2013). Furthermore, the cryolite mine in Ivittuut in South-West Greenland has

produced over 3.7 million metric tons of ore and practically financed all its state activities throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Poole *et al*, 1992). Moreover, as has been shown in Appendix 5, a modest 7% of Greenland's export in 2010 consisted out of minerals. These export revenues can be ascribed to the Nanortalik goldmine in the South of Greenland. While the aforementioned mines have been closed in 1990, 1987 and 2013 respectively, their success stories offer perspectives towards the potential of mineral extraction even though there is currently no mining activity in Greenland. Appendix 12 shows the most viable and promising areas for mineral production, and over 80 licenses have been granted to prospecting companies which indicates that foreign interest is high (*see* Gatermann, 2013).

Based on the current estimates, a report from the Committee for Greenlandic Mineral Resources to the Benefit of Society (2014) predicts several scenarios in which Greenland could become a successful mineral exporter. The most probable scenario requires five large scale mining projects over a timeframe of 20 years with potential sites like *Kvanefield* (rare earth elements, estimated DKK 40 billion) and *Citronen Fjord*, (zinc, estimated DKK 3.7 billion), which with a multi-pronged strategy have to ensure Greenland's economic diversification through investing into an expansion of the tourism industry (van Kammen, 2015). In the case that such a scenario should come true,

“the level of the Danish block grant [will be] reduced by an amount corresponding to 50% of the earnings from minerals and energy extraction once they exceed 75 million DKK. Future revenues from oil and mineral resources will then be divided between Greenland and Denmark, while the annual block grant would be reduced further and eventually phased out” (Nuttal, 2012: 116).

With this scenario in mind, I argue that Greenland could significantly lower both its political and socioeconomic dependency on Denmark if it is able to increase its natural resource production. However, scenarios like these involve “anticipation of different futures – uncertain, probable, or conjectured” (Nuttal, 2012: 118). While mineral production certainly offers potential for Greenland, it will, until sufficient extraction has been realized, have to keep relying on the Danish block grant. Nevertheless, the potential of natural resources alone has made Greenland more self-confident in its relationship with Denmark (Nuttal, 2012). It allows the country to broaden its scope with regards to investment partners while at the same time benefiting from the exploration activities which generate a substantial amount of revenue by themselves. The debate surrounding the political and socioeconomic dependency between both

countries cannot be understood without including the factor of natural resources. Moreover, the future will point out to what degree natural resource production will be a viable alternative for Greenland to reduce its dependency on Denmark.

### **5.3.5 Conclusion: How dependent is Greenland on Denmark?**

In the first part of my analysis I illustrated the significance Greenland's political and socioeconomic dependency on Denmark. As has been mentioned in chapter 2, it is very difficult to determine exactly to what 'extent' Greenland is dependent on Denmark. Instead, I have argued for instances in which I believe they contain elements of a dependency relation, based on the theory that I have outlined in chapter 3. Within this context, I have found that currently only a couple of policy areas remain under Danish control with foreign affairs, security and the judicial system being the most significant. At the same time, I have argued that the political dependency relation between both countries has been reduced overall, up to a point that Greenland can unilaterally decide to become independent. While the political dependency relationship between both countries shows some affinity with a neo-colonial framework in which Denmark still has political influence, Greenland could put an end to this situation whenever it so chooses.

On the other hand, I found that Greenland's socioeconomic dependency relation with Denmark has proven to be more established. Greenland's economy is strongly linked with the Danish economy, creating a relationship that can be considered as unequal. The block grant especially causes Greenland to be dependent on Denmark to supplement its economic deficits and which, in some cases, can give the latter also some political leverage. The prospect of increased availability of natural resources has offered hope for viable alternatives for the block grant, but the operations that are necessary to extract them have yet to be shifted into full gear. While in terms of dependency theory, it goes too far to posit that the countries' socioeconomic relationship is solely based on 'extraction,' I have pointed out that Greenland's socioeconomic development is not only dependent on financial support from Denmark, but also on Danish human capital and education, which arguably furthers the imbalance in the relationship between both countries. Moreover, it can be posited that this "imbalance has a negative impact on the economy of Greenland, strongly dependent on the Metropolis" (Tomala, 2014: 73), which limits the political maneuverability of Greenland to determine the course of its own future.

Naturally, political dependency and socioeconomic dependency are strongly related to one another. The case of the block grant is illustrative of this. However, the former can be officially discontinued without necessarily breaking the latter, as I have illustrated by the case

of neo-colonialism of many African countries in chapter 3. This implies that the socioeconomic dependency relationship between Greenland and Denmark does not necessarily stop even if Greenland decides that it wants complete political independence. Within this context, two out of three of the respondents have stated that true independence is only reached “*at the point where Greenland is economically independent*” (A2). With Greenland’s ‘small-state’ features in mind and the many difficulties it faces in its socioeconomic development, the reality is that reaching such a situation of socioeconomic independence will be quite challenging without Danish help. Moreover, I posit that the socioeconomic dependency has a direct influence on the political dependency of Greenland on Denmark. After all, if Greenland would be able to be socioeconomically self-sustainable through other means like natural resource production, this would significantly reduce its political dependency on Denmark.

However, this is currently not the case and Greenland has a relatively weak economy that is not only relying significantly on the financial support of the Danish block grant, but also on Danish human capital and the Danish educational system for the provision of adequate intellectual capacity. This has led to a significant political and socioeconomic asymmetry that is typical for a metropolis-satellite relationship. Therefore, I argue that the effects of the historical colonial relationship between both countries is still visible in their socioeconomic dependency relation and to a lesser extent their political dependency relation. In 5.5, I investigate how both dependency relations affect the formation of Greenland’s post-colonial identity. In the next section, I look at the relationship between Greenland and Denmark from the perspective of post-colonialism.

#### **5.4 Greenlandic identity formation from the perspective of post-colonialism**

As I have illustrated in chapter 2, post-colonialism assumes that the identity formation of post-colonial societies is still being affected by their former colonizers and that through an unequal relationship, the presence of the latter is still visible through the imposition on the former of e.g., language, culture and values. As such, I examine in 5.4.1 in what way Denmark continues to influence how Greenlanders perceive themselves within the field of Greenlandic identity politics. In 5.4.2, I investigate the essentialist conception of national Greenlandic identity. In 5.4.3, I examine the position of some of the Greenlanders who have formed a hybrid identity and how they manage their relationship with Denmark.

#### 5.4.1 Greenlandic identity politics

From the perspective of post-colonialism, Greenlandic identity formation has to be understood in relation to Danish conceptions of the Greenlandic ‘Other’ and Greenlandic conceptions of the Danish ‘Other.’ Within the context of the historical colonial relations between both countries, it is no surprise that “the primary Other from which Greenlandic identity is different – and from which Greenlandic identity is threatened – is Denmark, Danes and phenomena perceived as being Danish” (Sørensen, 1991: 48, 121, *quoted in* Gad, 2009: 8). The power relation that resides within these conceptions is articulated by a respondent who stated:

*“Well I think it is pretty unequal because in my opinion there is a lot of especially Danish people who still perceive Greenland as a colony even though Greenland hasn’t been a colony for over 50 years. So in my opinion there are a lot of Greenlandic politicians as well who still, not really perceive, but still are in this colony mindset” (A1).*

Through explicitly mentioning the inequality of the relationship between both countries, the response of the interviewee illustrates a perception on the Danish dominance within ‘Greenlandic identity politics.’ Gad (2009) describes Greenlandic identity politics as a process where Greenlandic identity is being negotiated with Denmark within a framework of power relations. In terms of post-colonialism, it can be stated that Greenland takes up the subordinate position of the Orient or the subaltern, while Denmark represents the dominant position of the Occident. Within this context, the Greenlandic subaltern has a conception of its own identity that is strongly influenced by the hegemony of the Danish conception of the Greenlandic Other. Moreover, the response above also shows that the Greenlandic subaltern is apparently taking over the dominant projection of the ‘colony mindset,’ which indicates that this conception of Greenland as a colony is internally being reproduced.

The dominance of Danish conceptions of the Greenlandic Other become especially problematic when they are stigmatizing, as is illustrated by one of my respondents below:

*“If you ask any Danish people on the street here in Denmark, like what do you know about Greenland, first and foremost they would say alcohol, secondly they would say dogs’ sleds, and third they would say it’s cold. That’s it, yeah. So and that’s maybe like one percent of Greenland, yeah. So we are still like this 99% which the Danish people doesn’t understand or doesn’t know about at all” (A1).*



Naturally, the apparent predominance of Danish conceptions that relate the Greenlandic Other to unemployment and alcoholism, can be detrimental to the self-image of Greenlanders. Moreover, with these stereotypes sometimes being confirmed by statistics and scientific research (see, e.g., Mairey, 2012; Björkstén *et al*, 2009), they are hard to overcome. As a result, the impact of the aforementioned stigmatization is significant, which naturally affects how Greenlanders perceive themselves and how at ease they feel when interacting with Danes (Smedegaard, 2013). Through an uneven power relation “Danes project negative feelings about the Greenlandic society and the Greenlandic ethnic characteristics, while Greenlanders are mostly negative about the Danes’ superior position” (Björklund, 2011: 95). However, in the end Danish perceptions seem to come out on top reaffirming the subordinate subaltern position of Greenland within Greenlandic identity politics.

To challenge the domination of negative Danish conceptions within Greenlandic identity politics, some Greenlanders have tried to emphasize a national Greenlandic identity (Dahl, 2010). As such, the process of forming a national Greenlandic identity, or *kalaaliussuseq*, has come a long way since the installation of Home Rule in 1979 (see Nuttal, 1992). The installment of the Act on Self-Government took the formation of this national identity even further, as Greenlanders are now internationally recognized as a people. This development allowed them to utilize their renewed self-confidence in their “struggle for self-determination and the right to independence” (Graugaard, 2008: 19). At the same time, with the establishment of the official international recognition, the question what it exactly means to be Greenlandic has become more relevant than ever. Therefore, I examine the essentialist conception of national Greenlandic identity below.

#### **5.4.2 The essentialist conception of national Greenlandic identity**

Naturally, the basic narrative of national Greenlandic identity is that of the ‘Noble Greenlandic Savage’ which originates from European and thus Danish colonial romanticism, but “has been taken over by the Greenlanders themselves as an adequate depiction of their ancestors” (Gad, 2009: 10). In this sense, national Greenlandic identity primarily has to do with traditions such as hunting, fishing and kayaking. For Greenlanders, these activities, accompanied with an exceptional prowess to survive in the cold North, are essential to express their identity as a people. Aside from these more hunting oriented characterizations, Greenlanders’ national identity also constitutes their “native music, folk dance, traditional bead embroidery and food preparation from seal and whale meat” (Moosa-Mitha and Dominelli, 2014: 140). Moreover, language also constitutes a big part of national Greenlandic identity. Greenlanders generally

take pride in being able to speak *Kalaallisut* (West-Greenlandic) or other Inuit dialects. As such, language forms a pivotal element of national Greenlandic identity of which the importance is worded by one of my respondents as follows:

*“I feel very privileged and I feel very lucky as well, because I read an article that only about 40,000 people on this planet actually can speak Greenlandic. So I am actually one of these 40,000 people that speak Greenlandic. [...] And of course knowing that it is extremely important for me to maintain the language so it doesn’t die out. I think in my opinion if I want to maintain my Greenlandic heritage and if I want to maintain my Greenlandic culture, background, my Greenlandic roots, it’s very important for me to maintain the language” (A1).*

The essentialist conception – or ‘kernel’ (Gad, 2009) – of national Greenlandic identity, is often understood along the aforementioned cultural and linguistic lines. This national identity is crucial for Greenlanders to be able to assert their position in relation to Denmark and the international stage, through a clear demarcation of their cultural heritage and language. However, the actual identity of the majority Greenlanders is not only based on this kernel but is also influenced by Denmark and globalization in general (Gad, 2009). Therefore, within the context of my analysis, it would be incorrect to perceive Greenland’s post-colonial identity formation as something that is solely constituted by traditional conceptions, which characterize Greenland exclusively as a hunting and fishing society with a unique native language. As such, the kernel of national Greenlandic identity formation as mentioned above can only function as an ideal type. The conception of what exactly constitutes being Greenlandic naturally differs per individual and is constantly being negotiated through the field of Greenlandic identity politics.

Through Greenland’s relationship with Denmark, various modern elements have been incorporated into Greenland’s post-colonial identity formation, which means that it is based on a combination of traditional Inuit culture and elements of modern Danish culture (Gad, 2009). It is “to a large extent built on being the ‘opposite’ of what is Danish even though it also builds on Western ideas, in regards to philosophy and social sciences about culture, ethnicity, nation-building, democracy etc., which was imported primarily from Denmark” (Smedegaard, 2013: 3). This combined identity is arguably very fluid and under constant negotiation through interaction between both Greenlandic and Danish cultural dispositions. I argue that the fluidity

of this ‘new’ post-colonial identity is best illustrated through the concept of hybrid identity as I referred to in 3.3.

#### **5.4.3 Greenlandic-Danish hybridity**

Since the transition from decolonization has proceeded rather peacefully, many Greenlanders have established a hybrid identity based on “mimicry and influence of the former dominating power [of Denmark]” (Smedegaard, 2013: 18). Naturally, this hybrid identity does not apply for the whole of Greenland since many Greenlanders in remote settlements experience much less of a Danish influence in their daily life environment. However, the concept of hybrid identity appears to be very relevant for the GROC officials as two out of the three respondents have mentioned that they felt both Danish and Greenlandic at the same time. For some Greenlanders having such a hybrid identity can be confusing, because it is preventing them to clearly identify an actual feeling of belonging. This is being illustrated by one of the respondents who could not clearly explain which country felt the most as ‘home’:

*“It’s difficult because... it’s very difficult for me because in Greenland some people say you are not a real Greenlandic because I am born here [in Denmark] and here in Denmark you are a Greenlandic here” (A3).*

This respondent, who was born in Denmark but has two Greenlandic parents, clearly illustrates a case of someone who feels ‘in-between’ two cultures. With no clear delineation of belonging, the respondent feels neither completely Danish nor completely Greenlandic.

However, having a hybrid identity does not necessarily have to be perceived as problematic. As referred to in chapter 2, Bahba (1994) understands hybrid identity as a position where agency is possible and where the subaltern can strengthen its position towards the former colonizer. Through their hybridity, many Greenlanders can both adhere to their traditional values while they at the same time successfully merge with modern society. This is worded by one of the respondents who commented on friends combining hunting and their daily jobs:

*“In Nuuk I have a lot of friends who have a day job from eight to four for example and then they go hunting after work and they go hunting in the weekends. So of course you can maintain this western way of life, and also the more traditional way of life. [...] You can maintain both of them, both of these worlds” (A1).*

Through expressing themselves through this hybrid identity that includes being in an ‘eight to four job’ combined with the ‘traditional way of life,’ some Greenlanders are able to take up a stronger position in relation to the Danish Other, than Greenlanders who are not familiar with the culture of modern society. The hybridity of the apparent opposite identities make it easier for these Greenlanders to assimilate some Danish features without having the feeling that they completely have to let go of their Greenlandicness (Alba, 2005, *referenced in* Smedegaard, 2013).

For a nationalist-oriented Greenlander, such a hybrid identity is problematic because he or she probably perceives it as a deterioration of the aforementioned kernel of Greenland’s national identity. This is mentioned by one of the respondents who had a strong opinion on the matter:

*“I surely can understand if some Greenlanders can see it as a problem. Because if you want to protect your heritage, of course you have to be strict about some things. But in my opinion a lot of Greenlanders are a bit too strict which makes them very nationalistic I think. So in my opinion and that is very dangerous actually because if you are too nationalistic, you exclude yourself from the outside world and you exclude other people to learn about your culture as well” (A1).*

Naturally, nationalist-oriented Greenlanders have been attempting to take a more conservative standpoint to the modern Danish influence by emphasizing the kernel of the national Greenlandic identity. However, it can be argued that it is essentially impossible to completely undo the changes that the traditional Inuit society has gone through. After all, I venture to posit that even nationalist oriented Greenlanders would not want to reduce the welfare and healthcare that modern day society has brought Greenland. In this sense, some scholars even argue that an integral part of Greenland’s identity is also based on the notion of a democratic welfare society. As such, “[d]emocracy’ and ‘welfare’ are pointed out as indispensable qualities of Greenland; both in the present-day version and even more [for] the Greenland in the making. This suggests democracy and welfare as irreducible aspects of Greenlandic identity” (Gad, 2009: 11). Moreover, completely undoing the progress that has been made would require Greenland to isolate itself not only from Denmark, but from the international society as a whole. This would be something that in our modern age is almost unimaginable and arguably also not preferable.

Taking the above into consideration, the hybridity of Greenland’s post-colonial identity formation seems to be a natural outcome of Greenlandic identity politics. Through a meeting

of two different cultures, a significant amount of Greenlanders – especially those living in the larger towns – are considered to have both Greenlandic and Danish elements of the perception of their own identity. However, the perspective of post-colonialism for the majority only takes elements of culture into consideration. Therefore, I will relate the process of Greenland's post-colonial identity formation specifically to the country's political and socioeconomic dependency on Denmark, based on my examination of these relationships between both countries in the first part of my analysis.

## **5.5 Greenland's political and socioeconomic dependency on Denmark and its impact on Greenland's post-colonial identity formation**

In this section, I relate Greenland's political and socioeconomic dependency on Denmark to the process of Greenland's post-colonial identity formation, while also using references with regards to the first part of my analysis. I argue that these forms of dependency keep having an effect on the position of Greenlanders within Greenlandic identity politics and how they perceive themselves in relation to Denmark. Within this context, I investigate in 5.5.1, the consequences of Greenland's political dependency on Denmark on the identity formation of the former. Subsequently, I do the same in 5.5.2, for the country's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark.

### **5.5.1 Greenland's political dependency on Denmark and its impact on Greenland's post-colonial identity formation**

In 5.1, I investigated the political relation between Greenland and Denmark from a dependency theory perspective through examining which policy areas were transferred to Greenland's administration after the establishment of Home Rule. Generally, post-colonialism does take into account political development especially with regards to independence. However, I found that the majority of work from this perspective on Greenland's political relationship with Denmark, only analyzes what Greenland has not achieved yet; i.e., the fact that Greenland still is not 100% politically independent. For example, some scholars posit that the current Greenlandic identity is 'transitional,' meaning that many Greenlanders see their country as being "on the way from imperial submission to future independence" (Gad, 2014: 102). Indeed, they argue that the political struggle for independence has become a part of Greenlandic identity itself. However, such a perspective often takes the focus away from what Greenland did achieve with the Home Rule Act and the Act on Self-Government, namely a significant reduction of political dependency through a transfer of the majority of policy areas from Denmark to Greenland.

Below I investigate some of the conceptions on this reduction from the perspective of the interviewed GROC officials. As such, I try to combine both theories to examine in how far Greenland's reduction on political dependency has had an effect on the country's post-colonial identity formation.

From the perspective of Greenlanders, naturally the most important development that the Home Rule Act has brought, is the establishment of a Greenlandic administration that cleared the way for increased self-determination. Within this context, the Home Rule Act significantly reduced Greenland's political dependency on Denmark. One of the respondents from the interviews mentioned to me the importance of the establishment of Home Rule for the Greenlandic people:

*"So the Home Rule Act was actually very important for the Greenlandic people, because it meant that for the first time the Greenlandic people had a voice. It meant that we could make changes in laws and rules and that we could make changes to make the Greenlandic way of life better for us, because of course who doesn't want to be the master of your own country, of course you do" (A1).*

As such, the reduction of political dependency through the transfer of authority on a large amount of policy areas, enabled Greenlanders to understand themselves as an independent people that could now decide on the course of their country themselves. Moreover, a "keynote in the introduction of Home Rule was to make Greenland more Greenlandic" (Sørensen, 2006: 152). This keynote was largely a reaction to the *Danization* of the 1960s that was mentioned in 4.2. As such, the Home Rule's response was an increased *Greenlandization*, safeguarding "the cultural heritage of the Greenlanders as basic factors in the development of an acceptable society" (Brøsted and Gulløv, 1977: 77) Furthermore, the establishment of "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" (Dahl, 1986, *referenced in* Graugaard, 2008: 15). I found that these developments have meant a lot to the Greenlanders themselves, because their country could now better emphasize its national identity. This is illustrated well through the perception of one of my respondents: *"The places, the things, after Home Rule, they became Greenlandic names, they became more Greenlandic" (A3)*. Equally important for this process of *Greenlandization* was the custody over the rules of important areas such as the Greenlandic flag in 1985, which cleared the way for the Home Rule government to reinforce the kernel of national Greenlandic identity as referred to earlier (*see* Nuttal, 2008). As

such, slowly but steadily, the reduction of political dependency made way for an increased awareness of Greenlandic identity.

In 5.1.2, I pointed out that the installment of the Act on Self-Government has not brought many changes with regards to the political dependency relation of Greenland on Denmark in terms of the transfer of policy areas. The matter of foreign affairs seems to be an especially sensitive subject for Greenland, since the country is not able to express itself independently from Denmark at the international stage. However, at the same time the Act on Self-Government officially has affirmed that Greenland can now unilaterally decide to transfer the remaining areas to its own administration under the condition that it finances these transfers itself. While Greenland currently does not have the financial capacity to sustain and implement changes if a transfer was made, the option alone to make unilateral decisions has meant a lot for the Greenlandic identity. As such, the impact of the Act on Self-Government is illustrated by a comment of one of the respondents below:

*“Actually, I was quite surprised because there isn’t that much change actually. Greenland can still take over some areas that take place in Denmark but we have to fund it ourselves now, that is the new thing against the Home Rule introduction. But it was sort of like the increased identity as a sovereign people [that was brought about by the Act on Self-Government]. [...] I feel like a real Greenlander right now, now I belong to my own country and I am part of the world as on the same level as others” (A2).*

This comment shows that reinforcing the formation process of a national Greenlandic identity is perhaps the biggest accomplishment of the Act on Self-Government. I posit that it has allowed Greenlanders to rally their conceptions of how they perceive themselves as ‘real Greenlanders’ under the kernel of a national Greenlandic identity. From the perspective of post-colonialism, this means that Greenland’s position within Greenlandic identity politics has been strengthened through a reduction of political dependency on Denmark. The inequality of the power relation has become lowered through this development, and Greenlanders are in a stronger position to assert those aspects of cultural identity which they deem the most important for their country.

With this section I have attempted to illustrate a direct connection between the reduction of Greenland’s political dependency on Denmark and an increased formation of Greenland’s national identity. I argue that for Greenlanders themselves, this reduction has been positive because their increased self-confidence through the establishment of both Acts has allowed them to take a better position towards Denmark within Greenlandic identity politics. Moreover,

Greenland is currently even in the position to unilaterally put a stop to the remaining political dependency which reinforces the country's position even more. In the first part of my analysis, I posited that the problems that sometimes seem to arise between Greenland and Denmark, are not so much related to political dependency, as much as they are socioeconomic. I argue that this is the same for the effects of Greenland's dependency on its post-colonial identity formation. Below I investigate the consequences of Greenland's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark for Greenland's position within Greenlandic identity politics.

### **5.5.2 Greenland's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark and its impact on Greenland's post-colonial identity formation**

As I illustrated in 5.3, Greenland's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark is quite significant through the established trade relations, the exchange of Danish human capital and education, and the transfer of the Danish block grant. As such, reducing this socioeconomic dependency seems to be of more importance to some Greenlanders than complete political independence. One of my respondents commented on this issue:

*"But in my opinion it is not really a question if you want to be more independent of Denmark, it is just to be independent. Period. [...] It does not have anything to do with Denmark, it has something to do with us being Greenlanders with us being able to take care of ourselves. To have a [strong] export system and to have an economic system which is good. Like a healthy economic system, because that is not the case at this moment"*  
(A1).

Instead of putting Greenland's priority on political independence from Denmark, this respondent would rather see Greenland to be economically self-sufficient and autonomous through being able to 'take care' of itself. While political independence is naturally the ultimate goal, the respondent acknowledges that it cannot be achieved without socioeconomic independence. As I referred to earlier, Greenland needs alternatives like increasing its natural resource production to be able to finance the transfer of policy areas itself and as a supplement to the Danish block grant. However, Greenland's natural resource production still needs more investments to be able to make a significant difference. At the same time, being so dependent on Denmark for not only the block grant but also on trade, human capital and education, means that Greenland also is leaning on just one partner for the majority of its socioeconomic development. The effects of this socioeconomic dependency must not be underestimated with



regards to Greenland's position in relation to Denmark within the process of identity formation. I make my arguments below based on two examples.

The first example through which discernable effects of socioeconomic dependency on identity formation can be observed, is that of Greenland's reliance on Danish human capital and education. When the Home Rule Act was established, Greenland's administration prioritized the use of education "as an important tool to strengthen the vernacular and to secure cultural and national identity [...] [and] as a vehicle to promote national, cultural, and linguistic values" (Goldbach, 2000: 269). As such I argue that the reduction of Greenland's dependency on Danish education had a direct effect on Greenland's post-colonial identity formation through strengthening the conceptions of the traditional Inuit culture. However, by the end of the 1980s, it was realized that the emphasis of the educational system on Greenlandic culture was too much and that it did not suffice for the requirements of an ever-globalizing society. Therefore, to a certain extent, the situation was reversed again to make a better balance of Greenlandic and Danish elements (Goldbach, 2000). As a result, Greenlanders are currently still familiarized with Danish culture through their own educational system and the majority learns Danish from a young age. According to one of the respondents, *"we do have Danish in school. And we also have geography and Danish culture and we also watch a lot of Danish television. So we actually learn a lot about the Danish way of life and about Danish culture"* (A1). Next to education, the presence of Danish human capital is also essential for Greenland as I pointed out in 5.3.2. This was also mentioned in one of the interviews with the GROC in which the respondent commented on the importance of Danish human capital for the educational system:

*"It still very important for us Greenlanders to have Danish people coming to Greenland to work. Especially in the school system of course because if the school system doesn't work [and] if the level of education isn't high enough ... you would get a whole generation of... I wouldn't say underdeveloped but not well educated enough"* (A1).

The consequence of Greenland being socioeconomically dependent on Denmark for human capital and education implies in itself an inequality in the relationship between both countries. In this sense, the Danes who come to Greenland to work take a dominant position within Greenlandic identity politics, while the dependency on these workers affirms the subordinate position of the Greenlandic subaltern (*see also Björklund, 2011*). For some Greenlanders, this affirms their feeling of 'inferiority' in their meeting with the Danish Other who possess superior knowledge and capacities. Moreover, Greenland's reliance on Danish human capital and

education, means that the use of Danish language in many cases is crucial. Therefore, fluency in Danish “is generally required to occupy leading positions in formal organizations (business, administration and many interest-based organizations). Hence, Danish speakers occupy most high-influence/high-income positions in Greenland” (Gad, 2009: 13). This means that the Greenlanders who do not speak Danish have a significant disadvantage in relation to those who do speak Danish. Therefore it can be posited that “you may still credibly apply the colonial categories as a spectrum: the elite is more Danish than the subaltern which is more Greenlandic than the elite” (Thisted, 2002: 203-4, *referenced in* Gad, 2009: 13).

Greenland’s socioeconomic dependency on Denmark through a reliance on Danish human capital and education, means that Greenlanders need to be able to speak Danish which currently seems to be more important than being able to speak Greenlandic. As such, the position of Greenland within Greenlandic identity politics is negatively affected because the Danish language is apparently more valuable than Greenlandic, especially with regards to the leading positions in the country’s business sector. Indeed, this implies that the position of Greenlanders as the subaltern in relation to the hegemony of the Danish elite is being perpetuated through Greenland’s socioeconomic dependency on Danish human capital and education. Naturally, bilingual proficiency in both Danish and Greenlandic is preferable, but because Greenland’s largest trade partner is Denmark by far, being able to speak Danish seems to be the most important (Gad, 2009).

The second example that I want to present is that of Greenland’s dependency on the Danish block grant. Where I find the block grant to be the most explicit example of the socioeconomic dependency relation between Greenland and Denmark, I argue that this is also the case with regards to the effects of this specific dependency on Greenland’s post-colonial identity formation. The consequences of these effects are explicitly mentioned by a respondent who argued that Greenland can only be equal when it is economically independent, which

*“would also increase the sense of being on the same level. Because [without the block grant], you are not beggars. And beggars are not choosers if you like. You can’t choose for yourself if you don’t pay for it yourself. I think at that point it will be really interesting when Greenland doesn’t get any block grant from Denmark. [...] [Moreover, Greenlanders] don’t have to have gratitude towards Denmark for receiving the money. But I think there is an expectancy on their part that they have to. You know... They feel like beggars and they don’t have to. And if you feel like a beggar you are not equal” (A2).*

Like is the case with Greenland's dependency on Danish human capital and education, such a conception of the country's dependency on the block grant indicates an affirmation of Greenland's position as the subaltern within Greenlandic identity politics. Within this context, some scholars posit that the block grant has a psychological effect that "perpetuates a dependency complex reminiscent of colonialism" (Dahl, 2005: 152). Høgni Hoydal, a Faroese politician, even comes to the conclusion that "we have to rid ourselves of the Danish money" (2006: 11) to dispose of the 'internalized culture of dependence' on the block grant. Therefore, Hoydal believes that the only way for Greenland and the Faroe Islands to get into an equal relationship with Denmark, is without Denmark's block grant, and that only then, will the feeling of inferiority subside.

In the aforementioned response, the GROC official explicitly points out the subordinate subaltern position of Greenland in relation to Denmark through referring to feeling 'like a beggar.' Within the process of Greenlandic identity politics, such a position of 'receiving assistance' is inferior to the dominant position of Denmark who is providing the block grant. As such, I argue that because of the weaker socioeconomic position of their country, Greenlanders are generally starting at a disadvantage when negotiating their identity with Danes. Moreover, this disadvantage is bolstered through Greenland's intricate trade relations with Denmark which has a much bigger economy. This indicates a difference in the socioeconomic statuses between both countries which simply cannot be ignored within Greenlandic identity politics. Combined with Greenland's colonial history, I argue that this can have adverse effects on the country's self-confidence with regards to the post-colonial identity formation of its people. It denies Greenlanders the ability to emphasize their own conceptions of identity that they find important; e.g., traditional Greenlandic culture in relation to the negative impositions of the Danish Other as I referred to in 5.5.1.

With the aforementioned examples, I have attempted to illustrate a connection between Greenland's socioeconomic dependency and the country's weakened position within Greenlandic identity politics. Within the debate surrounding Greenland's political independence, I argue that there should be more emphasis put on the consequences of Greenland's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark. Greenlanders are apparently disempowered because of their inferior socioeconomic status. While this arguably does not apply to all Greenlanders, I posit that if there is more attention to the mechanics of this dependency, then there is no need for Greenlanders to 'have gratitude' for receiving Danish assistance as the respondent mentioned earlier. This way, Greenland's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark could perhaps be transformed into a more positive perception. One of

the respondents acknowledged this dependency while at the same time perceiving it as a way to improve Greenland's development:

*“Especially thinking about the Greenlandic economy that isn't doing so well, especially thinking about the educational level is so low [...] that a lot of Greenlandic people don't speak Danish or English, which means that they can't really educate themselves in a higher level. So there are a lot of areas in which we are still very much dependent on Denmark. So I really don't see it as a [problem], I see it more as a great opportunity to strengthen the Greenlandic culture with the help of the Danish people” (A1).*

As such, the respondent sees Greenland's dependency on Denmark as a useful development which provides an opportunity for the country to move forward and to be able to 'strengthen the Greenlandic culture.' This is exemplified by new developments of young Greenlanders who take their higher levels of education in Denmark, and become enriched with knowledge, in addition to forming a hybrid identity which in turn could stimulate an empowerment of Greenlandicness. Within this context, there is the condition of course that they have to return to Greenland after they have had their education. For a long time, many Greenlanders did not return causing a 'brain drain' (OECD, 2011), but according to one of the respondents:

*“With the introduction of the Self-Government, there is a tendency that more young people want to go back. They have still their roots in Greenland. They want to do something for their society as well. So that's quite a new trend” (A2).*

From this perspective, Greenland's dependency on education can also open up possibilities towards increased hybridity and thus empower Greenlandic identity through the meeting with the Danish Other within Greenlandic identity politics. But as I referred to earlier, this hybridity is not diffused throughout the whole of the Greenlandic population, and as such, a large part remains in a subaltern position.

The above has shown that Greenland's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark is strengthening the dominant Danish conception of the Greenlandic Other in relation to the Greenlanders' own perception of themselves. This inequality in Greenlandic identity politics affirms the subaltern position of Greenlanders, which mostly has negative consequences for their self-image. It causes a disadvantage for Greenlanders every time they are meeting with the Danish Other. However, socioeconomic dependency can also be perceived in a more

positive way; i.e., because it allows for a strengthening of the formation of a hybrid identity that puts Greenlanders who studied in Denmark in an empowered position. Within this context, I posit that Greenland should give itself time to develop into to a full-fledged sovereign nation state, instead of focusing on becoming politically independent as soon as possible. I posit that it is only through reducing its socioeconomic dependency that Greenland can develop an identity that is truly ‘post’ colonial. Or in the words of a respondent:

*“Well I would love it if the colony mindset would be just put to rest. I would love it if we would sit down and [...] if Greenlanders would be more open to working with the Danish government. And if the Danish part was much more open to the Greenlandic part that both countries listened more [...] that both countries would be interested in moving forward” (A1).*

## **6. Discussion and conclusion**

In 6.1, I present a discussion on my analysis and point out some of the limitations of this study. Furthermore, I also give some recommendations for future research. Finally, in 6.2, I summarize the findings of my analysis through answering my main research question.

### **6.1 Discussion**

With this study I have examined Greenland's post-colonial relationship with Denmark through looking at the subject from two different theoretical perspectives. While I have argued that dependency theory has proven to be more suitable to investigate Greenland's political and socioeconomic ties with Denmark, I have posited that post-colonialism was more appropriate to examine Greenland's identity formation in relation to Denmark. As such, one of the purposes of this study has been to bridge what I believe is a gap within scholarly work on Greenland's post-colonial relationship with Denmark. The majority of this work has been done from the perspective of post-colonialism that largely ignores socioeconomic dependency structures, of which I argue that they also influence Greenland's post-colonial identity formation. To provide as complete a picture as possible, I have also included an analysis of Greenland's political dependency on Denmark and what consequences this has had for the former's post-colonial identity formation.

My analysis has consisted of two different parts where the two different theories have each been more suitable for providing a framework for my investigation. Bringing these two highly different theories together in the final part of my analysis has required me to be very flexible with regards to epistemological orientations which has proven to be quite challenging. For instance, I have managed to make quite a solid case to determine the reduction of Greenland's political dependency on Denmark. However, it is quite difficult to determine how important this reduction is for Greenlandic individuals. Within this context, while I posit that Greenland is currently politically quite independent, and that this has had positive consequences according to the respondents from GROC, this assessment is not representative for the whole of Greenland's population. After all, there are probably many Greenlanders who actively strive for complete political independence, regardless of the financial issues of their country. As such, they seem to attach much more value to establishing authority in the remaining policy areas than, e.g., the respondents from GROC who prioritize socioeconomic development over immediate political independence. This is why the results of my analysis have to be perceived within the context of the occupational and residential background of my respondents who are situated in quite a different social and geographic situation than many other Greenlanders.

Through living in Denmark, the respondents from GROC have developed a well-established hybrid identity in which they have found a powerful position to express themselves with full self-confidence in relation to the topic of my thesis. As such, they are in a unique position that differs profoundly for example from that of a blue collar worker who is working in one of Greenland's fish-processing facilities. Therefore, the answer on the extent to which the influence of both political and socioeconomic dependency has had on Greenland's post-colonial identity formation, has to be related to the specific social context of my respondents.

Another issue I want to point out is that while I have collected interesting information from the interviews, I have not been able to provide a more in-depth analysis of the interviews. As I referred to in chapter 2, I unfortunately only have been able to conduct three interviews with members from the GROC. This small sample has meant that I could not commit to an extensive in depth-analysis as much as I would have liked. While this has not really been problematic with regards to the first part of this study, which has primarily been concerned with the analysis of secondary data, the interviews played a more crucial part in the second part of this study. This has prevented me to provide more substance to the meaning of Greenland's political and socioeconomic dependency on the country's post-colonial identity formation.

Following up on the results of my analysis, I encourage future research to further investigate the effects of Greenland's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark. As I have pointed towards the intricate trade relationship between both countries in which Denmark has a much more powerful position than Greenland, there remains much to be uncovered with regards to what consequences this has for the latter's socioeconomic development. For example, there is almost no scholarly research on the composition of Greenland's bilateral trade relation with Denmark, which is constituted by a heavy reliance of Greenland on its export of fishing products, while Denmark is exporting high-end manufactured goods. Currently, this arrangement appears to keep Greenland locked in a situation where it cannot develop a proper manufacturing industry of its own. In addition, Greenland seems to have only a limited amount of partners with regards to its socioeconomic development. I argue that it would be relevant to further examine the consequences of such a dependency on Greenland's post-colonial identity formation through which it is constantly appropriated to Denmark. Moreover, I also encourage more research on the effects of the Danish block grant on Greenland's position in relation to Denmark within Greenlandic identity politics. While I have illustrated a connection in my analysis, I am convinced that it would be relevant to further investigate the psychological effects of the block grant on the post-colonial mindset of the people of Greenland. Finally, I would like to recommend a theoretical investigation that follows up on Kapoor (2002) on how the

combination of dependency theory and post-colonialism can be used more effectively. I argue that there is much to be gained by further establishing a connection between these theories for future research on post-colonial societies.

## 6.2 Conclusion

In this final section of my thesis, I summarize all my findings through answering my main research question: *To what extent is Greenland politically and socioeconomically dependent on Denmark and in how far does this affect Greenland's post-colonial identity formation?*

With regards to Greenland's political dependency on Denmark, I have found that the Home Rule Act and Act on Self-Government have gradually increased Greenland's political authority on the majority of its domestic policy areas such as economic regulation and education. Currently the most important policy areas that remain under control of Denmark are foreign affairs and security. While Greenland would very much like to see these areas transferred to its own authority, its administration currently does not have the financial capacity to realize and maintain such a shift. Notwithstanding that the final authority of these major policy areas still lies in Copenhagen, I have pointed out that Greenland has significantly reduced its political dependency on Denmark. This process has developed up to a point that Greenland has been granted full legislative authority to unilaterally decide to disengage in its political dependency on Denmark, which would *de facto* mean complete political independence. Even though such a development is highly unlikely to occur within the near future, the ability to take the decision unilaterally means that I have found it difficult to argue that Greenland politically is still very dependent on Denmark. In addition, as Greenland is constitutionally regarded as an equal partner within the Danish Realm in relation to Denmark I have argued that the dependency from Greenland on Denmark is not so much political of nature, but is more embedded in the socioeconomic relationship between both countries.

With regards to Greenland's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark, I have found that both countries are strongly connected in an intricate and unequal relationship through trade, human capital & education and the Danish block grant. At the foundation of this unequal relation lies Greenland's small economy that is relying primarily on one industry: its fishing sector. Furthermore, Greenland is situated in a difficult geographic location that hampers its socioeconomic development through undesirable environmental circumstances and long travelling distances between its settlements. As such, I found that the trade relation between Greenland and Denmark is reminiscent of a typical metropolis-satellite relationship in which Greenland is exporting primary resources while it is importing manufactured goods from



Denmark. While it would be incorrect to state that this relationship is purely of an exploitative nature, the trade relationship between both countries does portray characteristics of a neo-colonial structure in which Greenland is locked in a weak economic position in relation to the hegemonic position of Denmark. In this sense, Greenland is very much dependent on trading with Denmark, but this is not true the other way around. Moreover, Greenland is also dependent on the presence of Danish capital and education. As is generally the case in a metropolis-satellite relationship, the metropolis has a dominant position if it comes to the provision and generation of knowledge. Because Greenland's capacity of human capital and education is insufficient, the majority of the knowledge is still coming from Denmark.

Finally, I have found that the receipt of the Danish block grant appears to be the most explicit case of Greenland's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark. While it is not an unambiguous intention, the block grant does provide the Danish government with a strong capacity to keep exerting control and secure its economic (and political) interests in Greenland. As it constitutes an essential part of its government's expenditure budget, Greenland cannot do without this block grant. Moreover, because Greenland is financially bound to the block grant, it will have to accept all the implicit conditions that come with its receipt, especially the one that Greenland remains a part of the Danish Realm. While many have put their hopes on reducing Greenland's political and socioeconomic dependency through natural resource production, actual developments still have to take place. Nevertheless, increasing the capacity of natural resource production would have significant effects on the political and socioeconomic relationship between Greenland and Denmark.

Next to my analysis of Greenland's political and socioeconomic dependency on Denmark, I have examined the relation between the two countries from the perspective of post-colonialism. Special attention has been given to Greenland's post-colonial identity formation by investigating the dynamics of Greenlandic identity politics through the conceptual framework of the subaltern and hybrid identity. With Greenlandic identity politics representing a framework of power relations where Greenland's post-colonial identity is negotiated with Denmark, Greenland takes up the position of the subaltern Orient while Denmark has adopted the position of the hegemonic Occident. Within this context I have found that negative conceptions and stigmatization play a significant part within Greenlandic identity politics, reaffirming Greenland's subordinate position as the subaltern in relation to Denmark. To strengthen their position within Greenlandic identity politics, many Greenlanders have sought to emphasize a kernel of national Greenlandic identity consisting out of traditional cultural elements and language. However the conception of what it exactly means to be Greenlandic is

fluid and under constant negotiation through the field of Greenlandic identity politics. As a result, some Greenlanders – the respondents from GROC included – have adopted a hybrid identity that allows them incorporate both traditional Greenlandic and modern Danish elements. Moreover, this hybrid identity has enabled them to strengthen their position within Greenlandic identity politics. Through adopting some Danish features without needing to dispose of their traditional Inuit heritage, Greenlanders with a hybrid identity are in a stronger position to manage their relation with Denmark.

In the final part of my analysis, I have attempted to assess in how far Greenland's political and socioeconomic dependency on Denmark has had an effect on Greenland's post-colonial identity formation. Through bringing dependency theory and post-colonialism together, I have found that my respondents from GROC had quite a positive conception of the gains that the Home Rule Act and the Act on Self-Government have brought to their country, Greenland. Both Acts have engendered the establishment of a Greenlandic national identity while at the same time significantly increasing Greenland's autonomy and self-determination. From the perspective of post-colonialism, I have pointed out that these developments have led to a reinforced position of Greenland within Greenlandic identity politics. As such, the reduction of political dependency appears to have greatly contributed to strengthening the country's self-confidence in its post-colonial identity formation.

However, the effects of Greenland's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark seemed to have more adverse effects on the former's post-colonial identity formation. Through Greenland's reliance on Danish human capital and education, the Danish language still plays a dominant role in Greenland. As such, Greenlanders who do not speak Danish are at a significant disadvantage because they are not able to express themselves within the framework of Greenlandic identity politics as well as Danish speakers can. As such, their position as the subaltern in relation to the hegemony of Danes is being perpetuated through Greenland's dependency on Danish human capital and education. Moreover, the relation between socioeconomic dependency and Greenland's post-colonial identity formation has appeared to be even stronger with regards to the Danish block grant. It is here that I have pointed out the clear connection between these two different dimensions through which the post-colonial relationship between Greenland and Denmark has taken shape.

The connection between the two different dimensions exemplifies one of the main arguments I have made in my introduction; that Greenland's post-colonial identity formation cannot be understood without looking at the country's socioeconomic dependency on Denmark. As such, the block grant illustrates the weak socioeconomic position of Greenland in relation

to Denmark. This in turn has the effect that Greenlanders generally start at a disadvantage when they engage in their meeting with the Danish Other. They are in the ‘inferior’ position as recipients of financial assistance, while the Danes are in the ‘dominant’ position as the ones who give money. Such a situation perpetuates the position of the subordinate Greenlandic subaltern within Greenlandic identity politics. Moreover, because Greenland is primarily focused on Denmark for its socioeconomic development, these structures are bound to remain in place for the near future. On the other hand, Greenland’s socioeconomic dependency on Denmark could be perceived as something positive through embracing the possibilities that offer the means to develop, e.g., through education. As such, it might engender the formation of a hybrid identity that makes more agency possible within Greenlandic identity politics. Only the future can point out what path Greenland will eventually take, but it seems that the development of an empowered hybrid identity is more preferable than staying in the subordinate position of the subaltern.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Interview guide

The questions are asked with the goal to stimulate respondents to answer from a personal point of view on which they are encouraged to elaborate upon through life experiences, while also taking into account the perspective of the unique position that the officials from the Greenland Representation are occupying.

1. Where and in what decade were you born?
2. What kind of education did you receive, to what extent would you characterize your education as Greenlandic or Danish and in how far do you agree with education being either of them and why?
3. To what extent do you speak Greenlandic and what does the language mean to you personally?
4. What does Greenlandic identity constitute according to you and what importance does being Greenlandic have for you?
5. In how far did you experience the transition from the installment of the Home Rule Act in 1979 and what do you think about the changes it brought?
6. How did you experience the installment of the Act on Self-Government in 2009 and what did this mean to you personally?
7. To what extent do you feel that these Acts have increased Greenland's independence and political self-determination in relation to Denmark and what do you think that they have achieved for the Greenlandic population in general?
8. What are your thoughts on potential full independence for Denmark and why would you like to see Greenland becoming more or less independent?
9. To what extent have there been points in your life in which you considered the relationship between Greenland and Denmark as unequal or colonial? Can you give any concrete examples? (Optional) How do you perceive the history of the colonial relationship between Greenland and Denmark?
10. What would you consider as the ideal relationship between Greenland and Denmark and why?
11. Are there any concrete measures you could point to which you think will be likely to facilitate a better alignment of interest between Greenland and Denmark?
12. Is there anything more you would like to add or do you have any other questions?

Thank you for your time, if you are interested in my thesis I will be happy to send you a digital copy when it is finished.



## Appendix 2 Summary changes Home Rule Act and Act on Self-Government

### Fields of Responsibility assumed by the Greenland Home Rule Government (I and II) and Greenland Self-Government (III) respectively

#### I. Fields of responsibility assumed by the Greenland Home Government under Section 4 of the Home Rule Act

Fields of responsibility assumed by the Greenland Home Government under Section 4 of the Home Rule Act	Date of Assumption
Greenland's administration arrangement	1 May 1979
The administration arrangement for the municipalities	1 May 1979
Taxes and duties	1 January 1980
Regulation of the supply of manpower in Greenland	1 January 1980
Regulation of commercial Greenland fishing, whaling, etc.	1 November 1980
Preservation	1 January 1981
Power to intervene in conflicts notified in accordance with collective agreements concerning journalists	1 October 1982
Power to establish rules on compensation of pay, etc. for high cost of living for that part of the private labour market in Greenland on which pay is regulated on the basis of the Greenland wage regulation index	1 December 1983
Trade legislation	1 January 1985
Regulation of the remainder of commercial fishing	1 January 1985
The legal position of pupils in basic vocational education	1 February 1985
Power to intervene in conflicts notified in accordance with collective agreements (re-establishment of the duty to keep the peace) on the remainder of the public, non-State labour market and on the private labour market (Thule Air Base partially exempted)	1 November 1985
Power to establish rules on other terms of pay and employment on the private labour market in Greenland (Thule Air Base partially exempted), including rules on compensation of pay, etc. for high cost of living where the pay is regulated on the basis of the Danish wage regulation index	1 November 1985
Competition legislation	1 January 1986
Employment of seamen	1 July 1986
Village halls	1 January 1987
Interference suppression and communal aerals	1 January 1987
Regulation of non-commercial hunting and fishing	1 January 1989
Power to legislate on invitations to submit tenders	1 May 1989
The establishment of rules concerning the conclusion of collective agreements and other agreements, etc. for personnel employed by the Greenland Home Rule Government and the municipalities who are not covered by the general agreement for civil servants in Greenland	1 April 1991
The establishment of rules for and supervision of the production of naturally-dried fish for the Greenland domestic market	1 November 1993
<b>Fields of responsibility assumed by the Greenland Home Government under Section 7 of the Home Rule Act, cf. Section 4</b>	<b>Date of Assumption</b>
Place names in Greenland - Act 555 30/11-1983	1 January 1984
The establishment of rules concerning the Greenland flag - Act 222 6/6-1985	6 June 1985
The establishment of rules on summer time - Act 817 19/12-1989	1 January 1990
The establishment of rules concerning expropriation in fields of responsibility taken over - Act 1012 19/12-1992	19 December 1992
The study and exploitation of water power resources - Act 1075 22/12-1993	1 January 1994
Dogs and prevention of cruelty to animals - Act 906 16/12-1998	1 January 1999
Responsibility and liability in the media field - Act 439 31/5-2000	1 January 2001



## II. Fields of responsibility assumed by the Greenland Home Government under Section 5 of the Home Rule Act <sup>1)</sup>

Fields of responsibility assumed by the Greenland Home Government under Section 5 of the Home Rule Act	Date of Commencement
Act 579 29/11-1978 relating to municipal primary and lower secondary school in Greenland	1 January 1980
Act 580 29/11-1978 for Greenland relating to labour and social agencies	1 January 1980 <sup>2)</sup>
Act 581 29/11-1978 for Greenland relating to the training of teachers for municipal primary and lower secondary school and relating to socioeducational training <sup>3)</sup>	1 January 1980
Act 583 29/11-1978 relating to radio and television activities in Greenland (replaced by Act 815 19/12/1989 relating to radio and television activities in Greenland)	1 January 1980
Act 584 29/11-1978 for Greenland relating to leisure activities	1 January 1980
Act 587 29/11-1978 relating to the Church in Greenland (replaced by Act 264 6/5/1993 relating to the Church in Greenland)	1 January 1980
Act 589 29/11-1978 relating to the library system in Greenland	1 January 1980
Act 582 29/11-1978 for Greenland relating to vocational training	1 January 1981
Act 609 23/12-1980 relating to people's high schools in Greenland	1 January 1981
Act 610 23/12-1980 relating to the museum system in Greenland	1 January 1981
Act 612 23/12-1980 for Greenland relating to land use, urban development and building	1 January 1981
Act 134 28/3-1984 relating to support for trade and industry in Greenland	1 January 1985
Act 135 28/3-1984 for Greenland relating to the production and sale of Greenlandic products	1 January 1985
Act 944 23/12-1986 for Greenland relating to housing supply, housing support, rental of housing, etc.	1 January 1987
Act 848 21/12-1988 relating to the transfer of Greenland's central salary processing system to the Greenland Home Rule Government	1 January 1989
Act 850 21/12-1988 for Greenland relating to environmental matters, etc.	1 January 1989
Act 369 6/6-1991 relating to the health service in Greenland <sup>4)</sup>	1 January 1992
Act 1393 27/12-2008 relating to the upper secondary educations in Greenland	1 January 2009
Fields of responsibility assumed by the Greenland Home Government under Section 7 of the Home Rule Act, cf. Section 5	Date of Commencement
Act 469 6/11-1985 for Greenland relating to supply, traffic, postal service, etc.	1 January 1986
Act 943 23/12-1986 for Greenland relating to electricity, water, heating, the fire service, ports, roads, telecommunications, etc. <sup>5)</sup>	1 January 1987
Act 847 21/12-1988 relating to the transfer of Greenland Fisheries Research (Grønlands Fiskeriundersøgelser) to the Greenland Home Rule Government	1 January 1989
Act 305 14/5-1991 fixed the State subsidy to the Greenland Home Rule Government for civil tasks at the airport at Sdr. Strømfjord and at the defence area at Thule as well as the responsibility for Kulusuk Airport. These tasks were transferred to the Greenland Home Rule Government via an agreement of 21 February 1991 between the Office of the Danish Prime Minister and the Greenland Home Rule Government with effect from 1 October 1991.	1 October 1991

<sup>1)</sup> By Act 474 12/6-2009 on various conditions in connection with Greenland Self-Government all Acts of authorisation listed in table II above were repealed. The Greenland Self-Government authorities have the legislative and executive power in fields of responsibility that have been assumed pursuant to Section 5 of the Greenland Home Rule Act, cf. Section 23, Subsection 4, in the Self-Government Act. The Self-Government has the same powers in fields of responsibility assumed pursuant to Section 5 of the Greenland Home Rule Act as in fields assumed pursuant to Section 4 of the Greenland Home Rule Act and in fields of responsibility assumed pursuant to The Self-Government Act.

<sup>2)</sup> The rules on assistance activities for Greenlanders in Denmark did not enter into force until 1 January 1981.

<sup>3)</sup> Act 581 29/11-1978 was repealed with the commencement of Act 582 29/11-1978 for Greenland relating to vocational training.

<sup>4)</sup> By Act 1406 27/12-2008 on amendment of Act relating to the health service in Greenland, the Greenland Home Government assumed the field concerning the use of coercion in psychiatry on 1/1-2009 pursuant to section 7, cf. section 5 of the Greenland Home Rule Act.

<sup>5)</sup> By Act 1089 29/12-1997 for Greenland relating to telecommunications, telecommunications to and from Greenland were transferred to the Greenland Home Rule Government on 1/1-1998. By a Royal Decree of 27/10-1997, departmental responsibility was transferred from the Office of the Danish Prime Minister to the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Research.

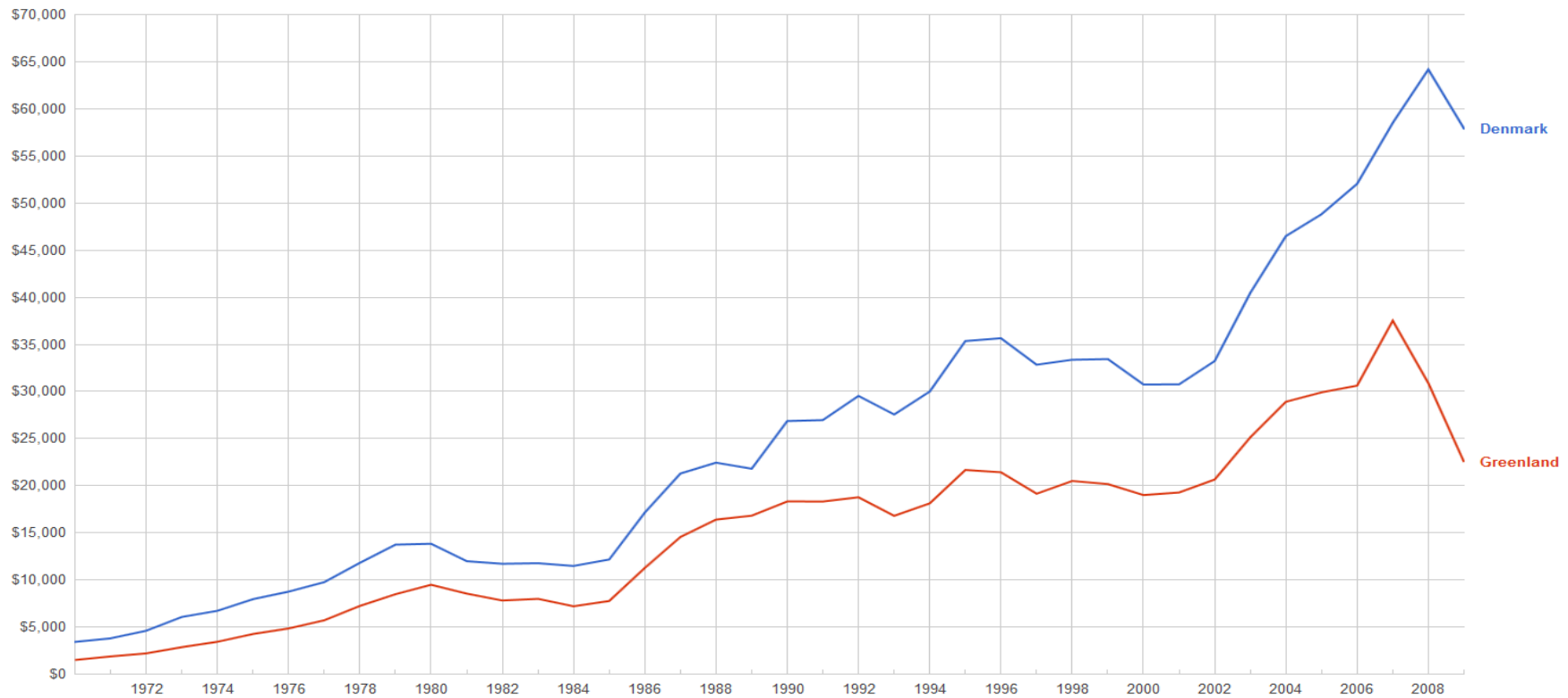
## III. Fields of responsibility assumed by the Greenland Self-Government under Section 2 of the Self-Government, cf. Section 3

Fields of responsibility assumed by the Greenland Self-Government under Section 2 of the Self-Government Act, cf. Section 3	Date of Assumption
The mineral resource area (List II, Nos. 26)	1 January 2010
The working environment on the offshore area (List II, part of Nos. 27)	1 January 2010

Adopted from *Statsministeriet*. Retrieved from [http://www.stm.dk/multimedia/GR\\_oversigt\\_sagsomr\\_270110\\_UK.pdf](http://www.stm.dk/multimedia/GR_oversigt_sagsomr_270110_UK.pdf) (last access 21-07-15)

### Appendix 3 Greenland's GDP growth

GDP per capita (current US\$)



GDP per capita is product divided by midyear population. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources. Data are in current U.S. dollars.

Based on data from *World Bank*, generated by ©2014 Google. Retrieved from

[https://www.google.dk/publicdata/explore?ds=d5bncppjof8f9\\_&met\\_y=ny\\_gdp\\_pcap\\_cd&idim=country:GRL:DNK&hl=en&dl=en#!ctype=l&strail=false&bcs=d&nselm=h&met\\_y=ny\\_gdp\\_pcap\\_cd&scale\\_y=lin&ind\\_y=false&rdim=region&idim=country:GRL:DNK&ifdim=region&hl=en\\_US&dl=en&ind=false](https://www.google.dk/publicdata/explore?ds=d5bncppjof8f9_&met_y=ny_gdp_pcap_cd&idim=country:GRL:DNK&hl=en&dl=en#!ctype=l&strail=false&bcs=d&nselm=h&met_y=ny_gdp_pcap_cd&scale_y=lin&ind_y=false&rdim=region&idim=country:GRL:DNK&ifdim=region&hl=en_US&dl=en&ind=false) (last access 21-07-15)



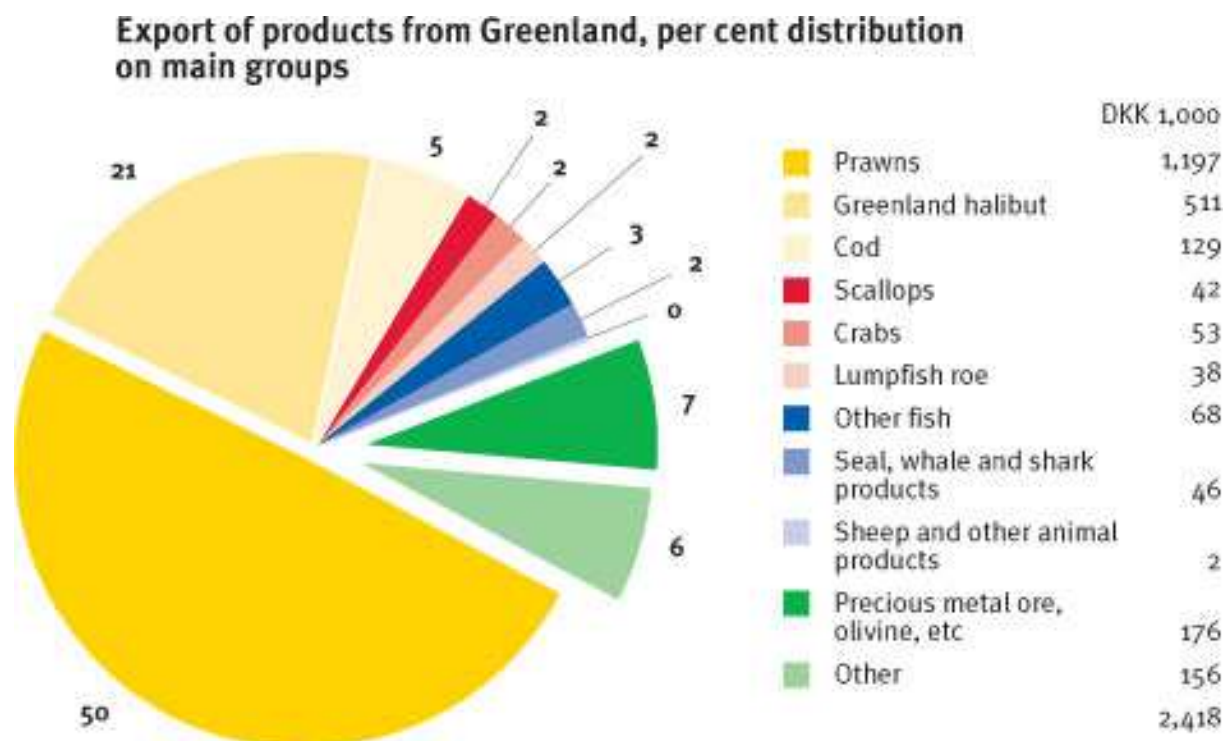
## Appendix 4 Greenland's GDP composition

GDP (2005 Prices)					
	2008	2009	2010	2011*	2012*
	DKK billion				
GDP	11.0	10.9	11.2	11.7	11.5
Imports of goods and services	8.5	7.3	10.0	11.2	7.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>19.2</b>
Private consumption	5.2	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.4
Public expenditure	5.9	6.2	6.1	6.0	5.9
Gross investments	4.5	3.4	6.0	7.9	4.6
Exports of goods and services	3.8	3.4	3.8	3.6	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>19.2</b>
	Growth in per cent				
GDP	2.1	-0.7	2.5	4.0	-0.9
Imports of goods and services	22.7	-14.6	37.6	12.3	-31.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>-6.7</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>-15.7</b>
Private consumption	-0.7	-0.7	1.7	1.5	-0.2
Public expenditure	2.2	3.7	-1.4	-1.0	-2.2
Gross investments	46.0	-23.7	75.2	31.0	-42.0
Exports of goods and services	8.1	-11.3	12.5	-5.8	-3.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>-6.7</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>-15.7</b>

\* Provisional figures

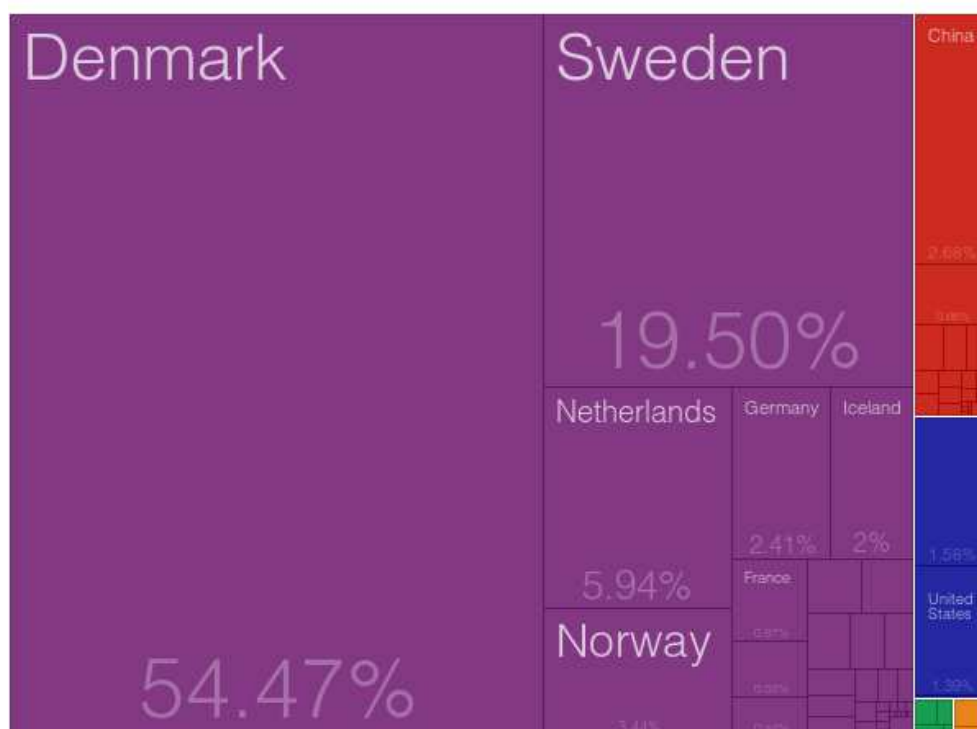
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## Appendix 5 Greenland's export products



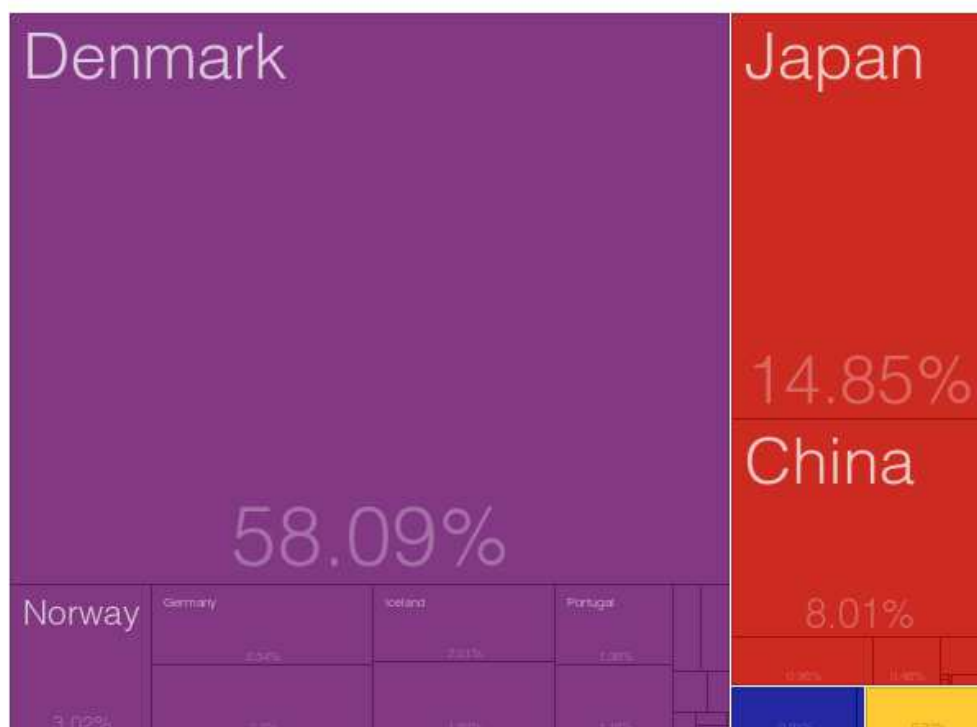
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## Appendix 6 Greenland's import partners



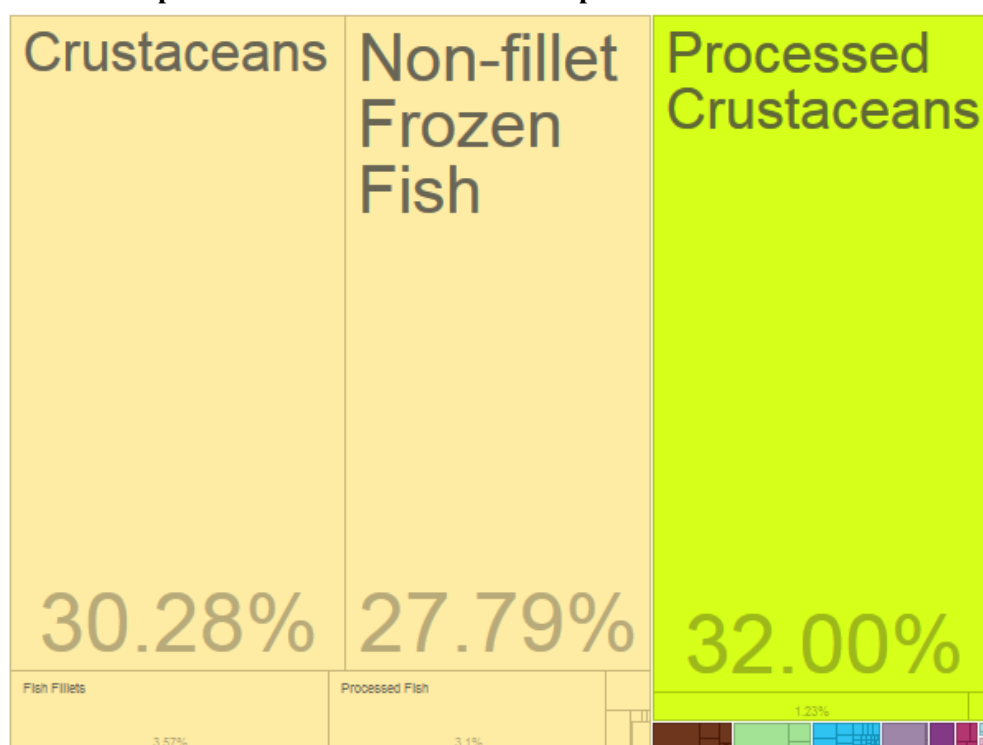
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## Appendix 7 Greenland's export partners



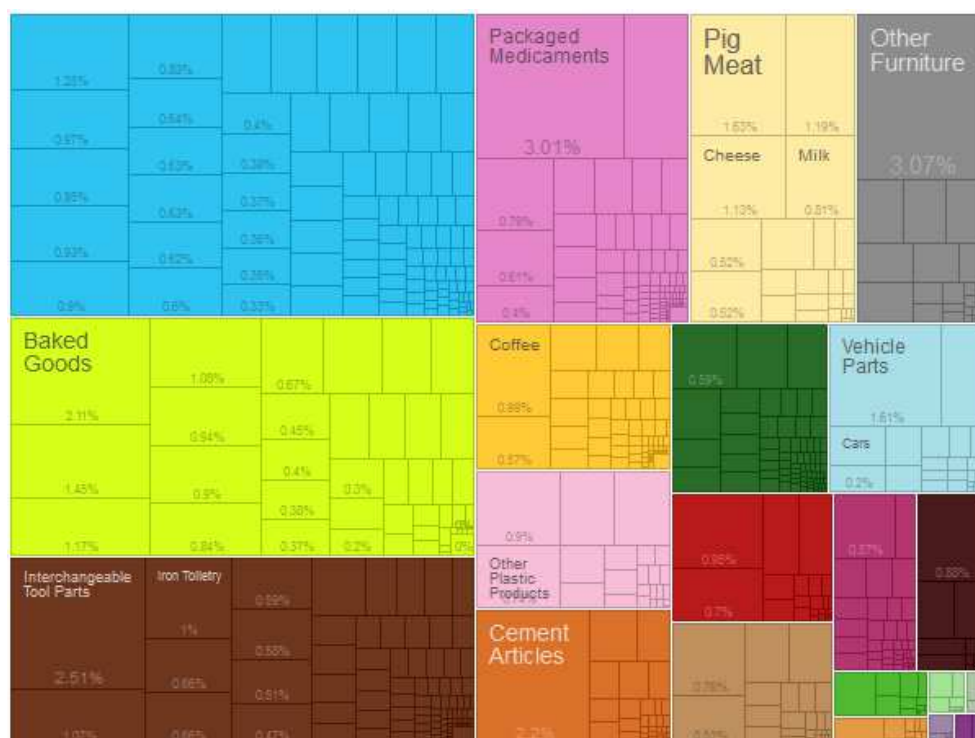
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## Appendix 8 Composition Greenland's bilateral export to Denmark



Adopted from *Observatory of Economic Complexity*. Retrieved from [https://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/explore/tree\\_map/hs/export/grl/dnk/show/2012/](https://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/explore/tree_map/hs/export/grl/dnk/show/2012/) (last access 21-07-15)

## Appendix 9 Composition Greenland's bilateral import from Denmark



Adopted from *Observatory of Economic Complexity*. Retrieved from [https://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/explore/tree\\_map/hs/export/dnk/grl/show/2012/](https://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/explore/tree_map/hs/export/dnk/grl/show/2012/) (last access 21-07-15)

#### Appendix 10 Employment in Greenland's public sector by place of birth

<b>Number of employed persons in Greenland's public administration and service by place of birth (at least one month a year)</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Total	14745	15068	14862	15142	14218	14537
Born in Greenland	13396	13707	13504	13715	12846	13229
Born in Denmark	1260	1272	1259	1318	1265	1208

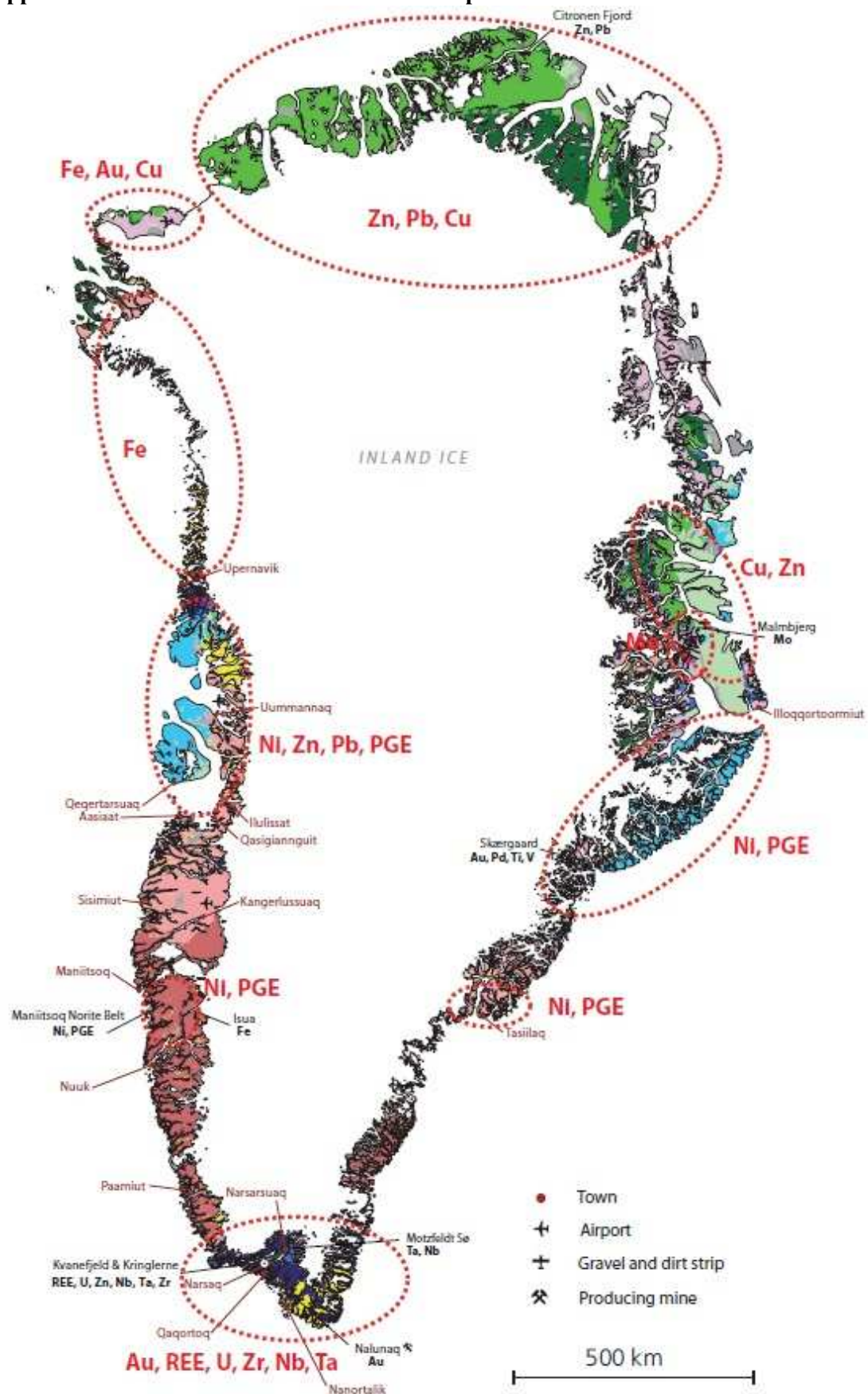
Based on data from *Statistics Greenland*. Retrieved from  
<http://bank.stat.gl/database/Greenland/Labour%20market/Employment/Employment.asp>  
 (last access 21-07-15)

#### Appendix 11 Employment in Greenland's business sector by place of birth

<b>Number of employed persons in Greenland's business sector by place of birth (at least one month a year)</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Total	2787	2496	2451	2431	2495	2570
Born in Greenland	2306	2011	1960	1888	1961	2027
Born outside Greenland	463	466	457	492	480	481

Based on data from *Statistics Greenland*. Retrieved from  
<http://bank.stat.gl/database/Greenland/Labour%20market/Employment/Employment.asp>  
 (last access 21-07-15)

## Appendix 12 Greenland's available mineral deposits



Adopted from *Committee for Greenlandic Mineral Resources to the Benefit of Society* (2013: 10).