Greenlandic Independence: The Dilemma of Natural Resource Extraction

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Though the Government of Greenland has its sights on independence through subsurface resource development, numerous impediments may stand in the way of realizing such a future based on a trajectory that depends on rapid foreign investment, favorable market conditions and robust community support. Markets are fickle to say the least, but the value that community members place on cultural, social and traditional economic factors may well unleash public debate into the very nature of the Greenlandic democracy. Indeed, the rising demand for informed and transparent public debate would suggest that unbridled development will not easily come to light without the inclusion of those who are most affected by resource extraction. Focusing on a mounting division between the educated urban elite and less educated rural community members, this article will examine Greenlandic development in the context of equalizing economic, political and social opportunities as primary conditions of democracy.

"Oil seduces those who would control it, feeding dreams of instant wealth and economic transformation."

Oil, Gavin Bridge & Philippe Le Billlion

Introduction

Greenland is arguably an emerging geostrategic location based on a presumed abundance of accessible hydrocarbon and minerals deposits. The rising interest of foreign entities, which the Government of Greenland has actively courted, prompted Greenland to regard non-renewable natural resource extraction as a pathway to financial freedom that could transform Greenland from its semi-independent status as a region of Denmark into a fully functioning

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independent state. However, the rate at which development has taken place has caused internal strife. The 2013 decision by the Inatsisartut, Greenland's parliament to lift the ban on uranium extraction further exacerbated tensions arising from the paradox of development with the potential for increased large-scale development. Large-scale development could lead to independence through economic freedom. In contrast, opponents of unbridled development have cited preservation of cultural traditions, the paramount dilemma of climate change and a construction of nation building that may be anathema to traditional Inuit hunting and fishing practices, as reason to advance with caution. Indeed, the paradoxical conditions of development need consider not only economic freedom, but must also address political freedoms in the form of public debate. Simply, how do the Greenlandic people at large envision their society in the future? This debate takes on a heightened significance given that 89 percent of the population is of Inuit origin (CIA).

The value of political and economic freedom is not in dispute. But who are the beneficiaries? How will government balance the interests of pro-development Greenlanders promoting the attributes of foreign investment with the interests of the greater Greenlandic citizenry? Economic freedom on a national scale does not necessarily equate to distributed social opportunity, nor does it ensure that the democratic value of public participation is sufficiently incorporated into the decision-making process. For this reason community participation, based on the values of transparency, freedom of speech, and accessibility to accurate and lucid information must be addressed as a factor of democratic state-building.

Home Rule, Elites and a Desire for Independence

On May 1st, 1979, when the Greenland Home Rule Government first met in Nuuk, the occasion was seen as a collective victory across the pan-Arctic Inuit community. The success attained by Greenlandic Inuit represented the collective aspiration of Inuit everywhere in that the goal of democratic self-determination was within reach (Hopson 1978). In attendance at that inaugural meeting of the Greenland Landsting (Assembly), Eben Hopson (1978), founder of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (then Conference), eloquently captured the spirit of the moment in his address:

> As we celebrate this inauguration, we can take pride and satisfaction in beginning here an important new chapter in North American democratic constitutional development. Greenland has become a symbol of new world democratic unity with the old world, and Denmark has become an important part of our North American community.

The adoption of the Home Rule Act affirmed Hopson's (1976) view that the circumpolar land claims movement manifested in Greenland was a "restoration of democratic self-determination." In tandem, the ICC was deeply committed to the principle that subsurface resource extraction must include safeguards that protect the fragile Arctic environment. Subsurface resources could provide economic benefits, but extraction could also be

detrimental to the environment and cultural values with which Greenlandic Inuit are endowed. To this end Hopson (1978) stated: "I believe nothing less than home rule can be trusted to protect our entire Inuit circumpolar homeland from environmental harm both on shore and off shore." By this time he had already concluded that the "politics of the Arctic" was based on the "politics of oil" (as cited in Shadian 2013: 16). In his 1976 address to the Berger Commission, Hopson (1976) noted that the oil industry should support Home Rule: "Our people in Greenland are not being consulted in any meaningful way as their resources are being sold out from under them. Home-rule is the key to an equitable land claims settlement anywhere in the Arctic. It is the heart of the Land Claims Movement."

Indeed, during negotiations of the Home Rule Act of 1979 the issue of subsurface resources was a key source of confrontation between Danish and Greenlandic representatives of the Home Rule Commission. Recognition of land rights gave rise to the issue of allocation and transfer of resource control from Denmark to Greenland. When the Act was finally written the Commission's representatives arrived at a compromise (Petersen 1995). The Greenlandic people have "fundamental rights in respect of Greenland's natural resources," and Government had the right to veto subsurface resource projects deemed incompatible with Greenlandic interests (Greenland Home Rule Act 1978).

Greenlandic self-rule has materialized as a course of factors related to decolonization. Dahl (1986) argued that during the 1950s and 1960s decolonization, first implemented by the Danish government, was a product of economic and political factors that served Denmark's interests. As an aspect of this top down approach Greenland's colonial status was nullified in 1953, but at the same time colonial practices remained. In practice Danish policy promoted modernization through development. Investment into the production sector encouraged the growth of centralized commercial fishing and the "voluntary" movement of people from remote settlements into towns to promote urbanization (Dahl 1986: 317). At the same time a "small, well educated, nationalist elite" (Dahl 1986: 316) of Greenlanders emerged with aspirations of greater social and economic opportunities (Dahl 1986: 317). However, the continuation of oppressive Danish policy led to increasing radicalization among this group of largely Danish educated elite, buoyed by an unrealized promise that this elite class would be equal with the Danes (Dahl 1986: 316-318). Increasingly politicized by Denmark's top down approach, these educated elites organized into political parties that were to become the backbone of the self-government movement, which in part was aligned with the global fight to end colonization. In 1975, the Greenlandic Provincial Council unanimously passed a resolution demanding that "the land and its resources belonged to the resident population." (Dahl 1986: 320).

As the Home Rule government came to power in 1979, the political parties that had formed earlier, Siumut and Inuit Ataqatigiit, declared their alliance with the interests of the fisherman, hunters and wage earners, many of whom lived at distances remote from the capital of Nuuk. Promises were broken; but this time the duplicity was internal to Greenland. "Despite explicit promises not to issue oil concessions in Jameson Land, East

Greenland, against the will of the local population," Dahl (1986: 323) says, "the coalition government of Siumut and Inuit Ataqatigiit did so in late 1984." A political structure dominated by a small group of elite had emerged "creating internal contradictions among people originally in support of common goals" (Dahl 1986: 323).

After a decade of gradual devolution of governance and administrative duties such as education, health and the economy, the 2009 Act on Greenland Self-Government devolved additional responsibilities including ownership of subsurface resources. The Act (2009), which sets out a complex financial arrangement, links economic independence with hydrocarbon and mineral development. As a highly simplistic explanation, Greenland receives a subsidy of DKK 3,439.6 million (adjusted annually based on price and wage indices) and revenues accrued from subsurface resource extraction go toward reducing the subsidy. Once the subsidy is reduced to zero, the Greenlandic government may enter into negotiations with Denmark regarding future financial relations and the introduction of independence from Denmark. However, whereas Denmark has devolved duties to Naalakkersuisut, Greenland has centralized those duties within Nuuk often sidestepping legislative debate and appropriate public consultation. Nuttall points out, for example, that since "Greenland took over control of sub-surface resources on 1st January 2010," the Bureau of Minerals and Petroleum (BMP) in conjunction with the Employers' Association of Greenland (GA) have actively sought the interest of foreign companies (Nuttall 2012: 25). Notwithstanding this association, Nutall notes that a GA report points out that "significant information has been excluded from public view" (Nuttall 2012: 33).

Beyond political conditions, global economic factors dictate that development through subsurface resource extraction is subject to market conditions. Fluctuating commodity prices and discovery of cost effective, easily recoverable oil and gas, such as tar sands and fracking elsewhere in the world may render Greenland less desirable as a resource frontier. In June 2014, Denmark's National Bank Nationalbanken, reported that Greenland's "economic activity is declining, and there are indications that the decline may even be quite rapid." Currently, companies have put all oil exploration on hold and the only active mine closed in 2013. The low levels of education make it difficult for Greenland to develop a competitive edge. Greenland's primary industry, fishing, is potentially unstable. Although the fish catch helped Greenland generate enough income to balance the 2012 and 2013 budget, exports declined over the last 12 months most likely because warmer waters are driving prawn stocks to colder waters further north (Denmark's Nationalbank 2014).

The Seduction of Subsurface Resource Extraction

Greenland is the world's 12th largest country with a small population of just over 56,000 people, a population that has steadily declined since 2005. The average monthly unemployment rate is 9.4% and 70% of the population between the ages of 15 and 64 has only a primary school education (The Committee for Greenlandic Mineral Resources 2014: 47). Education is closely associated with economic opportunity, as well as the capacity of a

public to participate in the democratic process. At the crossroads of economic development and democracy, public participation plays a critical role in establishing the direction desired by the Greenlandic people at large. Ideally, those most affected by development actively participate in the decision-making process, much in the same way that Hopson insisted in 1976 that Greenlanders be consulted in a meaningful way on oil exploration on the lands that were then still under the full jurisdiction of their colonial power Denmark (Hopson 1976).

The pursuit of Greenland's subsurface resources is not new. Mineral exploration began in the 1840s and the first off shore oil drilling started in the 1970s (Hansen 2013: 6). At present, however, the Greenlandic economy is based largely on fishing and tourism, with the percentage of export earnings at 56% and 37% respectively. In 2010 only 1% of export earnings were derived from the mining sector, although issuance of mineral licensees has increased from less than 20 in 2002 to slightly shy of 100 in 2012 (Nielsen 2012). In addition to minerals, the U.S. Geological Survey (2011) estimates that hydrocarbon deposits in West Greenland could reach 31.4 billion barrels of undiscovered oil, gas and natural gas liquids. If accessed, this would rank Greenland as the world's 19th largest oil and gas producer. Although multinational interest is most often attributed to climate change, Mark Nuttall (2012: 25) points out that mounting interest over the last five to ten years is "largely a result of an active international marketing campaign by the Ministry for Industry and Mineral Resources," alongside the Employee's Association of Greenland which provides a link between Greenlandic and foreign businesses.

To a large degree the Greenlandic government is banking on economic independence through large-scale development. A 2013 amendment to the 'Large-Scale Project Act' stipulates that the expected value of the project must exceed DDK 5 billion. A primary goal of the Act is to regulate the employment of foreign workers during the construction stage. However, the global corporate law firm, Evershed (2013), notes that the amendment affords "foreign companies great opportunities to use their own collective bargaining agreements as the Act does not regulate, for example, overtime payments, holidays, etc." At present, the prospect for large-scale projects is limited, although the much-publicized large-scale London Mining iron mine Isua project was recently approved and Australian Greenland Minerals and Energy (GME) Kvanefjeld uranium and rare earths project awaits approval in the near future. Isua, projected at a cost of approximately DKK 14 billion, is seeking investment from numerous global investors including the Chinese mining group Sichuan Xinye (McAlister 2014). It should be noted, however, that of the two firms contracted by London Mining to fulfill infrastructure requirements, one of these firms, Chinese Communications Construction Corporation (CCC), has been blacklisted by the World Bank on corruption charges for inflating the price of road-building projects elsewhere. Leonard McCarthy, VP of the World Bank's corruption division said, "This is one of the most significant and far-reaching cases we know" (Nyvold 2013: 28). In the case of the proposed Kvanefjeld project, GME has partnered with China Nonferrous Metal Industry's Foreign Engineering and

Construction Co. Ltd. (Greenland Minerals 2014) with a projected capital cost of $810 million US (Greenland Minerals 2013).

Even if large-scale development occurs to any great degree, 24 concurrent projects would be required to reduce block grant payments to zero, according to Hansen. Development projects of this magnitude would require extensive immigration to fulfill labor requirements; with a workforce of approximately 10,000 workers, possibly accompanied by family members, Greenlandic demographics would be drastically skewed (Hansen 2013: 19). Extensive mining would "radically change the entire structure of Greenlandic society"; local populations that lack the required education would typically stay in low-paid jobs while foreign workers would hold higher-paid jobs and core values such as berry-picking, fishing and hunting would be impaired (Hansen 2013: 23).

The 2014 report "To the Benefit of Greenland" conducted by the Committee for Greenlandic Mineral Resources illustrates the benefits and challenges of mineral extraction in the context of five possible scenarios. The report concludes that contrary to the hopes of the Greenlandic government, rapid subsurface resource development "will not necessarily benefit Greenland's economy in the long run" (To the benefit of Greenland 2014: 9). At the same time it will create change but not preserve society as it is today. Indeed, "an independent self-sustaining Greenlandic economy based on mineral resources contains an intrinsic dilemma," states the report (To the benefit of Greenland 2014: 23). "Extracting sufficient mineral resources to Greenland's independence within 20 to 30 years would require such extensive foreign investment and massive inflow of foreign labour that there is a real risk that the current Greenlandic population would become a minority in Greenland" (To the benefit of Greenland 2014: 23). The intention of the report is to drive a much-needed "serious" debate amongst Greenlanders as to the kind of society that the population desires in the future. Shadian (2014), for instance, argues that Greenland is at a crossroads negotiating through the muddy waters of decolonization. Shadian remarks:

> The Self-Rule Greenlandic government has often remarked that it *de facto* takes into account the indigenous rights of its Inuit by virtue of being a democratically elected government. At the same time, there are others in Greenland who believe the government is not thoroughly consulting with its Inuit. ICC [President] Aqquluk Lynge has made this argument a number of times since the passage of Self-Rule. (Shadian 2014: 204).

Indeed, as many others have found, *To the benefit of Greenland* report suggests that the decision-making process is beleaguered by perceptions that processes related to resource development lack transparency, which would benefit by improved governance through an independent environmental impact authority. Since the physical environment impacts the human environment, civil society needs to engage in informed dialogue with industry and decision-makers at the earliest stages of a proposed development project (Hansen 2013).

A 2012 study conducted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (2012) on the asymmetrical relationship between extractive corporations and indigenous peoples concurs, exemplified by the numerous cases of developing economies ravaged by the existence of subsurface resource extraction. "These projects inevitably affect indigenous peoples by reducing their traditional management systems"' the report notes, "thereby undermining their economic, cultural and spiritual life and threatening their very existence." The well-being of indigenous peoples depends on the policies and practices of States and international institutions. Although the concept of consultation is now the norm, "ambiguity remains" (United Nations 2012: 5).

Participatory Democracy

In 2008, only months in advance of the enactment of the Greenland Self-Government Act, Mark Nutall wrote "concern has been expressed in Greenland about the lack of public consultation and hearing processes, land-use conflicts, and the absence of legislation dealing with industrial development projects" (Nuttall 2008). Subsequently, Nuttall's 2012 exposé of the Isua iron mine suggests that the process of informed public consent is on a serious decline since 2008. Although the London Mining large-scale Isua project has gained the support of the Government of Greenland, public support is highly contested.

If realized, the Isua project will be developed as an open pit mine covering an area of 2 km^2. To extract the ore the surrounding inland ice will be removed at an estimated 13.5 tonnes a year. During the approval process several informational meetings were followed by public hearings held at the University of Greenland in Nuuk, which is located 150km from the site of the local community in Isukasia. Local concerns have mounted as to the considerable environmental impact over the course of the project (Nutall 2012: 27). As Nuttall (2012) expressed after observing the hearing process, "they were not really hearings at all – they were information sessions – and they highlighted the reality that Greenland has yet to develop and implement regulatory procedures and public hearings overseen by an independent review panel that guides decision-making processes."

Yet the remarks relayed to Nuttall by Greenlanders who attended the meetings went further to fervently denounce the intentions of the hearing process. A hunter said that the hearing was a "one-way process and the organizers wanted to be in control. They wanted to avoid debate" (as cited in Nuttall 2012: 29). Another audience member asked, "Have we been bought and can't change any decisions that have been made?" (as cited in Nuttall 2012: 30). Others cited issues regarding hunting areas that are in jeopardy, infringement on indigenous rights, a lack of experts that can oppose the information and unintelligible materials provided by London Mining. Nuttall points out that questions were "merely recorded" and that "no comments were returned and no answers were given" (Nuttall 2012: 30).

The principle of public consultation is fundamental to democracy. Not only is it critical to the rational assessment of public policy objectives and priorities, it also provides a means of addressing public priorities at large (Sen 1999: 274). Affirmed by the UN Declaration on the

Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) the principle of 'free, prior and informed consent' is indispensible to issues affecting economic and social well-being. Enshrined in the documents of numerous intergovernmental organizations, international bodies, conventions and international human rights law these principles are regarded as international legal norms.

In Greenland, however, structural inadequacies suggest that public consent is minimized. The Mineral Resources Act of 2009 (amended in 2013), which legislates development of subsurface resources, seeks "to ensure that activities under the Act are securely performed as regards to safety, health, the environment, resource exploitation and social sustainability" (as cited in Hansen 2013). An amendment to the Act in January 2013 split the activities of subsurface resource development into two departments – the Environmental Agency falls within the Ministry of Environment and Nature, while the Bureau of Minerals and Petroleum (BMP) administers licensing and monitoring activities remain as an arm of the Ministry of Industry & Mineral Resources. The Environmental Agency is responsible for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and BMP is responsible for Social Impact Assessments (SIA). However, as with the SIA process, the EIA process remains remarkably with BMP (Naalakkersuisut n/d). Both the SIA and EIA guidelines specify public consultation with relevant stakeholders as a prerequisite of the licensing process and feedback incorporated into the final report before licensing is approved.

Hansen suggests the process of public participation lacks specificity, but that the government needs more time to develop guidelines "tailored to fit the Greenlandic context" (Hansen 2013: 17). At the same time, extractive industries will impact both the natural environment and the human environment. Depending on the activities planned – type, size, timing and content of project – "impacts can be reversible or irreversible, they can be short or long term and even permanent" (Hansen 2013: 8). There is an aura of distrust in that lack of government transparency in the decision-making process, particularly with regard to BMP linked with the powerful influence of private companies will marginalize local interests. She suggests that there seems to be a fear that "the private sector will set the agenda, not protect local values, and not secure positive development" (Hansen 2013: 11).

Indeed, the process of public participation is fraught with challenges. Whether deemed inconvenient, unintentional, or a process in need of further development, the desire for economic independence may be infringing upon the democratic values of Greenlanders. A cornerstone of democratic freedom is the right to participate in public affairs. The values of participatory democracy requires open communications, argument and the right to demand that ones views are given due consideration, whether supportive or unfavorable.

Understood as a host of freedoms, Amartya Sen, the Nobel prize winning economist notes, "Political and civil rights, especially those related to the guaranteeing of open discussion, debate, criticism, and dissent, are central to the processes of generating informed and reflected choices" (Sen 1999: 153). Democratic values expressed as political freedoms, socio-economic participation and transparency guarantees, will each gain strength from the existence of the others when realized (Sen 1999: 38). However, the enticement of prosperity

may give rise to the demise of civil rights freedoms (Sen 1999: 149). In this regard Hansen (2013) suggests that community members may initially tolerate the negative impacts of an extractive industrial project, attracted by the prospect of employment, however, over time the consequences of development may cause societal divisions.

NGOs – Calling Authorities to Task

As pointed out by Erdal (2013) Greenland's "large-scale resource extraction is fundamental to state-building," which to a large extent has played out through the forging of diplomatic ties with China, and to a lesser degree significant exchanges with South Korea. Indeed, Nutall (2012: 25) argues that the path toward independence is an expression of nation-building and state-formation" built on the presumption of lucrative subsurface resource extraction. If realized Greenland would be the first independent Inuit state. This presents a double truth. On the one hand, Greenland would simply become a developing nation, but it would also be an indigenous nation bestowed with the legal rights afforded by UNDRIP. Where public participation is fundamental to democratic state-building, it is also closely associated with the international legal norm of 'free, prior, and informed consent' enshrined in UNDRIP. With these conditions, the path toward independence should take place with consideration for Sen's argument that public engagement is a primary condition of democracy that should exist alongside economic development, and with the precondition of 'free, prior and informed consent.'

This is not to suggest that Greenland is absent of public discussion, but as I am asserting here there is reason to challenge the extent to which government is fulfilling its social obligation of free and informed speech. At issue is the larger discussion of values expressed through the spiritual beliefs and traditions of the Greenlandic people, and to promote those values in accordance with the type and rate at which development takes place (Nuttall 2013).

In this context numerous organizations such as ICC Greenland, World Wildlife Fund Denmark (WWF) and Transparency International Greenland have raised concerns that the Government of Greenland has not appropriately dealt with the matter of public consultation. It would appear that the process of consultation might be less than complete, or at worst willfully deceptive.

Transparency International Greenland

Transparency International Greenland (TIG) was founded on August 31, 2011 in response to the direction taken by the Government of Greenland toward an extraction-driven economy. The organization promotes open and transparent transactions in government, business and throughout the greater society, and seeks to prevent corruption through transparency. TIG defines corruption broadly to include, bribery, fraud, embezzlement, nepotism and other forms of favors between parties. Government desire for rapid economic growth through the exploration and extraction of subsurface resources has given rise to the potential exposure for corruption. During this preliminary stage of development it is

particularly relevant that Greenland develop mechanisms to prevent opportunities for corruption (Transparency International Greenland). Given international evidence, resource extraction rarely benefits society at large. Rather it is most often a source of intergroup corruption and conflict. "To prevent this occurring in Greenland," TIG notes, "now is the time to ensure that public decisions taken in this area are transparent to the companies that will participate in these industries, but also to the people whose lives and livelihoods will be affected by them" (Transparency International Greenland).

During the application process, TIG contracted with Nordic Consulting Group (NCG) to conduct the first ever study of Greenlandic corruption and integrity standards. The goal of the study was to examine public participation relative to the extent to which governmental systems have the capacity to resist corruption, based on internationally accepted standards, which include accountability, transparency and integrity and the level of independence among the branches of government (Nordic 2012: 3). Based on interviews conducted in 2011, TIG found no indication of bribery, fraud or embezzlement, however, the study affirms that system inadequacies have given rise to behavioral practices such as favoritism. Public officials now motivated by personal considerations could be vulnerable to corruption motivated by personal gain in the future particularly in the extraction sector where large sums of money are at stake (Nordic 2012: 52).

As an overarching observation, the study found that "citizens have little opportunity to hold the authorities accountable" (Nordic 2012: 2). Accountability and transparency is hindered by uneven access to information, government secrecy prevails particularly with regard to BMP, the decision-making process is too hurried, and there is a widespread fear of criticizing authority. In addition, a high level of staff turnover, a limited pool of adequately educated job candidates and legislation that is both incoherent and confusing negatively impacts the administrative duties of public offices. In some cases, established rules are not necessarily followed.

Understood in the context of Greenland's small population, in a country of only 56,000 'everyone knows what everyone else is up to.' On the one hand this attribute suggests inherent societal transparency, however, cultural norms deter criticism. Greenlandic culture is imbued with a deep respect for authority thereby citizens lack the tradition of holding public officials accountable for their actions, although there is now a growing desire for openness and transparency. Fear of retribution, however, limits the extent of public engagement. For example, in the private sector many business owners are either recipients of government funding or rely on government as their primary customer and thus fear that criticism of authorities will jeopardize their economic interests. As another example, media is cited as less than objective. Until recently, all three media outlets – AG, Sermitsiaq and KNR – "were to a great extent subject to unilateral political control." Although government exerts less direct control, KNR (Greenland radio) is still reliant on public funding. It is too soon to judge how media will respond to its knew found independence, however, the study notes that media is often seen as less than objective. Journalists are cited for neglecting to conduct

proper follow up and for a reluctance to be critical of public officials and institutions. Those who were critical of public officials reported that future requests for interviews were denied. An independent media foundation is recommended to deal with these issues (Nordic 2012: 11-16).

Dissemination of and access to information in Greenland has far-reaching implications. For journalists and the ombudsman alike the process of attaining public documents is often delayed, sometimes denied or the request simply ignored. Although the legislation on transparency is fairly robust, in practice it is not always forthcoming. In some cases information is gained through the 'back door.' (Nordic 2012: 31-32).

BMP has come under considerable scrutiny for its "general culture of secrecy." A glaring example of secrecy occurred in 2011 when the Ministry refused to publish the oil spill contingency plan for a Cairn Energy project. The Ministry was later compelled to publish the plan as a result of public pressure. While framework agreements with oil and mineral companies are publically available, individual agreements are not disclosed even to Members of Parliament (Nordic 2012: 33-34). Moreover, BMP has responsibility for virtually all aspects of Greenland's mining and oil sector. Significantly, the Bureau is tasked not only with the issuance of commercial licenses and collection of royalties; it is also responsible for management decisions related to environmental and social impact assessments. During the tenure of Prime Minster Kleist, in 2010, overlapping interests prompted the majority party Inuit Ataqatigiit to call for the "separation of environmental and economic management resources" (Huntington et al. 2012). Separation of government functions occurred in 2013 as mentioned above, however, ambiguity remains.

ICC Greenland

Cultural tendencies that preclude parliamentary and public scrutiny combined with a tendency for secrecy have resulted in lackluster debate, specifically in the case of hydrocarbon and mineral development. However, ICC Greenland has played a critical role in establishing a much needed debate on the impact of extractive projects to the environmental and social well-being of both local populations and the nation as a whole.

In a Statement addressed to BMP dated 21 April 2010, ICC Greenland formally lodged a complaint with the Government of Greenland stating that based on ICCs experience with the Cairn Energy Drisko West Drilling Programme, the hearing process "points to contradictory, confusing, persuasive, hurried, and possibly deceitful" practices (ICC Greenland 2010).

As accounted by ICC Greenland (2010), representatives were invited on short notice to three meetings within the span of 15 days. The first two were promoted as informational only, but during the first meeting on February 1, 2010, BMP representatives left the meeting later explaining "government representatives should not be present during the meetings with others." ICC Greenland was then questioned by representatives from Cairn Energy, the global consultancy firm Environmental Resources Management (ERM) and other industry

agents, none of which had been revealed to ICC Greenland prior to the meeting, giving the impression that the meeting was something other than "informational." The second BMP invitation was relayed by email and a phone call asking to meet again the next day on February 2. At both meetings ICC Greenland stressed that they did not consider the meetings to be a formal consultation, and that their remarks should not be included in ERMs Social Impact Assessment report (SIA). When ICC was then invited to a third meeting promoted as a "consultation" on February 15, they declined citing the short timeframe and lack of sufficient resources to properly prepare. Against ICCs insistence, ERM not only quoted, but also misquoted ICC several times throughout the SIA report. ICC Greenland noted that it was unfortunate that "time constraints and lack of financial resources" prevented them from conducting a thorough review, thus unable to make a "valuable contribution to the substance of the project." The ICC Statement expressed broader concerns such as weakness in the broad public hearing; lengthy technical reports (greater than 50MB) that were either too big to download or too costly given the capacity of Greenland's Internet; or non-technical summaries that leave out critical information and deemed "sloppy." In total, based on ICC Greenland's experience, they consider the process as a fundamental violation of human rights, not only for Inuit but also for all indigenous peoples throughout the world.

Following Cairn's discovery of oil from one of its drill holes off the shores of Western Greenland, Aqqaluk Lynge remarked, "We really need a democratic infrastructure in Greenland," and proclaimed, "these are not in place" (George 2010). Subsequently, ICC Greenland partnered with Oceans North Canada to commission an independent review of Cairn Energy's offshore drilling program in Western Greenland. The technical analysis conducted by Harvey Consulting (2013), argued that the Government of Greenland, specifically BMP, obscured information from public view, citing "chronic delays," missing or redacted documentation and an overall attempt by BMP to avoid public scrutiny of the "response and contingency plans that in theory are designed to protect the public and the environment" (Inuit Circumpolar Council 2013).

ICC Greenland, however, did not rely on its partnership with Oceans North Canada alone to make the point that the Government of Greenland was woefully remiss in its attention to the public consultation process. In 2012 ICC Greenland partnered with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) again to drive the point that Greenlandic authorities, which are viewed as pro-business, have largely based the decision-making process on economic gain. Gitte Seeberg, the Secretary General of WWF Denmark, said, "The government has leaned too much in the direction of the companies. There have been few actual debates where people can express their feelings and too much has been rushed through without people's questions being answered" (Weaver 2013). The ICC/WWF report released in July 2013 made numerous complainants that public hearings were one-sided or biased, information was inaccessible, and that "Members of the public get the impression that the authorities don't want to take part in genuine dialogue," and that public input has no affect on the outcome (Langhoff 2013).

Then in October 2013, ICC Greenland, WWF and Transparency International Greenland formed a coalition of NGOs based on the belief that there is strength in numbers. The coalition strives to ensure that the public has an unprejudiced opportunity to engage in the decision-making process. Aaja Chemnitz Larsen, from Transparency International Greenland said: "Eventually, we would like to host open meetings, training courses and other initiatives to enhance informed public participation in decisions about the development of new industry in Greenland." The coalition prepared a list of recommendations that will be supplied to the Government in consideration of improving the consultation process. Jens-Erik Kirkegaard, Greenland's industry and labour minister responded that he looks forward to "continuing to work with the NGOs to develop specific plans for greater citizen involvement" (Arctic Journal 2013a).

ICC Greenland has come to the defense of local stakeholders, repeatedly advancing the principle of "free, prior, and informed consent" in accordance with UNDRIP. At the 2013 Arctic Peoples' Conference Aqqaluk Lynge stressed that it "is important in the new Arctic, that Inuit control the source [of] development in their territories and start on a footing of honesty, integrity, and transparency." Though Kirkegaard's response to the recent NGO coalition appeared solicitous of improvements to institutional practices, a recent event suggests that there may be a great deal of acrimony between ICC Greenland and Government. Greenland's proposed budget for 2014 includes cuts to annual funding for ICC Greenland from 5.4 million Danish kroner ($1 million) to 1.4 million Danish kroner over a period of four years. Kristian Jeremiassen, an MP for Siumut, the party led by premier Aleqa Hammond, wants to eradicate ICC's subsidy (Arctic Journal 2013b). Lynge said "Right now, the most responsible thing we can do is prepare to shut down" (McGwin, 2014).

Conclusion

Without a doubt Greenland has achieved a notable transformation since the day Hopson avowed the significance of Home Rule as a "restoration of democratic self-determination." Indeed, as economic and political policies once controlled by the colonial power of Denmark gave way to the gradual devolution of governance and legislative duties, Greenland emerged as a semi-autonomous country recognized for its geostrategic significance, based on a wealth of hydrocarbon and mineral deposits. In hindsight, however, Danish colonial policies that contributed Greenlandic modernization and to the creation of a small group of well educated Greenlanders may well have contributed to the apparent present day division between decisions-makers in Nuuk and a population of less educated rural fisherman, hunters and wage earner. As I have attempted to show here, the evidence suggests that decisions made in Nuuk do not necessarily align with the aims and objectives of the public at large.

This concerns not only Greenlandic development strategy that seeks to attract foreign investment as a means of generating economic stability; it also underscores the fundamental value of participatory democracy. At the crossroads of economic development and

democracy, public participation plays a critical role in establishing the direction desired by the Greenlandic people at large. As Sen (1999: 158) suggests, "a more informed and less marginalized public discussion of environmental issues may not only be good for the environment; it could also be important to the health and functioning of the democratic system itself."

Without open and informed public debate the future of Greenland will remain in the hands of an educated elite whose views on economic development may not in the long run benefit the society as a whole. On the other hand, community-based decision making combined with a nationwide debate on the overarching risks and benefits of subsurface resource extraction could lead to comprehensive strategy that takes a holistic approach to the political, economic and social freedoms that comprise a democracy. Greenland is without doubt a well functioning democracy, but as we have seen democracy is often messy even in the oldest of democratic nations. The future is yet to be seen, but one can readily assume that Greenland's future will be the source of increasingly robust debate.

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