



Forced assimilation of Indigenous children:
The case of the Danish-Greenlandic experiment

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International Migration and Ethnic Relations
Bachelor Thesis 15 credits
Spring 2019: IM245L
Supervisor: Christian Fernandez
Word count: 13125

Abstract

This thesis examines personal consequences of forced assimilation in relation to identity and belonging of 22 Greenlandic children who were sent to Denmark to participate in a ‘social experiment’ in the beginning of the 1950’s. By adopting a social psychological approach, the theoretical framework of intergroup identification and cultural trauma theories has been applied to the experiences of the children as accounted in the two books ‘*For Flid og God Opførsel*’ by Thiesen(2011) and ‘*I den bedste mening*’ by Bryld(1998). Findings of the analysis show issues of identity division and confusion, lack of belonging and severe hurt caused by forced assimilation in childhood. Furthermore, elements of cultural trauma theories such as contemporary consequences, trauma as a structural process and intergenerational effects are identified in the narratives. The thesis speaks to the larger case of Danish colonialism in Greenland and contributes to the academic field of forced assimilation of Indigenous children.

Keywords: Forced assimilation, Indigenous children, identity, cultural trauma, Greenland.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Research problem

In 1951, 22 Greenlandic children(9 girls and 13 boys) were removed from their home and families and taken to Denmark to be part of a social experiment organised by the State of Denmark and implemented with the help of Save the Children Denmark and the Danish Red Cross(Thiesen, 2011:20). The aim was that the children should return to Greenland and help improve the new Greenlandic society and make up the core in the new bilingual school system. It was thought that the means through this was best done via education in which Danish was a key factor(Walling, 2004:38).

In 1949 Doctor Kai Ludvigsen was sent to Greenland on behalf of Red Cross to provide the organisation with feedback on situations they might be able to improve. In his report there was a strong focus on the children as they after all were ‘the future of Greenland’ (Thiesen, 2011:19-20).

Arrangements were made to open orphanages in Greenland, as it would be a good way to handle the increase in children who had lost their parents to tuberculosis. They would, according to Ludvigsen, grow up in a healthy environment with all the necessities provided. Furthermore, they would be raised in a Danish-minded environment and hence be better prepared to handle the new modernised Greenland(Bryld, 1998:13).

In July 1950 the Department of Greenland presented the idea of the experiment to its members and with the votes 4 against and 18 in favour, ‘the experiment’ became a reality(Bryld, 1998:14).

The primary criteria for the selection of children were as followed; there should be 20 children, equal number of girls and boys, they should be orphans otherwise the parents should agree, they should come from disadvantaged homes, be between 6-7 years and intelligent(Walling, 2004:42). Furthermore, the stay should only last one year, as “their potential should not go to waste”(Walling, 2004:43), a clear indicator that the main concern was not about the best interest of the children, but to improve the Greenlandic society.

But priests, teachers and doctors had trouble finding children that fit into the criteria which caused changes in the selection and execution of ‘the experiment’(Thiesen, 2011:20). The age range was changed to 5-8 years and children classified as ‘motherless’ (not only orphans) were considered too(although in the end 6 children with mothers were selected)(Bryld:1998:15). Finally, the children were decided to live in an orphanage upon

return and not with their families, which seemed to not have been clear to either parents or children(Bryld, 1998:15). “At that time, you didn’t ask about anything. You were told to do this and that. No explanations as to why. The top ones were almost only Danes. Us Greenlanders didn’t have much to say¹”(Bryld, 1998:111).

Nevertheless, ‘the experiment’ was organised and the children were picked up from around Greenland by the ship ‘MS Disko’ and sailed to Denmark. Here they were first put together in a summer camp run by Save the Children as they adjusted to their new life in Denmark as well as attending regular health check-ups, in order to prepare them for their stay at Danish foster families, also recruited by the organisation(Bryld, 1998:14).

Eventually, six of the children ended up being adopted by their new foster families even though this was never the intention to begin with(Bryld, 1998:18).

After more than one year in Denmark they had learned the language and the customs of Danish culture, and in October 1952, 16 out of the 22 children returned to Greenland (Bryld, 1998:18). They were to their surprise not sent back to their families but put in the orphanage and continued their childhood and adolescence living there and attending the Danish School in Nuuk(Bryld, 1998:8). Here they lived away from their families for years and were only allowed occasional visits and holidays with them (Walling: 2004:56-57).

The children were meant to serve as role models for the new modernised school system in the colonised Greenland as determined by Denmark(Thiesen, 2011:7). All this was according to the Danish authorities and the implicated in the execution of ‘the experiment’ done in the best interest of the children(Bryld, 1998:21). However, ‘the experiment’ didn’t turn out as expected as the children had developed severe issues of identity and belonging as consequences of ‘the experiment’ and loss of their culture which became clear upon their return to Greenland(Thiesen, 2011:9).

I understand ‘the experiment’ as a case of forced removal and assimilation of Indigenous children as unfortunately seen in many other cases around the world with possibly the most well-known cases being those of ‘The Stolen Generation’ in Australia and ‘The Indian Residential School System’ in Canada(see HREOC (1997) and TRCC(2015 & 2015a)). Here previous studies(see AFH (2006, 2007, 2007a) & Elias et al.(2012)) have shown how forced removal and assimilation of Indigenous children has had negative consequences for both individuals and collectives in former colonies, even after colonial

¹ Quote in original language (freely translated by me):Dengang spurgte man ikke om noget. Man fik besked på at gøre sådan og sådan. Ingen forklaringer om hvorfor. De øverste var næsten kun danskere. Vi grønlandere havde ikke meget at sige.

practices have officially ended. It will therefore be of interest to the field to do an initiate examination of ‘the experiment’ as a case of forced assimilation of Indigenous children.

1.2. Research aim and questions

Accounts by the children from ‘the experiment’ have been collected and written down in the two books ‘*For Flid og God Opførsel*’² by Thiesen(2011) and ‘*I den bedste mening*’³ by Bryld(1998). The aim is to examine the personal consequences of forced removal and assimilation of the Greenlandic children from ‘the experiment’ in relation to identity and belonging. This will be done by applying the theoretical framework of intergroup identification and cultural trauma theories to the experiences accounted in the narratives by the children themselves. The following research questions will guide the thesis:

- How do the children from ‘the experiment’ construct their understanding of identity and belonging in relation to identified in/out-groups – and how does this change during the lifespans of the children?
- How might elements of cultural trauma theories contribute to the understanding of the narratives from ‘the experiment’?

1.3. Historical background

Different Inuit cultures started migrating from Siberia, through Alaska and Canada and arrived in Greenland approx. 4-5000 years ago. Several cultures have arrived in waves and around 900 A.D. members of the Thule culture arrived and continued to live in small communities, living off the land as hunters and fishermen. Greenlandic people descend from these people(Visit Greenland, 2017).

The Danish missionary Hans Egede arrived in Greenland in 1721 and in 1728 the first Danish colony ‘Godthåb’⁴ was created(Rud, 2017:2). Denmark made use of isolation policies to keep Greenland from the outside world and continue the colonialism. An example of this is the monopoly on all trade involving Greenland, which Denmark held from 1774 to 1950 and which income served to finance colonialism(Walling, 2004:18). ‘Kielerfreden’ from 1814 officially states Greenland as belonging to Denmark(DIIS, 2007:10), and it was not until 1953 that Greenland was no longer officially regarded as a Danish colony(DIIS, 2007:26).

² For diligence and good behavior (freely translated by me).

³ In the best interest (freely translate by me).

⁴ Today known as the capital of Greenland, Nuuk.

Another important factor in the Danish-Greenlandic relation is the Second World War and the occupation of Denmark, which to some extent cut off the connection between Denmark and Greenland for a while, causing Greenland to seek other trading partners like Canada and the USA(DIIS, 2007:23). After the Second World War the United Nations also required every colony to report on the work being done to improve and prepare existing colonies for independence as a part of the decolonising process(Petersen, 2004:19). In 1948 the Danish prime minister Hans Hedtoft declared that Greenland should no longer be subjected to the isolation policy and should become fully part of the Danish trade and business community(Walling, 2004:20-21). This along with the Greenlandic people's increased wish for more independence started a series of modernisation initiatives in Greenland by Denmark(Walling, 2004:20). A new commission was established, and this resulted in a report with eight law proposals of how to improve Greenland(DIIS, 2007:119). These later created the foundation of 'Nyordningen'(The New Incentive) of 1950 serving as groundwork for 'the experiment', in which thoughts and motives of improving and modernising Greenlandic society, especially in areas of education and social & health issues, can be found(Bryld, 1998:8-9). It was decided to introduce initiatives like kindergartens run by Save the Children and Red Cross run orphanages to improve these areas(Walling, 2004:23). The education system in Greenland was also 'upgraded' and secularised from the church and, furthermore, the Danish language became more dominant in Greenlandic schools(Walling, 2004:31). As the modernisation took place various actors felt a need to help Greenland transform from a hunter/fisher society to a "modern and industrialised society"(Walling, 2004: 24) and the children had a great role to play in this.

1.4. Current context

In 1979 Greenland acquires 'Home-rule' and becomes part of 'Rigsfælleskabet' consisting of Denmark and The Faroe Islands as equal members(Rud, 2017:2). In 2009 'Self-governance', voted by the people in 2008, is established in Greenland. However, the Danish-Greenlandic relation persists with Denmark continuously having the upper hand in political matters(Thisted, 2005:17).

After having been more or less completely under Danish rule for a bit more than 250 years, Greenland changed a lot demographically, physically and mentally too(AFH, 2006:37). The modernisation process which especially took off during the 1960-70's has

caused social changes to happen at an extremely high speed, which has had various consequences for the Greenlandic people (AFH, 2006:36-37).

However, when asked during a hearing in the Danish parliament regarding a public apology and compensation to the children involved in 'the experiment', the Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen answered as followed; "The history is not possible to change. The government regards the colonial times as an ended part of our common history. We must rejoice that the time is different now. Within the frames of self-government, we are today developing our common history in equality and with mutual respect between Greenland and Denmark"⁵ (Statsministeriet, 2009). In other words, no, the Prime Minister on behalf of the Danish government has not to this day thought it necessary to give a public apology. But in 2015 the organisation Save the Children gave a public apology for their engagement in 'the experiment' to the children involved (Agger, 2015). Although the Danish government still doesn't see the need for an apology, an official historical investigation has been agreed to be carried out between the Children and Social ministry of Denmark and the Ministry for Health, Social matters and Justice in Greenland, starting from April 2019 with the deadline of June 1st 2020 (Børne- og Socialministeriet & Naalakkersuisoq for Sundhed, Sociale Anliggender og Justitsområdet, 2019).

1.5. Thesis outline

The thesis has begun with an introductory chapter, where the research aim and questions were presented, followed by a historical background and current context of the topic. In chapter two, 'Review of Field', a review of relevant academic literature is presented and reflected upon in relation to the topic of the thesis. Chapter three, 'Theoretical Framework', presents and explains the selected theories and concepts in relation to the aim of the thesis. In chapter four, 'Method and Material', the overall research design and used methods are presented. Furthermore, the material is presented and discussed in relation to considerations of validity and reliability. An analysis of the material assisted by the selected theories makes up chapter 5. Finally, chapter 6 presents the concluding remarks of the thesis.

⁵ Quote in original language (freely translate by me): "Historien står ikke til at ændre. Regeringen betragter kolonitiden som en afsluttet del af vores fælles historie. Vi må glæde os over, at tiden er en anden nu. Inden for selvstyreordningens rammer udvikler vi i dag vores fælles historie i ligeværdighed og med gensidig respekt mellem Grønland og Danmark."

2. Review of the field

2.1. Forced assimilation of Indigenous children

'The experiment' can be understood as a case of forced removal and assimilation of Indigenous children, which has been discussed largely in academia. As this thesis will primarily focus on the Inuit children in the arctic area of Greenland, the phenomenon of forced removal and assimilation of Indigenous children has unfortunately taken place in many parts of the world with possibly the most famous example being that of Australia's Stolen Generation as thoroughly documented in the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Report *Bringing them home* (HREOC, 1997). Moreover, striking similarities can also be found in the case of Canada's residential schools (see the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada reports (TRCC, 2015, 2015a) and King (2006)). However, the relevant academic literature dealing with forced assimilation of Indigenous children can easily be further grouped to extend mere geographical categorisation. One category is firsthand narratives of Indigenous Peoples who have themselves been a victim of forced assimilation in their childhood and who may or may not be affected by it to this day. Examples of their stories can be seen in the *Bringing them home* report (HREOC, 1997) which is built on the voices of aborigines belonging to Australia's Stolen Generation, but also in the *Survivors Speak* report (TRCC, 2015b) from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada bringing forth the experiences of former students of the residential schools and contributing to the 'Oral History' of Indigenous experiences. Seran (2015:80) contributes to the debate of the importance of Oral History by examining Aboriginal traumas as intergenerational, as there are both consequences of this to be found in the narratives of the children and grandchildren of the Stolen Generation. She (2015:85-86) uses the concept of post-memory which is another way of acknowledging the intergenerational consequences of collective trauma. Narratives of children and grandchildren of Indigenous, which have been subjected to trauma, serves both as accounts in their own right, but they also contribute to the larger narrative of their parents or grandparents, and are therefore important to be recognised as such (Seran, 2015:85-86). Seran argues that there is a need to broaden the Eurocentric definition of trauma to include accounts of collective, historical and inherited trauma, and here oral histories play an important role in the healing process (Seran:2015:80). This particular category of previous research is of relevance to the thesis, as I intend to build the analysis primarily upon the

narratives of the children involved in ‘the experiment’, in order to get first hand sources and explore the effects of past events in a present perspective.

Contemporary consequences of Indigenous people can in many aspects be linked to the forced assimilation during childhood and adolescence. Examples of contemporary consequences may include addictive behaviour(AHF, 2007), domestic violence(AHF, 2003) and suicide rates(AHF, 2007a) for the now adult Indigenous population. Some studies like Elias et al.(2012) also argue for the intergenerational passing of these contemporary consequences. As these articles and reports primarily focus on victims of the Indian Residential School System in Canada, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) has also examined general patterns of ‘Historical Trauma and Healing’ of aboriginal people(AHF, 2004). Their report on ‘Decolonization and Healing’(AFH, 2006), which is based on research of native people from New Zealand, the United States of America, Australia and Greenland, shows similar patterns and results. This is of relevance to the thesis as consequences of past events are often still evident in contemporary Indigenous communities in former colonies. Although on a smaller scale than the experiences of the Canadian residential schools, ‘the experiment’ might reveal similar patterns of contemporary consequences of the forced assimilation, even though official colonialism has ended. Furthermore, an examination of intergenerational trauma will be of interest to the case as well.

Studies on trauma and healing in cases of forced assimilation of Indigenous children can be found in Kennedy & Whitlock(2011:251), who argues for a broader definition of trauma to e.g. include not only physical experiences such as war or conflict but also mental traumas such as racial discrimination as experienced during forced assimilation. They argue that people who “lived through the historical trauma of war, occupation and decolonization; today this legacy of trauma has an impact upon the capacity of individuals to construct a coherent narrative of the self”(Kennedy & Whitlock, 2001:253-254). This is interesting to the study of forced assimilation of Indigenous children, and especially of this thesis, as the analytical framework seeks to explore the children’s understanding of the self in relation to identity and belonging after having experienced forced assimilation in childhood. In Cuthbert & Quartly(2013:178) trauma and healing of children exposed to forced assimilation is also explored in the stories of aboriginal, mixed and non-aboriginal children who were removed from their families and placed in institutions and/or foster families as a part of the Australian assimilation policies. Along the line of healing is also the argument that recognition or acknowledgement of what happened can be useful in the

healing process for the individual as well as the collective(Cuthbert & Quartly, 2013:182). This is relevant since the children from ‘the experiment’ all ended up either in foster care or institutionalised at the orphanage for the remaining of their childhood and early adolescence.

Exactly public recognition and reconciliation – or the lack thereof – is another category explored in academia in relation to forced assimilation of Indigenous children (see Haebich(2011) and Dorrell(2009)). This is relevant in the case of ‘the experiment’ and in relation to the Danish Prime Minister’s withholding of a public apology. However, public apologies with the aim of reconciliation but without taking responsibility will only maintain previous unequal power structures as argued in Barta(2008) in relation to the public apology from the Australian government.

2.2. Danish-Greenlandic relations

Although not concerned with the ‘the experiment’ per se, other academic literature DIIS(2007), Rud(2017), Thisted(2005) and Jensen(2004) have addressed the topic of the Danish colonialization and other types of assimilation of Inuit in Greenland. DIIS(2007) provides a historical outline of the years 1945-1954 marking the beginning of the end to Greenland as a Danish colony and simultaneously covering the years where ‘the experiment’ took place. Thisted(2005) and Rud(2017) both discuss the more contemporary relation between Greenland and Denmark. These sources provide key knowledge about the relationship between Denmark and Greenland, which is important to get a better understanding of the historical and political context in which ‘the experiment’ took place as well as the relation between the two countries today.

The praxis of sending Greenlandic children to Denmark for a one-year school stay to improve their ‘language skills and personal development’ continued until 1976 and included more than 1500 children as examined in Ernst Jensen’s Ph.D. thesis(Jensen, 2001:463). He primarily focusses on the so-called ‘1.-Prep’ classes which were a group of carefully selected 6-7th graders that went to Denmark for a year to live with Danish foster families and attend the local schools in order to improve their Danish language skills (Jensen, 2001:463). The aim of his study is examine how a school stay of this kind was experienced in the memories of the individual students and what consequences the stay had on the linguistic situation, the personal development, the family situation and education, trade and policy(Jensen, 2001:464). Jensen concludes that while some

individuals suffered unfortunate side effects of the school stays in terms of deprivation, alienation and uncertainty in the creation of identity, the school stays had positive impact on the children(Jensen, 2001:482). While this particular piece of research is not based on the events of ‘the experiment’, it is still relevant to the thesis, as it shows, what I would argue, a continued process involving certain aspects of assimilation even after the colonialism in Greenland had officially ended.

2.3. The experiment

Regarding the subject of the Danish-Greenlandic experiment rather little research have been done. In fact, the only previous research on this specific subject, which has been possible to attain, has been the two theses by Farver(2010) and Walling(2004) each respectively with their own focus and different contribution to the research field.

Farver(2010) uses ‘the experiment’ as a point of departure for a further investigation of the discourses regarding the relations of Denmark and Greenland and their people. From a historical approach the discourses throughout time, as well as the ones that are dominating the debate today, are examined in order to investigate whether a process of reconciliation would be possible in the case of ‘the experiment’(Farver, 2010:10). Farver(2010) argues that the different discourses attached to the Danish understanding of ‘the experiment’, plays a major role in why a Danish-Greenlandic reconciliation process has not been started. She concludes that both the arctic-orientalism used to distinguish Greenlandic people as ‘the other’ as well as the paternalistic discourse surrounding ‘the experiment’ and partly the whole colonialization of Greenland, are major factors why a public apology has not been found needed as determined from the Danish side(Farver, 2010:84).

According to her, a reconciliation process only will be possible if Denmark is willing to change its understanding of itself as the wiser parent only doing what is best for its Greenlandic children(Farver, 2010:86). This study is relevant to the thesis as it discusses the discourses surrounding ‘the experiment’ concluding that it, from the perspective of the majority, was perceived as done in the best interest of the children involved.

Walling’s(2004) point of departure is the forced assimilation of aboriginal and mixed children in Australia(Walling, 2004:2). In her research she analyses the case of ‘the experiment’ with a focus on the historical background, as well as the aim, means and consequences. Walling(2004:88-91) concludes striking similarities between the two cases are evident, however, important differences suggests that the case of Australia was more

extensive with consequences similar to those of genocide(Walling, 2004:89). As Walling briefly outlines the different events and consequences of the Australian case, she ends up with key words such as reconciliation, national guilt, cultural genocide etc., which she argues have slowly made an appearance in the Danish debate regarding the relation to Greenland and especially when discussing ‘the experiment’(Walling, 2004:6-7). However, while Walling’s study is a historical analysis of the ‘the experiment’ and the circumstances surrounding it, I intend to look closer at the experiences as narrated by the children themselves.

2.4. Contribution

This social phenomenon is highly related to the IMER-field, as it can be seen as a consequence of ‘International Migration’ (the Danish colonialization of Greenland), but even more so, as concepts such as assimilation along with identity and belonging are often discussed in the area of ‘Ethnic Relations’.

This thesis seeks to contribute to the very small research field that currently exists on the Danish-Greenlandic experiment. In her research Farver(2010) does not seek to examine the experiences of the children but merely(and primarily the Danish) discourses and perceptions of Greenlandic people in relation to a possible reconciliation regarding ‘the experiment’. While Walling(2004) to some extent does pay attention to the experiences of the children involved, her primary analytical focus is more on a macro level of the historical and political structures surrounding ‘the experiment’. By adopting a social psychological perspective(acknowledging a construction of the self in relation to one’s social environment) and analysing the narratives of the children involved on primarily a micro level with a theoretical framework of intergroup identification and cultural trauma theories, this study seeks to fill the research-gap on the specific case in other ways.

Even though the operational framework of the thesis is carried out as a case study, this particular case of 22 children, still speaks to the larger picture of the Danish-Greenlandic relationship and shared history from a now post-colonial perspective. Furthermore, by including the concept of cultural genocide in the concluding remarks, as a result of examining intergenerational consequences of cultural trauma in the analysis, the thesis contributes to the debate of recognising the concept as important in academia and existing in real life.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Identity and belonging identification

Adopting the perspective of social psychology, sense of identity and belonging is strongly connected to our social environment, meaning also the interactions with other individuals (McLeod, 2007). A lot of human emotions, thoughts and behavior come from the need we have to belong, which means that part of how we perceive our own identity is related to what social groups we identify with (also known as our collective self) (Pogosyan, 2017). Therefore, we seek collectives that we can identify with in which we are accepted and appreciated.

Exploring parts of Henri Tajfel's Social Identity Theory, *social categorization* (cited in Ellemers & Haslam, 2012:381) is a psychological process where people tend to construct distinctive in-groups where they feel they belong and can identify similarities between the members and themselves. Likewise, out-group identification serves to identify differences between other groups and construct a sense of others, in which the individual doesn't feel they belong (Giles & Giles, 2013:142). These groups can be constructed by the individual, the existing groups or structures in society (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012:381). Examples of indicators for determining in/out-groups can be; language, looks, nationality, social status, religion, behavior etc. and are called *intergroup boundaries* (Giles & Giles, 2013:146). Especially language is an essential element of whether someone views another as a true member of the in-group or an outgroup imposter (Giles & Giles, 2013:144).

Another process is that of *social identification* which according to Tajfel (cited in Ellemers & Haslam, 2012:381) refers to "the realization that the self is included in some social categories, and excluded from others (...). Thus, when specific features are associated with a social group, or when these features are valued in a certain way, the process of social identification determines how this reflects upon the self." This can also influence the behavior and thinking of the self so that the individual change or enhance what is valued to the in-group and its members, sometimes at the expense of out-groups and their members e.g. by stereotyping or discriminating (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012:381).

I find it relevant to see how the informants identify their in-group peers and out-group others in an 'us vs. them relation' and to see if their sense of in/out-group belonging changes over time as a result of 'the experiment'.

3.2. Cultural trauma theories

According to Smelser(2004:38) cultural trauma refers to “an invasive and overwhelming event that is believed to undermine or overwhelm one or several essential ingredients of a culture or the culture as a whole”. Alexander(2004:1) argues that “Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways.” This construction of cultural trauma, or ‘trauma process’ as Alexander(2004:11) calls it, lies in “the gap between event and representation”(Alexander, 2004:11). The trauma process leads to a revision of the collective identity where the group will look back on a collective past. It is not enough to have been exposed to cultural traumas as it will not be recognised as such if the collective group, who has been subjected to this, does not choose to represent it as such.

Alexander(2004:27) argues that the process of cultural trauma can help in defining new moral responsibilities and in some cases redirect political actions. “The theory of cultural trauma applies, without prejudice, to any and all instances when societies have, or have not, constructed and experienced cultural traumatic events, and to their efforts to draw, or not to draw, the moral lessons that can be said to emanate from them”(Alexander, 2004:27). Especially having recognised these ‘moral lessons’, as exemplified in official stand points and/or apologies of former colonising governments, are of great importance for the identity and self-perception of the collective group who has experienced cultural trauma and for their further path of healing(Alexander, 2004:27).

Wiechelt and Gryczynski(2012) applies theories of cultural trauma to the case colonialism of Native Americans which shares similarities to my topic. They adopt Alexander’s definition of cultural trauma and adds that “members of the collective do not need to directly experience the event to experience the dramatic loss of identity and meaning that the trauma brings about. Nor does the trauma have to be a sudden event; it can be a slow process working its way into the psyche of the collective”(Wiechelt and Gryczynski, 2012:196-197). They also include the definition developed by Stamm et al.(2004, quoted in Wiechelt and Gryczynski, 2012:197) of cultural trauma and loss which “is based on the idea of cultural clash, whereby a hegemonic “arriving” culture challenges the “original” culture and disrupts fundamental cultural, social, and economic processes”. This is clearest exemplified in colonialism where “disruptions such as expanded trade,

intellectual innovations, epidemics, competition for scarce resources between the arriving culture and original culture, incongruent belief systems, and war—precede an era of cultural loss in which members of the challenged group, still struggling to adjust to the new social reality, continue to experience an erosion of their shared identity and the loss of familiar social structures (cultural memory, language, self-rule, place, family system, economic resources, and healing systems)”(Wiechelt and Gryczynski, 2012:197-198). Wiechelt and Gryczynski(2012:193-194) also point out the difference in previous western understanding of trauma as a single often very physically violent event afflicted on the individual, and the new development of cultural trauma as something than can be seen as a continued process, not physically violent and afflicted on a collective and even intergenerational. This notion share similarities to what is being discussed by Kingston (2015) where the word genocide is connoted with high degrees of physical violence, and the concept of cultural genocide therefore has not been acknowledged in international law as it typically takes form as the intergenerational structural process of assimilation.

3.3. Cultural genocide

Although not recognised as a concept on its own in the eyes of international law (Kingston, 2016:69), I have discovered the concept of cultural genocide being mentioned in increasingly more sources regarding forced assimilation of Indigenous children, especially in the cases of the residential schools in Canada as seen in Woolford & Garcek (2016) and MacDonald and Hudson(2012) as well as in Australia’s Stolen Generation as seen in Krieken(1999 & 2004) and Barta(2008).

Davidson defines cultural genocide as “the purposeful weakening and ultimate destruction of cultural values and practices of feared out-groups”(Davidson, 2012: 18-19), which also pulls strings back to the in/out-group identification theories. He explains the concept by e.g. applying it to the case of European settlers’ development of assimilation policies and techniques to the Indigenous Peoples in North America, which share similarities to the Danish colonialization of Greenland.

Kingston(2015) derives her understanding cultural genocide from two definitions. The first being Raphael Lemkin’s definition of genocide as later developed and defined in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide as “intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such”(UN General Assembly, 1948, article 2 cited in Kingston, 2015:64). She stresses that the

emphasis is on the physical violence and the intent behind it(Kingston, 2015:66). However, she argues that cultural genocide should be seen as a structural process that doesn't always have an explicit intending perpetrator but can be understood as actions that destroy a social collective(Kingston, 2015:66). Therefore the definition by Tinker, who writes that "cultural genocide can be defined as the effective destruction of a people by systematically or systemically (intentionally or unintentionally in order to achieve other goals) destroying, eroding, or undermining the integrity of the culture and system of values that defines a people and gives them life"(Tinker in Kingston, 2015:65), seems to cover the concept better in Kingston's opinion.

Other parts of her work are dedicated to the examination of cultural genocide on Inuit in Canada(Kingston, 2015:72-75) and is concerned with the lack of recognition of the concept especially in relation to Indigenous Peoples. It is a two-sided debate whether cultural genocide should be considered important enough to be recognised on its own in international law or if cultural rights should be protected in other types of legislations (Kingston, 2015:65).

Cultural genocide is a concept that is strongly connected to cultural trauma theories and the consequences hereof especially in relation to the concepts of intergenerational effects and structural and collective trauma rather than physical and individual. Because for cultural genocide to be recognised as such it is important that it will be intergenerational. Otherwise it would 'just' be regarded as any other individual experience of trauma, not associated with the destruction of parts or an entire collective culture. According to Barta (2008:208) official stand points such as government apologies have an important role to play in the recognition of this.

4. Method and Material

4.1. Research design

This study examines how the now grown up children understand and construct their sense of identity and belonging in relation to the experiences from ‘the experiment’. Adopting a social psychological perspective, intergroup identification and cultural trauma theories will be applied to carry out the analysis.

The research is carried out as a case study of a single event(‘the experiment’), yet it speaks to the larger picture of Danish colonialism in Greenland. To examine and analyse the selected material, considerations of autobiographical research were used. Following an initial reading of the material, where preliminary themes and theories started to emerge, a customised coding scheme(see appendix 2) was developed and applied to the material. First quantitatively in number of appearances, then more qualitatively, using the emerging data and with the assistance of the chosen theories, the material was thoroughly analysed with inspiration from qualitative content analysis.

Guided by the philosophical considerations of a constructivist ontology, I find the selected method and material appropriate to answer the research aim and questions of the thesis.

4.2. Methodology

Ontology refers to the beliefs about reality(Hammond & Wellington, 2013:115) and in the case of this thesis, the ontology is constructivist, meaning that the way I as a researcher will look at social phenomena, will be through the notion that an objective reality doesn’t exist, but that there are multiple realities(Moses & Knutsen, 2012:11).

Epistemology discusses how one gets the knowledge of a social phenomenon(Killam, 2015). Therefore, one’s understanding of what knowledge is, and how it is attained, ultimately defines the type of research questions asked in the later research as well as the methodology and methods, that one might find relevant in addressing these questions (Hammond & Wellington, 2013: 58). To get the knowledge of a specific social phenomenon(in this case ‘the experiment’), I need to explore and interpret various perspectives(or in this case narratives) on this, also referred to as an ‘emic approach’, as the understanding of reality is socially constructed by the actors involved. The emic approach usually gathers data from within a specific social context. These data will most likely have a more subjective character, as well as reflect personalised views and perspectives on a specific social phenomenon(Oliver, 2010:74). As researches using the

emic approach tend to gather data by interacting with people to find out what they understand as reality of a social phenomenon, they tend to be more qualitative in nature, such as in-depth interviews or smaller case studies(Killam, 2015). In the case of my thesis, I will analyse the various experiences(interpretations) of a given social context (forced removal and assimilation) and understand it as multiple realities of the children involved in that specific social phenomenon.

Methodology can be understood as a ‘philosophical guide to data gathering’, and it asks how knowledge is discovered and analysed in a systematic way(Killam, 2015). It is the toolbox of the tools(methods) used for gathering data(Moses & Knutsen, 2012:3). In this case the epistemology(emic) and ontology(constructivism) suggest interpretation to discover the multiple social realities experienced by the children. To best examine and answer the research aim and questions, I will adopt the methodological approach of the social psychological perspective, suggesting identity is a social construct shaped by the social environment in which the individual interacts(McLeod, 2007).

4.3. Case study method

Used when wanting to explore the uniqueness and ordinariness of a particular case, the method of *intrinsic case study* is applied(Berg, 2009:325). This is the case of ‘the experiment’ and the understanding of the individual narratives in the main sources as subjective and constructed understandings or multiple realities(Moses & Knutsen, 2012:11) of that specific social phenomenon that took place in the beginning of the 1950’s. However, the thesis doesn’t only seek to understand the social and psychological consequences of the children of that specific event but seeks to broaden what happened by adopting a more generalising operational framework such as forced assimilation of Indigenous children as a point of departure for the analysis. Therefore, in its whole the thesis makes up an *instrumental case study* which according to Berg (2009:326) is used when wanting to explore an issue or refine a theoretical explanation by making it more generalizable. This is done by applying a theoretical framework of intergroup identification and cultural trauma theories to the narratives of the children. In this way, case study of a single case can speak to the larger picture of a social reality, as Flyvbjerg argues: “For researchers, the closeness of the case study to real-life situations (...) is important for the development of a nuanced view of reality, including the view that human behavior cannot be meaningfully understood as simply the rule-governed acts

found at the lowest levels of the learning process, and in much theory”(Flyvbjerg, quoted in Silverman, 2006:303).

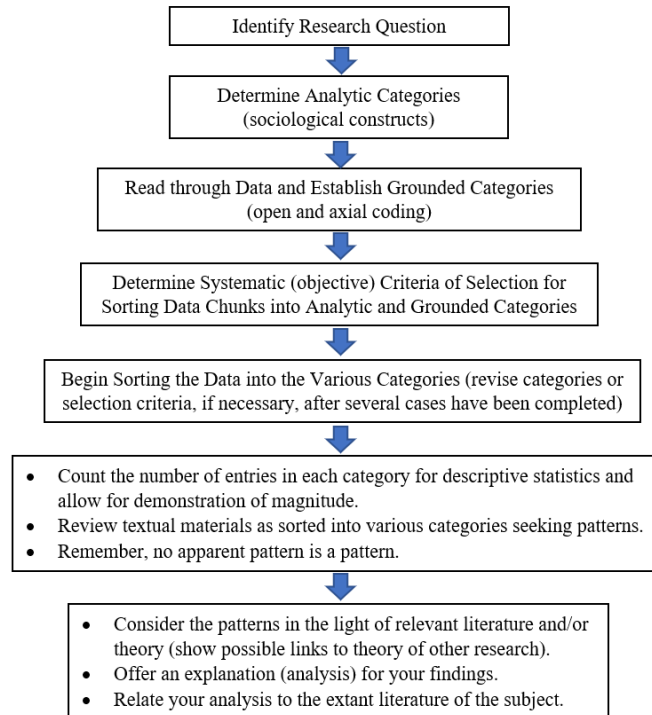
4.4. Autobiographical research

As the case study represents the overall method of the research design, it is important to keep in mind considerations of autobiographical research when analysing the material. Autobiographical research makes use of various sources e.g. life narratives, oral stories, diaries, memoirs etc.(Abrahão, 2012:30). It is “a (re)construction made by the researcher, through the research as he or she analyses empirical sources(...), in a critical dialogue with research findings from elsewhere, and with a global view of a social-economic and cultural environment where the studied lives take place”(Abrahão, 2012:30). Therefore, autobiographical research fit well into the case study model, as also argued in Freeman (2008) context is the essence of autobiographical research; “Given that the natural habitat of humans is culture—the life of language, relationships, and communities—it follows that autobiography is not only about the individual but also about the sociocultural world through which the individual moves”(Freeman, 2008:46). Furthermore, the three elements of life narrative, memory and time are essential to keep in mind when analysing autobiographical material(Abrahão, 2012:30).

However, as autobiographical research is not a specific method *pr. se*, but rather a turn in social science to focus and build research around personal accounts and narratives(Coffey, 2004:46), ‘qualitative content analysis’(Berg, 2009) will be the used method to guide the analysis of the selected material.

4.5. Qualitative Content Analysis

Berg states that qualitative content analysis can be used by the researcher to examine how “subjects or authors of textual materials view their social worlds and how these views fit into the larger frame of how the social sciences view these issues and interpretations” (Berg, 2009:343). The following is a figure of the ‘Stage Model of Qualitative Analysis’ (Berg, 2009:362), which has served as inspiration for the organisation and analysis of the material;



Berg explains ‘Directed Content Analysis’ to include “more analytic coding and categories derived from existing theories and explanations relevant to the research focus (..) the researcher immerse herself in the raw data, using these themes and those that may emerge from the data itself(Berg, 2009:340-341). With these notions in mind, I have developed a coding scheme(see appendix 2) to help organising the material in a scientific way and to better assist in the analysis.

4.6. Material

The main material used in the thesis will be the books ‘*For Flid og God Opførsel*’ (Thiesen, 2011) by one of the(now adult) children from ‘the experiment’ Helene Thiesen and ‘*I den bedste mening*’ by Bryld(1998) consisting of life history interviews from 15 of the children from ‘the experiment’ and in some cases members of their Greenlandic families and Danish foster families. These are the only published accounts concerning ‘the experiment’ from the perspectives of the children involved, that I know to exist.

Thiesen(2011) is what Berg(2009:283) defines as a ‘comprehensive autobiography’ where the author has written down her personal experiences in the life span of her earliest memory to the time of writing. Bryld(1998), on the other hand, categorises as an ‘edited autobiography’ meaning that author of the book is not the primary source herself but rather functions as a researcher, having the possibility to slightly edit the material for the

sake of creating clarity to the narratives(Berg, 2009:283). However, to get closest possible to the primary sources of the narratives, only chapters where a child gives their own account will be used in the analysis. This eliminates accounts of 6 children who have passed away before the making of the book. Furthermore, the interviews with the family and foster family members will also not be used in the analysis.

According to Berg, autobiographical accounts can be extremely useful as the information provides more than “simply a single individual’s subjective view on the matter”(Berg, 2009:284). They can “reflect social contours of a given time, the prevailing or competing ideological orientations of a group, or the self-reflections about one’s activities in various roles”(Berg, 2009:284). He concludes that autobiographical accounts provide “a solid measure of data for the research process”(Berg, 2009:284-285).

It is a fact that only limited previous research and available primary material exist in the case of ‘the experiment’. I have therefore decided to make use of these books as they nonetheless are based(if not written by, in the case of Thiesen(2011)) on firsthand primary accounts and are both important and relevant sources for this research. Furthermore, due to limitations of time and resources as a bachelor student, analysing already produced data seems like a very efficient alternative which will allow me to spend more time and effort on the analysis of the thesis.

Finally, secondary literature on the case of the experiment(such as previous research) and academic writings on the topic of forced assimilation of Indigenous children mentioned in the literature review have been used to give the thesis context.

4.7. Validity and reliability

As the following analysis primarily builds on personal narratives, it is important to keep certain methodological considerations and critique in mind.

Although the narratives of the children have been written down, they still belong to what is known in historical research as ‘Oral History’, which from post-colonial perspectives have been argued to help the process of healing(Visser, 2015:16). Widely recognised and well-known examples of these can be found in the two reports *Bringing them home* (HREOC, 1997) & *Survivors Speak*(TRCC, 2015b). Visser argues even further that “the injustice and wrongs of colonialism produce a restless state, in which trauma must be brought to light through narrative. Narrativization is empowering to individuals and their communities and is in fact crucial to cultural survival”(Visser, 2015:16). Furthermore,

Seran(2015:81) addresses the critique of validity of such sources as having been established to silence the voices of marginalised groups. Recognising oral history and narratives contributes to the liberation of native voices and stories(Seran:2015:84), as trauma-narratives helps rewrite history to include perspectives and experiences of former marginalised voices(Seran, 2015:81).

As respectively 48 and 61 years have passed since ‘the experiment’ to the actual collection of the personal accounts, I do not intend to regard the sources as objective and true accounts of the past but rather as a “particular and subjective representation” (Silverman, 2006:124) of this. As the informants look back, they do so in retrospect meaning that they might forget or remember various things due to the new context they find themselves in today with different knowledge, feelings and/or understanding of how they experienced what happened in the past(Freeman, 2008:47). However, as this research is based on a constructivist ontology, which recognises the notion of multiple realities(Moses & Knutsen, 2012:11), subjectivity is not something that should discard the sources as less scientific. It is, however, important to keep it in mind and stress the implications of this when analysing the material.

This is evident in the way that I have chosen to frame my research aim and questions. I am interested in investigating how the children in the present day have constructed a sense of identity and belonging, through their narratives, based on the memories of the past. According to Abrahão(2012:30) and Freeman(2008:47) interpreting and understanding the past from a present perspective is the essence of autobiographical research. Furthermore, I intend to see how elements of cultural trauma theories can contribute to the understanding of how these children choose to narrate the events of ‘the experiment’ in the light of recent debates of public apologies, reconciliation, healing and cultural genocide. Nevertheless, it is not only the informants there should be given source critical considerations, so should the interviewer. This is especially relevant when analysing the material of Bryld(1998). As I didn’t do the interviews myself, I didn’t see the facial expressions or hear the tone of voice of the different informants, which could have contributed to a richer analysis. The presence of her as an interviewer has influenced the situation and ultimately the answers too(Silverman, 2006:125-126). However, had I done the interview similar implications would have taken place and influenced the situation, albeit in a different way. Bryld serves as a mediator of the stories the children have told her, causing the primary material to be slightly edited. However, it is clear to see Bryld’s considerations regarding the interviews as having been very open ended and unstructured

which characterises life history interviews (Silverman, 2006:117), in the way that the majority of the writings in the chapters are primarily the uninterrupted words of the informants, only occasionally supplied with some added background information. Bryld also fulfils Berg's requirements for edited autobiography in the fact that "all unique styles of speak must remain unedited" (Berg, 2009:283). This is evident in statements like, "Kumerstøller darli' vær!" (Bryld, 1998:40) when a woman describes how her younger brother pronounced 'Gummistøvler dejligt vejr' in Danish [gumboots lovely weather] or the spelling of 'øller' (Bryld, 1998:192) instead of 'øl' which shows an informal and grammatically incorrect way of spelling 'beers' in Danish. Yet, Bryld could of course still have left things out that might have been relevant to the research. Nonetheless, everyone interviewed has proofread and recognised the writing before it was published defined as respondent validation' (Silverman, 2006:290) which speaks to the validity of the material. Thiesen (2011), despite being a firsthand primary source, only accounts for one of the children's experience. Although Bryld (1998) has been slightly edited, it is based on accounts of first hand sources and contains numerous accounts rather than one. This more quantitative contribution allows for cross-referencing of information from the different accounts and adds validity to the research despite the edit (Abrahão, 2012:35). However, to increase the scientific validity and reliability of the material and the research findings, I will compare (although not explicitly in the thesis but more as confirming or affirming notions) my findings to those of previous studies on similar cases of forced assimilation of Inuit children in Canada, school stays of Greenlandic children in Denmark in the 60-70's and studies of Danish-Greenlandic relations of the time.

5. Analysis

At the time Bryld(1998) was published 9 children lived in Denmark, 3 in Greenland, 1 in Sweden, 1 in The Faroe Islands and 1 in the Canary Islands. The rest had passed away, hereof 4 in Denmark and the rest in Greenland. This has left me with 15 accounts to analyse(see appendix 1 for overview of informants), whereof 14 of them are from Bryld(1998) and 1 is primarily from Thiesen(2011) with supplements from Bryld(1998). The selected quotes and topics of the analysis is based on a quantitative selection, where topics mentioned more times and by more children, were selected to give a more representative picture of the accounts(see appendix 2 for coding scheme and results). Finally, the quotes were more carefully analysed and put in relation to the larger theoretical framework and context of the Danish colonialism and forced removal and assimilation of Inuit children in Greenland.

5.1. Longing, homesickness and lack of answers

Being parted with the family was a traumatic event for most of the children. Feelings of homesickness and longing for their Greenlandic families are evident in statements such as;

[When told that the other children had left for Greenland] “Then I started to cry. Maybe I realised that I would never go home” – Johan (Bryld, 1998:156)⁶.

[After meeting mother in hospital] “When I got home, I hurried to my room and curled together in foetal position on my bed. It hurt in my chest, I cried quietly until it was dark. I wanted to talk to my mum so badly (...) tell her how much I had missed her. And I would ask, if I could go home with her when she got released. I wanted to tell her how lonely I was, even though we were many children at the orphanage. I felt like telling her that I often cried myself to sleep” – Helene (Thisen, 2011:135).

10 of the 15 accounts showed a confusion or lack of information both amongst adults and children as to what exactly was going to happen and why. This caused frustration and sorrow amongst the children as expressed in the following quotes;

[In Denmark] “I felt lonely even though my adoptive mother was very kind and loving. (...). For a long time, I thought everything was temporary but when a couple of years had passed, I started to cry a lot and ask when I was going home. I was inconsolable and didn’t believe my adoptive mother, when she said that I was going to

⁶ Quotes from Bryld(1998) and Thiesen(2011) used in the analysis are all freely translated by me. See appendix 3 for quote in original language.

stay with her and that the others were back in Greenland” – Carla (Bryld, 1998:168-170).

[When told to live at orphanage] “What? I thought in disbelief (...), it hurts in my chest. (...) It can’t be true, now they are taking me away from my mum again. (...) I’m in shock and with steps as heavy as lead, I enter the bus. (...) I’m crying inside myself while thinking: (...) Why am I going to have a new mother, when my own mother and siblings live in town?” – Helene (Thiesen, 2011:50-51).

“I still wonder why it was me and not someone else who went to live at the orphanage. No one has told me” – Gabriel (Bryld, 1998:71).

These quotes show the lack of information and explanation all the way from the beginning of ‘the experiment’, upon return to Greenland and to the present day. Studies have proved recognitions and apologies of wrongs done to a collective is important for clarity and the future healing process (Kingston, 2015:78), and due to the absence of this in relation to ‘the experiment’, the children try to find reasoning elsewhere by constructing meaningful explanations which can be a part of their history and thus present perception of self-identity. The two main explanations identified in the accounts are those that believe their families agreed to ‘the experiment’ with the best intentions;

”It was then, he told me that he didn’t have a clue about the adoption. He agreed to the fact that I could be in foster care for a long time. The authorities said that I would be well and educated. He wanted the best for me and had a lot of children to support already” – Johan (Bryld, 1998:159).

”I think, I came to Denmark because my father wanted the best for me. My mother was dead, and my father was left alone with many children (...) I didn’t know anything about what was to happen. I just remember, how unhappy I was” – Bodil (Bryld, 1998:94). And those with a more critical view on their families’ decisions as expressed in the following statements;

”I honestly don’t know, why my sister and I went to Denmark and later the orphanage – maybe because my aunt was one of those, who accompanied the children to Denmark. (...) It might be that my mother wanted it, because at the time it was a big shame to be born out of wedlock” [whose father was an American navy official] – Eva (Bryld, 1998:79).

”Us orphans have experienced things differently, but I think, most of us have had the feeling of being excluded, to be unwanted, both by our family and our people. Ever since I as seven-year-old was sent to Denmark, I have been insecure, whether my

mother loved me. I always had the feeling of being a 'guest', not as belonging to the family"– Helene (Bryld, 1998:46).

5.2. Intergroup boundaries as indicators of identity and belonging

"The realization that the self is included in some social categories, and excluded from others (...) Thus, when specific features are associated with a social group, or when these features are valued in a certain way, the process of social identification determines how this reflects upon the self"(Ellemers & Haslam, 2012:381).

The children account for various intergroup boundaries in the distinguishing between 'us and them' to construct a sense of belonging and identity. Differences in way of life/customs, economy, physical environment, food, upbringing, looks and language have been identified in the accounts as indicating similarities and differences between in- and out groups. With respectively 6 and 11 children accounting for these as important intergroup boundaries, the importance of looks and language will be further analysed in relation to how the children construct their identity.

[In Denmark]"People starred at us, a little group of black-haired, Greenlandic children, it was not a common sight back then" – Helene (Thisen, 2011:152). As looks are the first thing that meets the eye, this intergroup boundary has great influence in social categorization. 'The other' or 'the different' may be exoticized as expressed by one of the children; "In daily life at my adoptive mother's, I saw myself as the outsider. I was bullied and especially the adults didn't show me any understanding. There were so few Greenlanders, where I lived. Many over-starred me or touched my skin and talked about me, like I wasn't there" – Carla (Bryld, 1998:171). Although still discriminative, the exoticism can also entail certain advantages, which another girl experienced, as she got a friendly discount, when buying lollies at the local store; "Hansen couldn't resist such a little, black-haired, Greenlandic girl. (...) I was everyone's darling (...) If I didn't have it my way one place, I made sure to have it another. They treated me like this, because they thought that everything was sweet about me" – Helene (Thisen, 2011:45). However, most of the experiences of looks as intergroup boundary were negative and discriminating towards the children, and many of the informants experience the same discrimination in their adulthood; "I didn't like school. Was bullied. Back then, there were not so many Greenlanders, and that I had to hear for often. Yes, even today they can yell something ugly too" – David (Bryld, 1998:171).

Language is accounted to be the main intergroup boundary among a large majority of the children. Language plays an important role in in/outgroup identification and the construction and self-perception of identity (Giles & Giles, 2013:144) and will be analysed later in relation to cultural trauma theories.

5.3. Changes of intergroups

Humans have a need to belong (Pogonyan, 2017), so the fact that the children identifies in- and outgroups to try and fit in is only natural. However, it is interesting to see how these intergroups change over time as a result of 'the experiment' (see appendix 2).

Before the children are taken to Greenland the in/outgroup relationship is a very clear distinction between us/Greenlanders and them/Danes. This can especially be seen in intergroup boundaries like looks and economy; "We saw the Danes and wondered about their white skin, their size and the blue eyes, but we never talked to them. They kept to each other (...) it was among ourselves, we helped each other in times of need" – Carla (Bryld, 1998:171).

When first arriving to Denmark this division is still evident. The children tend to see each other as ingroup peers and Danes and foster families as the outgroup; "The first year, I felt alienated. I barely understood Danish and many children asked me, what I was doing here, and when I was going back to Greenland" – Søren (Bryld, 1998:157). However, as time passes and according with the relationship that is developed to the foster families, some of the children start to identify their foster families as part of their ingroup. This is evident when going back to Greenland; [About foster mother] "She wanted to adopt me, but it was not allowed, because I still had one of my parents. The next year, I cried every night out of longing after her" – Gabriel (Bryld, 1998:68).

Upon arrival to Greenland, the children still identify their Greenlandic families as the most significant ingroup, but as previously mentioned, they are met by barriers of language and the fact that they need to live at the orphanage. As time passes the lines between in- and outgroup get more blurred; "In school we attended the Danish class, and in the school yard the Greenlandic children played with us, without us being able to understand each other. Back then we thought, we were more than them, but I remember that it felt scary not being able to speak with them. We were there, but we didn't belong. It's strange, in our own country" – Kristine (Bryld, 1998:214). The children notice that they both feel a sense of belonging to Greenland and their Greenlandic families, but also increasingly more to the orphanage and Danish-speaking people, as the local children start

‘to outgroup’ them as different due to the language amongst other things; ”We attended the Danish school as the only Greenlanders. We were bullied by the Greenlandic children, who called us ‘Danish swine’ and ‘you orphan, go home’. They bullied us because we didn’t know Greenlandic, and because we didn’t have parents. When we went to and from school, we walked together, because we were scared of the Greenlandic children” – Gabriel (Bryld, 1998:69).

Identity division and confusion as well as feelings of alienation from previous familiarities and simultaneously rejections or lack of full acceptance by their new identified ingroup, the Danish-speaking, only seemed to grow stronger as the children grew older;

”When I reached puberty, I thought a lot about everything and cried often. I felt that I didn’t have any identity. Was I Greenlandic, Danish or what? I have always felt like a bastard” – Gabriel (Bryld, 1998:70).

”No matter what I do, I will always live with my dilemma, my rootlessness. When I’m in Denmark, I long for Greenland, and when I go to Greenland, I long for Denmark. I will never get over this. I feel that very few understand me” – Carla (Bryld, 1998:173).

As some of the children were adopted and stayed in Denmark and others end up going back for various reasons, the relationship between in- and outgroups becomes even more confusing. ”As the only Greenlander, it was difficult. I was looked down on and ordered around and in the end, I nearly gave up” [about his time as apprentice in Denmark] – Albert (Bryld, 1998:284). Although Albert was good at his job and spoke Danish fluently, his looks provoked stereotypes and discrimination inherited from relations between former colonised and colonisers. Albert then tries to find a sense of belonging in another group, but as a result of the language he is not accepted as a part of this group either; “ I wanted to live at the Greenlandic Home to be close to my country-men and to learn Greenlandic. I did get something out of it, but they bullied me, because I as a Greenlander spoke Danish. When the warden saw, how I was, he made sure that I was admitted to the psychiatric department at Rigshospitalet, because I was mentally broken down – Albert (Bryld, 1998:284).

The children naturally have different experiences with higher or lesser degree of in/out-group feelings towards Greenlanders or Danes. Nevertheless, they all seem to share a strong sense of identification with what Helene(Thiesen, 2011:143) describes as their ‘destiny sisters and brother’, meaning each other. They could unite over the fact that they all felt alone and unable to be understood; ”We instinctively felt deeply with each other, whenever something happened to our families. There was always full support even when

it was very hard to talk about. (...) [but] There was never the full confidentiality which we innermost wished to have – with just one person” – Helene (Thisen, 2011:135).

5.4. Losing a part of yourself: Cultural trauma theories in relation to loss of language and culture

”If I knew the language, I had moved to Greenland. In my innermost soul – I am Greenlandic” – Joel (Bryld, 1998:205).

Returning to their country and realising that they had lost their language brought grief and embarrassment to many of the children(Thisen, 2011:143). The children narrate of being bullied by the local children in school and scolded by the local adults for not being able to speak Greenlandic(Bryld, 1998:179). ”They would yell: Speak Greenlandic goddammit, you are Greenlandic! That hurt. (...) At the orphanage there was the opposite influence: We had to speak Danish and that doubleness confused us children” – Marie (Bryld, 1998:88-89).

Even as adult the intergroup boundary of language still has a huge impact in how the children see themselves in relation to their Greenlandic heritage and their own identity-construction. Many of the informants, who have later re-acquired the language, say that they don’t feel comfortable speaking in larger audiences as a fear of not mastering the language completely and being judged(Thisen, 2011:156). One feels ‘inhibited’ and many can’t write in Greenlandic either(Bryld, 1998:89). Furthermore, they perceive the language as a link to their identity and a way to get more knowledge of their Greenlandic roots, however, many feel that this possibility has been taken away from them along with the language(Bryld, 1998:184). ”I’ve always been proud to be Greenlandic – and unhappy when I met someone who taunted me because I didn’t speak Greenlandic. (...) I’m a Greenlander in Denmark and master Danish. It has taken many years to get this far. I’ll never be this good in Greenlandic as I am in Danish. I’ve had to think like this not to break completely down” – Johan (Bryld, 1998:55).

Cultural trauma is defined as an “invasive and overwhelming event”(Smelser, 2004:38) which undermines one or numerous components of a culture e.g. the language. [When a maid was caught teaching Greenlandic at the orphanage] ”I never want to hear you try to teach the children Greenlandic. They are Danish-speaking, and they have to stay like that. Is that understood?”(Thiesen, 2011:80-81). This quote shows how the children were forbidden to speak Greenlandic and how Danish language and culture were clearly

imposed and emphasized. As argued by Wiechelt and Gryczynski(2012:196-197) the cultural trauma is a “slow process working its way into the psyche of the collective”, evident in one of the children’s accounts of how they, as a part of their daily routine, would have to attend services in the Danish church, learn Danish songs and hymns, and how the headmistress went around every evening before bed time to check that the children would sing a certain Danish goodnight song and say their evening prayer (Thiesen, 2011: 70). Furthermore, the cultural clash of cultural trauma where an arriving culture challenges the original culture(Stamm et al. 2004, quoted in Wiechelt and Gryczynski, 2012:197) is exemplified in the account of how an amulet, given to a girl by her brother for protection, was burned by her Danish foster mother; “She took it off my neck and said that she didn’t like these sort of things. She threw it just like that into the fireplace. [When she asks her years later why] Back then we perceived it as something with spirits, and I didn’t want you to be around by spirits”– Carla (Bryld, 1998:167-169).

5.5. Contemporary consequences: Addiction and instability

Contemporary consequences as a result of forced assimilation of Indigenous children have been suggested to increase addictive behaviour(AHF, 2007), domestic violence(AHF, 2003) and suicide rates(AHF, 2007a) amongst Indigenous communities. The case of ‘the experiment’ is no exception with 6 of the informants accounting to either have had or still having struggles with poor health, domestic violence, criminality, suicide attempts, drugs, alcohol and unstable relationships, where the two latter being the more common issues. ”I moved a lot, was restless and became tired of the tough life with drinking. (...) I have really travelled a lot, maybe also to get away from myself. (...) When I drank, it was because I couldn’t find myself”– Albert (Bryld, 284-285). Here the informant reflects upon his addiction as means to forget whatever troubles he was going through. Another informant reflects upon his previous failed relationships to women and his children; “I don’t know why I have never settled down in a relationship. (...) When they want to decide for me, then I disappear. But it can also be the fear of losing someone again” – Joel (Bryld, 1998:205). For some of the informants it seems like the pattern of being uprooted from places and lack of close attachments in the childhood have proceeded to follow them into adulthood, possibly as a protection against the feeling of having to lose anyone again. Furthermore, some of these contemporary consequences also have an intergenerational dimension which will be discussed in the following chapter.

5.6. Intergenerational effects: The trauma continues

Wiechelt and Gryczynski(2012:193-194) explores the intergenerational aspect of cultural trauma as a continued process afflicted on a collective and consequently also the later generations of that group. Elements of this can also be found in the narratives both in relation to the informants' own children and the larger collective of the Greenlandic people.

As already pointed out in the previous chapter, unstable and short-term relationships have made its impact on many of the informants' adult lives. With statements like; "I have thought a lot about her [daughter], but I don't want to ruin something for her" (Bryld, 1998:152) and "It hasn't always been easy. My two eldest children were treated very rough by their father. My son became mentally ill and my daughter has also been through a lot. They have missed me a lot"(Bryld, 1998:185), it shows that in some cases the hurt and damage afflicted upon the children from 'the experiment' have continued causing problems for the next generation. It even shows the same pattern of wanting to do the best for your children by staying away from them, which some of the informants identified their own parents to do in the time of 'the experiment'.

The loss of the Greenlandic language is another example of how the cultural trauma afflicted on the children has had intergenerational effects on later generations. "(...) the language debate continues to be about being more Danish or less Greenlandic. (...) My children have experienced the problems up close, as they lived more in Denmark as little. (...) Here at home, we have consciously spoken both Greenlandic and Danish" – Marie (Bryld, 1998:89). Because Danish language has been imposed on Greenlandic people for generations, some Greenlanders consider Danish as their stronger language. This has caused debates in the later years between Greenlanders who prefer not to speak Danish at all and those who don't speak much Greenlandic(Sæhl, 2018). It goes to show how important an intergroup boundary language is in relation to the construction of identity, and how it unfortunately still creates intergroup hostility and conflicts among the wider collective in Greenland.

However, it is not only in Greenland that intergenerational consequences can be found. As exemplified in the following quotes, is the inherited structural discrimination of Greenlandic people in Denmark, which continues to persist to this day, in terms of language, looks and attributed negative stereotypes; [When being approached by drunk people calling out on her and some friends in Denmark] "The others didn't have words to

defend themselves. I scolded extremely in Danish. It was very hurtful, and I think those kinds of situations have developed my social engagement. I often let me use as interpreter and experienced time after time, how Greenlandic women lost the right to their children, just because they were Greenlandic and weren't understood" – Eva (Bryld, 1998:83). The intergenerational consequences attached to cultural trauma is also explained by Alexander(2004:22); "collective memory is thereby not only social and fluid but deeply connected to the contemporary sense of the self". This means that the cultural trauma, being part of a larger collective memory of the group(in this case the children from 'the experiment', or in the larger perspective, Greenlandic Inuit), will influence how the individual of that collective perceive their self-identity. This influence is present even though that particular individual was not herself exposed to the traumatic events as exemplified in the informants' previous quotes, which again speaks to the importance of post-memory trauma recognition(Seran, 2015:85-86). This argues for the intergenerational effects of cultural trauma and differentiates it from the 'common' perception of trauma as a single and physically violent event(Wiechelt and Gryczynski, 2012:193-194).

5.7. Summary of analysis in relation to cultural trauma theories

According to Alexander(2004) cultural trauma is a social construction, where meaning must be ascribed to an event by the collective group in question for it to be perceived as traumatic. "For traumas to emerge at the level of the collectivity, social crises must become cultural crises"(Alexander, 2004:10), where "Collective actors "decide" to represent social pain as a fundamental threat to their sense of who they are, where they came from, and where they want to go"(Alexander, 2004:10). Looking of the recent events described in the chapter of 'Current context'(request for public apology & the agreed historical investigation) this is what has happened with the increase of independence and language debate in Greenland the later years. Furthermore, I would argue that the informants, by putting their experiences into words, contribute to the collective representation of the pain they have been afflicted. As their story is only one case out of many of assimilated Greenlandic Inuit, which in Alexander's words can be seen as a "threat to their sense of who they are where they come from and where they want to go"(Alexander, 2004:10), the narratives have an important part to play in the larger process of official recognition and collective healing as they can facilitate 'moral lessons'(Alexander, 2004:27) to society and political actors.

As explained in the theoretical framework, cultural trauma can according to Alexander (2004:1) be broken down into five elements; 1) a group of people being subjected to what they understand as a 'horrendous event' 2) this must be felt and recognised by members of that 'collectivity' 3) it must be felt so deeply that it 'leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness' 4) the mark must influence that collective's memories 'forever' 5) the effects of the cultural trauma on the collective memory will change the 'future identity' of the group. When applying this theory to the case of 'the experiment' as accounted in the narratives, it is clear that the majority of the children have experienced 'the experiment' as a terrible event. It has left marks on all the children, some more than others, but everyone accounts for identity division and confusion which continues to exist in their understanding of their self-identity today. Their memories of their childhood have been marked forever and the effects of this cultural trauma have changed the way they identify with certain in/outgroups too. Furthermore, as the analysis has shown, it is not only the identity of those who experienced the cultural trauma firsthand that has been affected, but also the later generations of Greenlanders in both Greenland and Denmark. To summarise the chapter of the analysis in relation to cultural trauma theories, it can be concluded that elements of cultural trauma are found in the accounts of the children. Furthermore, by representing the pain of forced assimilation, the narratives contribute to the collective representation of the cultural trauma they have been subjected too. All this will contribute to the understanding of the informant's narratives and 'the experiment' as a case of cultural trauma in the shape of forced removal and assimilation of Indigenous children in Greenland.

6. Conclusion

Despite the cultural trauma in the past, most of the informants ended up having what might be considered a 'normal' life. Some had families of their own or other important and close relationships. Others have even re-acquired the Greenlandic language and kept in touch with their Greenlandic families. Although some of these people still expressed a sense of identity division, most of them had acquired a sense of belonging in either new relationships, work or other meaningful activities. Others, however, have had a more troubled life, including problems with alcohol, drugs, criminality, some died really young and some unfortunately succeeded in taking their own life. Although the course of life has taken different turns for all informants, they have all in their respected accounts made similar statements of identity confusion, lack of belonging and severe hurt from being separated first from their country, culture and family in Greenland, and some also later from their foster families in Denmark. However, the children have dealt with this in many ways. For example, by focusing their energy on creating their own family, rejecting their Greenlandic identity completely, finding consolation in religion and spirituality, getting engaged in Greenland via associations or learning the language or moving far away from both Greenland and Denmark in hopes to leave it all behind.

As identified in the analysis, issues regarding longing, homesickness and lack of answers have had social and psychological effects on the children. Danish culture and language have been structurally imposed where Greenlandic culture and language have been sought equally eradicated. Furthermore, the analysis has shown how intergroup identification has been used for the construction and understanding of identity and belonging, and how this has changed as a result of 'the experiment' throughout the life span of the children, as well as how it still influences their life and self-perception of identity today.

As evident in the analysis, elements of cultural trauma in terms of contemporary consequences, trauma as a structural process afflicted on the collective and with intergenerational effects on later generations have been identified in the narratives. Defined as "the purposeful weakening (...) of cultural values and practices of feared out-groups"(Davidson, 2012: 18-19) and as a "structural process" not necessarily having an "explicit intending perpetrator" but rather explained as "actions that destroy a social collective"(Kingston, 2015:66), the aforementioned elements of cultural trauma theories, identified in the narratives of the children from 'the experiment', fits well with the description of cultural genocide.

After colonialism comes an era of cultural loss in which members of the marginalised group, struggle to “adjust to the new social reality, and continue to experience an loss of their shared identity and familiar social structures(cultural memory, language, self-rule, place, family system, economic resources, and healing systems)”(Wiechelt and Gryczynski, 2012:197-198). From this point of view there are two waves of trauma being inflicted; the first is the actual colonialism and the second is the effects it has on the original culture also called ‘the era of cultural loss’. It is in the era of cultural loss and modernization of Greenland that ‘the experiment’ takes place and that the cultural trauma of these children begins. As identified here is also the notion that cultural trauma affects the ‘shared identity’ like loss of cultural memory and language, which became clear in the narratives.

Relevant to the thesis is also the fact that cultural genocide is not officially recognised even though one can find cases of this towards Indigenous Peoples throughout history and many (even generations after) are still affected by this in terms of socio-economic differences, structural discrimination and loss of language and culture(AHF, 2006:3). For cultural genocide to be recognised, it is important that it has intergenerational effects on later generations, and official stand points such as government apologies have an important role to play in the recognition of this(Barta, 2008:208). In relation to ‘the experiment’ it is important to mention the concept of cultural genocide when discussing the overall colonialization of Inuit in Greenland and the consequences hereof. As previous research has proven, forced assimilation has major consequences for the children involved later in life both in terms of personal conflicts such as struggles with identity and belonging, but also significantly lower socioeconomic and health status compared to non-Indigenous(AHF, 2006:3). The recent debate of public apologies and the government’s proposal of a historical investigation of ‘the experiment’ might be seen as part of a process of collective healing. However, that healing can only begin when past events are recognised(Kingston, 2015:78). By refusing to recognise the actions in the past or simply wanting to forget and move on, the Danish government ceases to recognise the contemporary consequences, which the rapid modernisation and forced assimilation in Greenland, have had on many Greenlandic children. This will only cause more intergenerational consequences on the collective as the hurt continues to exist in the later generations. Therefore, seen from a post-colonialist view and when discussing the overall colonialization of Greenland, ‘the experiment’ has in various aspects(as presented in the analysis) contributed to a larger case of cultural genocide on Inuit in Greenland. This

becomes evident both on the collective level due to its intergenerational nature and lack of official recognition from the actors involved as well as on the individual level as narrated by the children themselves in terms of the social and psychological consequences they account for.

This thesis has contributed to a more in-depth understanding of the social and psychological consequences of children exposed to forced assimilation in the case of the Danish colonialism in Greenland. Despite the clear delimitations and the uniqueness of this particular case, the thesis has contributed to the larger academic field of forced assimilation of Indigenous children and the consequences hereof. Addressing the constructivist methodology of the thesis, it is important to stress that no objective truth of the past has been proposed. Rather the multiple realities of the informants have been interpreted and examined with the assistance of theories and methods to guide the investigation appropriately to ensure as much scientific validity and reliability to the study as possible. Future contributions to the field might look more into the intergenerational aspect of the case and the relation to cultural genocide of Inuit in Greenland in a more extensive way than what has been presented here. Furthermore, it will be interesting to compare the outcome of the Danish government's historical investigation to previous studies regarding 'the experiment' and similar cases such as the Stolen Generation or the Canadian residential schools.

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Appendix 1 – The children

Helene Thiesen

Born: 1944, Nuuk, Greenland.

Informants available⁷: Helene, Helene's mother, sister, aunt & uncle.

Gabriel Schmidt (Gaba)

Born: 1945, Neria by Paamiut, Greenland.

Informants available: Gabriel and his two sisters.

Eva Illum (Marie's twin-sister)

Born: 1943, Nuuk, Greenland.

Informants available: Eva.

Marie de Renouard (Eva's twin-sister)

Born: 1943, Nuuk, Greenland.

Informants available: Marie.

Bodil Berthelsen

Born: 1944, Nanortalik, Greenland.

Informants available: Bodil and Bodil's brother.

Ole Fly

Born: 1942, Ilulissat, Greenland.

Informants available: Ole, Ole's foster mother

Johan Andersen

Born: 1946, Aasiaat, Grenland.

Informants available: Johan.

⁷ Only chapters where the child gives their own account has been used in the analysis. However, the other available informants and their information might have been used as secondary sources and information to the history and context chapter in the thesis.

Carla Lucia Knakkegaard

Born: 1943, Qullissat, Greenland.

Informants available: Carla.

David Pitsivarnatek,

Born: 1944, Kulusuk, (East) Greenland.

Informants available: David.

Joel Kâgssagssuk Hansen (Kagge)

Born: 1946, Maniitsoq, Greenland.

Informants available: Joel, Joel's sister

Kristine Haraldsen

Born: 1943, Qullissat, Greenland

Informants available: Kristine.

Aron Levisen

Born: 1943, Nuuk, Greenland.

Informants available: Aron.

Albert Egede

Born: 1943, Nuuk, Greenland.

Informants available: Albert, Albert's mother-in-law

Kristine Heinsen (little Kristine)

Born: 1945, Aasiaat, Greenland

Informants available: Kristine, Kristine's brother and Kristine's foster mother.

Søren Lundegaard

Born: 1946, Nanortalik, Greenland.

Died⁸: 1998, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Informants available: Søren.

Children who passed away before the making of the book⁹:

Ane Sofie Heilman (Older sister of Karl Heilman)

Born: 1944, Maniitsoq, Greenland.

Died: 1974, Albertslund, Denmark.

Informants available: Ane Sofie's two cousins, aunt, uncle, two daughters and mother in law.

Karl Heilman (Younger brother of Ane Sofie Heilman)

Born: 1946, Maniitsoq, Greenland.

Died: 1991, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Informants available: Karl's two cousins, aunt and uncle.

Hernik Raaschou

Born: 1946, Sisimiut, Greenland.

Died: 1997, Thule Airbase, Greenland.

Informants available: Henrik's brother, sister and widow. Henrik's two Danish sisters (from adoption).

Daniel Barselaj Danielsen (Barselaj)

Born: 1943, Ittoqqortoormiit, (East) Greenland.

Died: 1975, Denmark.

Informants available: Daniel's younger brother, widow, daughter, son and a former band member.

⁸ He passed away before the book was published, but not before the author did an interview with him.

⁹ These chapters have not been used in the analysis as the primary source (the child) had passed away. However, the informants available and their information might have been used as secondary sources and information to the history and context chapter in the thesis.

Eli Petersen

Born: 1941, Qullissat, Greenland.

Died: 1996, Qaqortoq, Greenland.

Informants available: Eli's son, widow and former boss.

Agnete Tittussen

Born: 1944, Nuuk, Greenland.

Died: 1973, Nuuk, Greenland.

Informants available: Agnete's daughter and four sisters.

Appendix 2 – Coding scheme

Time and place		In/out-group identification			Elements of Cultural Trauma Theories	
		In-group	Out-group	Inter-group boundaries		Number of children addressing issue
Number of children addressing issue:				1-Way of life 3-Economy 3-Physical environment 6-Looks 2-Food 11-Language 1-Uprising	Contemporary consequences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Drugs ○ Suicide attempt/thoughts ○ Struggle with stable relationships ○ Alcohol ○ Poor health ○ Domestic violence (foster fam) ○ Criminality/jail 	6
Grid. Before experiment	Family	Danes		Language, looks, economy.		
DK: Camp + foster families.	Experiment Children Foster families	Danes, Foster Families		Language, looks, food, physical environment, way of life.	Trauma as a long, structural & collective process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Danish culture and/or language imposed ○ Eliminating Greenlandic culture and/or language ○ Structural discrimination ○ Intergroups structurally imposed and reproduced ○ Collective identity – changes in Greenlandic society 	9
Back in Grid. (if relevant)	Family Danes Experiment Children	Danes Family		Language, physical environment, economy, upbringing.	Intergenerational effects of forced assimilation (e.g. in relation to children, or younger generation in Greenland)	7
Back in DK (if relevant)	Family Greenlandic people	Greenlandic People Danes		Looks.	Where do I belong? Identity division. Rootlessness.	8

Appendix 3 – Quotes in original language

All quotes are arranged in order of appearance in analysis.

Longing, homesickness and lack of answers:

[When told that the other children had left for Greenland] ”Så begyndte jeg at græde. Måske det gik op for mig, at jeg aldrig kom hjem” – Johan (Bryld, 1998:156).

[After meeting mother in hospital] ”Da jeg kom hjem, skyndte jeg mig op på mit værelse og krøb sammen i fosterstilling i min seng. Det smertede i brystet, jeg græd lige så stille, indtil det blev mørkt. Jeg ville så gerne snakke med min mor (...) fortælle hende, hvor meget jeg havde savnet hende. Og jeg ville spørge, om jeg kunne komme med hende hjem, når hun blev udskrevet. Jeg ville gerne fortælle hende, hvor ensom jeg var, selv om vi var mange børn på børnehjemmet. Jeg havde lyst til at fortælle hende, at jeg tit græd mig i søvn” – Helene (Thisen, 2011:135).

[In Denmark] ”Jeg følte mig ensom, selvom min adoptivmor var meget sød og kærlig. (...). I lang tid troede jeg, det hele var midlertidigt, men da der var gået et par år, begyndte jeg at græde meget og spørge, hvornår jeg skulle hjem. Jeg var utrøstelig og troede ikke på min adoptivmor, da hun sagde, at jeg skulle blive hos hende, og at de andre var taget tilbage til Grønland” – Carla (Bryld, 1998:168-170).

[When told to live at orphanage] “Hvad? Tænker jeg vantro, det smerter i mit bryst. (...) Det kan da ikke passe, nu tager de mig væk fra min mor igen. Det kan de da ikke. Jeg er i chok, og med skridt så tunge som bly følger jeg med hen i bussen. (...) Jeg græder indeni mig selv og tænker: (...) Hvorfor skal jeg have en ny mor, når min egen mor og mine søskende bor i byen?” – Helene (Thiesen, 2011:50-51).

”Jeg tænker stadig på, hvorfor det blev mig og ikke en af de andre, der kom på det børnehjem. Ingen har fortalt mig det” – Gabriel (Bryld, 1998:71).

”Det var der, han fortalte, at han intet anede om adoptionen. Han skrev under på, at jeg i lang tid kunne være i pleje. Myndighederne sagde, at jeg ville få det godt og blive

uddannet. Han ville mig det bedste og havde jo i forvejen en del børn at forsørge” – Johan (Bryld, 1998:159).

”Jeg tror jeg kom til Danmark, fordi min far ville mig det bedste. Min mor var død og min far var alene tilbage med mange børn (...) Jeg vidste intet om det, der skulle ske. Jeg kan bare huske, hvor ulykkelig jeg var” – Bodil (Bryld, 1998:94).

”Jeg ved oprigtig talt ikke, hvorfor min søster og jeg kom til Danmark og siden på børnehjemmet – måske fordi min tante var en af dem, der ledsager børnene til Danmark (...) Det kan også være at min mor ønskede det, fordi det dengang var en stor skam at være født udenfor ægteskab” [whose father was an American navy official] – Eva (Bryld, 1998:79).

”Vi børnehjemsbørn har oplevet tingene forskelligt, men jeg tror, de fleste har haft følelsen af at være udstødt, at være uønskede, både af vores familie og vores folk. Lige siden jeg som syvårig blev sendt til Danmark, har jeg været usikker på, om min morelskede mig. Jeg havde altid følelsen af ’gæstestatus’, ikke som tilhørende familien” – Helene (Bryld, 1998:46).

Intergroup boundaries as indicators of identity and belonging:

[In Denmark]”Folk gloede på os, en lille flok sorthårede, grønlandske børn, det var ikke et almindeligt syn dengang” – Helene (Thisen, 2011:152).

”I hverdagen hos min adoptivmor oplevede jeg mig selv som outsideren. Jeg blev drillet og især de voksne var uden forståelse for mig. Der var så få grønlændere er, hvor jeg boede. Mange overbegloede mig eller rørte ved min hud og talte om mig, som om jeg ikke var til stede” – Carla (Bryld, 1998:171).

”Hansen kunne ikke stå for sådan en lille, sorthåret, grønlandsk pige. (...) jeg var alles kæledægge (...) Fik jeg ikke min vilje et sted, så sørgede jeg for at få den et andet sted. De behandlede mig sådan, fordi de syntes, at alt bare var sødt ved mig” – Helene (Thisen, 2011:45).

”Jeg brød mig ikke så meget om skolen. Blev mobbet. Dengang var der ikke så mange grønlandere, og det måtte jeg ofte høre for. Ja, også i dag kan de finde på at råbe noget grimt” – David (Bryld, 1998:171).

Changes of intergroups:

”Danskerne så vi og undrede os over deres hvide hud, deres størrelse og de blå øjne, men vi talte aldrig med dem. De holdt sig til hinanden (...) det var os indbyrdes, der hjalp hinanden i nøden” – Carla (Bryld, 1998:171).

”Det først år følte jeg mig fremmed. Jeg forstod dårligt dansk og flere børn spurgte mig, hvad jeg lavede her, og hvornår jeg skulle tilbage til Grønland” – Søren (Bryld, 1998:157).

”Hun ville adoptere mig, men det var ikke tilladt, fordi jeg stadig havde en af mine forældre. Det næste år græd jeg hver aften af længsel efter hende” – Gabriel (Bryld, 1998:68).

”I skolen gik vi i den danske klasse, og i skolegården legede de grønlandske børn sammen med os, uden at vi kunne forstå hinanden. Dengang troede vi, at vi var mere end dem, men jeg husker også, at det føltes uhyggeligt ikke at kunne tale med dem. Vi var der, men vi hørte ikke til. Det er underligt, i vores eget land” – Kristine (Bryld, 1998:214).

”Vi gik i ’Den danske Skole’, som de eneste grønlandere. Vi blev drillet af de grønlandske børn, der kaldte os ’danske svin’ og ’dit børnehjemsbarn, tag hjem’. De drillede os, fordi vi ikke kunne grønlandsk, og fordi vi ikke havde forældre. Når vi skulle til og fra skole, fulgtes vi ad, fordi vi var bange for de grønlandske børn” – Gabriel (Bryld, 1998:69).

”Da jeg var i puberteten, tænkte jeg meget over det hele og græd ofte. Jeg følte, at jeg ingen identitet havde. Var jeg grønlander, dansker eller hvad? Jeg har altid følt mig som en bastard” – Gabriel (Bryld, 1998:70).

”Uanset hvad jeg gør, vil jeg altid leve med mit dilemma, min rodløshed. Når jeg er i Danmark, længes jeg efter Grønland, og når jeg kommer til Grønland, længes jeg efter Danmark. Jeg kommer aldrig over det. Jeg føler, at meget få forstår mig” – Carla (Bryld, 1998:173).

”Som den eneste grønlander havde jeg det svært. Jeg blev set ned på, de hundsede med mig, og til sidst var jeg ved at give op” [about his time as apprentice in Denmark] – Albert (Bryld, 1998:284).

“Jeg ønskede at bo på Grønlanderhjemmet, for at være i nærheden af mine landsmænd og for at lære grønlandsk. Noget fik jeg da ud af det, men de drillede mig, fordi jeg som grønlander talte dansk. Da forstanderen så, hvordan jeg havde det, sørgede han for, at jeg blev indlagt på psykiatrisk afdeling på Rigshospitalet, fordi jeg blev psykisk nedbrudt” – Albert (Bryld, 1998:284).

”Instinktivt følte vi altid dybt med hinanden, når der skete noget med vores familier. Der var altid fuld opbakning, selv om det var meget svært at snakke om.(...) Der blev aldrig den fulde fortrolighed, som vi inderste inde ønskede at have – bare med ét menneske” – Helene (Thisen, 2011:135).

Loosing part of yourself: Cultural trauma theories in relation to loss of language and culture:

”Hvis jeg havde kunnet sproget, var jeg flyttet til Grønland. I min inderste sjæl – er jeg grønlander” – Joel (Bryld, 1998:205).

”De kunne finde på at råbe: ”Så tal dog for helvede grønlandsk, du er jo grønlander!”. De sved. (...)På børnehjemmet var der den modsatte påvirkning: Vi skulle tale dansk og den dobbelthed forvirrede os børn” – Marie (Bryld, 1998:88-89).

”Jeg har altid været stolt af at være grønlander – og ulykkelig, når jeg mødte nogen, der håned mig, fordi jeg ikke talte grønlandsk.(...). Jeg er grønlander i Danmark og behersker dansk. Det har taget mange år at nå så langt. Jeg vil aldrig blive så god til grønlandsk, som jeg er til dansk. Jeg har været nødt til at tænke sådan for ikke at gå helt ned” – Johan (Bryld, 1998:55).

[When Greenlandic maid was caught teaching Greenlandic at the orphanage] ”Jeg vil aldrig mere høre dig prøve at lære børnene grønlandsk. De er dansksprogede, og det skal de blive ved med at være. Er det forstået?” – Helene (Thiesen, 2011:80-81).

”Hun tog den af min hals og sagde, at hun ikke brød sig om den slags. Hun kastede den uden videre ind i kakkelovnen. [when she asks her years later why] Dengang så vi på det som noget med ånder, og jeg ville jo ikke have, at du skulle omgås ånder” – Carla (Bryld, 1998:167-169).

Contemporary consequences: Addiction and instability

”Jeg flyttede meget, var rastløst og blev træt af det hårde liv med druk. (...) jeg har virkelig rejst meget, måske også for at komme væk fra mig selv. (...) Når jeg drak, var det fordi, jeg ikke kunne finde mig selv” – Albert (Bryld, 284-285).

“Jeg ved ikke, hvorfor jeg aldrig er faldet til ro i et forhold. (...) Når de vil bestemme over mig, så forsvinder jeg. Men det kan også være angsten for at miste igen” – Joel (Bryld, 1998:205).

Intergenerational effects: The trauma continues

”Jeg har tænkt meget på hende[daughter], men ønsker ikke at ødelægge noget for hende” – Johan (Bryld, 1998:152).

”Det har ikke altid været let. Mine to ældste børn blev behandlet meget hårdt af deres far. Min søn blev psykisk syg og min datter har også været ude i en hel del. De har savnet mig meget” – Little Kristine (Bryld, 1998:185).

”(...) sprogdebatten forsat drejer sig at være mere dansk eller mere grønlandsk. (...) mine børn har haft problemet inde på livet, da de som små mest boede i Danmark. (...) Her i hjemmet har vi bevidst talt både grønlandsk og dansk (..)” – Marie (Bryld, 1998:89).

[when being approached by drunk people calling out on her and some friends in Denmark] ”De andre havde ikke ord til at forsvare sig med. Jeg skældte voldsomt ud på dansk. Det var meget sårende og den slags situationer, tror jeg har udviklet mit sociale engagement. Jeg lod mig tit bruge som tolk og oplevede gang på gang, hvordan grønlandske kvinder mistede forældreretten over deres børn, bare fordi de var grønlandere og ikke blev forstået” – Eva (Bryld, 1998:83).