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Holck, Lotte; Muhr, Sara Louise

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Lotte Holck and Sara Louise Muhr

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Abstract

Purpose: To investigate how the construction and everyday maintenance of racialized psychological borders in the Greenlandic Police Force reproduce a postcolonial hierarchy of knowledge, where Danish knowledge and perceptions of professionalism are constructed as superior to Greenlandic knowledge and perceptions of professionalism.

Methodology: The paper is based on an ethnographic study comprising 5 days of observation of a training course for Danish police officers going to Greenland on summer assistance, 13 days of observation of police work in Greenland, 2 days of participatory observation of a leadership development seminar in Greenland, 26 interviews conducted in Denmark and Greenland with both Danish and Greenlandic officers and interventions in Denmark and Greenland.

Findings: The racialized borders create strong perceptions of ‘us’ and ‘them’, which are maintained and reinforced through everyday work practices. The borders have damaging effects on the way police officers collaborate in Greenland and as the borders are maintained through (often implicit) everyday micro-processes, management has difficulty dealing with it. However, the way the racialized borders became visible through this research project created an awareness of – and sparked conversation about – the colonial stereotypes that have constructed and reinforce the borders. This awareness opens up possibilities of collaborative disruption of those borders.

Implications: The paper shows how racialized borders limit the way professionalism is understood in the Greenlandic Police Force. But it also shows that, because these borders are socially constructed, they can be contested. Making the implicit everyday discrimination explicit through vignettes, for example, offers the chance to contest and disrupt the colonial hierarchy otherwise deeply embedded in the work practices of the police force.

Originality/value: Thanks to unique access to Greenland’s police force, this paper offers exclusive in-depth insights into current processes of racialization and colonialization in a contemporary colonial relationship.

Keywords: Colonialism, multicultural collaboration, police work, professionalism, racialization.

Having been singled out in the line, at the borders, we become defensive; we assume a defensive posture, as we ‘wait’ for the line of racism, to take our rights of passage away.

(Ahmed, 2007: 163)

Introduction

Within equality, diversity and inclusion literature, the notion of borders has long been used to describe how boundaries and limits are drawn between different cultures, including national cultures (e.g. Ng and Bloemraad, 2015; Özbilgin et al., 2015). Many of these studies draw on critical race theory and postcolonial theory to show how such borders are racialized (e.g. Al Ariss et al., 2014; Goh, 2015; Leopold and Bell, 2017; Liu and Pechenkina, 2016; Paradies et al., 2013), that is how race is not just the product of borders, but how racialization structures the very way in which borders operate and define people’s identities (e.g. Ahmed, 2007). Such racialization happens based on years of common colonial history, which, despite the fact that colonialism is said to have officially ended in most parts of the world, is still exercised as a form of neocolonialism through the superiority of ‘Western’¹ ideology in, for example, management discourse (Banerjee and Linstead, 2001; Jack et al., 2011; Özkazanc-Pan, 2008), and through the continued Western (organizational) control of foreign territory (e.g. Lammers, 2003) or the (financial) dependency on former colonizers (Ashley, 2016; Srinivas, 2012). In other words, colonization may no longer be exercised strictly through expanding physical borders of colonial empires, but it is certainly exercised through the continued construction and reinforcement of psychological borders of the mind, which influence the identity and self-understanding of both (former) colonizer and (former) colonized (Hall, 1996; McLeod, 2000).

¹ ‘Western’ is enclosed in inverted commas here to signal the fact that the term is a racialized social construction, as ‘Western’ is often used to describe countries that are inhabited mainly by white people, but are not in the western part of the world (e.g. Australia and New Zealand are considered belonging to the West), whereas ‘Eastern’ and ‘Third World’ describe countries in both east and west, inhabited by mainly non-white people; for example, geographically, Greenland belongs to the west but is never considered a Western country. Similarly, the distinction between global south/north denotes the generic geographic, historical, economic, educational and political division between North and South. Traditionally, the distinction has been used to refer to economically disadvantaged nation states and as a post-cold war alternative to ‘Third World’. However, recently, the term ‘Global South’ has been employed in a post-national sense to address spaces and peoples negatively affected by contemporary capitalist globalization, underscoring the power and privilege enjoyed by the Global North.

Racialization in this way produces psychological borders that are socially constructed through the everyday reiteration of race. As Ahmed (2004) argues, race is performative. Race is constructed – and constructs the world – while being re-enacted every single day and everywhere. When race is performative, it results in strong and often unconscious perceptions of racialized us–them divisions that are repeated every day, and that permeate the workplace through, and are reproduced by, workplace encounters. However, as we argue in this paper, because racialized borders are socially constructed, these borders can also be contested, challenged and renegotiated in everyday work and actively encouraged by organizations and employers. Racialized borders are therefore constantly (re)produced and reinforced, but also challenged, in daily interaction.

This paper investigates the construction of racialized borders through an ethnographic study of the Greenlandic Police Force. Greenland [Kalaallit Nunaat] is officially classified as an autonomous constituent country within the Kingdom of Denmark. However, the colonial history and current relationship to Denmark is complex. Even though there were early Viking settlements in Greenland, the year 1721 officially marks the beginning of Greenland's colonial era when the missionary Hans Egede founded a trading company and a Lutheran mission near present-day Nuuk. Although Denmark granted home rule to Greenland in 1979, and in 2008 Greenlanders voted in favour of the Self-Government Act (which transferred more power from the Danish government to the local Greenlandic government), many aspects of governance, including the judicial system and policing, remain a Danish responsibility. Because of the country's long and close ties to Denmark, most Greenlanders are a mix of predominantly Inuit and North European backgrounds. While the country has two official languages – Greenlandic and Danish – some speak only Danish, some speak only Greenlandic (in various dialects) and some are bilingual. This racial and linguistic mix of the population, combined with (partially) continued colonial rule, means that racialization happens along both visual bodily and linguistic differences.

Moreover, as this racialization happens in the context of a still very painful and politically sensitive colonial history, it is tied to a noticeable hierarchy of culture and knowledge where Western (i.e. Danish) knowledge and perceptions of professionalism are constructed by many (particularly, but not only, the Danes) as superior in relation to local (i.e. Greenlandic) knowledge and perceptions of professionalism. This influences the way police officers perceive each other's professionalism, skills and competencies and thus influences the Danish–Greenlandic police collaboration. But, as we will

argue, if these borders are acknowledged, made visible and discussed, they might be challenged and disrupted. The paper will therefore argue that micro-processes, which contest, challenge and renegotiate racialized borders, are important, as they offer new openings for mutual and respectful processes of collaboration.

A colonial hierarchy of work relations

Several organizational scholars have by now successfully demonstrated how a Eurocentric or Americanized management discourse based on colonial stereotypes is dominating management literature (Frenkel, 2008; Jack et al., 2008; Özkazanc-Pan, 2008). For example, Frenkel and Shenhav (2006) show how Orientalist assumptions embedded in the writings of management scholars result in a biased representation and a purified canon, which uncritically conveys the hegemony of Western management thinking (see also Frenkel and Shenhav, 2006; Jack and Loriecki, 2003; Jack and Westwood, 2006; Jaya, 2001; Westwood and Jack, 2006). As a result, Western management practices are imported into developing countries (Yousfi, 2014) and globalization thus works overwhelmingly in favour of Western countries' ideology of the expansion of capital (Banerjee and Linstead, 2001).

The close ties between Westernization and colonialism cannot be ignored, particularly as these ties produce an unquestioned hierarchical relationship between the West and the rest of the world (Frenkel and Shenhav, 2003; Özkazanc-Pan, 2008; Radhakrishnan, 1994). As Banerjee (2003; 2008) shows, the 'rational' and capitalistic management logic characteristic of Western economic thinking and its colonial relationship to so-called 'Third World' countries are problematic, as such logics pass on an unquestioned 'truth' based on the assumption that the West can civilize Third World countries and stimulate growth (Cortina, 2008; McLeod, 2000). Such assumed truth is problematic, not only because it rests on colonial stereotypes of an uncivilized, ineffective and superstitious East and a civilized, effective and rational West – to stick with Said's (1978) popular analysis of the effects of a worldwide colonial discourse – but also because it assumes that industrialization, globalization and capitalism equal progress and prosperity (Banerjee and Linstead, 2001; Jack and Loriecki, 2007). As has been shown by a now rather sizable body of literature questioning the sustainability of such Western management logic, industrialization, globalization and capitalism might after all not be the best way to secure sustainable development, whether this concerns management thinking or our planet at large (Özkazanc-Pan, 2018; Wittneben et al., 2012; Wright and Nyberg, 2017).

Despite the growing critique of the unquestioned superiority of Western management thinking, it maintains its assumed superiority and successfully manages to be the default standard to which most Third World countries are compared – and against which they compare themselves (Croft and Weerahannadige, 2017; Liu, 2017; Nkomo, 2011). Further, Western management logic is so strong as an ideology that subjects everywhere, not only in the West, internalize and identify with the rhetoric of its superiority at a personal and even emotional level (Yousfi, 2014; Muhr and Salem, 2013; Ulus, 2014). As Liu (2017) shows, employees engage in self-Orientalism in a way that ‘constrain[s] the lives of people beyond the colonizer/colonized dichotomy and ... [illuminates] the potential for their resistance against Orientalism’ (781).

A by-product of Western managerial logic is its construction of what it means to be professional and, thereby, the construction of the professional or the ideal employee (see also Meriläinen et al., 2004). Croft and Fernando (2017) show how the national identity of an indigenous population clashes with notions of the ideal worker in a way that makes it almost impossible for them to be perceived as potential professionals. Dar (2014) investigates how non-Western workers experience the demands of Western forms of reporting, particularly in languages that are not their native tongue, and finds that ‘reporting subjugates local knowledge leading to workers experiencing disempowerment’ (Dar, 2014: 131).

A colonialization of mind rather than land

Whether the colonial period (understood as the West’s conquering of land) is over is debatable. Although many African, Asian and Middle American countries have regained their sovereignty (or at least partly regained it, as is the case of Greenland; more detail later), nations such as Australia, New Zealand and the United States are still governed, by and large, by the original colonizers. Still, references to colonial regimes are described in terms of the past, as something that happened in our history. Postcolonial theory has, as we saw above, raised an important critique of such non-colonial discourses/myths, claiming that we do not live in a time after colonialism. On top of calling out actual present-day colonialism, as in the possession of foreign land, this body of literature also demonstrates how the continued influence of a colonial discourse maintains a colonial hierarchy between former colonizer and former colonized. This might not be in the form of the possession of land, but may be due to the (financial) superiority of Western knowledge institutions and the successful dissemination of Western knowledge and practices as being superior to non-Western customs. Rather than a

decolonialization, many therefore refer to a neocolonial regime (in effect through Western ideologies such as capitalism or industrialism and civilization). Jack et al. (2011) call this an ‘epistemic colonization’ and ‘cultural imperialism’, and Sardar describes it as ‘disguised as cultural, economic, political and knowledge-based oppression’ (Sardar, 2008: xix). Overcoming colonialism is therefore not just about giving land back to an indigenous people; returning land does not change the way both colonizer and colonized have internalized a colonial discourse over generations, as has been so vividly shown by, for example, the powerful work of Frantz Fanon (1963/1961; 1965/1959; 2008/1952) or Homi Bhabha (1990; 1994; 2008). Colonization does not end with the returning of land or sovereignty, as the mind (of both the colonized and colonizer) has been colonized psychologically and borders between colonizers and colonized have been drawn. To overcome contemporary colonialism, the dominant way of seeing things – that is, the colonial discourse – has to be challenged and assumptions about ‘true’ and ‘natural’ must be re-examined (McLeod, 2000).

Methodology

Case background

The case studied in this paper focuses on the Danish–Greenlandic police collaboration, thus the historical relationship between Denmark and Greenland is important for the case context. Greenland has been inhabited for at least 4,500 years with the first settlers being Inuit people crossing the ice from Canada and occupying Greenland from the north. This happened in a series of waves of migrations over several thousands of years resulting in an original people with mixed Inuit cultural background. The history of Greenland and Denmark dates back more than six centuries. Norse settlers (Vikings) began to occupy uninhabited land in the southern part of Greenland in the 10th century and Greenland was in this way simultaneously populated by two different cultures from each end of the country. However, Greenland became a part of Norway in 1261 and when Norway united with Denmark in 1380, Greenland came under Danish rule² (Rosing, 1999). The settlers disappeared for a period around the time of the plague in the 15th century, but returned to Greenland in 1721 with the missionary Hans Egede. As Denmark’s presence in Greenland has been consistent since 1721, this year also officially marks the beginning of Greenland’s colonial era. Then, in 1776, Denmark formed the Royal Greenland Trading Company, which had a monopoly on Greenland trade until 1950. In 1953 Greenland’s colonial status was abolished and in 1979 the Danish government granted home

² Greenland remained under Danish rule after Norway got its independence from Denmark.

rule to Greenland. With home rule, Greenland remained part of the Kingdom of Denmark and all Greenlanders hold Danish citizenship. Denmark retained control of constitutional affairs, foreign relations and defence, while Greenland maintained control over economic development, municipal regulations, taxes, education, the social welfare system, cultural affairs and healthcare. In 2008 the majority of the Greenlandic people voted for more autonomy from Denmark. The result of the vote came into effect on 21 June 2009, which also happened to be Greenland's National Day. Since then, Greenland has been working towards becoming more independent; nonetheless, Denmark still contributed an annual block grant to Greenland in 2018 of more than DKK 3.5 billion (more than half of Greenland's national budget). Denmark also retains government over foreign and defence policy, as well as the military and police force. As Jensen points out:

Due to the economic and political power as the only sovereign state in Rigsfællesskabet (The [Danish] Commonwealth), Denmark continues to act in ways not unlike those of a colonial power when national interests are at stake.

(2015: 444)

However, Greenland retains the right at any time to take control over more civil responsibilities, such as the police force, or to seek complete independence. Despite the fact that independence has been a hot political debate for a long time the people of Greenland have not been able to agree on the matter, resulting in continued Danish presence.

Greenland covers 2,175,600 km², but only has a population of approximately 56,000 people, of whom almost 20,000 live in the capital, Nuuk. Approximately 12 per cent of these are of Danish or other European descent, whereas the majority, 88 per cent, are of Inuit descent. As no cities are connected with roads and the weather conditions often make it difficult to fly or sail between them, mobility in Greenland is challenged by the lack of infrastructure. The largest cities have universities, but due to their relatively small populations (besides Nuuk, the major cities have between 2,000 and 6,000 inhabitants) they are rather small and offer only a limited number of courses. Due to their Danish citizenship, many Greenlanders have therefore moved to Denmark in search of jobs or education. In 2018, 16,470 people of Greenlandic descent were registered in Denmark. This represents a significant

proportion of Greenland's population (56,000) but an insignificant proportion of Denmark's (5.8 million).³

In 2017 the Greenlandic Police Force employed 313 people, of whom 122 were police officers. They are spread among 18 police stations across the country, making many of the stations very small with only one or two officers. Due to many different factors, among others the vast distances, the small societies and the extreme differences in light conditions between winter and summer, crimes in Greenland are very different from those in Denmark. Although Greenland is considered a Danish police district, the police work performed in the two countries differs significantly. The chief of police describes crimes in Greenland as being 'in effect'; they most often take place in the home and many of them take the form of domestic violence, rape or violence against children, including incest. Also, the incidence of alcohol-related crimes is much higher in Greenland than in Denmark, resulting in the fact that access to alcohol in some areas has been restricted and the police are particularly vigilant on certain dates where the consumption of alcohol is particularly high. However, as the chief of police says, there are almost no crimes committed against strangers, making Greenland a very safe country for tourists.

The Greenlandic chief of police reports directly to the Danish minister of justice (through the attorney general and the Danish national police commissioner), and governance of the Greenlandic legal system remains with the Danish parliament as well (Augustesen and Hansen, 2011; PM, 2010). In 2016 the Greenlandic Police Force was composed of approximately one-third Danish police officers and two-thirds Greenlandic police officers. However, as we detail later, such a division into Greenlandic and Danish is problematic and artificial and thus just an indication of the cultural complexities in question, as people identifying as Danish might have lived in Greenland most of their lives, whereas people identifying as Greenlandic might look Greenlandic, but have one Danish parent, only speak Danish and not be in favour of more independence. The Danish–Greenlandic division is in this way socially constructed and in itself racialized. The vast majority of the Danish officers are in Greenland on shorter stays, either on two-year contracts or on four- to six-month summer assistance assignments. A few of the Danish officers have lived in Greenland most of their lives. This is also

³ See for example Statistics Denmark for more information: <https://www.dst.dk/en>

the case for the chief of police, who is white and born in Denmark, but has lived in Greenland most of his life, both as a child with his parents and as an adult. The official working language of police officers in Greenland is Danish, but the population is mixed in this regard: some speak only Danish, others speak only Greenlandic (in various dialects) and some – especially in the bigger cities – are bilingual. Differences between Danish and Greenlandic identities are visible physically, and there are audible differences as the two languages are very different. Whereas most people identifying as Greenlandic speak Danish (some as their native tongue, some as a second language with a clear accent), most Danes in Greenland do not speak Greenlandic. The present racialized border between Danes and Greenlanders might then be genotypically mixed and unclear, but historical racial policies during colonization have (among other things) created a very present phenotypical division between white and non-white in which white is constructed as the ideal (Petterson, 2012). As Jensen (2015) points out, a postcolonial condition also influences those Greenlanders living in Denmark who, despite not having the status of minority, but that of a Danish citizen, often face discrimination and stereotyping. This points to the continued racial hierarchy between white (Danish) and Inuit (see also Laage-Petersen, 2015).

Data collection

The collection of data for this paper started in February 2015, when a full week's cross-cultural training programme arranged by the Greenlandic Police Force in collaboration with the Danish National Police College was observed. The participants on the course were the Danish officers going on assistance assignments in Greenland that summer. In August 2015, the authors travelled to Greenland for 13 days to interview and observe police working in three cities. We took part in daily life at the stations: we met at the office at the same time as the officers, interviewed officers when possible and went on as many trips, patrols, house searches, arrests, etc. as we possibly could, including at weekends and in the evenings. Generally, we experienced 100 per cent open access at the stations and were invited to private parties and trips (such as hiking and seal hunting) by several of the officers. The trip resulted in approximately 60 pages of field notes and 13 interviews lasting between one and two and a half hours. Before and after the trip, 13 more interviews were conducted over a satellite link from the main police station in Copenhagen. In November 2016 we were invited back to Greenland by the chief of police to facilitate a full day of leadership training on cross-cultural collaboration. The 33 most senior managers in the Greenlandic Police Force were brought together

for a week's leadership meeting. We observed one day, facilitated one day and were present at two dinners/social events: a burger night and the gala dinner. The facilitation was constructed as a research intervention, and detailed field notes were written (including notes taken by a colleague from the Danish police). All names of interviewees have been altered/anonymized, but they have been given either traditional Danish or Greenlandic names to avoid 'official classification' while maintaining which the interviewee identifies with.

The role of the researchers

Our subjective role in knowledge-making is inescapable. An ethnographic study based on an interpretative framework conceptualizes the researchers and participants as actively involved in the generation of data. This gives this study a participative bent and renders the subjectivity of the researchers relevant: 'Reflexivity sanctions the ethnographer to make knowledge claims but to make them with a self-awareness of her personal politics, privileges and resources' (Dar, 2017: 7). As emphasized by Pedersen and Samaluk (2012), it is therefore necessary for us to ask how 'whiteness' (or 'Danishness') plays a part in significant processes like methodologies and alliances between researchers and their interviewees/research subjects. Our subjectivities as white, middle-class, business school researchers with Danish backgrounds conducting research in a former Danish colony most definitely placed us in a position of power that cannot be ignored. This not only gave us an 'upper hand' communicatively, as our mother tongue is the official spoken language in the Greenlandic Police Force (compared to many of the officers, whose first language is Greenlandic), but also gave us an immediate position of high status and privilege as Danishness is (implicitly as well as often explicitly) associated with the colonial stereotypes of being educated, successful and powerful, among other things. Simultaneously, we were also aware of the tainted image of Danes in Greenland, because some Greenlanders – following years of colonization – perceive Danes as intruders, violators and oppressors. This image is however not at all shared by all people, as many Greenlanders feel a deep bond to Denmark; an interesting observation is the fact that the Danish royal family is more popular in Greenland than in Denmark. Thus, the position of power assigned to us was at the same time a privileged one and a contested one. These were factors that influenced our research activities (who we could talk to and about what) and provided us with affective sensitivities and emotions that informed the kind of data we generated and our subsequent analysis. As participating researchers, our roles have been manifold (guests, interviewers, researchers, observers, 'knowledge'

persons, consultants), engaging with the situations and making sense of them by trying to also ignite change (Meyerson and Scully, 1995). As white (Danish) researchers, we thus need to acknowledge and try to limit the inherent dangers of the white researcher's (colonial) desire to do good at the cost of the voice of the research subject, whose life and identity is the subject of scrutiny, as Ahmed (2004) and Spivak in particular warn about (see also Swan, 2017; Özkazanc-Pan, 2012). Thus, acknowledging that our perceptions and our bodies influence the research, we have tried to unfold our observations and theoretically informed interpretations 'criss-crossed' with participants' perspectives and reflections, providing a multifaceted and multivocal account of what transpired. Finally, the paper has been read, commented upon and finally approved by Greenland's chief of police (who is white and of Danish descent), as well as one of the regional chiefs who is next in command (of Inuit descent) as part of our methodological reflexivity as well as the data collection agreement.

Data analysis

For this paper, we have chosen to explore the richness and depth of the data and have constructed three vignettes that we analyse for racialized borders of professionalism. This method is ideal for this purpose, as racialized borders are not necessarily visible in interviews only. Even if they were, presenting the data through interview excerpts quickly loses the focus on micro everyday activities and comments that construct and reinforce such racialized borders. Thus, so we can use data from interviews, observations and interventions, we have constructed three vignettes, which draw on all three data sources. In this way, we are able to pass on the richness of the data, several people's points of view, their opinions, their actions and the dynamic between them at work. However, all text in the vignettes is based on what people told us or what we observed them say (to each other).

To identify the vignettes in question, we engaged in three rounds of coding. The first level of coding consisted of reading the material for instances where we saw racialized borders being constructed and discussing them between us. Based on this, we identified three major themes: 1) racialized borders arising because of different opinions about work tasks, priorities and procedures; 2) racialized borders arising because of language and nationality; and 3) racialized borders arising because of different interpretations of police identity and behaviour. In the second round of coding, we thematized and divided the material based on the above codes and, based on this, selected a story/event for each theme that was present across several interviews, observations and interventions and thus represented the theme well. The chosen stories/events were all observed by us and recounted and commented on

by several people so that we could build a multivocal narrative in the vignette. In terms of events that we observed, we asked the involved participants to reflect on the event afterwards.

These three stories, which will be represented in the vignettes, are: 1) Professionalism through availability: Hunting seals vs filing cases; 2) Professionalism through language skills: Writing a 'proper' report vs being able to communicate with local witnesses; and 3) Professional police identity: Being an authority or being in touch with the local community. The third level of coding was completed after the first versions of the stories were written. We then reviewed the material to see if we could add citations from more people or observations to the now elaborated stories – in other words, whether the data could be coded more specifically for multivocal material that fitted the stories specifically. Finally, the vignettes were read by the chief of police and the regional chief and they both said that the vignettes reflected the Greenlandic police well and that they could 'see themselves' in the stories.

To illustrate how different people interpret events and activities, we will tell the stories from two different people's viewpoints as well as maintaining our voice and observations in the stories. Although the stories are written in the third person, they are not written with one particular person in mind (nor from one station), but are a result of the coding process above and thus combine many voices from many people from different stations. This combination of the stories is done to secure anonymization, but also to ensure general relevance and representation of the stories. We are aware of the fact that double-sided storytelling in principle can add to the reinforcement of the two-sided border construction. However, we have chosen to do so not just from an analytical point of view, as it is easier for a reader to follow 'voices', but also to stay true to the data material, as even though many officers are trying to break down the stereotypical borders between Danes and Greenlanders, it is nevertheless how they generally refer to each other and make sense of much of what happens and how people behave.

Racialized borders in the Greenlandic Police Force: Three vignettes

Vignette 1: Professionalism through availability: Hunting seals vs filing cases

The new Danish 'summer man'

Peter has just arrived in Greenland and is very excited about his upcoming five months. Out of many applicants, he has been chosen to be one of the 20 Danish summer assistants who this year travel to Greenland to support the local police in their work. Peter is used to local communities, as he has served as an officer at a small police station in the countryside in Denmark, but he has never served in a police district this small. The town Peter has been assigned to is one of Greenland's five largest towns, but still has only about 5,000 inhabitants. It has taken him a while to get there because, as he discovers, no two towns in Greenland are connected by road. One can only fly or sail, and as it is quite often foggy and therefore dangerous to fly (and takes too long to sail from town to town) it is common to spend time waiting at the international airport in Kangerlussuaq. He was told he was lucky that he only spent the day there and didn't have to spend the night. He shows up at the police station a little before 8 a.m., a little surprised to see that no one is there and the door is locked. At 8 a.m., however, the two Greenlandic office clerks, Naja and Sava, come strolling along and let him in. After a minute or two, five more Greenlandic police officers as well as the station manager show up. They don't say much and Peter finds it slightly odd that they don't seem happy to see him. When they get in, however, he is assigned to a desk, and before long he has a long list of tasks to do, including questioning a witness to a bar fight that apparently happened two weeks ago, and a meeting with the police prosecutor who needs help with a couple of cases the other officers don't have time for. There are also a couple of calls from citizens that he has to take care of: mistreated dogs and a reported rape. The latter is introduced by one of the local officers with a laugh and the comment that 'Aviaja and Malik must have been drunk again'. His days are soon spent helping out everywhere he can. It is certainly not boring, but he is feeling a little like a janitor who cleans up after others, taking care of cases that should have been dealt with weeks ago. It is not quite as action-packed as he had hoped for. After a couple of days, however, he finds a stack of even older cases that haven't yet been taken care of. He is shocked and goes to find the station chief to tell him about his find. He can't find him and, after a while, when he finds the senior officer, Manu, in the kitchen, Manu tells him that the station chief is out hunting seals. He has taken half a day off, as there seem to be many seals close to shore today and he needs them for his dogs. Peter gets really upset and calls one of his Danish colleagues from the week-long introduction course to Greenlandic culture and police work prior to the outplacement. It feels good to talk to someone who understands him. They talk for quite some time about how crazy it is to find stacks of unsolved, unfiled cases in various piles and they laugh heartily about the fact that no crime ever happens without either the perpetrator, the victim or a witness being related to someone at the police station. They probably both exaggerated some of the

stories they told each other, at least Peter knows that he did, but they do agree that a different kind of moral must exist up here, one in which police work is not taken seriously, cases are not prioritized and human lives have less value. After the call, Peter starts dealing with the pile of unsolved cases: another fight at a bar, a woman who has been beaten up by her husband and a theft from the local supermarket are among the first cases he starts to investigate. After a while, however, he gives up. Either the victim has regretted reporting the incident, or the goods have been returned to the supermarket or the people involved don't remember what happened. He sighs, thinking that it is indeed another world up here, and goes home to watch some TV.

The Greenlanders who do not want to be 'saved'

Inuk, who has been in Greenland's police force since he was 19, sighs a little about the knowledge of what the day will be like. The new Danish officer will arrive. He knows that he will be eager and willing, but that this also means that he will come here with all his Danishness, thinking he knows better than the rest of them. Inuk is tired of Danish officers coming up, wanting to save them and make Greenland a better (which for the Danish officers means a Danish) place, and then leaving again. Inuk knows he needs to be nice to the new officer. It is nice of Peter to come all the way to Greenland and help out, and they *do* need the help – there is no way they can deal with all the cases with the number of staff they have – but he wishes that some of them would stay longer. Some do stay for two years, but even that is short, and it is tiring to greet every new Danish officer with the same amount of enthusiasm when he knows they are going to start talking about how the place could be more efficient, how they could optimize Greenlandic work practices, how much the IT system sucks and how if the police exercised more authority among the citizens, they could lower the crime rates. It's like they think they're Rambo, who can save them in five months. If people would just stay a little longer, so they got a chance to understand how things work here, they would understand that even though they worked 24/7, there would still be too many cases, and that the local officers know which of them to take seriously. When Malik and his wife have been in a fight for the tenth time this year the police cannot spend scarce resources on the case or, at least, it pays to leave it for a while since, once they sober up, they often regret having filed the complaint in the first place. Similarly, 90 per cent of thefts are returned, as the police just go up to the local school and ask who did it and the stolen goods then 'magically' reappear. So, what Danish officers consider to be good police work is not necessarily good police work *here*, so why do they constantly have to point out how much better it is in Denmark when their methods don't work here? It is not necessarily good police work to reach

a target of a fixed number of filed cases a week, but it is good police work to know whether to take a charge or an accusation seriously or not, to know where people might be or to be able to question people in a way that makes them remember. And that takes time to learn. No fancy school diploma – or experience from Denmark, for that matter – can do that. And if they just stayed over a winter or two and realized how dependent Greenlanders are on finding food for themselves or their dogs, they would not roll their eyes when they discover that people are out hunting. If there are seals close to shore or, even more importantly, musk ox nearby, Greenlanders go hunting. It's not as if the criminals can go anywhere; there are no roads out of here and very few cities to fly to, everyone knows within a couple of minutes when someone arrives in town and they won't get far in a boat. Things are different here, and if they weren't so obsessed about how the 'Danish way' is much better they might be able to get more than just a polite nod from Inuk. It is not like he doesn't want new friends, but he doesn't want superficial friendships with people who don't understand him or just see him as an exotic tourist guide to take them seal hunting or, even worse, see him as a tourist attraction himself who can invite them to '*kaffemik*' (a traditional Greenlandic party) and serve them '*mattak*' (raw whale skin), which they can tell stories about when they get home.

Vignette 2: Professionalism through language skills: Writing a 'proper' report vs being able to communicate with local witnesses

The efficient Danish officer

Back in Denmark after two years in the Greenlandic Police Force, Jette often reflects on her experiences up there. How different everything was – like they were not part of the same police force. When people say that they are busy in Greenland, well, that is not busy in Danish terms. They work in a very different way, not as structured or coordinated; in Denmark, colleagues help each other much more. In Greenland, when they had been out working on a case, Danes had to write the report once they got back. It always ended up being Jette writing it while the Greenlandic officers just put their feet on the table waiting for her to finish. But then again, when they wrote the police reports, they lacked accuracy, so it was better anyway that Jette wrote them. When describing who was present at an event, they would sometimes write down 'this guy's cousin' or a nickname. They all knew each other and they didn't feel compelled to write in much detail. When Jette took over as one from 'the outside' she didn't know this or that guy, she couldn't use that terminology at all and had to start all over. Police reports must be written in Danish – that is the official language in the Greenlandic Police Force and it is a necessity – as the police have to be assisted by Danish police prosecutors. Greenland

hasn't yet managed to produce its own lawyers, so they are dependent on Danes. Greenlandic police officers' level of Danish is simply too low; the difference between them and the Danish police is like comparing ninth grade to college level. There is a lot of 'Greenlandishness' in these reports; their formulations just do not make any sense, leaving ample room for ambiguity, misunderstandings and pitfalls. It is bad police work. Things Danes naturally would ask about or write down were lacking in the reports. Because they live in a small community, they heard it from somebody who heard it from somebody and the names of all these middlemen are not recorded because the whole village knows each other. They do not understand pronouns: 'take your car', that is fine, but 'take his car' is a potential criminal offence. In Denmark, the police write down what they thought and did as a policeman: which clues did they follow up and why? Reports in Greenland totally lack context and Danes immediately wonder if they followed all the necessary or potential investigative avenues. Everything is much slower; maybe it's because they're just used to a lower quality level, or maybe it's a language barrier. Of course, they are forced to use Danish; they speak in Greenlandic but write in Danish – that's hard – but nothing would work if Danes weren't up there. Greenlandic officers often do not abide by rules so when Danes have been there for a while they tend to meet midway. For example, if called out to a case of domestic violence, well, the Greenlanders do not report it anymore; they just ask if one of the spouses can sleep somewhere else – case solved. When children call the station saying: 'My dad is drunk', they just tell them: 'Go to bed and lock the door.' The next day, it is the same all over again. There is a joke in Greenland: that when a woman agrees to get married, she agrees to get beaten up. Most cases are with drunk Greenlanders, and when they are 'Greenlandic drunk' it does not make sense to question these people and spend a lot of time reporting it since it will happen again in three days. This is their culture.

The 'Danified' and 'Greenlandified' police force

Aqqalu thinks they get two types of Danish police officers: those who try to get involved and who Greenlanders become friends with, and others who don't get involved, are condescending and try to tell them what to do – the 'world champion types'. You can't revolutionize Greenland in one summer and do everything in half the time. Most Danes travel the world with the firm belief that everything is better in Denmark; if it is not like Denmark, then it is not worth anything. They move into a Danish ghetto, only speak together and tell each other the same story over and over again. It ends up becoming the truth: that nothing works in Greenland, everything is nepotism and that Greenlanders' professionalism is rock bottom. During all their jokes about Greenlanders, 'Greenlandic drunk' and

so on, Aqqalu often thinks to himself ‘Oh, just shut up’, but he doesn’t say anything out loud. They also have so many stories about how Greenlanders shy away from conflict, but when Greenlanders discuss this with each other, nobody is afraid of conflicts; if they have to discuss and argue with a Dane, then things change, as they must translate the Greenlandic mindset into Danish. And then they become almost submissive, afraid of being bullied because of their poor Danish skills. The older generation were forced to ‘Danify’, were taught Danish in school, so they are close to fluent in Danish, but subsequent generations were ‘Greenlandified’ in the 80s and 90s, and Aqqalu thinks their reports read like ‘junk’ because the younger generation think in Greenlandic and therefore write Danish with a Greenlandic mindset. For example, Benead is so well formulated in his mother tongue, Greenlandic, but Danish is a foreign language to him so he struggles with that. It is even worse for those who look more Danish, meaning those with lighter skin; people almost expect them to be better at Danish, but it is not always so because they might have grown up in a family where Greenlandic was more important.

Danes have zero tolerance for mistakes, but in Greenland it’s okay to make mistakes. This is just the way it is, because Greenlanders must solve all their problems with very limited resources and with limited competencies. Many of the stations are so small that one officer does it all; there is no way he or she will have the competencies or resources to avoid making mistakes. It’s not because they don’t care about the job, but because it has been necessary to try as hard as you can. Greenland has a lot of grim cases of domestic violence and the country lacks specialized personnel, so Greenlanders must do most of it themselves. Aqqalu is an investigator, coroner, prosecutor, social adviser; he even has to mediate in divorce proceedings. He takes a lot of civil cases. Then the Danes smile and remark that this is not ‘police relevant’ work. In cases of domestic violence, Greenlanders drive out the next day, ask what happened and tell them what to do to avoid a similar situation. Danes are so tense and concerned with rules, with ‘following the book’, telling people about their rights, etc. Greenlanders try to make the situation more relaxed to have a constructive talk with the family. Ironically, he thinks the Danes’ sense of justice is well developed, but up here they do things based much more on common sense and local reasoning. That is the difference. Danes think it needs to be different because it needs to be just. But up here, Greenlanders would rather say: ‘Well, let it slip. I talked to the man and there isn’t anything to it.’ Here, the Dane would go: ‘No, no, it has to be reported.’ It can be various things like domestic disturbance and other small things. Of course, big things must be reported and written down, but the small things, which occur most frequently in Greenland, are different; they do not have the resources to care for it all, and the population is so small and they can’t criminalize the whole

community, especially not when it's only small things. Remember, Greenlanders have to translate everything for the Danes. Everything they write in their reports comes from Greenlanders' mouths. It is quite annoying to act like an interpreter all the time. The Greenlander must do most of the work because he understands the language. If the Danish officer wants to interrogate a witness, then it creates tension and frustration because he needs a Greenlandic colleague to translate.

Vignette 3: Professional police identity: Being an authority or being in touch with the local community

The uniform as a sign of professionalism

It is late afternoon on Friday and Søren has taken the weekend duty in hope of some action. Before leaving for Greenland, Søren heard all these crazy stories from colleagues back in Denmark who had been summer assistants in Greenland. They experienced all these interesting cases you rarely meet as an officer in Denmark: sexual offences, rape, mass fights, dangerous crimes, some serious cases of violence or even killings. Not that he's hoping to get a murder or child abuse case when he is up here, but getting experience with more serious cases was one of his reasons for applying for a summer position here. However, he seems to have ended up in the wrong place. Not on the east coast, like his buddy Sven: Sven called yesterday and told about cases involving rape of minors and child abuse; he even had a case with a five-year-old who was bitten to death by sleigh dogs. Until now, Søren has mainly taken care of minor offences and assisted prisoners from 'the arrest' to the supermarket to do their shopping, which won't help his CV much in his pursuit of a career as an investigator back in Denmark. But now Søren gets a call: an old crazy guy is threatening to kill his wife at a birthday party. He has a rifle, but the wife has fled the house and is now hiding at some friends' place. Søren immediately calls Nanoq, a young strong officer, who is ordered to be on call all weekend to help Søren in case anything happens. Søren rushes to the car, making sure that he has his pistol and cursing the lack of handcuffs. In Greenland, if people are violent or drunk they are put into a sort of cage in the back of the car. This would never happen in Denmark – people would complain – but Greenlanders rarely complain about police behaviour.

Søren races to the home of Nanoq, who stands waiting in trainers and a hoody. Søren's first thought is: 'Damn, this is no outfit for a professional officer.' It does not signal 'police officer', when Nanoq is not wearing his uniform. A uniform indicates authority when they are on duty. Søren knows it is different up here, where everybody knows that Nanoq is an officer. Still, to not even care to put on a

uniform – that demonstrates lack of seriousness. Personally, Søren believes that when on duty you must stay focused and professional, and this is not the case if you wear your private clothes; private clothes can make you careless and easy-going. When Søren puts on his uniform, he is ready to respond, and he likes that officers look alike when they are at work. However, Søren doesn't say a thing. His Greenlandic colleagues have told him so many times that he can't change anything up here, but he is pretty annoyed nonetheless. Søren thinks that he might be old-fashioned, but how can his Greenlandic colleagues go to the hairdresser, spend time putting their boat in the sea or attend 'kaffemik' during working hours and in full uniform? This lack of consciousness about the significance of when to wear uniform is so unprofessional. When Søren puts on his uniform, he embodies a police officer for the world to see and he is always mindful to act as a proper officer in uniform. On the contrary, when he takes off the uniform, then he is a private person.

They arrive at the house of the family where the wife is hiding. He makes the necessary interrogations, but Nanoq constantly interrupts to translate for the family. Back in the car, they drive 200 metres to the neighbouring block. Thinking about their safety, Søren asks whether they have bulletproof vests: after all, he is in charge of the case and responsible for both his and Nanoq's own life. Of course, Nanoq mocks him: 'If you are afraid, just stay behind me', stretching out his full 1.9 metres. Reaching the door of the offender, Nanoq knocks on the door. Again, Nanoq cracks a joke: 'Family life doesn't work that well up here in the north, huh?' So typically Greenlandic to be sarcastic and make fun of serious events. A small shrivelled old man opens the door. They cannot interrogate him as he is too drunk. Searching the small apartment, they find parts of an old rifle that can't shoot. They bring him to the hospital for a mental check. Apparently, he needs new medication. Søren keeps him in detention overnight and thinks that this is no place for a mentally ill person. He belongs in the psychiatric hospital, but he is drunk and they won't admit him. Next morning, Søren must release him. He has threatened his wife and is in violation of his treatment sentence, but the health services decide to discharge him. This would never happen in Denmark; people would never be released when they pose a danger to others or themselves.

Another Friday night spoiled for no good reason

Friday at last and Nanoq is on his way to the pub with some friends. And then of course the summer assistant, Søren, calls him. As always when a Dane has the call duty, Nanoq is contacted to assist. Nanoq is half Danish and half Greenlandic and knows both languages fluently, so they prefer Nanoq to other colleagues, who only speak Danish poorly. Getting into the car, Søren sarcastically remarks:

‘Oh, are we going to a football match?’ Nanoq knows that Søren doesn’t like him wearing private clothes on duty, but if Nanoq had to put on a uniform every time they called him to duty, then he would always be wearing it. Nanoq has so little spare time, and all these extra call duties wear him down. Last year Nanoq was on call every second night because they lacked personnel at the station. Just the thought of having the call duty makes him tired. Nanoq never sleeps when he is on call duty; they can call him any time during the night. And then there is no time for a private life. Nanoq would love to be transferred to a bigger station, because they have more personnel, but the station manager won’t let him go. They depend on him because of his bilingual skills.

Cracking a few jokes about the situation, Nanoq tries to loosen up the mood and make Søren relax. Sarcasm and jokes are often the way to survive police work in Greenland; a way to collectively talk about and process sad or frightening events. Otherwise, it turns bad inside you. Nanoq has tried this several times. As a freshman and still a trainee at his first station, he had his first call: a suicide. He picked up the phone: ‘My dad shot himself.’ Nanoq will never forget it. Out of the thousands of calls the stations gets, his first should be this. He brought a colleague, a Danish summer assistant. He was very experienced and calm. That helped. Arriving at the place, they tried to seal it off. Nanoq took some pictures and thought: ‘This is going well’, but the summer assistant noticed how he was shaking. The man had done it outside his apartment in the entrance for everyone to see. It was a badly chosen spot; the entrance had some cracks, so blood was running through on the ground where some puppies were playing. Local kids came over and asked: ‘Why are the puppies all red?’ and ‘Who is it lying there; can we come and watch?’

Søren is racing through the city, not paying attention to kids playing at the roadside. The kids are not warned by a siren, because Søren has said that he doesn’t want to ‘scare off’ the perpetrator. Come on, Nanoq knows this man; he is a complete lunatic on heavy medication. Driving like crazy through a group of children won’t help anyone. Arriving at the apartment, Nanoq is focused on calming down the frightened family. With kids listening, they all talk about how crazy the perpetrator is and all the violent things he has done. Søren is interviewing in Danish, writing things down in his little book. He is so tense, intensifying the atmosphere of fright. Nanoq must translate most of their conversation, from Greenlandic to Danish to Greenlandic. If Søren had not insisted on being ‘in charge of the operation’ and doing the ‘interrogation’, then the police would long ago have arrested the man and allayed the family’s fears. On the way to the car, Søren asks whether any additional weapons or bulletproof vests are required. To calm him down, Nanoq jokes: ‘If you are scared, then stay behind me.’ But this does not seem to work; instead, it makes him angry. Danes are so whiny. When someone

falls and hurts themselves, Greenlanders laugh. But the Danish person goes: ‘Oh no, don’t make fun of him; it’s not fair. Don’t laugh about it.’ Greenlanders are more used to getting hurt. Nanoq tells Søren that he knows the man; the man is a sad case and has fired his gun downtown before just so that he could be admitted to psychiatric hospital. He will not do a thing. But Søren is all tense, hand on the pistol. It turns out the poor fellow only has a broken rifle. What a catch! Driving back, sitting next to the offender in the back seat – which Søren insisted that Nanoq should do even though he is not capable of anything – Nanoq knows his Friday night is spoiled. He will need to help Søren write the report, translate the interrogations of the witnesses and the offender, help with the facts, help him to take the poor fellow to the hospital for a mental examination. Another Friday night spoiled for no good reason.

Discussion

The case of Greenland’s police force could easily be interpreted as characteristic of neocolonialism operating through the superiority of the ‘Western’ discourse of management and professionalism (Banerjee and Linstead, 2001; Jack et al., 2011; Jack and Westwood, 2006; Jaya, 2001; Özkazanc-Pan, 2008), through continued Western organizational control of foreign territory (e.g. Lammers, 2003) and financial dependency on a former colonizer (Ashley, 2016; Srinivas, 2012). Greenland depends on Danish expertise (lawyers, doctors, civil servants and police officers), the Danish yearly block grant makes up over half of the Greenlandic state budget and Denmark has remained in control of constitutional affairs, foreign relations and defence. We have also exemplified this neocolonial relationship in the vignettes and how it results in stereotypical presumptions and us–them constructions between Danish and Greenlandic officers favouring Danes as professionally superior to the detriment of Greenlandic local knowledge and skills. However, there is more at play here and it would be a mistake to stop the analysis at this point. When showing the us–them constructions so clearly as we do in the vignettes, it also becomes clear that the us–them constructions are disrupted and contested in the very same everyday practices that maintain them. We will discuss how below.

In all three vignettes, racialized borders are constructed around or between different perceptions of how professionalism in the police is manifested. The way the vignettes are written, representing two very different viewpoints, highlights one of the most important findings of this fieldwork: that racialized borders are constructed and maintained around an unawareness of others’ points of view, which leads to stereotyping. Each individual story makes sense to the person telling it, but as the

stories are told and retold within the in-groups of either a Danish or a Greenlandic community, they are reinforced and strengthened through supportive confirmation of their supposed in-group ‘truth’. Additionally, when the stories are not told across the borders of the in-groups, the stories are never questioned or contested and the us–them division is maintained and strengthened.

The first vignette shows how colonial stereotypes of the lazy, savage, inefficient, incompetent Greenlandic and the rational, effective, professional and competent Dane feed into the way work performance is perceived. The colonial stereotypes – of both colonizer and colonized – produce perceptions of work tasks and procedures that increase the divisions in what is perceived as professional police work. Because many of the Danish officers are in Greenland only for a short period of time (up to two years), they lack understanding of what it means to live in the country and instead compare life there to a Danish ideal construction. When they then transfer Danish notions of efficiency and professionalism to a Greenlandic context, they are bound to fail, and they translate this failure as laziness, inefficiency or incompetence, rather than a lack of understanding of the local context. As Croft and Fernando (2017) show, the national identity of an indigenous population often clashes with notions of the ideal worker in a way that makes it almost impossible for them to be perceived as potential professionals. Greenland is treated very literally as a police district *in* Denmark. As the first vignette shows, this lack of contextual fit of how work tasks are performed in Greenland compared to Denmark keeps them from seeing the possibilities in each other’s ways of working. The stereotype of the lazy and inefficient Greenlandic keeps the Danish officers from valuing and using the Greenlandic officers’ situated knowledge. Furthermore, the Greenlandic officers’ personal investment in a colonial history that is filled with stories of Danes who exploit, use and exercise power over the Greenlandic people translates offers to help or suggestions to improve work practices into exercise of control, casting Danes as superior and in a position of making corrections, adjustments and improvements to Greenlandic policing. In the words of Ahmed (2004), the Danish officers’ behaviour is perceived as a classic example of white people’s yearning to ‘make a difference’. But because of the colonial history (more easily forgotten and neglected by the former colonizer than the former colonized), the desire to make a difference is performed on the basis of an undeniable racialized power asymmetry (Romani et al., 2018). This effort to make a difference cannot be freed from history and dates back to colonial Christian values, denying the agency and capacity of the Other and overemphasizing Western (white) ability to transcend the conditions of white power (see also Swan, 2017). Thus, as we see in the vignette, this yearning for making a difference, including

an inclination to speak on behalf of the other, locks the officers in a colonial relationship (for many unconscious and invisible) that affects their potential to collaborate.

In the second vignette, the issue of Danish being the professional language is similarly building on a colonial discourse. Not all Greenlandic officers have Danish as their mother tongue, yet it is the official working language of the Greenlandic Police Force and all written documentation must be in Danish. Dar (2017) emphasizes how the prominence of European languages is deeply problematic in contexts that have colonial relations to these languages because, historically, they have been used to coerce subjectivities and induce subjugation. However, rather than pointing to the problematic aspect of an indigenous people having to work in a language that is not necessarily their first language, it makes the Danish officers perceive the Greenlandic officers as less qualified or afraid of conflict. Similarly, from many Greenlanders' point of view, it feeds straight into the colonial construction of inferiority when the Danish officers judge the Greenlandic officers based on what they think is an unfair language criterion. The relationship is based on a hierarchy of culture and knowledge where Danish knowledge and perceptions of professionalism represent the criteria against which everything is measured.

'Professional' knowledge and command of the official language are often entwined and serve to reproduce white power privileges. The use of the former colonial language as the official language can be seen as an obstruction to achieving justice and as a way of maintaining and reproducing white/Danish superiority (Al Ariss et al., 2014). Danish officials, who benefit from Danish being the official language, do not have their position of authority questioned as it is naturalized by the subtle institutionalized practices of the public sector. As the official language, Danish further defines racial privilege and disadvantage in a work environment like the Greenlandic police, as oral and written command of Danish becomes an important factor in career prospects. Dar (2014) highlights how non-Western workers experience the demands of Western forms of reporting (particularly in languages that are not their native tongue) as alienating and that 'reporting subjugates local knowledge leading to workers experiencing disempowerment' (Dar, 2014: 131). From this perspective, the use of Danish as the official language both reproduces inequalities and creates new ones, as language asymmetries preclude the possibility of collaborating on an equal footing.

However, the issue of language illustrates the complexity of positions it makes possible: while obviously benefiting Danes in terms of leadership positions, it also disadvantages Danes in relation

to local encounters; for instance, while in the field, Greenlandic knowledge of weather conditions or of members of the local community. The two-sided story at times overshadows the reciprocity of ‘needing each other’ and collaboration in the field, creating avenues of challenging an otherwise ‘locked’ colonial relationship.

In the third vignette, we see how racialized borders and colonial us–them constructions become personal and transfer to the level of police identity as well. The borders are in this way no longer ‘just’ constructed on the surface level of tasks or skills, but are also about who the officers are and why they do police work. We see here how perceptions of professional and national identity intersect and feed into each other and how professional pride and national pride are tightly linked. When the uniform is not taken seriously by the Greenlandic officer, it violates the professional identity of the Danish officer who feels the Greenlandic officer shows disrespect to the profession. Professionalism for him is about embodying police identity through the work and the uniform; it is about who he becomes when he is at work. The Greenlandic officer, on the other hand, is always an officer and the uniform or being at work doesn’t change that. He is an officer at the local night club, at the family party, in every personal relationship he has ever had. As everyone in town knows him as ‘the officer’, police work filters through every aspect of his life and he feels personally insulted when Danish officers cannot see the personal sacrifices he makes; he is already a police officer, before the uniform. He does not have what he perceives to be a Danish luxury to switch back and forth between a public and a private persona. In his view, the fact that he is always a police officer is at the core of taking the job seriously, but as he is on call duty almost every weekend of his entire career, he takes the uniform less seriously on Friday nights than he does being ready to respond.

The Greenlandic officer finds it ridiculous when Danish officers feel the need to speed through the streets. The longest streets are a couple of kilometres long; you don’t save much time and the Greenlandic officer thinks you put pedestrians at risk – pedestrians who are not really used to cars, as there aren’t many cars outside of the capital, Nuuk. The problem here, however, is not their different opinions in and of themselves, but the way in which colonial stereotypes are used to make sense of their different opinions. Their behaviour and identity are in this way constructed along racialized borders between what is perceived to be ‘Greenlandic’ and ‘Danish’. It is not just their skills, but who they are assumed to be. In this sense, Said’s (1974) classic colonial stereotypes are internalized by both former colonizer and former colonized as a ‘colonisation of the mind’, as was also Fanon’s point, in such a way that they produce very essentialist predetermined categories within which they make sense of each other and each other’s behaviours. The Danes, who are only in

Greenland on a short-term contract, easily exoticize the Greenlandic experience and have a difficult time understanding how it must be to live in Greenland permanently. Not understanding this is interpreted as disrespect for Greenlandic culture, elitism, lack of empathy and, again, as another attempt to show off and demonstrate white power over a people Denmark has governed (in one way or another) for a long, long time.

Conclusion – towards a disruption of the colonial hierarchy?

As the vignettes show, the way events, skills and people's identities are made sense of along colonial stereotypes animate racialized borders between a perceived Danish–Greenlandic division. The way these stories are told and retold within in-groups further serve to strengthen and reinforce this us–them division. The vignettes clearly show the way psychologically and socially constructed borders between Danish and Greenlandic police officers are expressed and practised through everyday work. Such borders stem from – and are internalized through – a colonial history and a persisting asymmetrical power relation and are reproduced daily through the officers' interaction in the colonized professional space that is the Greenlandic Police Force. As shown by other authors in other contexts (e.g. Liu, 2017; Muhr and Salem, 2013; Romani et al., 2018; Ulus, 2014; Yousfi, 2014), through daily constructions of an 'us' and a 'them', officers who identify as Danish or Greenlandic contribute (often unknowingly) to the production of colonial stereotypes of the lazy, savage, inefficient, incompetent Greenlandic and the rational, effective, professional and competent Dane.

As racialized borders privilege the (former) colonizer (Al Ariss et al., 2014; Samaluk, 2014), the borders produce diverging opinions of what constitutes professional work and thus sustain systematic challenges to their daily collaboration. Because of the colonial undertones of the way these borders are constructed, the 'Western' perception of professionalism tends to be structurally and organizationally valued the highest and thus produces implications for the Greenlanders' employment and career opportunities. As Samaluk (2014) highlights, like the case of privileged class positions, whiteness – and, in this study, particularly the intersection of Danishness and whiteness – plays an important role in structuring social relations. Based on colonial history in Greenland, being Danish can best be understood as both a resource and a contingent social hierarchy that grants differential access to economic and social capital, as the elite (both professionally and economically) is still predominantly made up of Danes. In this way, socially constructed boundaries between 'Greenlandic' and 'Danish' can produce occupational segregation, exclusion from and inclusion in networks and

inequalities. Because of the colonial history and the undeniable power hierarchy this has created, it is difficult for the officers to negotiate and contest the borders – particularly as they disappear or are hidden in work practices and work identity. In a sense they are in what we call a ‘colonial deadlock’, locking each other into identity positions based on who they expect each other to be. In other words, the racialized borders are socially constructed in both a colonial history and the daily reiteration of colonial norms and discourses.

However, as the racialized borders and us–them divisions are socially constructed, they can also be deconstructed and contested. This might be by challenging the dominant way of seeing things – that is, the colonial discourse – and the associated assumptions about ‘true’ and ‘natural’ that have to be re-examined and reinterpreted. However, what the narratives that we showed in the vignettes made explicit was that the officers do not have a nuanced shared language for such deconstruction and contestation and as they did have a language for the us-them division, they tended to stay in the division – at least on a linguistic level. The narratives however not only showed the lack of a language that can transgress this colonial us–them division, it also made it explicit, tangible on contextual for the police force. This became particularly clear during the leadership seminar we facilitated where all 33 senior officers participated with enthusiasm in role-plays, culture analysis and discussions of excerpts from the data. The seminar simultaneously demonstrated the ability to create cracks in the colonial discourse when taking up shadow themes of prejudice and differences in the narratives from the vignettes. For instance, when debating the issue of nationality/ethnicity/race, it came up how most Greenlanders’ ancestry contains a mix of Inuit, Danish, Norwegian, Faroe Islander, Icelandic, etc., making it meaningless to distinguish between Danes and Greenlanders, which is also why none of the 33 identified as Inuit, but most of them as (primarily) Greenlanders.

This way of making use of strategic essentialism – by essentializing identities, albeit temporarily and situationally – through storytelling in the form of vignettes, can make explicit and manifest the otherwise subtle borders and their limits. Strategic essentialism always runs the risk of reifying differences and strengthening stereotypes, but they counterweigh the otherwise hegemonic notions of color blindness and meritocracy often governing public and bureaucratic organizations like the police. Focusing not only on difference in itself, but even more on the way we talk about/enact difference, allows for spotting how naturalization of norms and presumptions works. Creating space in organizational and communicative settings always entails taking ‘time out’ as well. This ability to create a common space and time in which individuals can listen to each other and grow closer is grasped in the notion of *epoché* (to take time out from, temporarily suspend or bracket ‘the truth’ of

one's own judgement in an attempt to understand the perspective of the other) to create empathy and change perspectives (Ghorashi and Sabelis, 2013).

Such capacity to make use of *epoché* might be induced by being exposed to multivocal vignettes like the ones we constructed above to acknowledge and make visible these borders in order to challenge and disrupt them:

The position of the other is not approached as a deviation from the norm but as a possible positioning within the discursive space and outside the time of the routine (or action) currently at hand [...] The main challenge would be to recognize otherness while making space for individual experiences beyond categorisations.

(Ghorashi and Sabelis, 2013: 83)

Hence, borders might be contested by being exposed, and here the multiple standpoints expressed in the vignettes are important as they help to examine the complexity of taken-for-granted privileges invested in racialization at work.

Making explicit the often otherwise invisible and internalized rhetoric of colonial inferiority/superiority at a professional, personal and emotional level (Liu, 2017; Yousfi, 2014; Muhr and Salem, 2013; Ulus, 2014) might be one way to go. But this necessarily needs to be retained in all the aspects uniting the police force, like a strong sense of shared professional pride and prevailing *esprit de corps*. As the chief of police and the regional chief remarked in a common mail commenting on our article:

The article is interesting and we do recognize ourselves. This being said, we do think the conflict between Danish and Greenlandic colleagues is drawn up too harsh. We would like that the article also recognizes the great community, friendship and recognition between employees regardless of Danish or Greenlandic background [...] However, we will use the three vignettes in our future dialogue between the officers. The vignettes will make people participate – some because they agree and other because they feel provoked. We want you to know that since you left, we have continuously debated cultural differences – and this in itself has changed some of our challenges in the right direction.

Thus, all in all, micro-processes that contest, challenge and renegotiate racialized borders are important as they offer new openings for mutual and respectful processes of collaboration.

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