Bachelor Thesis

Public Involvement in

the London Mining Hearing Process

- from the perspective of deliberative theory

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Abstract

Greenland constitutes one of the youngest democracies in the world and is a society characterised by significant social, economic and political inequality. Centuries as a Danish colony have left it with relatively weak institutional structures and with limited tradition for public dialogue. Today, as the country is at the verge of new large-scale industrial developments, calls for increasing public involvement in decision-making are mounting in a desire to strengthen the legitimacy of decisions. This thesis constitutes a case study of the hearing process on a proposed large-scale iron ore project by the company London Mining carried out in the autumn of 2012. The study is based on deliberative theory and argues that the hearing was characterised by a number of challenges in terms of reaching its deliberative potential, most notably the ones arising from the structural inequalities that continue to pervade and segregate society. While the challenges associated with power asymmetries and inequality of resources are not easily accommodated by a simple redesign of the hearing, the possible gains from improving conditions for deliberation in Greenland are substantial, leading this thesis to argue that targeted and sustained efforts at strengthening the deliberative component of decision-making processes remains worthwhile and should be pursued.

Key words: deliberation, deliberative democracy, public hearing, participation, legitimacy, involvement, consultation, Greenland, inequality, decision-making, inclusion

Words: 10,000

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List of Acronyms and Greenlandic Terms

BMP   The Bureau of Minerals and Petroleum

CSO   Civil Society Organisation

EIA   Environmental Impact Assessment

ICC   Inuit Circumpolar Council

Inatsisartut   The Greenlandic Parliament

Naalakkersuisut The Government of Greenland

SIA   Social Impact Assessment

In February 2013, a conference took place in the cultural centre Katuaq in Nuuk. Invitees included prominent figures from the economic and political elite in Greenland. The conference was named Future Greenland – From Vision to Reality and on the second day a number of resource persons from the public and private sector were invited to a panel debate to discuss what they considered to be the most critical issues in transforming vision to reality in the move towards a Future Greenland. A key topic turned out to be public involvement – more particularly, the significance of including the broad public in the decision-making processes about what future to move towards. It is this debate along with conversations during my time in Nuuk that inspired this thesis.

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1 Introduction

The Isua iron ore project by the London-based company London Mining A/S is one of several large-scale industrial projects that have been on the drawing board over the past years in the attempt to find a way forward for a struggling economy. If realised, the project will constitute a leap in Greenland's development process (Berthelsen,2013,interview;Kleist,2013,interview). Estimates suggest a total revenue based on taxes of more than 30 billion DKK and more employment than can feasibly be absorbed by the Greenlandic population, counting at the present approximately 57,000 inhabitants (LondonMiningA/S,2012a).

Considering the significant stakes involved in the potential realisation of the project, extensive preparations have been undertaken in the attempt to assess and prepare for the changes that the project is expected to bring to the country. Along with the formal application for an exploitation license, the company, London Mining A/S, submitted a statutory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Social Impact Assessment (SIA) in the spring of 2012. Building on top of a number of company-initiated information meetings, the government took charge of a nine weeks hearing process in which the aim was to "strengthen impartial knowledge-sharing and promote open debate" concerning the development of a new mining industry (Berthelsen,2012,own translation).

The planning and execution of the four public meetings that were held during the hearing period were outsourced to the private company Kompetencekompagniet. The hearing period lasted from August till October 2012. When the hearing ended, 34 hearing responses had been submitted. The public meetings had a continuously growing attendance with 50-60 participants in the first meeting and 160 at the final meeting.

1.1 Research Problem and Significance of Study

Considering the hearing process an example of the efforts of the previous government to "involve the public" (Berthelsen,2012,own translation) and to "secure the public's influence and involvement in the decision-making processes" (Naalakkersuisut,2009,own translation), this will be the focus of this thesis. The aim of this thesis is to analyse the challenges associated with involving the public through the London Mining hearing process from the perspective of deliberative theory. In particular, I am curious to understand,

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What were the main challenges in ensuring a deliberative public hearing process on the London Mining project?

Greenland is a country characterised by significant social, economic and political inequality. Previous research has established the way that these inequalities continue to feed into each other in a reinforcing cycle in which many people remain marginalised and unable to influence the political agenda (Janussen,2003;Andersen&Tonsgaard,2003). In particular, Janussen has noted how the continuous segregation between decision-makers and parts of the population may lead to a crisis of legitimacy in an age characterised by great decisions and changes(Janussen,2003:53). It is this research that my thesis seeks to build upon by questioning the deliberative capacity of the public hearing as a response to the increasing calls for greater public involvement in the decision-making processes on the project. In recognition of the significant inequalities and marginalisation that continues to characterise the political reality in the country, the study will be especially attentive to the way that these characteristics may impact conditions for effective public deliberation in the hearing.

The relevance of the case is underlined by the intensity of the debate sparked among stakeholders and in the media concerning public involvement in the decision-making process on the London Mining project. Also, the hearing process is the most extensive in the country to this date and was considered a frontrunner of its kind, as explicated by the then-Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources, Ove Karl Berthelsen(2013,interview,own translation),

"We had to put together a process, because a project of this kind has never before existed in Greenland so close to a town. Although it is a 150km away [from Nuuk], the planning, the size and the sheer volume of foreign temporary workers in the construction phase is larger than anything that has been before in Greenland. This means we had to find whole new structures, a whole new legal framework and new public hearing processes… there has not before been put together a hearing process that considered these larger processes."

Rather than simply being an evaluation of a past hearing process, the intention is to shed light on some of the challenges associated with carrying out a process of public involvement in a society that is characterised by pervasive inequalities in terms of access to economic, social and political power and resources and to relevant information and knowledge. Through this, the hope is that the deliberative ideals will help to generate new insights into the conditions for public deliberation in Greenland and in other societies characterised by similar challenges.

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1.2 Some Delimitations

Since resource constraints have prevented a more comprehensive study involving the broader public, this study is based on the experiences and input of key stakeholders in the process. As such, the study is not generalizable to the broader population that were invited to partake in the public hearing nor are its insights necessarily transferable to other hearing processes in Greenland or abroad.

On a practical note, Greenland experienced a change of government in March 2013 when the coalition led by Inuit Ataqatigiit (IA) handed over power to the new Siumut-headed coalition. Since the hearing process took place while the previous coalition was still in place, the thesis will be primarily based on its policies.

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2   Methodology

In this section, I will discuss the methodological aspects of the research with the intention of providing a sound background to the choice of design, methods and mode of analysis employed in the remainder of the thesis.

Halperin & Heath argue that the descriptive question, which is the focal point of this study, lends itself particularly to the qualitative case study, as it provides "in-depth understanding of a process, event or situation"(Halperin&Heath,2012:173). Further, Conrad et al. identifies the case study to be the most appropriate method for assessing processes of public participation. This is due to its sensitivity to the wider socio-political context, which is considered inevitably influential on the case at hand(Conrad et al.,2011:764). The idiographic approach of the case study will hence allow me to answer my research questions adequately by analysing the process from a variety of perspectives not otherwise accessible to reveal the "complexity and particular nature of the case in question"(Bryman,2012:66,69).

 The London Mining public hearing may be suggested to at once constitute the unit of analysis and the case of the study. While a more expansive assessment, incorporating the entire duration of London Mining's activity in Greenland and the entire country's population could be justified, this was dismissed with reference to the resources available, echoing Andersen et al.'s statement that "all investigations are subdued to limitations in terms of the resources available", including time, money and skills (Andersen et al.,2010:70,own translation).

 The case study may be claimed to be credible in that findings are triangulated in the process of delving deeper into the case (Andersen,2010:113). This parallels Halperin & Heath's assertion that case studies often have a high internal validity, because of a good match between theory and evidence (Halperin&Heath, 2012:208). What challenges the case study in terms of measuring up to research criteria is its limited transferability, which means that it is difficult to generalise beyond the sample investigated(Andersen,2010:113;Bryman,2012:69-70). This is also the case for this study. The hearing process constituted a novelty in the Greenlandic history of public involvement, both in scope and size, and the national specificity of public hearing structures means that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to generalise across settings to the experience with hearings in other democratic societies.

2.1 Data Collection

The data was collected during one month in Nuuk, Greenland in May-June 2013. While the case was selected because of its novelty role in the field of public deliberation in Greenland, it was initially not clear what the exact focus within the case would be. As such, the study took an explorative approach (Andersen et al.,2012).

The choice to conduct interviews was based on reasoning parallel to Harrits et al.'s three arguments for when the qualitative research interview is appropriate. These include "1)an interest in meaning and significance, 2)an explorative investigation and 3)an interest in unique information"(Harrits et al.,2010:146,own translation). Through the interviews, I was able to obtain information not otherwise accessible and to gain an understanding of the variety of experiences with public involvement in the hearing. In addition to the interviews, the public hearing materials constituted a rich source of information, especially for the more factual details of the process.

2.1.1 Sampling

Andersen et al. argue that, if there are only one or few units of analysis, probability sampling is not a useful tool for generating the richest data in relation to the theory. Rather *theoretical* or *purposive* sampling is preferable (Andersen et al.,2010:89). Bryman writes that "the goal of purposive sampling is to sample cases/participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed"(Bryman,2012:418). It is further noted how a useful criterion in developing the sample, whether sequentially or non-sequentially, is that of *variety,* "so that sample members differ from each other in terms of key characteristics relevant to the research question"(Bryman,2012:418).

While theoretical sampling fits well with the explorative approach through its employment of theoretical saturation as a criterion of how long to continue and the inherent possibility for continuously refining theoretical categories during the process of data collection, a time constraint made it necessary to fix the sample to some extent a priori.

The first step in sampling was an identification of who constitutes the population the sample is to be taken from. In the case of the London Mining hearing, the population is delimited to Nuuk's population, as Nuuk is where the public meetings took place during the hearing period and its population was the main target of efforts to inform and involve the public.

In selecting the sample, the main criterion was to gather the richest data possible without carrying out more interviews than needed both due to personal time restraints in managing the data later and to avoid being of unnecessary inconvenience to informants (Elklit&Jensen,2010). As such, sampling was done strategically with regard to who were the main stakeholders, who I knew had been engaged in the process and had reflected on it (Harrits et al.,2010). I ended up with 12 interviews, which reflected a diversity of perspectives on the process. The choice to target people, who were already engaged in the process and had taken a stance on it naturally biases the data. It is often the critical voices that get heard, while more compliant perspectives may remain silent. This is characterising both for the interviews I conducted as well as for the excerpts from the meeting minutes. The thesis is acknowledging of this and of the limitations it places on the study in terms of transferability (Andersen,2010;Bryman,2012). I would have liked also to interview the labour organisations to properly understand their engagement in the process to, but due to the constraint of time and resources, this was dismissed.

2.1.2 Interviews

In line with the explorative approach employed in sampling and with the aim of generating as much useful data through each interview as possible, I decided to make use of semi-structured interviews, though in the more unstructured end of the spectre (Harrits et al.,2010). For most informants, I initiated the interview with a number of prepared questions, which allowed me to obtain factual information about the interviewee's role and involvement in the hearing process. I then continued on to a number of themes, which allowed me to explore more in-depth how the different interviewees had experienced and evaluated the process (Halperin&Heath,2012). This type of interview provided a flexibility, which gave the interviewee the opportunity to steer the interview into areas, which they found more significant. This sometimes led to a situation in which the interview became more conversation-like, though always with the latent consciousness of not steering the informant or embedding preconceptions in my questions, as Bryman notes are important, especially when working with more explorative approaches, (Bryman,2012:473). The interview guides evolved continuously throughout the process of interviewing informants, as I became more knowledgeable of the factual details of the hearing process and more attentive to the ways in which people tended to conceptualise of their experiences with the process. In this way, my understanding of what was significant evolved through a process similar to Glaser & Strauss' *constant comparison*(Bryman,2012:568).

All interviews were conducted in Danish. This is the language of the educated in Greenland and the second language to many of the Greenlanders that I interviewed (Langgård,2003). The colonial legacy inherent in the language was

something I was attentive to and tried to ameliorate by ensuring that good rapport was established during each interview (Bryman,2012). On a practical note, all interviews took place in locations selected by the informant. The informant was fully informed of the purpose with the interview and has subsequently been sent the transcribed interview for validation.

2.1.3 Additional Data Sources

In addition to the interviews conducted, data has been available in form of public documents concerned with the hearing process. These constituted a rich information basis for preparing the interviews and for embedding myself in the case. Publicly available hearing materials located at the Government of Greenland's hearing portal, included,

1. The Environmental Impact Assessment
2. The Social Impact Assessment
3. Minutes and speeches from the four public meetings
4. Written answers to all questions asked at the public hearing
5. 34 hearing responses

In addition to this, I have made use of public documents, including coalition agreements, reports from Greenland Statistics etc.

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2.2   Managing and Analysing the Data

All relevant parts of the interviews were transcribed. As interviews were conducted in Danish, transcriptions were also made in Danish and citations have subsequently been translated near-verbatim for use in the thesis. Coding and analysis have been done in English, which imply the inevitable risk of biasing the data in the process of translation.

Applying Holliday's thematic approach to induce organising themes from the transcriptions, I initially searched through the data to become aware of recurring themes that could be useful for analysis. These were tagged with initial 'headings', which were then changed in the process of moving back and forth between different sections of the data and between theory and data, until eventually a gradual structure and focus for the analytical section emerged (Holliday,2007:90-98). The process of developing themes continued well into the analytical writing and fitted well with the inductive approach characterising the case study (Bryman,2012:69). As such, the emergence of analytical categories was characterised by continuous interplay between theory and data that ensured a strong link between theoretical framework and empirical findings.

As for the publicly available data sources, their comprehensiveness has made rigorous analysis impossible. Instead, they have primarily been used as background material, citations and for obtaining factual information.

2.2.1   Strengths and Limitations of the Data

The strength of the data lies in its breadth and depth. I was able to interview all relevant stakeholders, except the labour organisations (and the wider public). Without exception, all interviewees were interested in the issue, which made it possible to extract rich data from each of the 12 interviews. At the same time, this also constituted the main challenge, as the amount of data has been time-consuming and overwhelming at times to deal with. Nevertheless, the overall quality of the data is high with only one significant factor limiting it. The interviews took place 9-10 months after the hearing process itself, which means that it to some could be difficult to remember exactly how the process took place. This was ameliorated by triangulating factual claims across the different interviews with formal, public documents whenever possible. Unverifiable data has been discarded.

3 Literature Review

It is possible to discern a number of branches of democratic theory that concern themselves with public involvement in decision-making processes. These are exemplified first and foremost by the treatise by Robert Dahl and by theories of deliberative and participatory democracy. In outlining the criteria for a democratic process, Robert Dahl (1989:109) argues,

"Throughout the process of making binding decisions, citizens ought to have an adequate opportunity, and an equal opportunity, for expressing their preferences as to the final outcome. They must have adequate and equal opportunities for placing questions on the agenda and for expressing reasons for endorsing one outcome rather than another."

Dahl's normative understanding of public input as a key component in the democratic order is much in line with the ideals propagated by participatory and deliberative democrats: Citizens constitute indispensable stakeholders in decision-making and should be provided *adequate* and *equal* opportunity to impact procedural as well as substantive aspects of the process. At the same time, Dahl's stress on voting as the principal way to secure equality at the decisive stage of decision-making discerns him from particularly the theoretical underpinnings of deliberative democracy(Bohman&Rehg,1997:xii-xiii).

The idea that democracy through deliberation constitutes a more legitimate way of decision-making as compared to democracy as *the aggregation of preferences* i.e. voting has constituted a driving force behind the development of deliberative democracy as a distinct branch within political theory (Rosenberg,2007a:4-5; Young,2000:18-22;Elster,1997:11). Dryzek's notion of the *deliberative turn* within democratic theory refers to the sudden growth of deliberative theory, recognised by many scholars, that took place some decades ago (Dryzek,2000:v, Niemeyer,2011:103-104). Though debates continue as to its exact timing, there is wide agreement that the field has experienced significant growth over the past decades(Bohman&Rehg,1997:ix;Black,2012:59). While early research focused on the normative requirements to the deliberative procedure, work from the recent decade has been increasingly concerned with more applied studies of deliberation (Abelson et al.,2003:239;Dryzek,2010:9). Some applied studies can be located within the branch of participation. Participatory models often rely on the normative foundations of deliberative democracy in spelling out criteria for ensuring substantive participation. Examples include Webler and Renn's criteria of competence and fairness and Abelson et

al.'s four key components of evaluating deliberative processes (Gastil et al.,2012:208;Abelson et al.,2003:244). While participatory models are often easily applicable, their theoretical dependence on deliberative theory means that to place participation in the context of core democratic ideals requires a visit to the theory of deliberative democracy. This corresponds to Lehtonen's finding that deliberative theory has received increasing attention as "a normative ideal for evaluation"(Lehtonen,2006:185). Nabatachi et al.'s anthology *Democracy in Motion* (2012) includes recent examples of the applied side of deliberative studies. The editors describe the field as being characterised by a "fragmentation and a continuous "academic-practitioner divide", which they source to the diversity of deliberative practice with regard to purpose, level of governance, participants and locus of action (Nabatchi,2012:4).

In sum, public involvement can be assessed from a number of perspectives within democratic theory, in particular those of deliberative and participatory theory. A lot of the applied literature is based on societal conditions radically different from the Greenlandic, which made them difficult to use for theoretical insight. I have chosen to locate my study within the branch of deliberative theory, which I found most applicable to the aspects of the hearing process that I was curious to explore. Hence the remainder of this review will address first, the normative literature to locate the study in its theoretical context and then provide a brief overview of previous research on democratic conditions in Greenland.

3.1 Defining Deliberation

Considering the extensive body of work that has been done on deliberative theory, it is surprisingly hard to find an outright definition of what deliberation means in practice. Most attempts at refining the notion have taken the shape of formulating normative criteria to qualify the deliberative process.

Work within the idealist branch of deliberative democracy constitutes a rich source of normative criteria for deliberative procedures. This includes, but is not limited to, Cohen's *ideal deliberative procedure,* Dryzek's consideration of the *deliberative system* and Habermas' *ideal speech situation* as the embodiment of his belief in free, non-coercive and reasoned argument (Cohen,1997:72-75;Webler&Tuler,2000:568Dryzek,2010:10-12, Dryzek,2000:24).

Some scholars have suggested that deliberation strictly adhering to Habermas' principles excludes the many, who are unable to formulate their convictions according to the requirements of rational argument (Siu&Stanisevski,2012:96;Abels,2007:106;Young,2000). To those, deliberative communication may also include rhetoric, testimony, greeting and storytelling (Black,2012:73-74;Siu&Stanisevski,2012:94;Young,2000:52-80). To Young, the main criterion rests on inclusion. Legitimate deliberation requires that "those affected by it have been included in the decision-making processes and have had the opportunity to influence the outcomes"(Young,2000:5-6). This criterion corresponds closely to many of the legitimising principles that have been advanced as justifications for the pursuit of deliberative democracy (Webler&Tuler,2000:570;Dryzek,2000:1-2;Abelson et al.,2003:244;Barrett et al.,2012:186-187).

Common to most criteria is the aim to establish a legitimate account of deliberation. In this way, the notion of legitimacy takes up a special position in the deliberative literature and hence deserves a mention.

3.2 Power and Legitimacy

The role of power in deliberation and its influence on the perceived legitimacy of deliberative procedures is a subject to continuous debate. Some scholars, including Habermas and Cohen, assume power relations to be somehow neutralised in the deliberative space or, as Cohen writes, that deliberative democracy "subject[s] power to reason's discipline"(Walsh,2007:55; Rosenberg,2007b:131;Cohen,2007:221). To Cohen, the legitimacy of deliberation, both with regards to process and outcome, depends vitally on the "free and reasoned agreement among equals"(Cohen,1997:72-74). This is similar to Habermas' communicative rationality, in which the only power prevailing is that of the better argument (Siu&Stanisevski,2012:94;Dryzek,2000:172).

To others, the assumption that power can somehow be 'neutralised' or 'disciplined' in the deliberative space is naïve and "skewed" (Mouffe,1999:752;Young,2000:40;Dryzek,2000:65). To Mouffe, the denial of the "conflictual dimension of politics" undermines the entire theory of deliberative democracy (Mouffe,1999:752). Instead, she proposes a project of radical and plural democracy, which is based on an understanding of power as constitutive of social identity and the presumption there can be no democracy other than through acts of power (Mouffe,1999:753). To Young, the rationality-based conception of deliberation of Habermas and Cohen does not need to imply the dissolution of deliberative theory. Rather, she argues for recognition of the role played by power, privilege and difference as reflected in her requirements to legitimate deliberation cited earlier (Young,2000). Dryzek makes an attempt at moving beyond this tension by advocating his account of *discursive democracy* as an alternative to, or rather a specification of, the deliberative account. He argues that discursive democracy is preferable in its critical approach to established power structures and "pluralistic in embracing the necessity to communicate across difference without erasing difference"(Dryzek,2000:2-3).

Abelson et al. frames the issue in terms of equality and questions the extent to which deliberation can ever take place among *equals* considering the disparities in competence and the power imbalances between those who possess information and those who do not (Abelson et al.,2003:246). Bohman reorients the issue of equality to one of capabilities in order to bridge the "potentially conflicting demands of diversity and equality" (Bohman,1997:326). Looking at effective capabilities provides a way of looking beyond mere proceduralism to evaluate the actual opportunities that people have for engaging in deliberation. Knight and Johnson argue that a society that is dedicated to political equality of the kind required by deliberative forums must make substantive efforts to ensure citizens the necessary capacity to participate, even though this process may involve redistribution of power and difficult trade-offs

(Knight&Johnson,1997:310). In practice, disparities in opportunity for effective participation remain a fact, which can challenge the legitimacy of process as well as outcome.

The emphasis on power and equality corresponds well to the particular focus in this thesis on issues of social inequality and will hence be explored more in depth in the theoretical discussion following next.

3.3   Previous Research on Greenland

Greenland constitutes one of the youngest democracies in the world and with a scarce population, the research accumulated in the field of political science is extremely limited. Most research in the field has been concerned with the Danish-Greenlandic relation and has revolved around questions of ethnicity, language and colonialism. Jens Dahl's *Arctic Self-Government* from 1986 constitutes a comprehensive assessment of political developments in Greenland, especially around the period of the establishment of home rule in 1979. Of relevance are his considerations of the country's structural resemblances to those of many developing countries with colonial legacies and his analysis of the relation between social class and political power. The 2003 anthology, *Democracy and Power in Greenland*, constitutes the most recent attempt at synthesising the political reality in Greenland today (Winther(ed.),2003). Here, the continuously meagre conditions for public dialogue are considered as part of Janussen's assessment of *Democracy's Conditions in Greenland*. Limited public dialogue is attributed to the dispersed and localised population, the colonial history, to an educational backlog, a weak press and basically harsh living conditions, which makes daily chores, rather than political dialogue, the key priority (Janussen,2003). The notion of political poverty in the context of Greenland is introduced by Andersen & Tonsgaard in the paper on *Voter Power in Greenland* (Andersen&Tonsgaard,2003). Andersen & Tonsgaard establishes that the political reality in Greenland is characterised by latent institutional deficiencies in the shape of limited channels of communication between the political system and the general public that restricts the opportunities for articulating demands to the political system. This is suggested to be a potential challenge to political legitimacy and stability in the long run (Andersen&Tonsgaard,2003:77).

While deliberative theory has not before been applied to the Greenlandic setting[1], it nevertheless constitutes a useful means for assessing the legitimacy of political processes in a country characterised by such pervasive inequalities as the Greenlandic. This study builds on the existing research by questioning the capacity of the hearing to act as a tool for the public to place demands upon their elected representatives. Further, it seeks to question the extent to which wider societal inequalities may impact conditions for deliberation in the case of the hearing by addressing the role of power in the deliberative sphere as advanced above. In a scant scholarly field, it is the aspiration that this thesis will contribute with new insights, motivating continued research into the conditions for public deliberation in Greenland and its influence on the legitimacy of decision-making processes in an era of great change.

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[1] With the exception of the use of Habermas in the policy report *Democratic Legitimacy in Consultation Processes Associated with Large-Scale Projects in Greenland* published by Greenland's Employers' Association in 2012.
[2] Lyberth (2013,interview) and Poppel's insistence to call them "information meetings […] because they did not

4 Theoretical Framework

Having provided an overview of some of the main issues within the deliberative literature, the intention is now to introduce and discuss more in depth the theoretical concepts that will serve as guidance in the empirical analysis following next. Approaching the empirical data of the study by the use of thematic analysis, three main themes emerged. These were:

1. Communication during the public meetings.
2. The experience of in-/exclusion
3. The ability to impact the outcome of the decision-making process.

While the themes emerged in an initially inductive process, they were eventually coupled with theory and refined through an iterative process in order to ensure a strong link between theoretical concepts and empirical findings.

The theoretical framework is based on Dryzek's notion of *deliberative capacity* concerned with the tripartite demands of authenticity, inclusion and consequence. It will be employed first, to structure the theoretical discussion below and later, to guide the empirical analysis, operationalizing the notion of deliberation. Though not framed in terms of legitimacy, Dryzek's understanding of the deliberative capacity of a system circumvents the commonplace evaluative approach of comparing real life deliberative processes with normative criteria of legitimacy by making the deliberative qualities of a system a matter of degree rather than a question of either or (Mansbridge,2007:260). While the intention is not to discuss Dryzek's definition of each term in detail, they usefully encapsulate the three main issues, I wish to discuss and sum up some of the main criteria to the deliberative process agreed upon by many scholars. To ensure focus on the notions of inequality and marginalisation, as established in the introduction, Iris Marion Young's work on Democracy and Inclusion will be employed.

4.1 Authenticity

Deliberation is authentic to the extent that it is "able to induce reflection upon preferences in noncoercive fashion" (Dryzek,2010:10)

The call for authenticity is concerned with the quality of deliberation and with the communicative interaction between different participants. In the idealist version propagated by Cohen, the ability to induce ""reflection upon preferences without coercion""(Dryzek,2000:8 cited in Cohen,2007:222) is an inherent feature of "the fundamental characteristics" of the deliberative act of reasoning, because "the point of deliberative democracy is not for people to reflect on their preferences, but to decide, in light of reasons, what to do"(Cohen,2007:222). With appeal to public reason, Cohen emphasises rational argument as the cornerstone of deliberation, because only in this way can the collective power be subjected to reason's discipline (Cohen,2007:220-222). Young challenges this account, as she argues that rational argument excludes the many, who are unable to formulate their needs or interests according to the norms of 'articulateness' and 'dispationateness' inherent in the notion of the rational argument (Young,2000:37-38) Rather, she posits, the concern should not be with the content of people's contributions to discussion, but with "a set of dispositions" – referred to as *reasonableness* - held by each participant that makes them willing to listen to others and to "change [their] opinions or preferences because others persuade [them]" (Young,2000:24-25). To Young, people can reason, in Cohen's sense of the word, without being reasonable (Young,2000:24). In Cohen's framework, the qualities encapsulated by Dryzek's notion of authenticity constitute indispensable features of deliberation, which cannot be assessed as a matter of degree (Cohen,2007:222). Counter, to Young, the quality of argument can vary to the extent that people are reasonable, though it can also be undermined, leading to a situation which Young refers to as *internal exclusion,* i.e. "when people lack effective opportunity to influence the thinking of others" even when they are nominally a part of the decision-making process (Young,2000:55). What distinguishes Cohen and Young is their account of power. While Cohen perceives rational argument as a means of taming power in the deliberative sphere, Young considers it the very expression of power.

   Summarising, the notion of authenticity can then be operationalized through evaluating the effective opportunities there are for people reflect upon their interests, while recognising the potential impact of power on these deliberative interactions. An assessment of the authenticity of the hearing will help reveal any challenges associated with the communicative aspects of the hearing and will shed light on the ways in which different experiences of in- or exclusion may impact on the deliberative capacity of the process overall.

4.2 Inclusion

Deliberation is inclusive in requiring *"the opportunity and ability of all affected actors to participate"*(Dryzek, 2010: 10)

Dryzek's specification mirrors many criteria of legitimacy, asserting that those affected by a decision should be invited to partake in discussion about it (Gould,2004:26;Young,2000:5-6;Cohen,2007:222). While a public hearing is by nature open to everyone, Young – supported by a wide range of other scholars - argues that existing democratic societies tend to be characterised by a "reinforcing circle between social and economic inequality and political inequality" that enables the powerful to dominate the agenda and marginalise or exclude the less powerful(Young,2000:17-18;Knight&Johnson,1997;Ryfe&Stalsburg,2012). Understanding inclusion as contingent on the notion of equality makes the issue more than simply a matter of formal rules, and calls instead for a consideration of people's actual ability to participate in deliberative processes. Bohman, inspired by Amartya Sen, calls for equality of capability as he argues that the deliberative process "cannot simply favour those who are most educated, who have access to special information, who possess the greatest resources and privileged social positions"(Bohman,1997:325). Capabilities are defined as the ability to convert resources into means in order to achieve ends and is defining to people's ability to participate in the political process. Inequality of capabilities leads to the existence of a *political poverty line*, below which it is impossible to initiate deliberation or to have any chance of influencing its outcome (Bohman,1997:333). Though Bohman conceives of resources and capabilities as being distinct and not necessarily correlated, he also acknowledges the reinforcing circle noted by Young. "Capability failure" covers the situation when economic resources prove to be positively correlated with the development of capabilities, leading to a situation in which some have access to the political process, while others remain marginalised or excluded (Bohman,1997:335). Young and Bohman's understanding of equality and inclusion can, as was the case with authenticity, be distinguished from the idealist version propagated by Cohen and Habermas. To the latter, the power-subjugating force of rational argument makes people equal in the deliberative sphere, even if they are not otherwise equal in any way. In this understanding, the deliberative sphere, by being free and equal, becomes inclusive to anyone wishing to participate (Nabatchi,2012:9).

Summing up, effective inclusion hinges on more than an invitation to participate and calls instead for an acknowledgement of the differences in resources and capabilities among different stakeholders. The deliberative capacity of the hearing process depends here on the extent to which it manages to be inclusive to citizens, no matter their social, economic or political resources or capabilities

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4.3   Consequence

Deliberation is "consequential in its capacity to "somehow make a difference when it comes to determining or influencing collective outcomes" (Dryzek,2010:10)

The final aspect to consider in an assessment of the capacity to involve the public through deliberation is that of consequence, also framed by some as *impact* (Barrett et al,2012:181). In its idealist version, deliberation is the process of generating rational consensus through "the non-coercive coercion of the better argument (Habermas,1983:182 in Bächtiger et al.,2007:86). Here, as authenticity was to Cohen, consequence becomes an inherent feature of the act of deliberation. Nevertheless, the unattainability of consensus, at least in the Habermasian sense, has been recognised by many, leading to the challenge of formulating what then we should expect to be the outcome of the deliberative process (Gaus,1997;Christiano;1997;Dryzek,2010). The ability to somehow influence the outcomes of the procedure constitutes a significant justification and a legitimising principle to many scholars (Young,2000;Dryzek,2007;Barrett et al.,2012). At the same time, research has found it difficult to establish the causal link between deliberative procedures and its outcome (Knight&Johnson,1997;Dryzek,2007). Fung has argued that participants in public policy processes often have little or no expectation of influencing its outcome, which he attributes to the kind of communication that takes place during the participatory process (Fung,2006). To Young, impact depends on inclusion and its absence is a result of the power discrepancies in the deliberative sphere, which make some participants able to exclude the needs or interests of others (Young,2000). This is backed by Coelho & Nobre (in Barrett et al.,2012:187), who have found that deliberative public policy processes are often characterised by significant power asymmetries, which undermine the public's possibilities for effectively impacting agenda as well as outcome. Knight & Johnson (1997) suggest impacts on outcome to comprise a measure of the relative effectiveness of participation, which they relate to the *equal opportunity* of all participants to *political influence* (Knight&Johnson, 1997:280-281).

Significant to all these accounts is the way they view the notion of consequence as being intimately related to the procedural features of the process. The notion of consequence can then be operationalized as a function of authenticity and inclusion and be assessed with reference to the variables set out above. An assessment of the deliberative capacity of the hearing will have to address the interdependency of these three measures to adequately understand its ability to impact outcomes.

Through the above discussion, Dryzek's concept of deliberative capacity has been operationalized as a measure of deliberation to further develop a basis for the subsequent empirical analysis. By contrasting and comparing the theoretical claims of Habermas and Cohen with those of Dryzek, Young and Bohman, it has been possible to shed light on the way that the notions of power and equality may impact each of the three measures of deliberative capacity.

In the following section I will analyse my empirical data based on the theoretical findings advanced above. The discussion will be structured according to the three themes generated in the initial analysis of the data recognising the way that these reflect the measures discussed above. The aspiration is that the notion of deliberative capacity will prove a useful tool for assessing the challenges associated with constructing a deliberative hearing process.

5 Empirical Analysis

Deliberation has been operationalized in terms of Dryzek's notion of deliberative capacity measured by the three variables of *authenticity, inclusion and consequence.* The three terms are broadly interpreted to reflect and incorporate the themes developed in the initial thematic analysis of the data as well as Young's theoretical concepts. Hence, the subsequent analysis will be structured according to the three themes, seeing that this will allow me to integrate the theoretical framework and empirical data in a coherent and meaningful analysis. Through the analysis, the aim is to shed light on some of the challenges associated with ensuring a deliberative hearing in a hearing characterised by widespread social, economic and political inequality.

5.1 Communication during the Public Meetings

Applying Dryzek's notion of authenticity calls for a consideration of the ways in which the meetings encouraged people to reflect upon their interests in a non-coercive manner. This is what I set out to do now.

The public authority, the Bureau for Minerals and Petroleum (BMP), had hired the private company, Kompetencekompagniet to organise and carry out the meetings. At their decision, the first three meetings followed a similar structure:

1) Presentation on an aspect of the application
2) Reading aloud some of the written responses to questions posed last time
3) Group work, and
4) Group presentations with opportunity for asking questions (no answers)

The fourth meeting was organised as an open debate.

Stakeholders in many different positions recognised the meetings as a source of information either for public authorities and the company or for participants,

while many also criticised the limited opportunity for debate [2] (Kompetencekompagniet,2012c;Meyer,2013,interview;Poppel,2013,interview;Lyberth,2013,interview;Kleist,2013,interview;Titussen,2013,interview;Mejlvang,2013,interview) This is amply reflected in the following comment by Peter Oluf Holm Meyer, a private citizen who participated in the meetings,

"At every meeting new questions came up, but we couldn't get the answers until next time, when they were roughly jotted down on a piece of paper […] it was all very brief and with no debate. We lacked that debate about very, very crucial issues, where you could only shrug your shoulders afterwards and think, well, next question, next answer."

(2013,interview,own translation)

Kaj Kleist, Communications Director for London Mining Greenland, called it "frustrating" and argued for dialogue "while the brain was still warm" (2013,interview,own translation).

Though the group work may be suggested to provide some opportunity for meeting the demands of authenticity, subjective experiences challenge this account. Bjarne Lyberth, Executive Science Advisor with Inuit Circumpolar Council, observed how those "who spoke Greenlandic sat together, and those who spoke Danish sat together […] and you prefer to sit together with those with whom you agree" (2013,interview,own translation). Sitting with people with whom you already agree reduces the spectre of interests you are exposed to and thereby limits the reflection upon preferences conducive to authentic deliberation. The point is reinforced by the observations made by Meyer: "There may have been one or two, who were able to elaborate on their thoughts or frustrations[…]but that was it"(2013,interview,own translation).

It can be argued that none of the first three meetings provided real opportunity for people to reflect upon their preferences through authentic deliberation with others. This is all the more problematic considering that most of my informants demonstrated a high degree of reasonableness, in Young's sense of the word. This was exemplified by Hedemand's statement, "I followed all four seminars to become more informed and also to see if I could get my opinions changed"(2013,interview,own translation). The opportunity for acting on this came at the fourth meeting: A panel debate with decision-makers and experts. Johannes Kyed, Kompetencekompagniet, commented on the debate, "people had longed for it and maybe we should have started that way"(2013,interview,own translation). When asked why they didn't, he pointed to the role of power and to the way that knowledge inequalities in an open debate easily can lead to a situation mirroring Young's internal exclusion, "we thought it would be too much

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[2] Lyberth (2013,interview) and Poppel's insistence to call them "information meetings […] because they did not constitute hearings" (Poppel,2013,interview,own translation) underlines the point.

of 'strong stakeholders against the experts' evenings'', where it becomes "almost a monologue from the experts, with some strong stakeholders asking critical questions, while the rest remain simply as listeners"(Kyed,2013,interview,own translation). To Kompetencekompagniet, recognition of the power asymmetries between those who possess information and those who do not had led them to pursue a model in which they sought to "buil[d] something up" in an understanding that a shared information basis would provide better conditions for authentic deliberation on the last night: "we wanted people to understand the information, they got, so that they could have time to reflect on it and then form an opinion"(Kyed,2013,interview,own translation). Nevertheless, this points to a more fundamental challenge for the conditions for authentic deliberation in Greenland, namely what Hedemand, Spokesperson for Timmiaq, Greenland's Bird Watching Association, referred to as a "strong culture of non-interference" (2013,interview,own translation), pointed to in varying terms by many of my informants (Poppel,2013,interview;Kleist,2013,interview;Jeppson,2013,interview; Kleist,2013,interview;Mejlvang,2013,interview). When asked how to address this, all emphasised the need "to inculcate time" (Poppel,2013,interview,own translation). The point here is to recognise the impact of power and inequality of information on the conditions for ensuring authentic deliberation in the space of the four meetings during the hearing period. While the last meeting could be suggested to be somewhat enabling for authentic deliberation, the three others were not, and the question is to what extent the three first meetings really were sufficiently conducive to even out the discrepancies in power and information in order to facilitate a more authentic debate on the last night. These issues will be elaborated on in the following section on Inclusion.

5.2 Inclusion

The existence of a political poverty line and the underlying disparities in knowledge, resources and capabilities in Greenland calls for a consideration of the challenges associated with including the public in the hearing no matter their socio-economic resources or political capabilities. The minutes document recurring comments on the dominating presence of "public officials and not so many ordinary people"[3] (Kompetencekompagniet,2012a;2012b) at the meetings and the discussion above alluded to the reluctance on part of many Greenlanders to engage actively in deliberation. Anders Mejlvang, Spokesperson for Transparency Greenland – in line with Hedemand above – relates it to culture, "the Greenlandic population is relatively faithful to authorities and shy, so when you sit there, you may listen, but you don't hear people's opinion" (2013,interview,own translation). This is a point supported by Greenlandic scholars, including Janussen(2003), who relates it to the colonial relation between Danes and Greenlanders (Janussen,2003;Petersen,2003;Hansen,2003). When asked how to include people more successfully, a more timely, extensive, facilitated and impartial information flow along with more time to form opinions were the common answers (Titussen,2013,interview;Mejvang,2013,interview; Poppel,2013,interview;Hedemand,2013,interview;Kjær&Hansen,2013,interview). In fact, many of my respondents proposed models somewhat similar to the public meetings: "focus groups or café meetings, where you sit down and get it translated into what it means for hunting opportunities […] etc. and then get a chat with people and get responses" (Mejlvang,2013,interview,own translation) and an opportunity for people to "come and listen […] approach it in a way where you involve people and don't scare them away by demanding them to perform[…]but the fact that you had to get through it all in four meetings was simply too much, it's self-evident that it becomes superficial"(Poppel,2013,interview,own translation). The key argument emanating from these statements is that the approach adopted by Kompetencekompagniet was not in itself flawed in terms of securing inclusion, but the lack of time made it impossible to achieve the intended results. This resonates with the conclusion of the Greenlandic Employers' Association 2012 policy report that found that public hearing meetings are characterised by insufficient time to process information (Grønlands Arbejdsgiverforening,2012). The findings above also point to another failure in the efforts to include people in the process: The lack of an adequate information basis that could facilitate broader public participation, i.e. inclusion in the process. As a participant in one of the public meetings comments, "We as a people have

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[3] The strong prevalence of Danish public officials in the Greenlandic public administration should be noted here, sometimes making 'being Danish' an implicit in references to the public administration (Christiansen&Togeby,2003;Janussen,2003)

not been heard about what we fundamentally think about mining[…or…]about the exploitation of our resources – do we want to give away our resources?" (Kompetencekompagniet,2012a,own translation). Young's notion of internal exclusion is particularly applicable in this regard. Information constitutes resources and political participation implies the capability to convert them into productive ends. If the hearing is unable to provide information that can be converted into the formation of stances and opinion across a spectre of capabilities, then it effectively prevents a segment of the population from participating, potentially undermining the deliberative capacity of the decision-making process.

Capability failure at a societal level is reproduced in the hearing process. Consulting the BMP about their experience of the process, I was told, "It was said repeatedly during the hearing, "oh, we have no information received". No, but it's really all out there…you could have watched the [information] videos, you could have come to all the [London Mining information] meetings, you could have read all the papers[…]but really, they just don't know where to begin and where to end, because the information flow is maybe suddenly so overwhelmingly large that they just cannot relate to it"(Kjær&Hansen,2013,interview,own translation).

The expression of a "data tsunami" by one BMP official (Kjær&Hansen,2013,interview,own translation) sums up the experience recounted both in the minutes and by a majority of my informants (Poppel,2013,interview;Hedemand,2013,interview;Titussen,2013,interview;Mejvang,2013,interview;Myrup,2013,interview;Kleist,2013,interview). Kaj Kleist, London Mining, encapsulates its implications in his statement "…Making themselves familiar with the material, no, that they don't do, no one does. Because it's only the geeks, who do that, i.e.[…]Danish academics"(2013,interview,own translation).

In summary, the sense of capability failure is pervasive and is recognised by all sides in the process. It arises from a hearing that was too short to properly include people on their terms and from an information flow that did not match the capabilities available in the broad public. The result is a widespread experience of being internally excluded from having a real stake in the decision-making process on the project through the hearing, "One feels suppressed and is [merely] an audience" (Kompetencekompagniet,2012b,own translation).

A final consideration, not reflected in the discussion above, concerns the question of who constitutes the "all affected"(Dryzek,2010:10). The hearing meetings were confined to Nuuk, which is the town closest to where the project will be located and beyond doubt, the location that will be *most* affected. Nevertheless, the then-responsible Minister noted, "We can risk initiating societal transformations to the extent experienced when Greenland became an industrialised society"(Berthelsen,2013,interview,own translation) implying a situation in which all citizens can rightfully claim to be affected. The scare scenario, touched upon by a number of my informants (Poppel,2013,interview;Jeppson,2013,interview;

Mejlvang,2013,interview; Berthelsen,2013,interview) were the 1950s and 1960s when the Danish authorities carried out an extensive process of centralisation and transformation of Greenlandic society in which Greenlanders turned out to be "the audience of their own development process"(Jeppson,2013,interview,own translation;Tobiassen,1995:22,own translation). Against this background and recognising that "Nuuk is very atypical for the rest" (Berthelsen,2013,interview, own translation) of the country, it can be argued that the hearing did not even *attempt* to include all affected. The question is whether it has that ability to do so at all. The fact is that only 25% of the population continue education beyond primary school and that educational competences are markedly concentrated in Nuuk, making structural factors the real barriers to be overcome, if hearing processes in the future are to become more inclusive (Statistics Greenland,2011). Steen Jeppson, project manager on ICC's project on public involvement argued, "One thing is to create good public meetings, but as long as we don't improve the competences of the population with education, knowledge etc., we will keep meeting the same barrier"(2013,interview,own translation).

Hence, while time and information characterised the challenges in terms of ensuring an *internally* inclusive process, the underlying structural inequalities in terms of education and knowledge present an even greater challenge to creating a truly deliberative hearing process in that they undermine the possibility for ensuring genuine inclusion according to the criteria set forth by Dryzek and many other scholars. The final issue to be considered is that of *impact.*

5.3 Impact on Outcome

Questions in the vein of "Why is it that I as an inhabitant of this country is not being heard?"(Kompetencekompagniet,2012d,own translation) and "Can we still say no?" (Kompetencekompagniet,2012c,own translation) were recurring input at the hearing meetings. Meanwhile, the public authority, BMP, wondered, "What is it stakeholders and citizens would like to get in order to feel heard and involved[…]?"(Kjær&Hansen,2013,interview,own translation), thereby underlining the lack of effective communication between different stakeholders in the process. When asked the question posed by BMP, one clear answer emanated from all the CSOs and the private individuals, I spoke to: "We should have been included from the start of the project, but we weren't[…]The only point of participation has been in the public hearing[…]At that point, everything has already been decided upon, i.e. the democratic process has been skipped completely"(Titussen, Friends of the Nuuk Fjord,2013,interview,own translation). As Meyer elaborates, "It really affects the discussion. The feeling of sitting with something that seems to have been decided upon beforehand"(2013,interview,own translation). It is internal exclusion once again, this time not due to the lack of knowledge or skills, but due to an experience of, in effect, not being an equal stakeholder in the process. Earlier involvement seemed to be key to many of my informants in terms of being able to, in effect, impact the process (Titussen,2013,interview;Myrup,2013,interview;Lyberth,2013,interview;Poppel,2013,interview;Mejlvang,2013,interview;Meyer,2013,interview): "if you are going to change anything, you have to get into the phase earlier, because otherwise a project like that soon moves onto a track that it is difficult to change later"(Mejlvang,Transparency Greenland,2013,interview,own translation). Meyer elaborated, "because they have spent 200-400 million DKK[…]It hangs in the air that it has to be realised at any cost"(2013,interview,own translation). The argument that political pressures may really make it difficult to 'change track', i.e. to substantially impact the decision, at such a late stage is supported by the then-Minister's statement that he would have liked a more extensive hearing process, if it wasn't because "we were in the middle of elections[…there were]different pressures from abroad as to, 'Now Greenland has to perform…can we trust the Greenlanders, when they say that and that and that or can't we trust them'"(Berthelsen,2013,interview,own translation). Further, Kaj Kleist, who besides holding the current position as Communications Director with London Mining, is also former Director of the public administration and hence intimately familiar with the political dynamics in the country, commented that "Unless we start up, nothing will happen in Greenland[…]because there are no other opportunities… the only one is mining"(Kleist,2013,interview,own translation), a perspective that is supported from many sides. As Meyer argued, "The debate

takes place at two levels, where one is the concrete project, and the other is the socio-economic, where we all left to take a stance as to whether we can afford to reject them[…]development and money is in dire need"(2013,interview,own translation).

The next question is to what extent the hearing really *was intended* to provide scope for impacting the process. While the then-responsible Minister, Ove Karl Berthelsen, said that the hearing helped to "eliminate the different elements of uncertainty that the population ha[d]"(2013,interview,own translation) and the public authority, BMP stated that "the large majority of [questions and comments during the hearing] result in[…]that some corrections have to be made [to the EIA and SIA]" (Kjær&Hansen,2013,interview,own translation), it is less clear whether there really was an option to "say no"(Kompetencekompagniet,2012c,own translation). At the second meeting, a participant stated, "we would like to encourage[…]Naalakkersuisut[…]that citizens get an opportunity to express their opinion with a yes or a no, as it would be more comforting to see whether the[…]society is ready or wants to say no"(Kompetencekompagniet,2012b,own translation). The reply was, "It is Naalakkersuisut who decides whether the project will be approved or not. When the hearing phase is completed, London Mining has to produce the final EIA and SIA which will be the basis for whether Naalakkersuisut deems the project socially and environmentally sound[…]Every citizen has to make their voice heard at elections for Inatisisartut"(Kompetencekompagniet,2012b,own translation). Hence, the hearing process only provided indirect opportunity for the public to impact the decision by pointing to issues of social or environmental risk, which could then impact Naalakkersuisut's decision, but this is far from the deliberative ideals in which deliberation is the actual means of decision-making. What is interesting in this regard is the perception on part of the Minister of the hearing being a "suggestion-oriented hearing process, not a discussion process"(Berthelsen,2013,interview,own translation) (though he, in his opening speech at the public meetings called for "open debate" (Berthelsen,2012,own translation)) whereas the CSOs, and arguably also the broader public, expected more "real influence"(Myrup,2013,interview,own translation). The experience of "being excluded and the decision being made without anyone being able to impact it"(Titussen,Friends of the Nuuk Fjord,2013,interview,own translation) resulted in the majority of the CSOs either skipping or boycotting the public meetings. As Transparency Greenland commented, "we concentrated our resources where we found it substantial"(Mejlvang,2013,interview,own translation) and Avataq, Greenland's Environmental Association argued, "if we decide to participate anyway, it will constitute some kind of endorsement of the process, so we boycotted"(Myrup,2013,interview,own translation). A perceived inability to "induce reflection upon preferences"(Dryzek,2010:10), because the decision has already been reached challenged conditions for authentic debate. Further, the limited opportunity for many stakeholders to impact central parts of the decision-

making process challenges the inclusiveness of the hearing, all together and significantly reducing its deliberative capacity.

Three main issues emerge from this discussion, one being the significance of timing, where the late timing of the hearing challenged the capacity for impacting outcomes, the other being lacking correspondence of expectations, which make different stakeholders evaluate the process according to different criteria and the last being, a lacking trust in the hearing as a means to influence. Here, *the experience* of the hearing being inconsequential discourages participation and in that way limits the deliberative capacity of the hearing process.

Having considered the three measures of deliberative capacity above, it is now time to synthesise the findings from each in a concluding discussion. The aim of the following section is to draw together some of the main challenges identified in the empirical analysis to properly understand the factors that may have prevented the hearing process from reaching its full deliberative potential.

6 Discussion & Conclusion

The aim of this thesis is to identify some of the main challenges in ensuring a deliberative hearing in the case of the London Mining project. The empirical analysis revealed a hearing process that was characterised by a host of challenges preventing it from reaching the deliberative potential outlined by Dryzek's notion of deliberative capacity. While the public meetings had been designed with the intention to accommodate the disparities in power, resources and capabilities that characterise Greenlandic society, they failed adequately to do so and resulted instead in a hearing with almost no opportunity for authentic deliberation and with widespread experience of internal exclusion. Internal exclusion arose from power asymmetries between those who possess information and those who do not and from a failure on part of the hearing process to incorporate mechanisms that could prevent societal capability failure from being reproduced in the space of the hearing.

A longer hearing process was suggested as a way to nurture deliberative conditions in a 'non-confrontational' society like the Greenlandic. Nevertheless, the question remains, whether time would really be sufficient to counteract the challenges arising from such deep-rooted structural inequalities as the ones characterising Greenlandic society. The deliberative ideals call for inclusion of 'all affected', which in the case of Greenland, and even Nuuk itself, includes a citizenry that is grossly unequal in terms of access to basic resources, education and political influence. Previous research has established the reinforcing cycle between social, economic and political inequality and the way that differing access to basic resources impact the democratic health of the polity (Janussen,2003;Andersen&Tonsgaard,2003;Young,2000). This thesis argues that these factors continue to constitute significant challenges in ensuring authentic and inclusive deliberation in the country in manners not counteracted by the hearing. Supported by Bohman's statement that the deliberative process "cannot simply favour those who are most educated[…or…]who have access to special information"(Bohman,1007:325) and Knight&Johnson's argument, that deliberation may require redistribution of power (Knight&Johnson,1997:310), this thesis argues that a hearing that aspires to the deliberative ideals – conducive, as they are, to legitimacy – will have to address and accommodate these inequalities. By being based on information material beyond the scope of even the most capable stakeholder, the hearing took place on terms set by the powerful, as warned by Young, while excluding the many to whom the hearing material remained effectively inaccessible. This leads to an echo of Abelson et al.'s question, as to whether deliberation can ever take place among *equals* considering

the disparities in power and the unequal access to information that characterise stakeholders (Abelson et al.,2003:246).

In addition to the structural challenges addressed above, the deliberative capacity of the hearing was challenged by its late timing in the overall decision-making process, undermining faith in the capacity to impact outcomes through the channel of the hearing. Hence, while Fung attributes participants' limited expectations of impacting outcomes of public policy processes to the *kind* of communication that takes place during the process, this study found the *timing* of involvement to constitute an even more underlying factor. The experience of being excluded from the actual decision-making process prior to the hearing discouraged participation in the hearing process itself and in that way further challenged its deliberative capacity. This reinforces the interdependency of the three measures of deliberative capacity and supports Young's claim that the deliberative ideals ultimately hinge on inclusion.

The ideals of deliberation are pursued for many reasons, one being their conduciveness to the legitimacy of decision-making processes as well as their outcome. Janussen (2003) and Andersen&Tonsgaard (2003) point to the challenging conditions for political legitimacy in Greenland in a time characterised by great changes and decisions. The London Mining project constitutes a case in point. The challenges associated with ensuring an authentic, inclusive and consequential hearing process, uncovered in this thesis, suggest that the issue of legitimacy is a subject of continuous concern in Greenland that deserves committed and incessant scrutiny. The London Mining hearing did only indirectly, and to very limited extent, provide opportunity for placing demands upon decision-makers and elected representatives. Further, the challenges with ensuring an inclusive hearing process indicates that parts of the population may, in effect, be hindered from making use of even the limited political leeway provided by the hearing, thereby keeping them firmly below the political poverty line and limiting their stake in the political process to the point of voting. This refers back to the distinction between deliberative democracy and democracy as the aggregation of preferences. While the former is associated with a multiplicity of challenges even in a miniscule attempt as the hearing, its value in terms of strengthening the democratic health of the citizenry may motivate a continuous effort to improving deliberative conditions, especially in these times of great change and development. Its place on the agenda was secured at the conference Future Greenland and with the challenges identified in this thesis, more targeted efforts may also be pursued to strengthen and consolidate its practice.

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