



# GREENLANDIC FRAMES

Screen Production in and about Greenland

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UNIVERSITY OF  
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# PhD Dissertation

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## Greenlandic Frames

Screen Production in and about Greenland

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFI	American Film Institute
AIFF	Arctic Indigenous Film Fund
AK	<i>Alanngut Killinganni</i> (feature film)
BPG	<i>Borgen: Power &amp; Glory</i> (TV series)
CEL	Community Engagement Ladder (model)
DFI	Danish Film Institute (Det Danske Filminstitut)
DKK	Danish Krone (currency code)
DR	Danmarks Radio (Danish Broadcasting Corporation)
EU	European Union
GR	Grønlands Radio (renamed to KNR in 1980)
ICC	Inuit Circumpolar Council
ILC	Industry lifecycle
ISFI	International Sámi Film Institute
KNR	Kalaallit Nunaata Radioa (Greenlandic Broadcasting Corporation)
MT	My translation (translated to English by the author)
NAPA	Nunani Avannarlerni Piorsarsimassutsikkut Attaveqaat (The Nordic Institute in Greenland)
NIFF	Nuuk International Film Festival
PI	Personal interview (interviews made by the author)
SVoD	Subscription Video on Demand
TIC	The Industrialisation of Culture (framework/model)



## Summary (English)

This dissertation is a study of screen production in and about Greenland from a historical and contemporary perspective. In recent decades, an indigenous screen industry has emerged in Greenland that has otherwise been a destination for foreign production for more than a century. This has created an international production environment where foreign production continues to dominate, while Greenlandic film professionals are increasingly involved in these production processes and the production of Greenlandic content is growing. Despite this, there is limited knowledge about film production in and about Greenland. The aim of this dissertation is thus to create qualified insights into this development and the distinctive production environment of today. Through a place-based approach, both indigenous and foreign film production in and about Greenland is examined, and how Greenland-based production is characterised by ultrasmall and particular conditions.

The method is rooted in location-focused production studies through three qualitative case studies of the feature films *Alanngut Killinganni* (Malik Kleist, 2022) and *Kalak* (Isabella Eklöf, 2023), and the TV series *Borgen: Power & Glory* (DR/Netflix, 2022) based on interviews, document analysis, and observations. In addition, the first comprehensive Greenlandic screen industry history is presented, including aspects such as transnational collaboration, institution-building, and Greenlandic film policymaking. The dissertation uses a broad theoretical framework including approaches to place and location, industry lifecycles, affective entanglements, and place branding. A major contribution is the development of theoretical frameworks for the study of degrees of participation and *ultrasmall* screen industries.

Based on the analyses, it is concluded that the Greenlandic screen history is more complex than previously described, both in terms of indigenous production, collaboration, political interest, funding opportunities, and place branding. The case study of *Alanngut Killinganni* highlights growing Indigenous filmmaking, but also the challenges of limited funding, (too) few film professionals, multifunctionalism, and distribution opportunities. The *Kalak* case highlights Danish-Greenlandic co-production and distinct emotional factors that characterise all stages of the production process, while *Borgen: Power & Glory* emphasises streaming services' interest in Greenland and the Arctic as well as unique location challenges. Among other things, it is concluded that Greenlandic locations are historically burdened by misrepresentations, which reinforces Greenlandic scepticism towards foreign filmmakers thus making the historical-emotional perspective essential to include. The concluding comparative discussion further describes how ultrasmall conditions must be seen according to the particularities of each context, where factors such as strategy, individual success, and funding opportunities are very different and characterised by external factors, history, and dependencies.

The dissertations' comprehensive analyses of distinctive production conditions and histories thus contribute new knowledge in a previously unexplored area of international film studies. It contains significant findings on the importance of location, ultrasmall production conditions, power relations, as well as Greenlandic and international film history relevant to several research areas and production contexts.

## Resumé (dansk)

Denne afhandling er en undersøgelse af film- og tv-produktion i og om Grønland fra et historisk og nutidigt perspektiv. I de seneste årtier er der vokset en filmbranche frem i Grønland, der i mere end et århundrede har været destination for udenlandsk produktion. Det har skabt et internationalt produktionsmiljø, hvor den udenlandske produktion fortsat dominerer, mens grønlandske filmfolk i stigende grad indgår i disse produktionsprocesser samtidig med, at produktionen af grønlandsk indhold vokser. Trods dette er der begrænset viden om filmproduktion i og om Grønland. Formålet med denne afhandling er derfor at skabe kvalificeret indsigt i denne udvikling og det særegne produktionsmiljø, der eksisterer i dag. Gennem en stedsbaseret tilgang undersøges både lokal og udenlandsk filmproduktion i og om Grønland, og hvordan grønlandsforankret produktion er præget af ultrasmå og særegne vilkår.

Metoden er forankret i location-fokuserende produktionsstudier gennem tre kvalitative casestudier af filmene *Alanngut Killiganni* (Malik Kleist, 2022), *Kalak* (Isabella Eklöf, 2023), samt tv-serien *Borgen: Riget, Magten & Æren* (DR/Netflix, 2022) med udgangspunkt i særligt interviews, dokumentanalyse og observationsstudier. Derudover præsenteres den første omfattende grønlandske filmbranchehistorie, der inkluderer aspekter som transnationalt samarbejde, institutionsskabelse og grønlandsk filmpolitik. Afhandlingen tager udgangspunkt i en bred teoretisk ramme, som omfatter tilgange til sted og location, branchelivscykluser (industry lifecycles), affektive sammenfiltringer (affective entanglements) samt stedsbranding. Et stort bidrag er desuden udviklingen af teoretiske rammer til undersøgelsen af deltagelsesgrader og ultrasmå (ultrasmall) filmbrancher.

På baggrund af analyserne konkluderes det, at den grønlandske filmhistorie er mere kompleks end tidligere beskrevet, både hvad angår egenproduktion, politisk interesse, støttemuligheder og stedsbranding. Casestudiet af *Alanngut Killiganni* fremhæver en voksende lokal filminteresse, men også udfordringerne ved begrænset finansiering, (for) få filmfolk, multifunktionalisme og distributionsmuligheder. *Kalak*-casestudiet belyser desuden dansk-grønlandsk co-produktion samt særlige emotionelle udfordringer, der præger alle led af produktionsprocessen, mens *Borgen: Riget, Magten & Æren* understreger streamingtjenesters interesse i Grønland og Arktis samt særegne location-udfordringer. Det konkluderes blandt andet, at grønlandske locations er historisk belastede, hvilket forstærker grønlandsk skepsis mod udenlandske filmskabere, hvorfor det historisk-emotionelle perspektiv må medregnes. Den afsluttende komparative diskussion beskriver desuden, hvordan ultrasmå forhold må ses i lyset af de enkelte konteksters særegenheder, hvor forhold som strategi, succes blandt enkeltpersoner og fundingmuligheder er vidt forskellige og præget af eksterne faktorer, historie og afhængighedsforhold. Disse forhold giver visse samarbejder en følelsesmæssig kompleksitet og understøtter i stedet samarbejde på tværs af ultrasmå samfund.

Afhandlingens omfattende analyser af særegne produktionsvilkår og -historie bidrager dermed med ny viden i et hidtil udforsket område i international filmforskning, der indeholder væsentlige fund omkring betydningen af location, ultrasmå produktionsvilkår, magtforhold samt grønlandsk og global filmhistorie til gavn for en bred vifte af fremtidige undersøgelser og produktionskontekster.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

An interesting question to consider in relation to film is whether there is a minimal threshold with regard to population, for example, that must be met for small-nation cinema even to make sense as a project.

(Hjort 2011)

Since the 2000s, there has been a growing interest in small nation cinemas, influenced by Mette Hjort's work and the small nation cinema framework (Hjort 2005; 2009; 2017; Hjort and Petrie 2007). This interest marks a shift from historically dominant cinemas, for instance from Hollywood and large European countries (e.g., France, Germany, Italy), to smaller, regional, and marginalised cinemas (Chow 2015, 41). Despite this shift, questions about the significance and implications of even smaller scale in filmmaking remain, as highlighted by Hjort's opening quote. This becomes even more relevant as what I define as *ultrasmall* screen industries – tiny production communities characterised by distinctive 'ultrasmall' conditions<sup>1</sup> – are emerging alongside and within both large and small screen industries. One of those environments exemplifying the outlined shift is the Arctic<sup>2</sup> region, driven by a growing interest in local narratives, new funding avenues, and affordable, mobile filmmaking technologies (Mackenzie and Stenport 2015, 7). A standout is Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland), which despite its challenging conditions – including a population of approximately 56,000 and particular geographical, demographic, and political contexts<sup>3</sup> – has witnessed the rise of an indigenous screen industry with local production and international collaborations.

The development in Greenland is evident through several industry events such as the establishment of the filmmaker's association Film.gl in 2012, the annual film festival Nuuk International Film Festival (NIFF) since 2017, the film workshop Filmiliortarfik in 2019, and several Greenlandic produced feature films. In addition, there is a continued and increasing international interest in Greenland as a production site rooted in a century of foreign filmmaking in and about Greenland, stemming from the colonial era and ongoing geopolitical conflicts. Based on these developments – historical and contemporary – Greenland and the Arctic “is not an isolated or discursively remote region: it is a profound part of a global system

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<sup>1</sup> I introduce the concept of ultrasmall in Chapter 2.

<sup>2</sup> The Arctic is often geopolitically defined rather than by natural markers (e.g. cartographically or climatologically). Following the notion of Critical Arctic Studies (Mackenzie and Stenport 2015, 2), I refer to the Arctic as a multifaceted region working across these fixed definitions, e.g., through cultural representations and histories.

<sup>3</sup> For an overview of Greenland's history and conditions, see Appendix 1.

of representational interchange and, through moving images, has been so for over a century” (MacKenzie and Stenport 2015, 3).

In this dissertation, I study screen production in and about Greenland, encompassing both contemporary case studies and historical aspects of the screen industry. I examine how the Greenlandic screen industry has emerged, increasingly attracting international screen productions despite the challenges. Notably, Greenland's policy support remains sparse, even compared to other small and ultrasmall Nordic Arctic nations (Nordic Council of Ministers 2018, 26). This lack of support is evident in limited film-related policies, the absence of a domestic film institute, and no operational tax initiatives to lure foreign film ventures. Along with high price levels and expensive infrastructure, Greenland does not appear as an attractive location for international runaway productions. Despite this, foreign production companies continue to come to Greenland to shoot – and have done so for more than a century.

These developments have created a dual focus in the Greenlandic screen industry, where opportunities are being explored to both support local filmmaking and attract foreign filmmakers. For instance, Film.gl’s self-proclaimed aims are not only to professionalise and create better conditions for the evolving Greenlandic industry, but also to brand Greenlandic locations, attract foreign productions, and establish international collaborations (Film.gl n.d.a). As presented by Greenlandic producer Emile Hertling Péronard (2022), this has caused fundamental issues in balancing the opportunities of foreign interests and the development of a Greenlandic film culture:

We are all experiencing this huge interest right now. It’s quite overwhelming. From production companies and streamers and broadcasters wanting to come to Greenland to shoot [...]. I think, in terms of the Greenlandic film industry, this is, on one hand, really great, because there is a lot of work for the Greenlandic film professionals. On the other hand, there is also a risk of being carried away by telling other people’s stories.

A key aspect is thus how an ultrasmall screen industry positions itself between domestic production and production service – between culture and commercialisation – and how this can be addressed considering policy and industry developments.

The quote illustrates the transnational nature of screen production in Greenland, emphasising the necessity in research to include all productions that take place *in* and *about*

Greenland, thus incorporating local *and* foreign productions as well as Greenland-set productions shot elsewhere, as it all affects the Greenlandic screen industry. Therefore, I bring place and location into the centre of the analysis to emphasise the importance of (geographical) place and to include all place-based activities as well as runaway production. In doing so, my focus is on production circumstances and conditions in a research field dominated by textual analysis with a focus on representation, risking overlooking the unique production environment in Greenland and how it emerged. Not least, using Greenland as an example, I want to examine factors surrounding what I describe as *ultrasmall* conditions.

As a result of this interest in both film history, media industry/production studies, and location studies, I pose the following overall research question I will answer through four sub questions:

#### **What is the current state of screen production in and about Greenland?**

1. How did a screen industry emerge in Greenland, and how should we understand this in terms of current policy and industry structures?
2. What are the particularities of Greenlandic locations, and how are Greenlandic locations used by filmmakers?
3. What are the tensions between indigenous and foreign screen production?
4. What can be regarded as the advantages and disadvantages of being an ultrasmall screen industry?

I build my work on a broad theoretical framework, outlined in Chapter 2, that encompasses approaches to and understandings of location, community participation, scale, industry lifecycles, and branding strategies. My qualitative methodology is rooted in location-based production studies and makes use of three contemporary Greenland-based case studies through interviews, policy analysis, and observations. In addition, I present the first comprehensive Greenlandic screen industry history that includes aspects such as transnational collaborations and policymaking.

Departing from a place-centred rather than national cinema approach, I analyse both local and foreign production. According to Ruth McElroy, this broad approach “has the merit of recognising that a great deal of filmmaking in small nations is undertaken by producers from outside the nation” (McElroy 2016, 435). My aim is thus to present Greenland as an example of how ultrasmall industries develop and are constantly challenged by the conditions created

by various factors linked to size, policies, demography, culture, and history. Furthermore, as argued by Julia Hallam (2010, 278), a “model of film history focused on landscape and place poses interesting challenges to conventional ideas of national film culture as it is currently conceived in the scholarly historical imaginary” which also applies to understanding contemporary screen industries. Following Hallam, I include the three distinctions regarding landscape and place made by Scott Mackenzie and Anna Westerståhl Stenport (2015, 1) in relation to Arctic cinemas: 1) Arctic-made films mainly viewed in the South; 2) outsider-produced films primarily seen in the South; and 3) films produced and watched by Arctic residents locally.

Subsequently, I position my dissertation within existing film-related research on Greenland and the Arctic, and relate it to existing literature on creative media industries and production studies. Thereafter, I introduce my case selection of *Alanngut Killiganni* (*The Edge of the Shadow*, Malik Kleist, 2022), *Kalak* (Isabella Eklöf, 2023), and *Borgen: Power & Glory* (DR/Netflix, 2022). The last section will introduce the structure of the dissertation and its various chapters.

## **Positioning the dissertation within film-related research in and about Greenland**

Though screen production in and about Greenland is far from a large field of research, there is a small but growing body of academic literature, often in the form of sporadic articles from various scholars with few anthologies and dissertations. In the last category, Werner Sperschneider’s dissertation *Der Fremde Blick – Eskimos im Film* from 1998 examined the representation of ‘the Other’ using the example of Greenlandic Inuit (Sperschneider 1998). Similarly, Erik Gant’s dissertation, *Eskimotid*, from 2004 thoroughly analysed the representation of Greenlandic Inuit in *Danish Greenland films*<sup>4</sup> based on postcolonial theory (Gant 2004). In addition to these, there are dissertations which have included Greenlandic film sporadically such as David W. Norman’s *Land, Technology and the Rise of Experimental Art in Post-Home Rule Greenland* (2021) and Anne Mette Jørgensen’s *Moving Archives: Agency, emotions and visual memories of industrialization in Greenland* (2017). For instance, Norman examines the

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<sup>4</sup> When I use the term ‘Danish Greenland films’, I refer to Danish produced feature films using Greenlandic locations or Greenlandic themes.



work of key Greenland filmmakers such as Inuk Silis Høegh, but focuses on his work as an artist more than as a filmmaker.

While both Sperschneider and Gant's dissertations have a historical approach focusing on productions up until 1998, Carl Nørrested's *Blandt eskimoer, eventyrere, kolonisorer og etnografer: Grønlandsfilm* is the first book-based (though short) historical introduction to Greenland on screen from the earliest years up until its publishing in 2011 and with the inclusion of features, short films, documentaries, and animated films (Nørrested 2011). In addition to these publications, the 232<sup>nd</sup> edition of the journal *Kosmorama* from 2003 gave an in-depth introduction to Greenlandic film history from various scholarly perspectives (Schepele et al. 2003). In 2021, the 280<sup>th</sup> issue of *Kosmorama* once again delved into Greenlandic themes, where I combined one article on Greenlandic screen history with four long-form interviews with Greenlandic filmmakers (Grønlund 2021a).

In general, the field of Greenlandic film is covered by a range of scholars who have sporadically studied audio-visual media in the context of Greenland. Among these, the most active are Kirsten Thisted (2012; 2015a; 2013), Inge Kleivan (1976; 1981; 1996), Lill-Ann Körber (2015; 2017b; Just and Körber 2012;), as well as Jette Rygaard (2012; 2008; 2017) and Birgit Kleist Pedersen (2003; Rygaard and Pedersen 2003). In recent years, I have positioned myself in the field with a number of publications on screen production in Greenland (Grønlund 2021a; 2022, Grønlund & Dybdal 2020a; 2020b).

As I have outlined elsewhere, there are two dominant tendencies in this research on film and Greenland: the *postcolonial* and the *place-centred* (Grønlund 2021a), where the first remains to be the most dominant. The postcolonial approach can be regarded as a continuation of a long tradition of representation-oriented analysis with Ann Fienup-Riordan's (1995) *Freeze Frame* concerning Inuit on primarily American film as a key publication. In addition to Gant's dissertation, a wide range of literature continues this focus on postcolonial perspectives often with references to Edward Said's concept of *Orientalism* and *Othering*; concepts that scholars such as Fienup-Riordan (1995, XI-XII) have expanded to *eskimoorientalism*, Thisted (2006) to *eskimoexoticism*, and Tess Skadegaard Thorsen (2020, 116) to *arcticalisation* to describe the specific othering and exotification of Inuit on film.

The recent strand of place-centred research is more interested in the use and experience of Greenlandic places and spaces with an emphasis on location. These approaches are quite diverse, but with an overall interest in aesthetics and landscape, for instance in the mountain aesthetics of Arnold Fanck's *S.O.S. Eisberg* (1933) (Körber 2015), the urban aesthetics of

*Nuummioq* (Grønlund and Dybdal 2020a; Thisted 2015), or the (Gothic) Arctic landscapes of *Tunn is* (Agger 2021; Grønlund 2022a). This tendency can be seen as part of a general increase in place-centred research – sometimes referred to as the *spatial turn* in media studies (Jansson and Falkheimer 2006, 13). This is evident in recent literature on Nordic noir which has taken a ‘Northern turn’ towards the Arctic and Subarctic regions with newer concepts such as *white noir* (Hansen and Waade 2017, 255) or *Arctic noir* (Waade 2020a; Iversen 2020) to describe and conceptualise the ‘cold aesthetics’ of the Arctic region in recent high-end television drama.

In line with this notion of Arctic noirs, there has been more cinema studies on the Arctic region as a whole – and hence Greenland. One key example is *Films on Ice: Cinemas of the Arctic*, the first anthology to examine the many facets and diversities of cinemas in the Arctic region from a transnational perspective. The editors Mackenzie and Stenport (2015) bring together a wide range of scholars to examine these so-called *Arctic cinemas* from various perspectives situated within the emerging field of *Critical Arctic Studies*. According to Mackenzie and Stenport (2015, 2) their book challenges dominating strands of Arctic research by “deliberately juxtaposing diverse examples of Arctic filmic expression, challenging narrow national or genre traditions that have previously barred them from being considered together”. This broad focus on the representational diversity of the region through transnational lenses has continued through anthologies such as *Arctic Cinemas and the Documentary Ethos* (Kaganovsky et al. 2019) and *Arctic Cinemas: Essays on Polar Spaces and the Popular Imagination* (Hart 2021). In addition, new literature such as Mark David Turner’s *Inuit TakugatsaliuKatiget / On Inuit Cinema* (2022) focus on the circumpolar region with a particular attention to Inuit filmmaking which naturally encompasses Indigenous<sup>5</sup> filmmaking in Greenland.

The literature on Greenland is generally dominated by studies on representation and imagery with an emphasis on early screen production while little has been written on Greenland as a screen *industry* (see e.g., Montgomery-Andersen 2021; Grønlund 2021a; Grønlund and Dybdal 2020b). Despite recent changes in the industry and the unique production culture, development and international interest, the focus remains on postcolonial

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<sup>5</sup> I differentiate between ‘Indigenous’ (with an uppercase ‘I’) and ‘indigenous’ (with a lowercase ‘i’). ‘Indigenous’ refers to distinct social and cultural groups with collective ancestral ties to specific homelands, such as the Inuit or the Sámi. Conversely, ‘indigenous’ denotes any individual native to a particular place (Weeber 2020). For example, someone can be indigenous to Greenland (by virtue of being born there to e.g. white, Danish parents), but may not necessarily be an Indigenous person of Greenland (Inuit).

and representational approaches. Furthermore, as Kirsten Thisted (2006, 68) argues, there is a tendency of ‘writing out’ Greenlandic influence in film history which thus degrades the Greenlanders involved to being unwilling representatives of a (most often) Danish discourse.

However, two studies of the Greenlandic film industry have been conducted on an industry and governmental level to advise the screen industry and the Greenlandic cultural sector. First, the report *North Atlantic Talents* offers a brief overview of the film industry in terms of, e.g., film funding opportunities, institutions, education, and levels of competences (Jonsson et al. 2016, 16–22). Based on this, the report summarises the strengths and weaknesses of the region as a whole and of individual countries (see table 1):

<b>Strengths Greenland</b>	<b>Weaknesses Greenland</b>
Strong visual storytelling tradition Resilient optimism Joint national focused effort Synergy between the cultural expressions – theatre, arts, literature and music Fantastic locations	High price level Expensive infrastructure for digital as well as physical services Very limited local market Very few distribution possibilities No formal possibilities for education other than in Denmark Lack of cooperation between film and television Strong dependence on Denmark despite culture clause

Table 1: Strengths and weaknesses cited from (Jonsson et al, 2016, 6).

Most striking in this set-up is the preponderance of weaknesses, all pointing to structural conditions such as the lack of infrastructure, dependencies, and ultrasmallness. In contrast, the strengths are more closely linked to ‘soft values’ such as ‘resilient optimism’. Based on this, the report outlines several recommendations, which in the case of Greenland are the establishment of a film workshop and a film institute as well as increased collaboration between the studied nations; inclusion of politicians; annual conferences; and joint financing (ibid., 7). Published in 2016, the report to some extent presents an outdated picture of the industry, which has since fulfilled some of the recommendations – not least the establishment of the film workshop Filmiliortarfik in 2018.

The later *Arctic Business Analysis* report, although shorter and mainly emphasising comparisons within the Nordic Arctic film industries, aligns with findings from *North Atlantic Talents* (Nordic Council of Ministers 2018). The report, drawing from qualitative data, ranks the Greenlandic film industry lowest in terms of policy support and economic activity compared to its Arctic counterparts (see figure 1).

There are several reasons for this, but it is particularly linked to the continued limited funding and the absence of a film institute in the remaining countries, including the Faroe Islands. While the report is important in providing a brief overview, it is relatively superficial

in the analysis of the Greenlandic film industry “based on a qualitative assessment of data on the level of support and economic activity for each country” (Nordic Council of Ministers 2018, 21). While both reports identify overall strengths and weaknesses, they lack an in-depth and nuanced understanding of the complex context, history, and specific challenges. Additionally, they do not provide clear explanations for the exact basis of their findings.

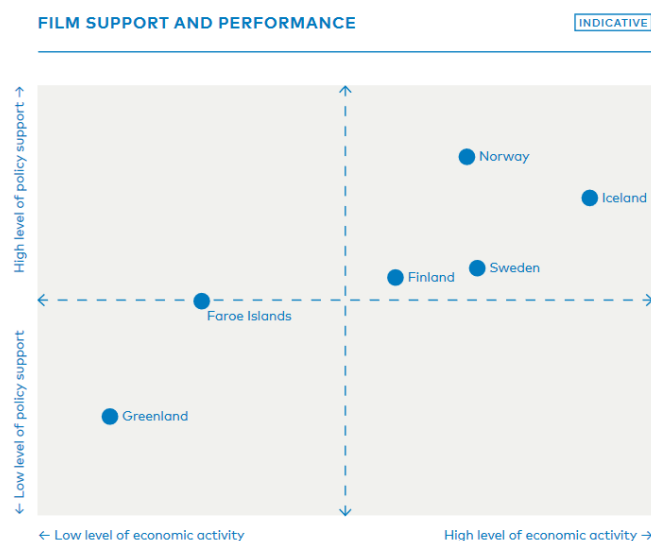


Figure 1: Model of film support and performance from the *Arctic Business Analysis: Cultural and Creative Industries* (Nordic Council of Ministers 2018, 21).

For this reason, my field of interest is precisely the production circumstances, the screen industry, its stakeholders, and collaborators. Consequently, my interests are more in line with similar work on Greenlandic journalism such as Naimah Hussain’s (2018) dissertation on journalism and journalist practice in Greenlandic news media or Signe Ravn-Højgaard’s (2021; 2022) work on the Greenland media policy/system, both with a clear focus on size. While both focus on journalism and news media, the attention towards *systems* and *practice* rather than media *texts* is comparable.

Although the postcolonial perspective is indisputably important – and must be included to some degree in any study that relates to Greenland, especially from a Danish researcher’s perspective – my interest is specifically on Greenland as a ultrasmall screen industry positioned between national cinema and foreign interests. By doing so, the screen production in and about Greenland is taken into the field of production studies and viewed as a ultrasmall, yet important actor in an ever-changing global system of screen production.

In terms of the existing strands of approaches, I follow the notion of place-centred research by focusing more specifically on the importance of location in a context where foreign interests have been and continue to be by far the largest part of the total volume of

productions. I argue that location has a distinctive significance in places such as Greenland where unique landscapes and inherent narratives have the potential to form the basis of a screen industry that can contribute positively to the national cinema as well. Unlike other (small or large) nations' screen industries, Greenland has – from the silent film until today – primarily been a *destination* for foreign productions; a tendency that holds both major problems and opportunities for an ultrasmall, but growing, screen industry. Furthermore, this industry- and location-centred approach has the potential to not only contribute with new academic knowledge, but to also contribute with productive knowledge for the industry itself – both in Greenland and abroad. In this sense, the research can potentially affect future production strategies, policymaking, and discussions outside narrow academic contexts.

I thus position the dissertation within dominant approaches to production studies (Banks et al. 2015; Szczepanik and Vonderau 2013; Caldwell 2008; Havens and Lotz 2017) with an emphasis on place-specific conditions connected to sites of production, geographical place, policy, and place as destination (Hansen & Waade 2017: 56). As presented by Eva Novrup Redvall (2020), the 2010s have seen a growth in Nordic production studies, leading to a diverse and vibrant field of research. This includes research in content production at public service broadcasters (Ytreberg 1999; Andersen 2019; Sundet 2021a), screenwriting processes (Redvall 2010; 2013), single-case studies (Hansen and Christensen 2017; Redvall 2018; Sundet 2021b), genre (Bruun 2010; Hansen and Waade 2017; Sand and Vordal 2021), adaptations (Gemzøe 2020), and not least regionality (Sand 2017; Chow 2015; 2021; Chow and Sand 2020), where the latter's focus on regional conditions has been particularly inspiring. The Nordic focus on production studies has also resulted in several anthologies bringing together a wide range of researchers in the study of, e.g., sustainable cross-national filmmaking and co-production (Bakøy et al. 2017; Hammett-Jamart et al. 2019) and film and series production in small nations from an industrial level through companies and specific productions to studies of individual careers (Bakøy et al. 2016; Waade et al. 2020). With this dissertation, the aim is to examine screen production in and about Greenland from a new, place- and industry-driven approach and thereby contribute with new insights to the vast landscape of media industry and production studies.

## Case selection

As I will present in Chapter 3, a large part of the dissertation builds on three qualitative case studies chosen based on specific criteria, namely a fiction criterion and a location criterion. The first meant that I only looked towards longer fiction formats such as feature films and TV series rather than documentaries. The second meant that the cases should preferably be filmed in Greenland and fit as best as possible within the temporal framework of the three-year project. The choice therefore fell on three productions that met these criteria to varying degrees while offering insight into three different types of productions currently taking place in Greenland.

The first production type is the local Greenlandic feature film *Alanngut Killinganni* (*The Edge of the Shadow*, Malik Kleist), which premiered in September 2022. The film was shot in 2019, but through a retrospective production study, my case study provides insights into the possibilities and limitations of local production, especially by virtue of being fully financed by Greenlandic funds, while also gaining more international attention as a nominee for the Nordic Council Film Prize. As such, it is the latest example of domestic film production and how it operates within the distinct Greenlandic conditions.

The second production type is the international co-produced feature film exemplified by the Danish-led *Kalak* (Isabella Eklöf) which premiered at San Sebastián Film Festival in September 2023. As a co-production across six countries – including Greenland – this case study offers insights into both established production patterns and new types of collaborations. The film is shot fully in Greenland, centred in the capital of Nuuk and the settlement of Kulusuk on the East Coast, testing the possibilities and limitations of Greenland as a production site. At the same time, the film's controversial themes of abuse and addiction provide insight into other (emotional) aspects of transnational cooperation and Greenlandic participation.

The third production type is an international TV production in the form of the large-scale TV series *Borgen: Power and Glory*, which premiered in 2022 and was shot in 2021 in Greenland and Denmark. As the first collaboration between DR and Netflix, the series reflects a growing interest in Greenland and the Arctic from SVoD services. Through a collaboration with the then newly started production service company Polarama Greenland for the Greenland-set shooting in and around the town of Ilulissat, the largescale production also tests the opportunities and challenges inherent in this type of production from an aesthetic, logistical, and financial perspective.

The three cases – and comparisons between them – offer insights into contemporary screen production in Greenland and how place-specific conditions affect productions while productions also affect places. However, these cases must be understood and analysed in the light of the Greenlandic screen industry history, which is presented in Chapter 4, as well as the policy and infrastructural conditions presented in Chapter 5.

## Overview of the dissertation

The dissertation consists of 10 chapters. After this introduction, Chapter 2 present theoretical approaches to creative industries, participation, (affective) entangled histories, industry lifecycles, and transnationalism. Furthermore, the chapter introduces the concept of *ultrasmall* as a merger of existing literature on small nation cinemas and the ultraminor, followed by a space-centred section on concepts such as location, setting, runaway production, and place branding. In Chapter 3, I present the methodological framework based on production and location studies, qualitative case studies, interviews, document analysis, and observation studies, while also presenting my overall approach to writing screen industry history through digital resources.

In Chapter 4, I present a historical overview of screen production in and about Greenland from the first Greenland-related production in 1897 up until just before the ‘second wave’ of screen production starting in 2009. The chapter is divided into three periods (1897-1938, 1939-1978, and 1979-2008) with a focus on screen production during Home Rule government and not previously described productions. The chapter thus precedes and leads to the contemporary screen industry and status of screen production described in Chapter 5 with attention on Greenlandic policies, production frameworks, (transnational) collaboration, industry formations, and institution building thus leading to the case studies. The following three chapters – 6, 7 and 8 – are the case studies of *Alanngut Killinganni*, *Kalak*, and *Borgen: Power & Glory*. In chapter 9, I bring together key points from the case studies and discuss them in relation to ultrasmall contexts before Chapter 10 presents the overall conclusions and perspectives for future research on screen production in and about Greenland.

In this way, the dissertation offers both theoretical contributions (especially through the concept of the ultrasmall), a comprehensive analysis of Greenlandic film history, and new insights into production practices in an under-researched setting and the importance of place-specific conditions. The dissertation contributes with new knowledge about Greenland

specifically, but also about global screen production and the Arctic as a transnational production environment, about the Greenlandic-Danish relationship, and about the position of ultrasmall screen industries in global production flows.



# Chapter 2

## Theoretical approaches

In this dissertation, I study *screen* production in and about Greenland. My focus is on the complex process that goes from idea to final version following a broad understanding of the production aspect:

Screen production is a field that encompasses the creation of (audio)visual media content for a variety of platforms, including film, television, and online streaming. As such, it involves a wide range of activities including development, writing, directing, casting, shooting, editing, and post-production.

(Batty et al. 2019, xxx)

This chapter introduce a place-centred approach to screen production in and about Greenland rather than a focus exclusively on indigenous screen production. The chapter is divided in three overall sections; In the first section, I present various theoretical approaches to creative industries, their development and (industry) lifecycles, as well as community participation, affective entanglements, and transnationalism. In the second section, I will present my concept of *ultrasmall*, exploring its definition and implications for ultrasmall screen industries. Finally, the third section will examine the role of place and location in shaping the development of screen industries, considering the particularities and significance of place in terms of aesthetics, historical developments, policies, and branding.

While this chapter and the dissertation is not rooted in postcolonial theory as such, postcolonial discussions and implications are embedded throughout the approach to and understanding of screen production in and about Greenland as a *postcolonial cinema* “in relation to the conditions of its production, distribution, and reception, which are particularly complex given their dependence upon transnational collaborations, alternative circuits of distribution, and heterogeneous exhibition venues” (Ponzanesi and Waller 2011, 2). As formulated by Mette Hjort and Duncan Petrie (2007, 2), some “small nations or states are marked by a history of colonial rule and thus by an important relational complexity that emphases on American cultural and economic imperialism tend to obscure”. Therefore, the complications of postcoloniality will be discussed continuously rather than being delimited to one theoretical section with the risk of overlooking its significance.

# Industries, lifecycles, and affective entanglements

In this dissertation, I use the term screen *industry* as an umbrella term to cover the field of production of both television and film. As argued by John T. Caldwell (2013, 157), it is important to be reflexive towards *the* industry as a clear, self-evident sphere. Rather, industry is a complex concept being not only culturally constituted, but also racialised, gendered, embodied, textualised, and in many ways – as Caldwell concludes – a mess. As a result, what we encounter and are presented as industries must be understood reflexively and critically. In similar ways, Govil (2013) uses the Indian film industry’s struggle for being recognised as exactly that – an industry – to broaden the perspective to alternative networks than those who lie within the established and recognised industries. Through this, Govil suggests “a more dynamic sense of industries as social and textual arrangements, sites of enactment, and other dramaturgies of interaction, reflection, and reflexivity” (Govil 2013, 176). The focus is then towards the industry status as such and how these industries are “made up” (Govil 2013, 173).

Overall, the attention in the creative industries is towards *texts* and the creation, distribution, and exhibition of these. Therefore, I will refer to my field of subject as an industry but simultaneously pay attention to the conjectures that follows:

Whatever the terms applied, the research field benefits from recognizing and assessing the presumptions locked up in how we conceive of and represent media as industries. Thinking beyond essentializing and enclosing representations provides ground for theorizing more broadly the industrial existences of media.

(McDonald 2021, 14)

Taking this discussion of terminology to ultrasmall industries (measured in population) such as the Greenlandic naturally opens for further discussion as to when an industry can be considered such in the first place. It is thus a discussion of *minimum threshold* in terms of talent mass (potential screen workers) and domestic market (potential audience). In this regard, *sustainability* is an obvious issue understood as “the productivity of a market in terms of output, turnover, and full-time employees” (Raats 2018, 235).

Whether it is due to size or political circumstances, the discussion of what constitutes an industry is widely debated. For instance, Viviane Saglier (2017) argues for an epistemology that looks beyond nation states as the standard way to understand industrial formations and thus the processes of legitimising industries. Through the term *non/industry*, Saglier introduces

a non-normative definition of that does not rely on the legitimacy of political, economic and diplomatic structures; ‘non/industry’ describes both this indecisive moment that sees the formation of multiple independent groups and enterprises, and the underlying aims of such groups to eventually consolidate a film industry whose future shape is still to be determined. [...] Emergent film economies are temporal objects as much as spatial ones, and they demand a theorisation and a methodology that acknowledge the negotiations, uncertainties and failures that contribute to shaping them  
(Saglier 2017, 193)

The concept is thus a critical assessment of what constitutes an industry as something “shaped within small nations, proto-states and other undermined political and economic formations in the Global South and beyond” (Saglier 2017, 193). In other words, this is an attempt to describe *in-between* industries.

As Saglier, I will critically approach the understanding of an industry and thus the “the necessity of finding tools to account for the agency and struggles of undermined economic, political and diplomatic actors on the local and international scene” (Saglier 2017, 201) – not least due to the size and Greenland's postcolonial status and continued (dependency) relationship with Denmark. As I will further elaborate on in the following overall section on spatial dimensions of filmmaking, my approach focuses highly on scale and a place-centred understanding acknowledging that a large part of filmmaking in a specific spatial sphere is done by foreign producers (McElroy 2016, 435). This approach to industry is, rather than a specific national focus, towards *all* production activities which constitute the industry of a spatial sphere.

## **From cultural to screen industries**

Screen industries are commonly seen as part of the *cultural* industries. According to David Hesmondhalgh (2013, 16), *culture* points to the fact that these industries “deal primarily with

the industrial production and circulation of texts”. Here, texts can be understood as cultural *products*; “nonmaterial' goods directed at a public of consumers, for whom they generally serve an aesthetic or expressive, rather than a clearly utilitarian function" (Hirsch 2000, 356). Hesmondhalgh delimits these to the core industries of broadcasting, film, music, publishing, gaming, advertising, and webdesign (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 17). Since the 1990s, however, the term *creative* industries have become increasingly popular among scholars and policymakers. It has received increasing interest in the 2000s and is a relatively new term first appearing in 1998 in the UK covering 11 distinct industries from art and design to film and publishing. Here, it was defined as “those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property” (Flew 2012, 9). According to Hesmondhalgh (2013, 174), the adoption of the term was caused by a (neo-liberal) shift in focus towards seeing these industries as part of economic development and thus a way for cultural policymakers to be taken seriously.

If we follow this understanding, the mobilisation of the term ‘creative’ rather than ‘cultural’ holds implicit claims of the impact of these industries; “that the creative industries are the key new growth sector of the economy, both nationally and globally, and thus, against a background of manufacturing sector decline, they are the key source of future employment growth and export earnings” (Garnham 2005, 25). While transnational collaboration and financing has been important since early cinema, the financial and production complexity has risen in recent years attracting local, national, and international attention and involvement – for instance in the production of high-end television drama (Hansen 2018, 193).

As these examples show, terminology matters and arise from certain traditions of thinking about concepts such as culture, creativity, or media. No matter what terminology one uses, the understandings share the common conception of media-as-industry (McDonald 2021, 3) and necessitate a framework which encompasses the complex nature between and within any creative industry. One example of such is the Industrialization of Culture framework (TIC) and the following model made by Timothy Havens and Amanda Lotz (2017). This framework (see figure 2) gives an overview of various factors which influence all texts made in the industries and thus which factors should be addressed in the study of such:

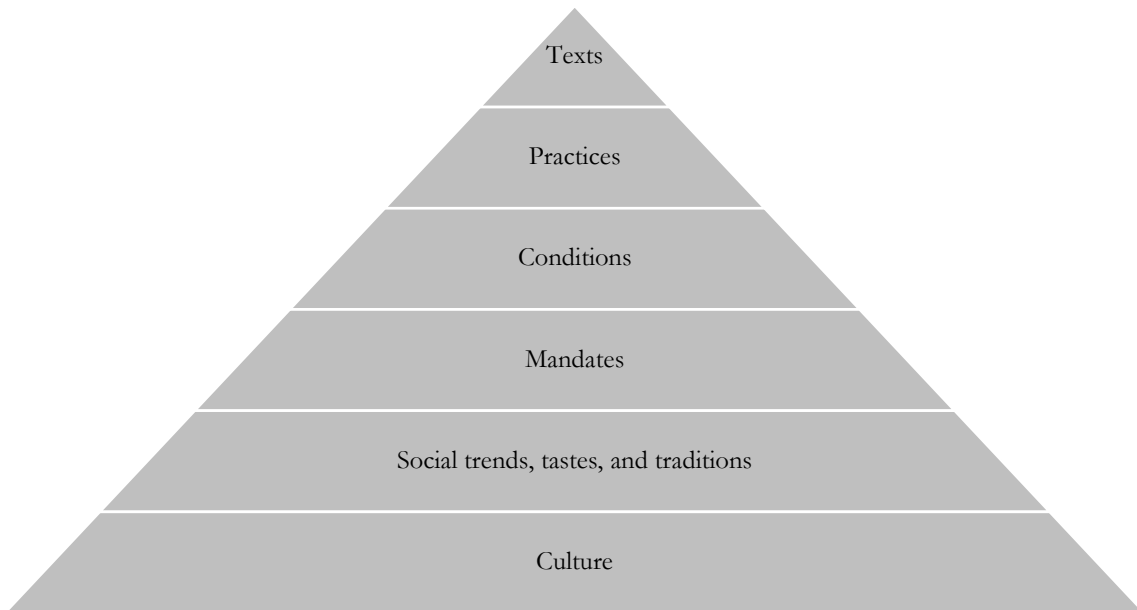


Figure 2: The Industrialisation of Culture framework (TIC) based on Havens and Lotz (2017, 24).

On the top of the figure, there are the texts themselves which are influenced by all the factors beneath. As Havens and Lotz explain, the different layers of influence and their internal dynamics can be understood as a pinball machine. Rather than a hierarchy or a one-way process, the process of cultural creation is multidirectional, and the creation of texts follows the movement of the ball in a pinball machine influenced by the various factors in the machine. In this way, the framework of every process is the same, but the path of the ball – the text – unique and thus uncertain (Havens and Lotz 2017, 28–29).

The factors that shape the path of the text are the *practices* of the industry such as day-to-day routines or standard operating procedures employed by workers or organisations. These can be *creative practices* from the workers involved in making the texts, *distribution* and *exhibition practices* from the workers and activities bringing the texts to the audience, or *auxiliary practices* from actors outside the core industry but with great importance such as advertising or tourism industries (ibid., 27). The *conditions* refer to the technical, regulatory, and economic realities the texts are created within. These are larger than any individual entity and rarely operates independently (ibid., 26).

The *mandates* are “the primary goal or the reason for being of the media industry” (ibid., 25). These objectives can be *commercial* (driven by profit-making) or *non-commercial* (e.g. public service, do-it-yourself, or community mandates) and can exist simultaneously in the production of one text. However, most countries today rely on *mixed mandate systems* and thus

a combination of the two (ibid., 54). For instance, a public service broadcaster running commercials or coproducing content such as TV series with commercial SVoD platforms. Together, the mandate terminology can be useful in analysing what sort of content is produced and which strategies are deployed in an increasingly complex production environment characterised by various transnational collaborations.

*Social trends, tastes, and traditions* refer to the wide “range of social and cultural resources that media producers might possibly draw on when creating texts” (ibid., 24). These are cultural, aesthetic, or political traditions of a given national or communal context. This could be traditions, tastes, or trends of certain genres, themes, or visuals pointing towards the foundation of the pyramid: *culture*. Havens and Lotz use this contested term in two related senses: “first, an aesthetic sense, to refer to the texts that the media industries produce [...]; second, in an anthropological sense, to refer to the specific social practices, values, mores, and hierarchies associated with a particular group of people” (ibid., 25).

In this dissertation, my interest is specifically towards the Greenlandic *screen* industry. I use this term in a similar way to what various scholars refer to as film and television industries which are often – and increasingly – being studied simultaneously (Caldwell 2008; Sand 2017; Hammett-Jamart et al. 2019; Chow 2015). This is due to several considerations, one being the overlap of personnel in film and television among both below- and above-the-line workers (Caldwell 2008, 8–9). This tendency has also been referred to as *crossover* describing the exchange of personnel between the film and television industries and thus a shift towards hiring freelance rather than the traditional permanent in-house staff (Redvall 2011, 193). When I choose the term ‘screen’, it is thus fundamentally to describe the same overlap, which is only getting more apparent in very small national or community production contexts.

## **From production to participation**

As the TIC model aims at providing a basic understanding of media industries, it is somewhat limited to the large degree of international collaboration that takes place, not least *across* cultures. Though far from a new phenomenon, international collaboration is inextricably linked to screen production, especially in developing industries such as the Greenlandic:

Filmmakers hungry for exotic locations and new stories have always travelled the world to make their films and often in the process, almost by default, have entered into ‘co-productions’. Shooting far from home requires the establishment of local partnerships (to

identify crew, cast and locations, etc.) and, more often than not, also entails some sharing of risk.

(Hammett-Jamart et al. 2019, 2)

In recent years, international collaboration has been on the rise, which is not least evident in the growth of international co-productions over the past decades (Talavera 2018). This naturally creates a production culture inevitably affected by varying degrees of cultural differences. Similar to the concept of culture itself, it is an additional, more intangible layer in collaborative processes that can create problems and communication breakdowns – even if legal problems are solved (Neumann and Appelgren 2007, 10–12). These differences are wide-ranging and can, for example, be at national, corporate, and professional level; from the culture of a nation, an organisation, or between functions within the given organisation (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012, 9–10). In filmmaking, this is naturally a highly international sphere with multicultural crews not only because of globalisation but also legislatively with participation requirements in relation to transnational funding and co-production – especially in relation to government-funded co-productions. While most global co-productions are made within formalised frameworks such as co-production treaties – based on decades of co-operation, experience, and policy cycles (Mitric 2018) – this is not always the case, especially in small and emerging industries.

In the case of Indigenous communities, a lot has been written about *participatory* filmmaking (e.g. Amir 2019; Potter 2019; Telo 2013) especially in terms of ethnographic documentaries of minority communities in order to disrupt power imbalances between participant and filmmaker. In this way, members of the community act as conduits for translation and storytelling, representing words, terms, images, and emotions of the community making the film medium a way to democratise experience (Wiebe 2015, 253). In the case of screen production in Greenland, the involvement of Greenlanders may vary from no involvement to formal co-productions with Greenlandic production companies, personnel, and governmental funding. To approach and analyse this multifaceted area of involvement, I propose to use basic theory of citizen participation and write it into the screen production context.

In Sherry S. Arnstein's theory of citizen participation, involvement is seen as a spectrum ranging from empty ritual to benefit stating that there "is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the



outcome of the process” (Arnstein 1969, 216; 2019, 24). In this understanding, citizen participation is a way of redistributing power so that powerless *have-not* citizens are included in shaping the future:

It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parcelled out. In short, it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society. (Arnstein 2019, 24)

In terms of citizen participation (or power), this distribution is variable and to be understood as a ladder with eight rungs divided into three degrees of citizen power (see figure 3).

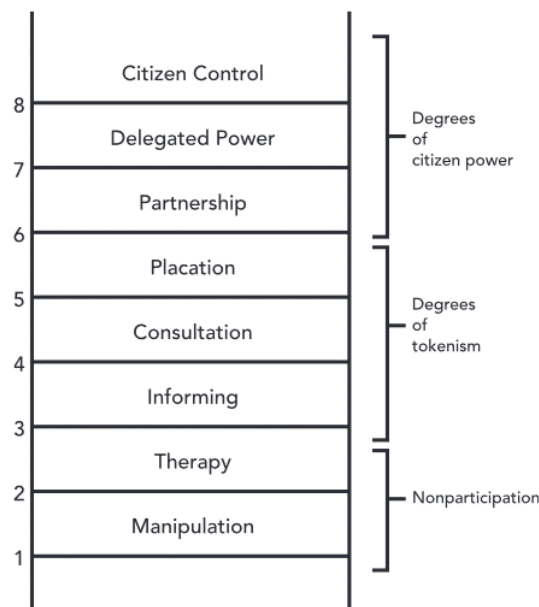


Figure 3: Arnstein’s ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein 1969; 2019).

Starting from the bottom, the first two rungs are the categories of *nonparticipation*: *Manipulation* is where decision-makers have full control and mislead citizens into believing they have power and are rather being educated. *Therapy* is where citizens participate in programmes or activities designed to change their attitudes or behaviour, but still have no real influence (ibid., 26-27). It is thus intended to mislead, treat, or educate citizens rather than involving them. The next three rungs consist of the degree of *tokenism*. The concept of tokenism is often used to describe “the practice of satisfying the *moral requirement* for the inclusion of

members of structurally disadvantaged people in groups that are better placed in society. This maintains the idea that *social mobility* is available to all when it is not” (Grant 2017).

The degree of tokenism consist firstly of *informing*, where citizens are given information about decisions that have been taken, but have no real opportunity to influence the process, *consultation*; where citizens are consulted and given the opportunity to express their opinions, but decision-makers are not obliged to take these opinions into account, and finally *placation*; where influence is present, but only by a few elected ‘worthy’ citizens easy to unvote and remove from power – often simply to demonstrate involvement (Arnstein 2019, 27–30).

Lastly, the degree of citizen power is then *partnership*; where citizens have gained the ability to negotiate and collaborate with those in power to make decisions, *delegated power*; where citizens can obtain a majority of mandates for various decision-making processes, and finally *citizen control*; where citizens have full control over the decision-making process without interference from decision-makers “in full charge of policy and managerial aspects, and be able to negotiate the conditions under which ‘outsiders’ may change them” (ibid., 32).

However, originally published in 1969 in the context of citizen participation, Arnstein’s ladder has been criticised<sup>6</sup> and rethought multitude times up until the present day (e.g. Lauria and Slotterback 2020) and has been connected to new fields such as development studies (Choguill 1996) and media studies (Carpentier 2016). Though the model can be criticized for issues of normativity, lack of complexity, and overlooking the importance of structural and contextual factors, it remains to offer a basic understanding of participation adaptable to a wide range of social encounters – especially in terms of uneven power relations.

When it comes to screen production in Greenland, I argue, Arnstein's model can be used as way to evaluate how Greenlanders are involved in production processes. To do so, I will follow the example of e.g. Marisa Choguill (1996) and refer to ‘community’ rather than ‘citizen’ in order to focus on a broader, local level, thus including various actors in a given community – from the citizen to the local production service company. I thus integrate an insider-outsider perspective as the difference is not power relations internally (between citizen and public officials) but rather between community members and non-community members. To fit better into the field of screen production, the models thus compromise and merge existing rungs, but keeps the overall degrees of participation in a community setup (see figure 4).

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<sup>6</sup> In the original article, Arnstein (1969, 217-218) already discuss the limitations of the typology in terms of e.g. diversity, roadblocks (such as racism, paternalism, or participation), and distrust.

1	Community control	Community members have majority control over the decision-making process. They are fully responsible for management and decision-making aspects and have the power to negotiate the conditions under which 'outsiders' participate.	Degrees of community power
2	Delegated power	Community members are given some degree of control in terms of decision-making and management.	
3	Partnership	Community members are given the possibility of negotiating and discussing the production process and their influence. Their input and ideas are considered and (partially) integrated into the screen production.	
4	Placation	A few, 'worthy' community members have limited or symbolic influence easy to unvote and remove from power – often simply to demonstrate involvement.	Degrees of tokenism
5	Consultation	Community members may be consulted and given the opportunity to share their opinions and perspectives on the film production. Decision-makers can take these opinions into account, but they are not obliged to integrate them.	
6	Informing	Community members may be informed that a film production is taking place, but they have no real possibility to influence the content or decisions related to the film.	
7	Manipulation	Community members are misled to believe that they have actual power in relation to screen production. On the contrary, they are involved deliberately in a way that denies them power.	Non-participation
8	Exploitation	Outsiders come and produce content without informing or involving community members.	

Figure 4: The Community Engagement Ladder (CEL) model based on (Arnstein 1969, 217).

In this model of community engagement – from here referred to as Community Engagement Ladder (CEL) – most of the categories are paraphrased from the original while two steps have been swapped and one modified. While the rung of therapy addressed the original context to a large extent, the new lowest rung of exploitation describes to a much greater extent a challenge associated with foreign production in small communities, namely the passive utilisation of local places (and often culture) in a production without the involvement of its members. In this way, this rung is linked to concepts such as *cultural appropriation* in the sense that the specific characteristics of a local environment (urban and rural landscapes, culture, climate, etc.) are used without involvement – and thus the consent – of community members.

The model must be understood from a broad perspective, where the community includes local people, film professionals and production companies.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, power can be achieved commercially and legally through contracts with production companies and film professionals, as well as through actual community member participation through the involvement of, for example, the local population in a Greenlandic settlement. In an ideal

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<sup>7</sup> Arnstein (1969, 218) does approach issues of employment in the original article and issues of crossover: “For example, employment of the have-nots in a program or on a planning staff could occur at any of the eight rungs and could represent either a legitimate or illegitimate characteristic of citizen participation. Depending on their motives, powerholders can hire poor people to coopt them, to placate them, or to utilize the have-nots’ special skills and insights”.

collaboration, a higher level of community participation can create economic and creative opportunities for the community; Local talents, film workers, and businesses can get involved in the production and benefit from the production's possible impact on tourism, cultural exchange, and economic development.

As the top rung – or more accurately, the floor the ladder leads to – is actual *community filmmaking*. This term is often associated with Indigenous filmmaking, where researchers increasingly see filmmaking as "a powerful tool for self-representative knowledge-sharing by Indigenous communities" (Orbach, Rain, and Contreras 2015, 478), just as it can have a broad meaning that also includes the filmmaker as not being part of the community:

we can see community filmmaking itself as a spatial and temporal practice of the work and interactions of a dynamic network of agents (the filmmaker, the communities involved, the funders and the audiences, for example) who are moved by both individual interests (for example, generating visibility, aesthetic expression, career goals) and collective interests (for example, civic agency, local place-making, community representation).

(Malik et al. 2017, 263–64)

These diverse networks play a role in community filmmaking at multiple levels. These ranges from hands-on production activities to broader contexts, including local place-based influences and policy frameworks and it is important to understand how these levels either support or oppose the objectives of community filmmaking. (Malik et al. 2017, 264–65). In relation to the CEL model, however, the understanding here is of exclusively community-controlled screen production, where the project itself, its development, production, and distribution is managed by the community itself. This approach frames community filmmaking as a tool in the decolonisation discourse, nurturing a production landscape where productions are orchestrated in compliance with the distinct cultural dynamics.

As such, community filmmaking is closely related to discussions of *narrative sovereignty* “where diverse people have space and support to tell their own stories on their own terms” (Hurtubise 2021, 162). As argued by Michelle Hurtubise (2021, 168-69), this can be seen as part of a shift among Indigenous filmmakers to increasingly talk about Indigenous power and voice rather than colonial appropriation both in shaping own cinemas and gain influence in foreign productions. The increasing focus on narrative sovereignty has thus paved the way for Indigenous cinemas, which are often examined with roots in Māori filmmaker Barry Barclay (2003) have coined *Fourth Cinema* to describe the uniqueness and function of

Indigenous filmmaking as something different from the First-Second-Third cinema framework shaped around nation states.

Naturally, this points back to issues of the degrees of and reasons for involvement. Here, validation from community members can quickly become problematic “when framed with the need to ‘authenticate’ something for an outsider” (Hurtubise 2021, 6). It is important to note that the level of community participation in screen production depends on several factors including resources, time, the willingness of decision-makers, and the specific context. This presentation still describes community participation superficially and does not go into key issues such as labour, formal agreements, or more abstract issues such as cultural appropriation. Nevertheless, a basic vocabulary for participation is created, which can be used on several levels in this dissertation.

## **Entangled histories and affective entanglement**

The concept of *entangled history* refers to the interconnectedness of historical events across not only national borders, but regions and cultures drawing on a variety of approaches and perspectives, including comparative analysis, cross-cultural studies, and network analysis. According to Casper Tybjerg (2021, 41), the theoretical concept:

challenges the tendency to look at a subject such as film art or the work of a film artist within the framework of a particular nationstate, insisting that international interconnections must not be ignored. It also asks historians to think about the significance of their own place within a scholarly infrastructure (such as universities or archives) that tends to be anchored in a particular national context.

In this way, the focus is upon interconnection in the broadest sense seeking “out points of entanglement or crossing in time and space, examining the actors and circumstances of such interactions, the threads of which sometimes shoot off in unexpected directions, often implicating the researchers themselves” (Norén et al. 2023, 7). Rather than seeing the nation as the key frame of reference with limited contact across its borders – in terms of for example aesthetics, genres, markets, and reception – entangled history goes beyond this ‘container’ and towards a focus on interaction, interdependence, and complexity (Hagener 2014, 3–4). It thus refutes the idea of national histories being linear and isolated, highlighting instead the intricate webs of connections and impacts that shape historical events.

The concept of entanglement is useful for several reasons; First of all, cinema has been transnational from the beginning (Tybjerg 2022) and remains to be. In other words, the entanglement is not only useful to describe cinemas of the past, but also cinemas of today. Secondly, entangled history seems appropriate in the context of postcolonial industries such as the Greenlandic.<sup>8</sup> While entangled can be seen as synonymous with transnational (Hagener 2014, 3), the metaphor “suggests something messy, constraining, ensnaring – a dangerous liaison” (Tybjerg 2021, 44). While *transnational* suggests an exchange – with two or more nations being actors in that transition – *entanglement* underlines the possibly problematic and uneven nature of screen production in colonial and subsequent postcolonial nations or territories. Michael Werner and Bénédikte Zimmermann (2006, 31) describe how entangled history is connected to ‘shared history’ and its use in postcolonial studies. In this notion, the metaphor of entanglement is used by scholars such as Shalini Randeria to describe postcolonial India (Randeria 2009). Furthermore, this has been followed by approaches such as *transcolonial* history which seek to denationalise colonial histories “by considering history as a social space in which experiences were shared, creating various forms of historical entanglement” (Immler and Scagliola 2020, 3).

However, this entangled history approach has a risk of cultural imperialism or even re-colonialization of Greenlandic film and culture by viewing Greenlandic film history in connection with other, mostly settler, nations. Isak Thorsen and Emile Hertling Péronard touch upon this issue in their chapter on filmmaking in Greenland which is included in a book on the history of *Danish* cinema. For this reason, they underline the risk of re-colonisation of Greenlandic culture, but argue that

not to acknowledge the entangled histories of Danish and Greenlandic cinema and the role played by cinema in the cultures’ respective and collective self-understandings would be to ignore a key aspect of that shared history. Even in the most basic film-historical terms, the earliest Danish film, the first Danish sound film and the first Danish colour film took Greenland as their subject.

(Thorsen and Péronard 2021, 264)

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<sup>8</sup> A similar understanding is used in the research unit Postcolonial Entanglements at Aarhus University, referring “to the material entanglements of people, practices, ideas, capital and technologies that texture colonial pasts, presents and futures. These entanglements forcefully connect and disconnect different parts of the world; and they silence, liberate and rearrange cultural systems and expressions.” (Aarhus University 2023).

Similarly, it would be to ignore a key aspect of Greenlandic cinema and screen production to not include and study its entanglements with not only Danish, but for instance German, British, French, Norwegian, and – as of recently – Sámi filmmaking. The Greenlandic screen industry is a product of – and in many ways a reaction to or against – this history of entanglement. By focusing on Greenlandic agency and development throughout the entangled film history, a more in-depth understanding of the present-day screen industry is created.

However, while a broader, critical approach to history is inherent in the concept of entanglement, it does not consider the particularities that may exist between specific nations. As a former colony, Greenland's relationship with the former coloniser, the Danish state, has a distinctive status woven into postcolonial tensions and continued asymmetries. This is part of a general shift in the power relations in between postcolonial nations and their former colonisers – and with recent developments, especially in the Arctic region:

One of the main characteristics of the changing Arctic of the twenty-first century is that power is moving north. The asymmetrical power relations between the southern metropolises and the indigenous north are challenged by various forms of self-government. This evokes strong emotions on both sides of the relation, just as strong emotions are associated with the legacy of colonialism and racialization of non-white populations. An affective approach to political processes, taking emotions seriously as a determining factor in decision-making processes, offers an in-depth analysis of the afterlife of colonialism and its influence on the present and the visions for the future.

(Thisted 2022, 37)

As further underlined by Kirsten Thisted (2018, 72), there are many emotions present in this relationship that are not just arbitrary and diffuse but circulate according to historically determined patterns linked to power and financial relations between Denmark and Greenland (see Appendix 1 for more historical and political context). Thisted has thus analysed and described this relationship inspired by Sara Ahmed's theory of *affective economies* in order to access an emotional<sup>9</sup> relationship that, unlike financial aspects, is difficult to concretise and access (Thisted 2018, 72).

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<sup>9</sup> As Thisted (2022, 38), I follow the performative approach of affect studies that uses terms such as *affect*, *emotions*, and *feelings* with a similar intent or meaning, effectively making them interchangeable.

In short, Ahmed's (2004) concept of affective economies describes the ways in which emotions are produced, circulated, and transformed within social and cultural contexts. It describes the relationship between emotions and the economy and how emotions affect and are affected by social and economic structures. Emotions bind subjects together into collectives, which continues on their own through circulation and exchange, challenging the notion that emotions are private, solely belonging to individuals, and coming from within (Ahmed 2004, 117). These emotional economies operate through a process of emotional *attunement* (Ahmed 2014, 221), where individuals are attuned to the emotions of others and respond accordingly leading to the formation of emotional communities that influence our experiences of the world.

As Thisted argues, a range of emotions circulate in the Danish-Greenlandic relationship

based on an affective economy inherited from the colonial era, which Denmark is reluctant to give up because it is linked to a constitutive narrative about Danish identity: Denmark as a pioneer of equality and the protection of minorities. The Greenlanders, on the other hand, want to dismantle this emotional economy because it places Greenland in a subordinate position.

(Thisted 2022, 37–38)

This has created a certain affective economy between Danes and Greenlanders shaped by centuries of intimate relations of labour, friendship, and partnerships making a hybrid space sometimes difficult to distinguish between Danish and Greenlandic. However, as Thisted continues (2018, 72) there exists a boundary carefully guarded by both entities where an individual can change from being themselves to suddenly embodying 'the Dane' or 'the Greenlander' based on the history of these characters. Thisted (2018) illustrates that even though analysing certain emotions can be challenging, an exchange of e-mails between a Dane and a Greenlander<sup>10</sup> shows that particular words and phrases can provoke these emotions and initiate conflicts, highlighting the persistence of established emotional economies. These sharp boundaries and strong emotions are not alien to Greenlanders or people working in or about Greenland but rather have a strong presence in many relationships – professional and personal.

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<sup>10</sup> These are Danish journalist Else Lidegaard and Greenlandic actor and former theatre director Makka Kleist.



Much in line with this is the concept of *scanguilt* coined by Elisabeth Oxfeldt (2016; 2018) referring to a particular Scandinavian emotion stemming from privilege:

A dark side of happiness and privilege is guilt. Time and again, we encounter narratives in which Scandinavians are confronted with an unhappy, less privileged global other. [...]. Often, these external and internal others evoke guilt feelings based on a realization that one's own happiness and privileges are, or have been, attained at the expense of suffering others. (Oxfeldt 2018, 1)

As further argued by Oxfeldt (2018, 2), this is directly connected to colonisation and imperialism, and remains present today through neo-imperialism, capitalism, and climate change as a distinct variant of a broader, Western guilt. Seen in the light of the Danish-Greenlandic relationship, it becomes a sense of guilt for Danes in their encounter with Greenland and, in filmmaking, not least the story of misrepresentation and Othering.

I agree on Thisted's argument that "one does not understand the current discussions, including the debates on large-scale projects, uranium, and autonomy, unless one takes into account these emotions and their historicity" (Thisted 2018, 72, MT). It speaks to postcolonial conditions where discourses of independence, Danish imperialism, and paternalism, Greenlandic globalisation are just minor parts of a complex relation. Following this, I believe it is necessary to recognise and consider these emotions in all analyses encompassing transnational relations and especially between Greenland and Denmark.

In this way, it is particularly important to recognise this in the analysis and understanding of screen production in and about Greenland, which in this dissertation has a focus on foreign and especially Danish production taking place in Greenland. In addition, screen production is particularly sensitive because it involves creating audio-visual depictions of Greenland, its people, and its culture, produced in a highly international space that intersects both business and culture.

In addition, specific conditions and emotions are present when it comes to specific relationships and collaborations. These affective economies are not the same in other types of interactions. For instance, a Greenlandic-German collaboration does not necessarily provoke the same emotions but is instead a different emotional economy characterised by different conditions, thus creating a different space for collaboration.

I therefore argue for including the emotional, affective levels in the theoretical approach, particularly in relation to the Danish-Greenlandic collaborations, I examine. In relation to

the concept of entanglement, it is therefore possible to differentiate between different types, where the Danish-Greenlandic one can be described as an *affective entanglement* influenced by the emotional economy that is present. Hence, adding “an affective methodology can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of both history and contemporary political, social and economic issues in the Arctic” (Thisted 2022, 52) which also includes the field of screen production. Following the existing issues on cultural differences and collaboration earlier presented, this adds an extra emotional layer to the understanding of the collaborations that take place. To adapt Thisted's quote, one does not understand the current screen industry and collaborations unless one considers emotions and their historicity.

## Screen industry lifecycles

One of the aims of this dissertation is to offer a more theoretically framed and in-depth introduction of screen production in Greenland. Based on my initial approach of focusing on screen industry beginnings, one basic and useful approach is to look at the history through lenses of *industry lifecycles*.

Industry lifecycle (ILC) models are structured around a series of chronological stages. While the number of stages vary, they generally describe the development of an industry from its emergence to its decline aiming “to explain changes in technological development and industry structure over the period that the industry ages” (Peltoniemi 2011, 349). ILC studies cover industries in the broadest sense starting with American car manufacturing (Abernathy 1978) and eventually cultural industries such as video games (Balland et al. 2013) or SVoD (Cunningham and Silver 2013).

While the vast amount of these studies focusses on largescale industries globally or set in countries many times larger than Greenland, it is beneficial to supplement ILC theory with theories of cluster lifecycles. The cluster lifecycle perspective helps to secure a more locally rendered understanding than what the broader idea of ILC models offer. While clusters “do not always follow the lifecycle of the dominant industry” (Valdaliso et al. 2016, 66), they are smaller, clustered parts of that dominant industry. While I will refrain from referring to the whole Greenlandic screen industry as a cluster, the cluster lifecycle helps grasp the small-scale dynamics of an ultrasmall industry. Therefore, the following draws on both industry and cluster lifecycle literature referred to collectively as industry lifecycles (ILC).

Most often, ILC models are divided into four stages where firms affiliated to these industries face very different challenges. While the naming of the four stages differs, I will refer to them as *pioneering*, *growth*, *sustainment*, and *decline*. During the *pioneering stage*, the industry is 'born' into an uncertain state "composed of many small start-up firms, seeking to exploit perceived business opportunity" (Cunningham and Silver 2013, 15). In the *growth stage*, the number of employees increase along with more perception and collective action along with the building of institutions to support the open and flexible networks in emergence. This growth consists of a focus in terms of heterogeneity along with a dominant design or approach (Menzel and Fornahl 2010, 226). This focus also contains a *shakeout*, as barriers-to-entry rise, dominant companies grow, and smaller ones merge or disappear (Cunningham and Silver 2013, 15). Furthermore, to allow this growth, the industry has reached a *critical mass* of both employees, companies, and costumers. This stage initially ends, when an 'industry average' is met which leads to a stage of sustainability.

The *sustainment stage* is characterised by stagnation in terms of employment and focused competencies in established networks (Menzel and Fornahl 2010, 227). For the same reasons, this stage is often referred to as a stage of *maturity*, where it becomes difficult to improve productivity and a long duration of stability occurs with relatively stable profitability (McGahan et al. 2004, 10–11; Cunningham and Silver 2013, 15). At the end of this stage of sustainment, a decline stage occurs "when the industry and its major players fail to remain at the cutting edge of innovation and are directly challenged by new innovations, new entrants and/or converging industries that can better satisfy the existing costumers needs" (Cunningham and Silver 2013, 15–16). As a result, a decrease in companies and employees occur and start-ups become rare. The knowledge base become too focused as the local industry is locked into a previously successful model unable to renew due to increasingly closed and homogenous networks. Therefore, the ability to adjust to changing conditions, integrate external knowledge, and sustain diversity is lost. However, as Menzel and Silver underline, the strong networks are still capable of collective action due to the strong, but closing, networks (Menzel and Fornahl 2010, 227). As a result, unless radical changes are made, the industry declines and risks to completely perish – locally or as an overall industry.

The ILC model enhances our comprehension of screen industries by allowing discussions on the rise and fall of these industries, both locally and globally. Although the previous section critiqued the transnational concept, I will present basic approaches to transnationalism; When combined with the CEL and ILC models and foundational concepts

of entanglements, these insights offer tools to examine the birth of screen industries. This perspective highlights the influence of (trans)nationally driven initiatives and strategies and aids in understanding contemporary transnational collaborations.

## Transnationalism

In an article, Bradley Harmon (2020) presents Faroese cinema as a nation-building process within a transnational context. Here, he analyses the Faroese film history through various types of transnationalism presented by Mette Hjort (Hjort 2009) arguing “that Faroese cinema is inherently transnational and that recent institutional establishments and feature film productions are not starting points for Faroese cinema, but rather milestones in its development” (Harmon 2020, 145). Inspired by this, I take departure in the same approach to understand the transnational nature screen production in Greenland.

According to Hjort (2009), the term *transnational* became a key word in film studies causing a *transnational turn* in the 2000s. As a result, the term itself became widely use in both film and television literature. However, as Hjort argues, the term is often used

as a shorthand for a series of assumptions about the networked and globalized realities that are those of a contemporary situation [...] As a result, and quite against the intentions of those who use it, ‘transnational’ ends up playing a strangely homogenizing role (Hjort 2009, 13)

Hjort thus calls for a scalar understanding of ‘transnationalism’ as a concept that recognises various forms of transnationality and has proposed nine types of exactly that. In the following, I will present seven of those: epiphanic, affinitive, milieu-building, opportunistic, cosmopolitan, globalising, and modernising transnationalism.

*Epiphanic transnationalism* describes cinematic articulation of shared culture creating “deep national belonging that overlap with aspects of other national identities” (Hjort 2009, 16). Here, not yet publicly recognised communities are articulated cinematically through transnational co-production but can also manifest itself elsewhere such as in co-production policies. While this opens for not yet articulated communality between two entities, *affinitive transnationalism* is collaboration between two similar cultures “typically being understood in terms of ethnicity, partially overlapping or mutually intelligible languages, and a history of

interaction giving rise to shared core values, common practices, and comparable institutions” (Hjort 2009, 17). The term can also reflect similarities beyond cultural heritage such as shared problems experienced within the communities and industries.

As the name *milieu-building transnationalism* indicates, the focus is towards industrial development and institution building, where positive features of one thriving film milieu is transferred to another such as cultural policies, infrastructure, or support (Hjort 2009, 18–19). In contrast, *opportunistic transnationalism* is a purely economic endeavour focusing on the possibilities of a certain transnational collaboration. Here, the goal is not to create lasting networks, feelings of shared culture, or valuable communalities, but instead to seize available economic opportunities whenever (and wherever) they occur (Hjort 2009, 19–20).

In terms of *cosmopolitan transnationalism*, the focus is towards the filmmakers as cosmopolitan with multiple belongs “linked to ethnicity and various trajectories of migration here becomes the basis for a form of transnationalism that is oriented toward the ideal of film as a medium capable of strengthening certain social imaginaries” (Hjort 2009, 20). As a result, the productions created are often situated on various locations across borders. According to Hjort (2009, 21), this is not locked to purely subjective experiences of place and belonging but does reflect the privileged movement of the filmmakers and the particular blend of national or communal spaces. It is thus closely linked to postcolonial and diasporic filmmaking.

More economically oriented, *globalising transnationalism* address the limitations of national film financing and make films that have global appeal to recoup the costs of international co-productions. The idea behind is that (popular) filmmaking is notoriously expensive and it requires big budgets to attract a large audience. As such, globalising transnationalism is similar to the process of making global cinema aimed for a global audience and thus a widespread assumption that there are common interests and tastes across national borders (Hjort 2009, 21–22).

In terms of *modernising transnationalism*, it occurs when a transnationalised film culture becomes a way of driving and representing the modernisation process in a particular society. This can be seen as a way of pursuing modernity through means other than traditional markers like health, income, and literacy. Developing a film culture that looks beyond national borders can help to reflect and create transnational connections and can also serve as a way of expressing the ideals that drive a rapidly changing society. As such, the productions showcase and create transnational connections, with the focus on

transnationalism being seen as a sign of a forward-thinking and progressive approach to cultural policy and institution-building (Hjort 2009, 24–26).

As Hjort (2009, 30) concludes, transnationalism is a common phenomenon that can take many different forms and promote various values. Any given example of transnationalism may involve multiple values, with the relative importance of these values depending on the type of transnationalism. As transnationalism becomes more common, it is important to carefully distinguish between its different tendencies and to support those that are guided by sustainable goals.

At the same time, it is possible to speak of several types of transnationalism in the same productions – or types of transnationalism that compete. Collectively, this terminology makes an effective way to analyse and discuss various types of collaboration and co-production in an inherently entangled production milieu.

In the following section, I will take a step back to the national perspective and instead focus on Greenland's specific conditions by drawing, among other things, on Hjort's small nation cinema framework. As Hjort argue, a

transnational approach to small-nation Cinema Studies requires a broad conception of small nationhood that recognises the implications not only of geographic scale and population size, but also of limited resources (measured in GDP) and histories of diminished political autonomy (especially colonial ones)  
(Hjort 2017, 482)

Therefore, I will present and develop Hjort's framework and thus conceptualise a new one more specifically linked to what I will refer to as *ultrasmall* screen industries.

# Conceptualising the ultrasmall

Including and examining scale as a key factor is a tendency that has a long history in research across multiple disciplines. Here, fields such as economics, politics, and education have studied different concepts of small nations and their specific issues and opportunities since the late 1950s when the economic implications of size came to the centre of attention (Bray and Packer 1993, xxiv). Since then, this scale-centred interest has spread into several branches and created an ever-growing field of studies on the significance of size, not least on small nation cinemas (Hjort 2005; Hjort and Petrie 2007).

Due to the particularities of Greenland's vast size and (very) small population, scale appears as a necessary focal point – whether it concerns geopolitics, education, or the screen industry. Though my interest is centred on the latter, I will present and discuss central theoretical understandings focused on approaches to and the significance of size. While the study of small nation cinemas is often linked to cinemas which in the context of Greenland and similar nations, communities, and peoples seem large, my goal is to offer an understanding of the 'extremely small'. Through this, concepts such as power and postcolonialism will be discussed along with other size centred and distance related concepts such as peripherality.

## From minor to ultraminor

In cultural studies, different concepts of smallness have been discussed continuously and often through the term *minor* which is typically linked to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's studies of *minor literature* and their examination of Franz Kafka's writings in their monograph *Kafka: Pour une littérature mineure* from 1975. The concept originates with the idea of *triple ghetto* developed by Pavel Eisner to describe Kafka's social and cultural position as a German-writing, Czech Jew in Prague creating a literature which is "carved within a major language, e.g. Kafka's writing in German in Prague, outside of the dominantly German speaking territories of Germany and Austria" (Tuckerová 2017, 435). As such, minor literature is not written in a minority language, but by a minority *within* the major language they are using. Thus, in minor literature, everything is political, takes on a collective value, and hence "the three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of language, the

connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation” (Deleuze and Guattari 2008, 18).

Following this idea of minor literature, Bergur Rønne Moberg and David Damrosch introduces the term *ultraminor* to “reflect the need to think small cultural spaces more accurately than the broader and still somewhat blurry category of minor literatures allows us to do“ (Moberg and Damrosch 2017, 133). In this regard, they underline the importance of size:

The ultraminor size constantly generates a certain structure in terms of patterns of living, thinking, mapping, remembering, and speaking, all with consequences for aesthetic developments. Fundamentally the ultraminor size entails structural handicaps and a systematic lack of capacity and resources connected both to space and to time [...] a sense of belatedness, clustered ideas, and a short history of modernity  
(Moberg and Damrosch 2017, 134).

In this sense, being ultraminor has a wide range of consequences for the cultural production of a given community; a status presented as strongly negative with a wide range of ‘handicaps’ in a global cultural ecology dominated by a few (major) communities.

The dynamic nature of the concept is influenced by a wide range of local and global developments and not least in the context of Greenland: “Greenland has an ultraminor population [...] and generally an ultraminor infrastructure, yet, meanwhile, the renewed focus on the Arctic is turning Greenland into a global player” (Moberg et al. 2020, 193). Whereas this statement primarily relates to (geo)political changes and shifts in power, it will naturally seep down into the cultural industries – for instance through the rise of geopolitical TV series centred around Greenland such as *Thin Ice* and *Borgen: Power & Glory* (Grønlund 2022a).

Furthermore, the ultraminor concept is described as a more radical version of Deleuze and Guattari’s minor, in terms of the before mentioned focuses on the minority’s use of a major language:

By contrast, an ultraminor literature may be produced within a distinct but small language community, very much based in a specific territory. Far from deterritorializing a hegemonic class or culture, an ultraminor literature may be used to create or bolster the community’s territorial integrity  
(Moberg and Damrosch 2017, 134).



In this sense, the ultraminor is a spatial term which can describe ultraminor communities struggling on several levels. It is not only a question of conditions of size, but which emotions or strategies are present or being used to cope with being exactly ultraminor. The object of interest, then, is the compensation strategies arising from these feelings and experiences.

To use the ultraminor term in practice, Moberg describes the distinctiveness of Faroese literature. Moberg models the ultraminor in three different, but related, concepts:

Firstly, the ultraminor size relates Faroese literature to its geographical, cultural and historical conditions; secondly, the size relates to the emotional background of deprivation which is that of a felt and experienced reality of deprivation understood as lack of capacity [...] and, thirdly, aspects of the ultraminor size are used as an imaginative compensation and gives impetus to look at the little as a whole world in itself.

(Moberg 2017, 198).

According to Moberg (2017, 199), several emotions and basic conditions come with the status as both geographically, demographically, and culturally ultraminor: a lack of recourses within cultural institutions, a weak public sphere, and a limited literary market to the point, where it is questionable whether it can be considered a market at all.

However, while Deleuze, Guattari, and Moberg's interests lie within literature and language, my interest is within screen industries. Here, Deleuze discussed the concept of minor *cinema* in his later work by transferring the characteristics of minor literature to a particular kind of cinema referred to as "modern political cinema" (Deleuze 2013, 224) where the identity of nations, peoples, and their becoming are negotiated. As described by Damian Sutton and David Martin-Jones:

To act in a minor way, then, is not to oppose a dominant political system, but to inhabit the system and change it from within. Thus, although Deleuze and Guattari's work on Kafka was originally focused on the way minor language could be created in literature, their idea of the minor can be applied to any number of contexts, including cinema

(Sutton and Martin-Jones 2008, 53)

The concept of minor thus becomes a useful way to understand modern day power relations within contexts such as postcolonialism and globalisation in literature as well as cinema. It

addresses a people in the process of becoming in an attempt to break free of dominant discourses of e.g. a native population (Martin-Jones 2004, 229). In short, minor cinema is primarily concerned with the alterity of a new subject: a people in the making.

Following Sutton and Martin-Jones, I see a theoretical potential in applying the concept of ultraminor to the context of cinema and industrial approaches to such. The concept is fundamentally tied to a basic condition of size as a determining factor in ways of living and thinking – and ultimately how aesthetics develop. Thus, literature is just one cultural artefact in which structures and emotions of being ultraminor can be analysed. This approach to the ultraminor leans towards both industry and textual analysis in the search of strategies to cope as well as genres, style, or form in the context of a communal (or national) cinema. When the ultraminor “bolster the community’s territorial integrity” (Moberg and Damrosch 2017, 134) rather than deterritorialising, it takes the form of community (or nation) building as well as cultural expressions of being ultraminor through various texts. In this way, ultraminor relates Greenlandic cinema to the geographical, cultural, and historical conditions similar to how it relates Faroese literature to the same.

This fundamental focus on size and territory – one of the elements separating minor from ultraminor – is tightly linked to the tradition of *island studies*. Here, the unique characteristics and challenges of islands and island communities are examined including looking at the social, cultural, economic, and environmental aspects of life on islands, as well as the history, geography, and politics of island nations and territories. The goal is to gain a better understanding of island life and to develop strategies to address the challenges faced by island communities. For instance, Moberg and Damrosch (2017, 134-135) quote Donald McLeod’s remark on being an island community: “[island communities] possess a limited resource base, tiny domestic market, diseconomies of scale, poor accessibility, limited infrastructure and institutional mechanism and a high degree of dependency on external forces”. Due to this, island scholars engage with concepts such as *islandness*, *remoteness*, or *connectedness* as well as opposing metaphors such as *paradise* and *prison* to shift our perspective and analyse ‘a world of islands’ (Royle and Brinklow 2018).

Re-centering the focus from mainland to island, island studies – or *Nissology* (McCall 1994) – has been defined as “the study of islands on their own terms” (Baldacchino 2008, 37) suggesting a process of empowerment and reclaiming of histories and cultures. Here, *islandness* is a core term describing “the emergent distinctiveness or essence of islands, [which] can be translated into distinguishing patterns of spatial development” (Baldacchino 2018, xxv). In

these studies, space-related concepts such as *boundedness*, *connectedness*, *smallness*, and *isolation* are used to describe this distinctiveness – both from the perspective of insiders (the islanders) and the outsiders (the mainlanders). These perspectives often contain opposing experiences, logics, and discourses that encapsulate some of the complexity of islandness – or “islands as spatial paradoxes” (Moberg 2017, 209). For instance, boundedness – the territorial specificity of an island – entails not only geographical boundedness, but also psychological and societal which often cause a strong attachment to the inhabited spaces that creates a sense of both unity and inclusion *and* separatedness and exclusion (Royle and Brinklow 2018, 9).

By embedding the concept of ultraminor within the tradition of island studies, Moberg and Damrosch create a basis of analysing ‘beyond texts’ and towards other approaches such as those of production or location studies. By basing the theory on generalisable conditions for islands, a foundation is created for the work with more than the linguistic or artistic:

Among the limitations that characterize ultraminor cultures, a weak public sphere, lack of influence internationally, short outreach, limited cultural capital in general, a relatively low degree of specialization (although many ultraminor societies are equipped with highly skilled people), strong dependence on recourses from the outside world, and a highly limited market can be mentioned as the most prominent. In Greenland and the Faroe Islands in particular, the limited market is a widely felt and experienced aspect of the cultures (Moberg et al. 2020, 195).

In this way, industrial aspects such as labour force, market, (cultural) power, mobility, access, and (economic) dependency are usable in studying not only a national cinema, but also a place-bound screen industry and place-bound filmmaking.

The ultraminor concept, while useful in analysing the unique contexts of places like Greenland and the Faroe Islands, especially in relation to their postcolonial status, has its limitations. One significant drawback is its substantial deviation from the original 'minor' concept, even though it seeks to align with it. Another issue is its local-centric perspective, potentially overlooking the valuable insights that could be gained from considering the viewpoints and impacts of foreign actors involved in the ultraminor setting. The external actors' perceptions of geographical and societal factors, their interactions with local filmmakers, and how the perceived remoteness affects the productions are vital angles to explore, especially in contexts where foreign involvement is substantial. To address the lack of a focused industry-oriented approach within the ultraminor framework, incorporating the

small nation cinema lens offer a more grounded analysis in the field of screen industries, enhancing the depth and applicability of the ultraminor concept.

## From small to x-small

In *Small Nation, Global Cinema*, Mette Hjort (2005, ix) studies Danish cinema as a “small nation engaged in the production of minor cinema” through a small nation cinema framework. In this sense, Hjort makes connection to the minor through the descriptor ‘small’ and thereby eschew some of the implicit evaluation of significance the term ‘minor’ carries (McElroy 2016, 433). Furthermore, the ‘minor’ is now specifically a *nation* – Denmark – that shares the political understanding of minor cinema as a nation deeply influenced by its small size, which places it unfavourably within the landscape of global cinema.

With a reference to earlier work made with Ib Bondebjerg, the small nation status is given based on three conditions:

1. The size of its population is too small to sustain a commercially based, indigenous film industry.
  2. The language spoken by the nation in question, Danish, is understood primarily by Danes, making it difficult to expand the market for Danish film through exports.
  3. A key problem for the indigenous film industry is the ongoing influx of American films.
- (Bondebjerg and Hjort 2001, 20)

The focus is on how Danish cinema thrived *despite* – or even because of – these basic conditions which can describe several small nation cinemas across the globe. The idea of focusing on scale, then, allows narrowing down aspects that characterise these environments and by examining several small nation cinemas, the differences – and not least similarities – can come to light. One of these differences between the ultraminor and the small nation cinema approach, then, is the question of nation.

When Benedict Anderson wrote the influential *Imagined Communities* in 1983 it was, among other reasons, a reaction to a ‘big country bias’ which dominated the American academic study of history and nationalism. As accentuated by Pei-Sze Chow (2015, 41), this is similar to the scholarly turn in film studies “toward the cinema of small, marginal, and peripheral territories [which] aims to redress the long-standing neglect of ‘other’ cinemas that are not Hollywood or, in the main European context, France, Germany, or Italy”. Turning the

attention to the first descriptor, *small*, the critical concept of small nationhood in film studies has gained increased focus.

What applies as 'small', however, is for constant discussion within the broad academic field on small nations, and Hjort and Petrie discuss several approaches to the demarcation of the ill-defined category. According to Hjort at Petrie, smallness can be thought of through four basic measures: population, geographical size, Gross National Product (GNP), and history of subjection to a ruling nation (Hjort and Petrie 2007, 3–7; Hjort 2011).

The result in *The Cinema of Small Nations* is a broad sample of small nations with a population size of up to 23 million people (with a clear concentration of 4-10 million), 682-273,800 square kilometres, and a GNP per capita of USD 1,200-41,000. This includes independent states, special administrative regions and sub-national entities with self-determinations (Hjort and Petrie 2007, 6). In this sense, "cinema is not small in an absolute sense, for the very concept of small nationhood invites comparisons and contrasts" (Hjort 2011). According to Hjort, small nationhood can be defined by one out of four parameters *and* all four as long as the researcher is aware of the challenges that come with the varying degrees of smallness.

In short, the small nation cinema framework is an analytical tool, which draws attention to scale and how scale impacts cinematic practices. It highlights how small nation cinemas, and media systems in general, are different from those of large nations: "They are vulnerable, dependent on decisions taken elsewhere, and their financial and creative recourses are limited" (Trappel 2014, 251). In this sense, size matters with a general focus on the challenges of being a small nation and what makes a small nation cinema 'thrive' (Hjort 2011).

In the debates on demarcations, the line between small and large are often at the centre. In less focus are discussions of when small nations are *too small* to meaningfully fall under the category along with the various nations examined in *The Cinema of Small Nations*. Hjort and Petrie do mention this briefly in their introduction, when they deselect certain countries due to their smallness, such as Liechtenstein, Andorra, or Oman. However, there are exceptions:

A noteworthy exception, however, is Iceland, with a population of just over 300,000 and a film industry that has produced sixty feature films since 1978. As a film-producing microstate, Iceland is included here as a case allowing for an exploration of the extra-small factor.  
(Hjort and Petrie 2007, 4)

In a later article, Hjort continues this line of thinking: “An interesting question to consider in relation to film is whether there is a minimal threshold with regard to population, for example, that must be met for small-nation cinema even to make sense as a project” (Hjort 2011). The citations thus indicate an undefined lower limit to small nation cinemas in which Iceland represents a lower category as a film-producing *microstate* with ‘extra-small factor’. This is something the small nation cinema framework share with the traditional small nation theory upon which the framework is built:

No lower limit has been set: it seems evident that the disabilities that are a consequence of size where the population is ten million will clearly be intensified where the population is five or ten times smaller. However, such ‘micro-powers’ as Western Samoa have not been seriously considered at all. They surely constitute yet another class of states with reasonably distinct and characteristic problems of their own.

(Vital 1967, 8–9)

As the question of minimal threshold remains unanswered, this section will attempt to delimit concepts of this subcategory outlined with designations such as *micro* and *extra-small* – and what this ‘extra-small factor’ brings to the study of screen production. To do so, I wish to merge the small nation cinema framework with the already outlined concept of ultraminor and suggest the concept of *ultrasmall* as a framework to better grasp the ‘extra-small factor’ of – in this case – filmmaking in Greenland and ‘seriously consider’ these ultrasmall cases.

However, another similar approach focusing on size already exists in Greenlandic research through Signe Ravn-Højgaard’s (2022) work on journalism in Greenland. While the approach is towards Greenland as a delimited space of news media and internal relationships between media and politics in microstates, the size-specific approach does offer conclusions relevant to film industry perspectives. Here it is argued, that despite differences between microstates

the smallest media systems share four characteristics linked to their micro size: (1) government domination, (2) high social integration and overlapping role-relationships, (3) multi-functionalism among journalists and media outlets, and (4) dependence on few individuals.

(Ravn-Højgaard 2022, 1)

Though linked to journalism, the four characteristics may be transferable to the screen industry subject to the same size-created conditions of government domination and a small talent pool. Furthermore, Ravn-Højgaard (2022, 12) concludes how the

smaller the media market is, the more pronounced the diseconomy of scale. In micro media systems, there are so few resources available in the media industry that it impedes the media sector's capability to, for example, have sufficient journalists employed to be able to produce quality news

(Ravn-Højgaard 2022, 12)

By replacing 'journalists' with 'filmmakers' and 'media outlets' with 'production companies' there are potential to broaden the perspective beyond news media. However, the Greenlandic news media have fundamental differences from that of filmmaking – for instance in terms of commercial possibilities and potential audiences. Instead, this approach to media systems will feed into the ultrasmall framework by supporting arguments and relating it more concretely to a Greenlandic context.

More directly situated in screen industries, Björn Norðfjörð's chapter on Iceland in *The Cinema of Small Nations* introduces the concept of *x-small cinemas* (extra-small) as a category that makes a distinction from small cinemas. While smallness can be defined in several ways, for instance, Iceland's relative wealth, "population is a crucial factor, as it delimits the possible expansion of the cinema in question" (Norðfjörð 2007, 45). An x-small nation such as Iceland simply lacks the potential national audience and even a very successful film cannot recuperate its costs at the local box-office (Norðfjörð 2007, 46). In this sense, the first characteristic of x-small cinemas is the fact that several conditions describing small nation cinemas are pushed to the extremes, the first one being the extra-small population resulting in not only a too-small audience for a proper nation audience (economically speaking) but a naturally delimited pool of talent and workers for both above- and below-the-line personnel in the x-small industry:

To a certain extent these shortcomings may be among the defining characteristics of x-small cinemas, for they arise in contexts that typically lack either the financial means or the population to develop an all-round film culture (Norðfjörð 2007, 51).

Furthermore, the literature on small nation cinemas is focused on the productions made *inside* the nation for its inhabitants; the national cinema. However, as Norðfjörð explains, the x-small nation may thrive on a model with national film as an industry (rather than a cultural category) by focusing on *both* indigenous forms of cultural expressions and servicing outside productions: “Indeed, for a small national cinema, certainly the x-small ones, whose local productions cannot sustain an industry by themselves, a productive partnership between the two could be said to be vital” (Norðfjörð 2007, 52). In line with this, I advocate for a broader approach involving more than solely the national cinema in the context of x-small nations such as Greenland (made by Greenlanders, about Greenlanders, for Greenlanders) by incorporating the foreign productions that – to a greater or lesser extent – involve both local actors and the nation itself.

Ruth McElroy uses this broad approach to study film production in Wales:

This approach has the merit of recognising that a great deal of filmmaking in small nations is undertaken by producers from outside the nation [...]. The effect of putting place at the centre of the frame is that *all* film activities in that location become subject to analysis. This has the potential to reveal some relatively neglected areas including, for example, the increasing importance of television drama to the industrial and representational ecology of small nations. (McElroy 2016, 435)

In a specific production environment such as Greenland, with limited infrastructure and financing opportunities, but with relatively high foreign interests in local production and global (geopolitical) focus in general, this broad approach can create a greater understanding of the mechanisms at play – and how the development of an x-small industry takes place as an interaction between local and foreign productions in and about Greenland. Here, the ‘productive partnerships’ are, as formulated by Norðfjörð, vital for the development – both as a transnational industry and a national cinema.

While the small nation cinema framework does offer analytical lenses “to shed light on at least some of the ways in which subnational, national, international, transnational, regional and global forces dovetail and compete in the sphere of the cinema” (Hjort and Petrie 2007, 2), the approach has a tendency of optimism. According to Petr Szczepanik (2021, 194), Hjort’s focus on the opportunities rather than limits of small nationhood has “developed her model to serve progressive cultural-political agendas and knowledge transfer between various small-nation cinemas“. In this way, the framework can be overly optimistic focusing on



“accounts of small-nation constraints turned into opportunities, clever cultural policies, or solidarity and sharing among filmmakers” (Szczepanik 2021, 198).

To follow this critique, small nations react to their own smallness in inconsistent ways. With a changing industry – for instance in terms of SVoD and a growing demand of local content – the question is how small nation actors and markets will react in their specific small nation cinema context. In a scholarly context, this demands a reflexive approach from the researcher:

Small media market researchers should be able to critically and comparatively study all these trends and industry modes: from successful examples of ‘affinitive transnationalism’ [...], to the stubborn provincialism and illiberalism of more nationally oriented media markets. (Szczepanik 2021, 200)

To carry out this form of critical, comparative study to a, extra-small, ‘minimal threshold’, I suggest the merge of the above outlined concepts of ultraminor and x-small cinema to the concept of *ultrasmall*.

## **Introducing the ultrasmall (periphery)**

With the above review of the concept of ultraminor, the small nation cinema framework, and the related perspectives from island studies, micro media systems, and place-centred approaches, I wish to present a brief overview of the ultrasmall concept. As mentioned earlier, this stems from a fundamental scale-centred approach to the understanding of filmmaking and screen industries. Here, size generates “a certain structure in terms of patterns, living, thinking, mapping, remembering, and speaking, all with consequences for aesthetic developments” (Moberg and Damrosch 2017, 134). In addition, size naturally limits the options for a given industry whether it is about the market, talent pool, partnerships, power, or distribution possibilities. The question is, then, how various actors – that being both local and foreign – act upon these scale related conditions in terms of strategies related to for example collaboration, institution building, funding, or indigenous filmmaking? To paraphrase Szczepanik (2021, 196) with an ultrasmall twist, how do the film professional’s self-conceptions represent, perform, and react to ultrasmallness?

To sum up and merge the various conceptualizations in this section, a number of characteristics can describe the ultrasmall. Here, the ultrasmall screen industry:

1. has a population size making it impossible to sustain a commercially based indigenous screen industry.
2. is commercially dependent on foreign interest and productive partnerships.
3. is vulnerable to and dependent on decisions taken elsewhere.
4. is connected to certain structural disadvantages created by a lack of capacity and resources, tiny domestic markets, a weak public sphere, low degree of specialisation, and dependence on recourses from the outside.
5. is characterized by multifunctionalism and dependence on few individuals.

While a ultrasmall nation may not fit completely with all points, the fundamental scale related vulnerability and feelings of ultrasmallness stands as a key structural component. For one, the ultrasmall is not necessarily bound by national borders, but often to communities and specific territories and languages or dialects. The term should thus be understood as dynamic and vary greatly from community to community. Just as the small nation cinema framework, a wide range of fundamentally different nations, cultures, and communities can be regarded as ultrasmall. With Greenland as an example, the four measurements of population, geography, and GNP, describe a relatively wealthy, ultrasmall population within an ultrasmall infrastructure set in an extremely large territory. At the same time, “the renewed focus on the Arctic is turning Greenland into a global player” (Moberg et al. 2020, 193) potentially affecting other areas such as screen industries.

If we compare these factors, it only makes sense to compare Greenland with communities with similar populations. Greenland can thus be compared to Faroe Islands, St. Kitts & Nevis, Marshall Islands, or Sápmi in terms of population (all similar populations with around or less than 100.000), or areas with similar populations *and* size such as Nunavut or the Yukon Territory. As with the ultraminor, these communities share “a short history of modernity” (Moberg and Damrosch 2017, 134) through colonial pasts and postcolonial presents in continued entanglement with their former small (such as Denmark) or large (such as the US) colonial nations.

However, nations such as Liechtenstein, Andorra, or Monaco do not share this past and differ in several ways. Yet, the ultrasmallness of their populations still affect ways of thinking, strategies, (cultural) power, and a constant relationship with not just large, but also small surrounding nations and their cultural influences, e.g. in terms of language and dialects. It is still about thinking and working in an ultrasmall context and investigating how best to act,

develop, and potentially thrive based on the conditions ultrasmallness creates. However, to better grasp and expand the ultrasmall it is necessary to put in relation to a related spatial term such as *peripherality*.

According to Szczepanik et al. (2020, 6), the concept derives from a long tradition of centre-periphery hierarchies embedded in social sciences literature connected to structuralist theories of the 1950s to the 1980s with dependency theory or imperialism debates. These critically discussed and analysed inequality in the development of world capitalism and how it sustained dependence of the periphery on the core. While these have been revised from various positions, “the center/periphery or core/semi-periphery/periphery model maintains its explanatory power when applied to culture and media in the era of globalisation—historical flows of novels from the core to the semi-periphery and then periphery” (Szczepanik et al. 2020, 6). In the case of Europe, the centre can be regarded as the UK, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain (the West European big five) with economic and cultural power to which the periphery must relate and position itself (Szczepanik et al. 2020, 3).

However, despite these similarities, the concepts of smallness and peripherality is fundamentally different:

Smallness and peripherality should not be confused with each other because they are defined by different parameters: size and resources in the first case, distance from the centers of economic or cultural power in the second. Small countries (such as Denmark) might achieve a more central position in transnational flows than larger peripheral cases (such as Poland) (Szczepanik 2021, 192)

In this way, ultrasmall nations can be both peripheries and non-peripheries depending on their position in the cultural flows.

Following this, Greenland has the status of an ultrasmall periphery. The question then is how ultrasmallness and peripherality shapes screen production, and how the industry navigates these? With peripherality as a relational and dynamic concept, the peripheral can be studied from various perspectives and understood “as a mode of practice, as a textual strategy, as a production infrastructure, and as a narrative encoded on the margins of the dominant modes of production, distribution, and consumption” (Iordanova et al. 2010, 9).

The next section will explore how space and location, including aspects of place branding and runaway production, impact ultrasmall screen industries, highlighting their specific challenges and opportunities – not least in ultrasmall contexts.

# Placing location

During the last couple of decades, studies of place have gained increasing interest across multiple disciplines. Since the 1980ies, media studies have seen an increased interest in concepts of place, creating the so-called *spatial turn* recognizing of the fundamental importance of spatiality (Jansson and Falkheimer 2006). Where spatiality has previously been given particular interest in a few disciplines such as architecture, geography, or urban sociology, the spatial turn has resulted in “an unprecedented diffusion of critical spatial thinking across an unusually broad spectrum of subject areas” (Soja 2010, 13). This growing interest in spatiality today is further increased by globalisation, both culturally and societal, which includes both internationalisation *and* a significant interest in the local and specific place (Waade 2018, 213). In this section, I will present and discuss various concepts related to spatial dimension of film studies and screen industries. To do so, I take departure in the literature around location studies (Hansen and Waade 2017; 2019) and supplement with literature on, for example, runaway production to better adapt to the particularities of the Greenlandic context.

## Places and spaces

When working with spatial dimensions and place as an analytical dimension, a distinction between *space* and *place* is necessary. This distinction is not ambiguous, but ‘space’ is often seen as “a realm without meaning – as a ‘fact of life’ which, like time, produces the basic coordinates of human life” (Cresswell 2015, 16). Instead, place is loaded with meaning: “When space feels thoroughly familiar to us, it has become place” (Tuan 2011, 73) which underlines “the importance of place as a signifier of belonging and longing in a globalised culture” (Eichner and Waade 2015, 4). The two can also be distinguished more clearly through “the distinction between place (as embodied, experienced, physical place) and space (a virtual, imagined location) related to technology and media and how they influence the way we construct, use and experience places in contemporary culture” (Eichner and Waade 2015, 4).

In terms of the concept of space, it opens discussions of more abstract contexts of for instance nationality, colonialism, and the global. In this regard, Tim Edensor speaks of national spaces. Here, the nation consists of a bounded space:

The nation continues to be the pre-eminent spatial construct in a world in which space is divided up into national portions. The nation is spatially distinguished as a bounded entity, possessing borders which mark it as separate from other nations [...]. These borders are also imagined to enclose a particular and separate culture, a notion which is articulated by hegemonic ways of differentiating and classifying cultural differences. It is not that different cultures cannot exist within any nation, but that they are subordinate to the nation, and conceived as part of national cultural variety (Edensor 2002, 37).

Central in Edensor's understanding of both national, regional, and local spaces is distance from the idea that globalisation is necessarily a threat and overwhelming to local specificities. Instead, global processes "are inserted into it through various codes of spatial ordering, where over time they become domesticated additions to a familiar spatial palimpsest" (Edensor 2002, 64). While this can be understood as defensive rearticulations of national identity, it can also create new networks and dialogues across space with a potential of creating something new and *hybrid*. In this regard, Edensor (2002, 64) refer to the concept of *third space* as a place "where alternative identities are established (or to where outsiders are despatched)".

While this third space is an abstract spatial concept, the idea of space and place is also discussed in literature on production studies and media industries. For instance, the anthology *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries* (2009) focuses the whole third part, "Production Spaces: Centers and Peripheries" on exactly "the physical, cultural, and symbolic locations of media production" (Mayer et al. 2009a, 8). Here, the focus is on transnational and multi-sited productions across national borders and thus an emphasis on runaway production (Sand 2017, 50).

As such, the meaning of 'production space' is vague and broadly used in media production literature across abstract (cultural, symbolic) and concrete (physical, geographical) spaces and places. In film and literature studies more specifically, studies of space and place as a narrative element have a long and rich history – for instance through the concept of *mise en scène* – with a focus on the diegetic setting as it appears on-screen (Hansen and Waade 2017, 28). One

important contribution to the spatial turn in media studies is that of Kim Toft Hansen and Anne Marit Waade (2017; 2019). Through what they coin as location studies, they offer an approach to the intangible nature of spatially focused studies by examining the complexities of the relationship between places and screen production through a combination of *off-* and *on-screen* factors of location.

On-screen factors point to the textual aspects of location: The use of place *in* the final production and landscapes and notions of e.g. urban/rural or local/global drawing on theories of film and landscape (Lefebvre 2006; 2011), *local colour* (Kapoor 2008), or geographical approaches (Edensor 2002). In terms of off-screen factors, Hansen and Waade connect textual analysis to production studies by examining the creative and financial practices connected to and shaped by the specific place which influences the final productions (Hansen and Waade 2019, 107). In this lies a broad understanding of spatial factors that goes beyond looking at industries as purely business models but as spatial entities that give certain competitive advantages and disadvantages shaping productions in distinct ways. In this way, no site of production is purely a business model; it is also a unique geographical entity with distinct production structures (Scott 2005, 47).

The close connection between the use of place and location, local communities, economy, and tourism in regional spheres makes the approach particularly useful in relation to ultrasmall nations where the impact of larger productions in the nation can be compared with those in sup-national regional communities. However, to focus more directly on the significance of *location*, I will define the concept and position it in the field of related concepts that relate specifically to the field of screen industries.

## **Location, setting, landscape**

According to Miranda Banks, location is an essential theme when engaging with production studies as the

specific geographic location of a production work space dramatically affects – and perhaps even determines – the possibilities for which practitioners will be involved in a project, the processes of production, and what kind of television can be made.

(Banks 2014, 121)

Therefore, factors of location must be included in any study of production. However, concepts of spatiality – including locations – appear as broad, undefined conceptions needing delimitation.

When engaging with location as analytical focal point, I write the dissertation into a longer theoretical discussion of precisely distinction between spatial concepts. Similar to Hansen and Waade (2019, 105), I “view *locations* as the specific place where a scene of a film or a series is shot, while the *setting* is the overall diegetic space of the characters”. According to Henri Lefebvre, the on-screen element calls for a broader understanding by supplementing setting with the concept of (cinematic) *landscape*. Here, setting is exclusively “subservient to characters, events and action” while landscape is “a pictorial concept distinct from the mere setting” (Lefebvre 2011, 64). As such, this understanding leans towards a more phenomenological-oriented textual analysis, which engages more thoroughly with “the more complex significations and aesthetics that mark out location-as-landscape from location-as-setting” (Roberts 2016, 367).

Despite this simple distinction, location, setting, and landscape are far from separate entities. Instead, they influence each other internally, where distinctive meanings of locations are created and reproduced – not only influenced by the productions themselves, but also the viewers, the creators, and the surrounding society. One way to explain this process is through the concepts of *mediation*, *mediatisation*, and *hypermediatisation* in relation to place. According to Susanne Eichner and Waade:

*Mediation* illustrates the plain representation of a specific place, for example a photo of the crime scene in a news article or images of Oxford’s streets in the Inspector Morse crime series. The *mediatisation* process depicts places that the audience primarily knows from media, e.g. the skyline of Manhattan or a typical symbol of a specific place, for example the Eiffel Tower representing Paris and France. Finally, *hypermediatisation* is a far more complex process comprising how people act, behave, perform and navigate in places because of spatial mediatisation. In other words, knowledge and imaginations of places through media influence the way in which people experience and act in certain *places* (Eichner and Waade 2015, 6)

Therefore, the attention should not solely be on how film and television creates place and space, but equally on how place and space creates (or shapes) film and television. This interwoven process of meaning in film studies is prominent in interdisciplinary research on

the development of urban modernity – especially in terms of cityscapes and how film and television is part of place-making activities. Returning to the basic meaning of place and space, these places

are the territories where people live and which they invest with symbolic meanings, both personal and social. Film production acts both to deterritorialize the meanings associated with places and reterritorialize them to fit a project script. In other words, production not only makes some places look like other places, it can alter the ways people see places in the aftermath of the film

(Mayer 2016, 393)

Thus, place-mediatisation also speak into the deceptive nature of film and opens a more abstract discussion of cinematic places caught between aesthetic, cultural, economic, and labour relations.

Essential in location studies' theoretical foundation is the concept of *local colour* that – similar to the approach as a whole – works across off- and on-screen factors of screen production by including aesthetic, political, and practical dimensions (Hansen and Waade 2017, 35). According to Vladimir Kapor, the concept of local colour (or *couleur locale*) can be traced back to French literary criticism to describe “a set of features used for a vivid and distinctive depiction of a spatially or temporally remote setting” (Kapor 2008, 41). With reference to French and English dictionary definitions, the term focus on the distinctive image of a nation, region, or specific epochs through external features. The use of local colour is then a way in which artefacts, scenery, dress, climate, or behaviour can represent particular local places.

This understanding of local colour is thus exclusively connected to on-screen understandings. However, Eichner and Waade (2015, 5) argues for a broader understanding of local colour, which is not limited the on-screen settings and landscapes, but encompassed the physical along with the mediated and imagined place and their internal relationship underlining the complexity and significance of these spatiality in line with the mediatisation of place. Agreeing with this broadened understanding of local colour, I continue to follow the location studies use of the concept as relating to



(a) representations of places, regions and landscapes on screen, (b) the political and economic conditions for how the regions are considered in culture and media production, and (c) the commodification of places and locations in global market cultures  
(Hansen and Waade 2017, 40)

However, as Hansen and Waade (2017, 41-42) underlines, these ideas of connectivity between places on- and off-screen assumes that the physical place represented on-screen (location) corresponds to the diegetic place in the narrative (setting) which is not always the case. Instead, they mention Mark Sandberg's concept of *place substitution*. Sandberg (2014) studies the plausibility of place substitution through the example of *The Kite Runner* (Marc Forster, 2007) shot on several locations in China despite its setting in Kabul, Afghanistan. This opens for a discussion of the representational gaps and contradictions between locations and settings. In what follows, I delve deeper into the issue of place substitution, broaden it, and at the same time relate it to runaway production.

## **Place substitution, location doubling**

With 'place substitution' and 'fake locations' as fundamental elements of filmmaking, Sandberg's (2014) study of place substitution draws a picture of a complex relationship between locations and settings, where a greater focus on location has emerged. For example, he describes how the importance of location has grown not only for filmmakers but also for audiences, leading to a whole range of questions:

At what points in film history have audiences cared about the actual location of filming? When did it become a mentionable, promotional asset for studios to claim that a film was shot 'on location,' and what contrastive prior practices gave that claim its value? When does the identification of actual shooting locations become an expected piece of information in the end credits of films, and why?

(Sandberg 2014, 23)

In this way, location has grown from a backdrop where a narrative took place, to a factor that relates to the medialisation of place. In other words, location matters to such an extent that it has a deep impact on tourism and regional development.

The significance of location is further challenged in the context of place substitution. Here, Sandberg (2014, 26) speaks of a “calculated risk” taken by screen producers when engaging with geographically specific settings shot elsewhere in terms of the geographic knowledge of residents in the audience. In these cases, Sandberg discusses *plausibility* and thus plausible substitution rather than the much-debated concept of *authenticity*. As such, it is closely linked to Chris Lukinbeal’s (2006, 339) concept of *geographic realism* as an aesthetic practice “which links a fictional narrative to a location’s sense of place” which does not necessarily depend on on-location filming. Here, the choice of filming *Apocalypse Now* (1979) in the Philippines and the Dominican Republic rather than the setting of Vietnam and Cambodia would be considered geographical realistic in Lukinbeal’s (2006, 339) terminology, making the concept “subjective and fluid, not objective and factual”.

Hence, it is about how a production through place substitution creates the most plausible setting often using varying degrees of local colour or *cultural specificity*. For instance, a production can aim for a “placeless product” that travels more freely between markets “unburdened by obvious cultural signifiers” (Sandberg 2014, 28); that is, without cultural specificity. Hence, place substitution of geographically specific places is complex as the place substitutions is

not only seen to replace the original ones but also to convey a range of social and political meanings connected to them. In symbolic depiction, locations act as shorthand not only for places and spaces somewhere else, but also for intangible things such as ideologies, sensibilities, sentiments and values.

(Paasonen 2015, 13)

In this way, it is very much about what to substitute and in what cultural context. A common element in the problematisations is that substitution is not just substitution, but culturally vulnerable issues that require producers to ask questions beyond the purely aesthetic and economic ones.

In addition, the terminology itself appears problematic. While Sandberg uses ‘substitution’ as a concept to describe the complicated issue of location-setting discrepancies, there is no consistent way to describe this. He also chooses to articulate the issues with this particular terminology and what exactly constitutes substitution:

If two places belong to a continuous landscape or some other larger entity, does it make sense to use the word “substitution” at all? Or does using the term “substitution” only come into play because of the existence of a perceived border or boundary, a clash of some sort that must be ignored or covered over in order for the process to be successful?

(Sandberg 2014, 24–25)

Here, Sandberg articulates several challenges with the terminology itself. In the academic literature on these issues, one of the most prominent alternatives is that of cinematic *body double* (e.g. Paasonen 2015; Elmer 2002) borrowing the terminology from acting, when a person (for instance, a stunt double) takes part in a film instead of the main actor.

Common to the discussion is a (necessary) simplification of the process of substitution. However, both body double and substitution point towards one act of substitution and thereby fail to consider the different degrees of substitution taking place in filmmaking – especially in the wake of digital advances, where the merging of different images (and landscapes) creates places that exist only in that particular screen production. Therefore, I have proposed – as I have used elsewhere (Grønlund 2022a, 212) – the verbs *doubling* and *part doubling* of location to describe and differentiate between completely substituted locations with partly substituted locations – for instance by mixing on-location footage from the original location with footage taken elsewhere. I will use this terminology to describe the phenomenon throughout the dissertation. However, to understand doubling of location, then, requires looking 'beyond' the landscape and into culturally motivated emotions and not least (usually) national contexts. To do so, I propose to apply terminology from literature centred on so-called *runaway productions*.

## **Runaway production**

Runaway production refers to the phenomena of Hollywood-based production shooting abroad, which gained momentum in the 1950s. This caused the Hollywood American Federation of Labor’s film council to launch a report in 1957 stating that among the then four major studios of Hollywood, more than 50 percent were shot abroad in primarily the UK, Italy, Mexico, France, and Germany. In addition, the report “identified factors that led producers to shoot abroad: 1) authentic locale; 2) lower labor costs; 3) blocked currencies; 4) tax advantages and 5) easy money and/or subsidies” (Ulich and Simmens 2001, 359). Pamela Conley Ulich and Lance Simmens (2001, 360) draw the issue and discussion of runaway

production forward to the turn of the millennium, where it “has continued to grow in importance, scope and visibility” and is ranked “among the most critical issues confronting the entertainment industry”. As a result, Ulich and Simmens have listed the perceived main causes and impacts of runaway production. A profound concern is the potential erosion of *cultural identity*, particularly the diminished prominence of Hollywood as a hub for fostering perceived American culture and values such as ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’ in global communications (Ulich and Simmens 2001, 368).

According to media lawyer Adrian McDonald, runaway production types can be narrowed down to three main categories:

*Artificial economic runaways* are films shot abroad because of artificial, or legislatively created, incentives designed to lure productions. *Natural economic runaways* are films that shoot abroad to take advantage of natural economic occurring phenomenon – cheap labor that lower production costs. *Artistic runaways* are films that shoot abroad to artistically service the story – a film about Paris that shoots in Paris.

(McDonald 2007, 900, emphasis added)

These categories are flexible and may overlap, and thus an ideal production – from the producer's perspective – would be all three at once, achieving both the cheapest possible production costs due to artificial and natural economic opportunities and closest possible correlation between location and setting.

The interest in becoming an attractive location for foreign production has resulted in many cities and nations to make initiatives to lure Hollywood and thus creating “Satellite Production Locations” (Scott 2005, 53) or more critically “Little Hollywoods” (Mayer 2016). Today, an increasing number of governments seeks to lure largescale production from abroad to boost economies. For instance, the Arctic Business Analysis report on cultural and creative industries shows how small Arctic nations and especially Iceland thrives in terms of film support and performance (Nordic Council of Ministers 2018, 21). In Iceland, the film industry has been fundamentally transformed by the increasing number of runaway productions with Hollywood as a major ‘client’ offering competitive salaries, specialisation, and unique locations (Norðfjörð 2015, 184–85).

However, nations interested in foreign productions are not only trying to attract Hollywood productions; runaway is an international phenomenon, with even small nations ‘running away from home’ and towards cheaper, more professionalised or suitable locations

abroad. For instance, Danish producers have in several cases moved large screen productions to the Czech Republic where Prague has offered cheaper costs, tax rebates, and special facilities (Nygaard 2017; Østergaard and Waade 2016, 210–12).<sup>11</sup> This continuing interest in attracting foreign productions does not seem to be changing – especially with the growing platformisation of the media industry in a multi-platform era and thus the rise of SVoD platforms as global conglomerates (Evens and Donders 2018). As a result, subscription-funded networks have created an ever-growing demand for high-end television drama considerably expanding the volume of production of especially US fiction. This so-called *peak TV* has furthermore expanded non-US high-end television production and thus significantly increased the number of co-produced, non-English language programmes (Dunleavy 2020, 337).

From a location perspective and as argued by Les Roberts (2012, 3), this has made *cinematic cities* such as London, New York, or Mumbai with long and strong histories of screen presence that are thus strongly present in the collective memory and in the place-mediatisation that takes place among audiences. In addition, there are cities, countries, and landscapes which have been widely present on-screen without them becoming distinctly cinematic cities – for example through location doubling. As described earlier, Liverpool has been used as a location double for many British locations, but it does not have an obvious screen presence and can be seen as a *city-in-film* rather than a film city. In this regard, Roberts has argued that

cinematic geography in which ‘location’ demands no intrinsic connection to the physical geography and architecture of the city promotes an understanding of the city-in-film in which location counts only insofar as it functions as a semiotic marker.

(Roberts 2012, 6)

In this way, California’s “universal geography” (Sandberg 2014, 42) and Liverpool as “the world in one city” (Roberts 2012, 147) are both examples of how geography and thus location are contributing factors in the creation of both film cities and cities-in-film. In relation to the Arctic as a region, I have similarly argued that Iceland's emergence as a film nation stems

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<sup>11</sup> Prague as a production hub attracting foreign companies is not new but dates back to the 1930s with the establishment of Barrandov Studios (Szczepanik 2016, 91–92).

precisely from its ability to be “the ‘Arctic in one nation’ due to its extensive use as a stand-in for various Arctic locations – urban as well as rural” (Grønlund 2022a, 212).

In the same article, I have dealt with the problem of runaway from another angle – or rather, from an extra link in the 'runaway' chain. While the runaway literature most often discuss where productions run *from* and where productions *run* to, there are also places that are completely avoided. For instance, if a Hollywood production shoots a film set in the French Alps in Canada, it is by definition an American runaway to Canada. But in the same equation, there is France, which – in the same way as Hollywood – has missed out on a production. Thus, I have argued that even though the terminology is loaded with pejorative charges from dissatisfied unions in 1950s Hollywood, the idea of runaway productions seems quite illustrative to the 'loss' of local foreign productions for the productions 'in between' (ibid.).

In this allegory of running away and avoiding, nations and communities lose not only the benefits of funds and professionalisation, but also the opportunity to present their own 'real' places and landscapes instead of a foreign creation of plausible places. The attention is taken beyond economy and plausibility and towards discussions of ethical and representational issues, where “runaway productions and choices of location must be seen in the light of more than mere practicalities” (ibid.). Runaway also becomes a delicate subject, where questions of culture, identity, power, and cultural imperialism enter – especially if the places in question have been subject to historical misrepresentation.

To succeed in attracting foreign production, the key words seem to be *sustainability* in terms of *flow of production*. According to Lukinbeal, the fundamental requirement consists of two elements: “For a regional and international production center to capture and attempt to retain a portion of Hollywood's 'variable flow of production' they must have available studio space and a skilled 'below the line' labor pool.” (Lukinbeal 2006, 341). As such, building a professionalised and specialised labour pool of film workers is not sufficient; studio space, availability, and additional film infrastructure are equally essential. Similarly, attractive locations and spectacular landscapes – such as New Zealand as Middle Earth – can create a temporary production boom but require additional developments to not only secure sustainability in terms of production flow, but to avoid losing the development and flow of a national cinema.

## Place branding and location-based industries

With both artificial and natural economic runaways, location can be described as a currency for the production companies involved. At the same time, there are local film funds, regions, and tourist organisations that can contribute with finances, locations and, not least, joint efforts in relation to marketing the films. For the local actors – such as municipalities, city councils, local businesses or the like – it is about creating economic growth and thus exposure and *branding* of the places in question (Østergaard and Waade 2016, 211). In this way, location contains *production value* as a practical concept widely used but ill defined. According to Waade (2013, 100), production value can be understood as the combination of economic/practical and artistic/aesthetic values in mutual benefit which together ensure market impact. A production value can thus be used strategically in terms of production, collaborations, and marketing. In screen contexts, the concept can be classified in the sense that a given production has *high* production value and is thus deemed to have a good chance of achieving media attention and attracting a large audience (Waade 2013, 100–101). A location can similarly have production value if it is deemed to have high potential for success – especially if it is also low cost and accessible.

An industry which is closely related to location-work is that of tourism, where a concept such as *film-induced tourism* (Beeton 2016) is widely used to describe the tendency of ‘following in the footsteps’ of famous movies and their locations – no matter if these are doubled or imaginary such as New Zealand or iconic studios such as Universal in Los Angeles. In recent years, this tendency of media-induced tourism has spread to the television series – for instance with the rise of Nordic noir and the following fascination with Scandinavia (Hansen and Waade 2017, 279; Waade 2020b).

While screen tourism literature is generally focused on audiences, the tourism aspect can be transferred to the production and pre-production phase. For instance, Emiel Martens (2018) has studied the history of film and tourism in Jamaica. While there has naturally been a general interest in attracting tourists to the Caribbean island, film history also includes examples of film productions staying additional periods of time. In as early as the 1910s, Jamaica experienced the first instances of this type of tourism:

For the first time in Jamaica’s film history, the local business elites explicitly aimed to seize the potential associated with hosting a film production. As such, the production marked an early instance of the idea of location filming as a form of business tourism, with film producers

being addressed as long-stay visitors. Local entrepreneurs tried to create such a pleasurable experience for the members of [production company] the Terriss Company so that they and other film companies would be persuaded to shoot more moving pictures on the island. (Martens 2018, 200)

In this way, the ‘host’ function of film production was a key incentive in what became business tourism. According to Ward and O’Reagan (2009, 214), the film-induced tourism approach is a somewhat limited way of perceiving the relationship between screen production, tourism, and, place. Instead, film production can be seen as a yet another tourism business segment. Then, tourist boards and film commissions can refer to film production in a certain location as

a form of working holiday to a destination that was already a significant tourist destination. Tourism management and planning were here responding to the film producer as a long-stay business tourist, and film production itself as potentially another event to be managed and catered for. In this case, destination branding as a production location was closely tied to its pre-existing identity as a premier tourist destination. (Ward and O’Regan 2009, 218)

However, as Marten’s studies on Jamaica show, the tendency is far from new. It is thus also interesting to examine how a nation, city, or community and its actors conceive and market the production part itself as a tourism opportunity, and not only how they conceive future opportunities related to a possible growing tourism as a *result* of the productions.

As such, these issues evolve around the concept of *place brand*; the (perceived, constructed, or desired) identity of the place:

In a nutshell, the term “place brand” refers to the defined DNA of a place, that is, its unique, distinctive character, marked by what we perceive as its personality and identity. It is at the same time a promise and a shared idea that brings persons and organizations with an interest in the place together, guiding discussions around what makes—or should make—their city, region, destination, or country special and unique. (Kaefer 2021, 7)



As a result, *place branding* refers to how a place brand is marketed in for example media. As with any type of branding – which usually encourages simplicity and uniformity in the identity a company exudes – it requires a certain amount of essentialism. Place (or destination) branding is thus based on the idea that a place is marketed through “one-way communication emphasising a few, selected aspects of the place. Such identities could be a scenic landscape, a special culture, and/or the mere existence of excellent skiing conditions” (Ren and Blichfeldt 2011, 431).

In relation to Greenland, a re-branding process has been underway in connection with the dismantling of the relationship with Denmark, where Greenland has been seen in a subordinate position: “The goal is the establishment of an independent nation-state, and the chapter investigates how, in order to reach this goal, postcolonial Greenland is turning itself into a modern nation-as-investment destination, a ‘Brand New Greenland’” (Thisted 2022, 38). Thisted builds this on Ravinder Kaur’s (2020) term *brand new nation* that demonstrates how the modern nation increasingly markets itself as an *investment destination* with nations today actively compete for investment by offering favourable business conditions and creating an attractive investment environment; “Thus, twentieth-century *nation building* is increasingly being replaced by twenty-first-century *nation branding*” (Kaur 2020, 10). This shift in focus means that economic factors play a central role in national development and governance. Kaur (2020, 13) explains, how the brand new nation has been transformed and presented as a commercial ‘enclosure’ for capital through the combination of free markets, state control, and “the spectacular imagination of utopian dreamworlds in capitalist design”:

This form emerged from an ongoing historical shift – the capitalist transformation of the nation-state wherein the logic of capital is the glue holding the nation and state together. The nation in this scheme is imagined as a vast enclosure of production, its territory a reserve of untapped natural resources, its population potential producers/consumers of goods and services, and its cultural essence a unique nation brand that distinguishes it from other investment destinations. All of these can be capitalized (transformed) into income-generating assets. The state is the authority that manages the income-generating capacity of the national enclosure and holds the power to visualize, brand, legislate, and spatially rearrange the national enclosure as a market-ready investment destination.

(Kaur 2020, 13)

As Thisted (2022, 46) underlines, the Greenlandic development since 2009 corresponds strongly to the brand new nation theory, where the nation-state is transformed into a nation-as-investment destination; for postcolonial nations, the idea of the nation as a commercial brand is compelling as it promises to cleanse the nation of the shame of colonial oppression. The new nation wants to present positive images to the global public and ignore or suppress negative images potentially damaging the brand value (ibid.). In the case of Greenland, Thisted exemplifies through various cases, how the nation – e.g., through the slogan ‘Pioneering Nation’ – has inscribed itself precisely in this discourse; in this case, “to maintain Greenland as an exotic locality, with a tough and resilient population that honors their roots in the millenniumold hunting culture while at the same time navigating the modern world” (Thisted 2020, 46). Thus, place (re-)branding is already ongoing in Greenland by capitalising on its unique geographical location and natural resources presenting itself as an attractive destination for investment in areas such as mining, energy, and tourism.

To sum up, a wide range of national or regional industries are primarily a result of their spatial features – features that can be branded and otherwise used to attract foreign production or broader community benefits such as employment and income. In many cases, screen industries or cinemas “that are at points of emergence seem particularly predisposed to a variety of spatial manoeuvres” (Kapse 2014, 20) often resulting in Kaur’s ‘brand new nation’. In some cases, I argue, the destination and location are the very foundation for the establishment of an actual screen industry. These can then be described as *location-based screen industries*, where the status as a destination for early foreign production has been a catalyst for the creation of local screen production or national cinema rather than, for example, a national film production having been established first.

Based on this chapter, I have thus created a comprehensive and innovative theoretical foundation for the work with ultrasmall screen industries, which at the same time has defined and illustrated specific conditions in Greenland. In the next chapter, I will describe how my methodological approach has been characterised by an explorative approach rooted in existing literature on production and location studies, qualitative methods and industry history.

# Chapter 3:

Methodology

In this chapter, I present my research strategy which embeds three case studies within the overarching methodology of location-driven production studies. Early on, I recognised a lack of research on Greenland film from industry, production, and policy viewpoints. This led me to also include a historical chapter as a contextual understanding of the contemporary screen culture. In the following, I will present my qualitative research approach, starting by addressing the challenge of studying Greenland from a Danish point of view. Then I will introduce the case study methodology and my location-driven production study which integrates interviews, fieldwork, and document analysis. Lastly, I outline my strategy for investigating the industry's history using digital tools.

## Positioning

As a “field of inquiry” (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, 3), qualitative research is inherently multimethod with the researcher as a key ‘tool’ in preparation, collection, and analysis. According to Klaus Bruhn Jensen (2020, 287-288), qualitative research in media and communication studies has three common denominators: First, qualitative research centres around *meaning* as it is both studied and used for explanation; People interpret their daily lives and extraordinary events using communication technologies built with inherent meaning, and researchers interpret these interpretations. Second, qualitative research highlights the importance of exploring communication in its *naturalistic contexts*; This involves a range of approaches to gaining an understanding of local people's perspectives on their reality and necessitate sampling of e.g. cultures, places, informants, time periods, and practices. Thirdly, researchers are seen as *interpretive subjects* distinguished by the fact that interpretation permeates the entire research process; “in the prototypical qualitative study, interpretation is an activity crisscrossing different stages and levels of inquiry, and which typically one scholar undertakes on a continuous basis” (Jensen 2020, 288). Thus, the researcher's position *within* the qualitative research is decisive for the knowledge that is produced – both by virtue of the research design, the context and, not least, the individual. Therefore, I start by positioning myself within the study, more specifically in relation to being a Dane conducting Greenland-related research.

In relation to issues of the Greenlandic-Danish, I regard myself as indisputably Danish. Born in Sweden to Danish parents in 1994, moving back to Denmark in 1997, where I grew up, I identify as and am considered to be Danish. Accordingly, I indisputably occupy an

outsider position – not only as non-Indigenous, but also as non-Greenlander and non-filmmaker. I thus argue to be positioned as a *double outsider* with the challenges (and opportunities) that come with it.<sup>12</sup> In this position lies a reckoning with the research practices and history that have existed in Greenland since colonisation. Issues of researcher positionality and personal relation to the subject – being insider, outsider, or in-between – has become still more discussed, e.g. in relation to researcher-researched dynamics in a research field caught in multiple colonial entanglements and shared histories. As argued by Naja Dyrendom Graugaard (2020, 47), “researching in the Arctic cannot entirely avoid its coloniality, no matter which position(s) in the (complex) relations between colonizer and colonized one might find oneself”.

The Greenlandic researcher Naja Carina Steenholdt (in Højsgaard 2020) identifies four main types of researchers coming to Greenland: the Danish, the Danish-Greenlandic, the Greenlandic, and the foreign. Among these, Steenholdt finds that Greenlanders will have the most scepticism towards the Danish researchers. As Steenholdt argues, the role of a Danish researcher in Greenland is affected by both (cross)cultural, linguistic, and postcolonial relations. In this way, certain (cultural and emotional) factors ‘stick’ to the researcher, since these are linked to the factors that already characterise the outsider position.

Stine Agnete Sand (2023) has recently discussed decolonisation, positioning, and freedom of speech in a Norwegian-Sámi context, addressing important issues of non-Indigenous scholarship and how the role of the researcher is increasingly discussed in Arctic research (and globally). As Sand argues, this discussion is not unproblematic, and there is an increasing need to discuss how different perspectives (Indigenous, non-Indigenous, or in-betweeners) can complement, rather than replace, each other. As Sand asks: “What role can, or should, a non-Indigenous researcher have in the on-going processes of decolonization, knowledge building and -exchange in a cross-cultural context?” (Sand 2023, 3).

This question is difficult to answer, not the least in a Greenlandic context where the discussions came relatively late compared to e.g. discussing the importance of Indigenous knowledge research in Canada or Alaska (Sejersen 2004, 33). However, as argued by Anne Merrild Hansen and Carina Ren (2020a) in a recent anthology on collaborative research

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<sup>12</sup> A similar use of the double outsider position has been used by Louise Folkes (2018, 49): “As an English researcher working within a Welsh suburb, where I do not reside, I argue that I am positioned as a ‘double outsider’, and that this influences participants’ responses to me, and the ways in which they construct insider/outsider boundaries”. In doing so, it touches on similar geographical and postcolonial relations that together create the dual position.

methods in the Arctic, discussions about positionality and community involvement have intensified in recent years in Greenland, where a growing interest has made the research field popular, leading to new literature on e.g. collaborative research methods to ensure “that the knowledge is locally anchored and consolidated, but also that it can contribute to the raising of competences allowing nations and peoples to benefit from research activities and knowledge co-production” (Hansen and Ren 2020b, 2).

In this regard, one of the factors often discussed is hit-and-run research which can be described as:

a fly-in/fly-out data extraction with little or no consolidation in the local or surrounding communities. In particular, hit-and-run research describes a nonreciprocal process of knowledge production which benefits the incoming scientist while neither exchanging with, reporting to, nor “paying back” locals or Greenland as a whole.

(Graugaard 2020, 35)

As Graugaard (2020, 36) explains, this is not a new tendency; a legacy of research in Greenland has been undertaken by outsiders studying the Arctic and Inuit ways entangled with mission, trade, exploration, and exploitation funded by the Danish state. Western researchers had unlimited access to Arctic societies and turned indigenous peoples into (forced) research objects. According to Graugaard this means that “undertaking research in Kalaallit communities cannot avoid being associated with European (particularly Danish) imperialism and colonialism” (2020, 36).

In this project, the issue of positioning has thus been how to best construct a project that – within the possibilities of a PhD framework – consider these issues. Positioning is an intrinsic part of researching in these contexts, necessitating ongoing reflection on how positionality affects factors such as access, interviews, interpretations, privileges, and critical distance. Not least, this requires an understanding of the context and the history in which the researcher operates.

## **Case study research**

This dissertation is primarily based on qualitative case studies. As defined by John Gerring (2007, 19), a *case* “connotes a spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point of time or over some period of time” determined by the type of phenomenon studied,

whether this is a nation-state or an individual, working within spatial and/or temporal boundaries. According to Robert K. Yin's two-fold definition, a case study is an empirical method that:

- 1 investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in depth and within its real-world context, especially when
- 2 the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident

(Yin 2018, 15)

As such, a case study aims at investigating a single phenomenon or specific event within its natural context (rather than experimentally designed), emphasising the importance of a broad range of data through multiple sources of evidence such as interviews, observations, and document analysis and thus triangulation of data. According to Yin (2018, 8-11), case studies – as every research method – can be *explorative* (focusing on exploring unknown aspects to develop hypotheses or theory), *descriptive* (describing a phenomenon without necessarily explaining it), or *explanatory* (explaining and analysing a case often based on pre-existing theory or concept).

While Yin emphasises the significance of case studies as a research method, Robert E. Stake (2005, 443) argues that they are not 'essentially qualitative' or a method as such, but instead delimited by the case itself. To create a distinction, Stake (2005, 445-446) then identifies three types of case studies: the *intrinsic*, *instrumental*, and *collective*. In intrinsic case studies, the aim is to create a deep understanding of a single case and its uniqueness rather than its generalisability. In the instrumental case study, the focus is towards problem-solving or theory-building, and the case is limited to one more second function – an instrument – to achieve this. Lastly, the collective case study examines variations between cases, which again puts the cases at the centre, but uses the comparative element to create a general understanding of a phenomenon.

None of the above categorisations are finite but can be used simultaneously and to varying degrees. Overall, the case study involves delineating and analysing a part of reality based on a theoretical approach and data collection and thus choosing a specific research area and approach that can vary in methods. As argued by Stake (2005, 447), case studies should focus on the *particular* rather than the ordinary, consequently prioritising the unusual in each case when focusing on various elements including the nature of the case, history, physical setting,

contextual factors, relationship to other cases, and informants that can contribute to the understanding of the case.

Based on the above, my approach to the case study places it across multiple levels, but within a “contextual orientation of qualitative research” (Jensen 2020, 290) where contexts vary from micro-perspectives on single informants to macro-perspectives with national or cultural influences. Similar to other studies of screen industries – e.g. Sand's dissertation on regional Norwegian screen business (Sand 2017, 55) – I thus work across the explorative, descriptive, and explanatory case study. This way, the three-year process has gone from an explorative phase created by the very limited literature on industry history and policies to a descriptive presentation of industry structures and production processes resulting in explaining parts of these processes based on the knowledge generated and in comparison with similar production contexts.

I hence employ an iterative approach to explore the Greenlandic screen industry, weaving historical analysis with intrinsic and collective approaches in the examination of three distinct case studies. These case studies analyse individual and shared characteristics of contemporary screen productions, paying attention to the nuances that define the ultrasmall screen industry. Delving into specific productions, it offers insights into the roles of different production companies and key individuals in this unique ultrasmall context. This investigation is complemented by a comparative analysis presented in Chapter 9, which situates Greenland within a broader landscape of ultrasmall screen industries, thus navigating between macro and micro perspectives, aiming to foster a theoretical discourse around the concept of ‘ultrasmallness’ while highlighting the contemporary nuances of screen production in Greenland, with a particular focus on the utilisation and significance of location.

## Case selection

In terms of case selection, a main criterion was that production should take place primarily in Greenland which precluded other contemporary Greenland-set productions such as the Danish/Icelandic feature film *Against the Ice* (Peter Flindt, 2022) or the Swedish/Icelandic television serial *Tunn is* (*Thin Ice*, 2020), both primarily shot in Iceland to double Greenland (Grønlund 2022a). Another criterion was that the cases should be longer formats understood as feature films and television series and further classified as fiction, understood as a *mode of production*: “a network of funding, filming, postproduction, and exhibition tendencies



common to work normally indexed as 'documentary'". Therefore, choosing fiction formats is to approach an (often) more demanding and complex mode of production, where the demands on the 'host industry' are generally higher and thus test its capacities in the broadest sense. In addition, the possibilities of location are broadest in fiction; whether it is Greenland used as fantasy landscapes or for doubling other locations such as Antarctica. However, as explain in the introduction to the registrant (Appendix 2), I have included documentaries in the historical chapters (4 and 5) due to the historical importance of documentary formats, especially in the early history of expedition and ethnographic film.

For these reasons, I have chosen three cases that in different ways – and to varying degrees – involve Greenland: *Alanngut Killिंगanni* (Malik Kleist, 2022), *Kalake* (Isabella Eklöf, 2023) and *Borgen: Power & Glory* (2022). These cases can be seen as representing three key production modes of the Greenlandic screen industry: the local, intimate production (*Alanngut Killिंगanni*), the international co-production (*Kalake*), and the largescale high end television production (*Borgen: Power & Glory*). The ambition was to uncover different approaches to screen production in and about Greenland marked by different perspectives, budgets, and experiences with one common condition shaping the possibilities, stories, and aesthetics: Greenland as location. My sampling thus appears as *convenience sampling* as I studied what was “most easily available” (Jensen 2020, 291) at the project time. At the same time, I have also worked within a site and format constraint, where my cases have been the only ones that roughly fit within my project time. In this way, my convenience sampling is also a ‘possibility sampling’ limited by the size of the field.

## **From production to location study**

Production studies encompass a wide area of research. For instance, Miranda J. Banks (2014, 120) describes it as being rooted in the belief that a distinct relationship exists between a media artefact, its production process, the originating industry, and the governing policies and socio-economic backdrop during its creation. In adopting this comprehensive methodology for this dissertation, I align with the growing amount of media studies that emphasizes the creators – or 'senders' – of media and the mechanisms of their craft. As Mads M. T. Andersen (2022, 45) notes, the scope of this approach is vast, and “the media in question can be all kinds of media and the methods used for

production studies are often interviews and participant observations [...] policy analysis, historical analysis, or document analysis”.

Within production studies, several researchers underline the importance of spatial dimensions following the assumption that the:

specific geographic location of a production work space dramatically affects – and perhaps even determines – the possibilities for which practitioners will be involved in a project, the processes of production, and what kind of television can be made [...] [involving both] geographic place (at the level of nation, state, region, city) and an extremely localized understanding of a specific space (district, studio, sound stage)

(Banks 2014, 121)

This geographical awareness has been demonstrated by several production researchers, who have examined the geographical particularities that characterise different central or peripheral production sites as both national and runaway production (Mayer et al. 2009; Flynn 2016; Tinic 2016; Palmer 2016; Agger 2017; Gleich 2018; Mikos 2020).

One of the major contributions in this branch of production studies is that of *location studies* mentioned in the previous chapter. Developed by Kim Toft Hansen and Anne Marit Waade (2017; 2019), the approach offers a general model for studying locations in film and TV by a dual analysis of on- and off-screen elements. To do so, Hansen and Waade uses a:

cultural-industrial model for studying production culture in film and television productions, location studies encompass very similar empirical material, but rather than focusing on production culture in general (as Caldwell does), location studies include documents, personnel and rituals which relate specifically to the decisions about locations.

(Hansen and Waade 2017, 55)

Location studies thus take point of departure in John Thornton Caldwell’s diverse methodological basis focusing on interviews, observations, economic data, promotional material, and (industry) documents, some of which are described as ‘deep texts’ at three levels: 1) publicly disclosed deep texts (for explicit public consumption such as behind-the-scene material, screened Q&A’s, or online videos); 2) semi-embedded deep texts (with ancillary public viewing such as internal panels, activities, and messages often on an industry

level); and 3) fully embedded deep texts (for bounded professional exchanges such as demo tapes, organisation newsletters, workshops, equipment iconography) (Caldwell 2008, 347).

In location studies, these layers of data are supplemented by two additional layers of material through the productions themselves and the geographical places and settings which according to Hansen and Waade, ultimately result in a six-layered analysis:

1) content analyses of television dramas (mapping, tallying and comparing locations and settings on-screen), (2) close readings of television dramas (the various functions of locations and settings represented on-screen), (3) empirical drama production studies (sites of production including interview material and deep texts), (4) empirical analyses of physical locations (geographical places including city brand managers), (5) analyses of policy and funding practices (policies of place including local authorities and funding bodies), and (6) analyses of media destination branding (place as destination including online tourist material).

(Hansen and Waade 2017, 60)

The two first levels engage with on-screen dimensions, while the following attention on off-screen elements supplements production studies with location studies' contextual focuses around, for example, art history and, not least, tourism. Locations are thus:

marked by different practical, aesthetic, commercial and political interests that influence the productions as a creative practice [...] [and] influenced by the financial composition of the productions as well as the practical assistance a production crew may get from local practitioners who aim to attract film or television productions to local areas but have their own interests and place branding strategies.

(Hansen and Waade 2019, 114–15)

In their approach, Hansen and Waade move from on-screen to off-screen analyses. The off-screen factors indicate the broad empirical approach related to place, as Hansen and Waade exemplify with several factors influencing the choice of location (table 2):

Sites of production	Place as destination
Producers, line producers, executives Location managers/scouts Local, distant, or foreign location Production designers Cinematographers Set designers Other production personnel	Online presentational material Film tourism operators Film tourists Tourist managers Ordinary tourists Potential analyses and reports
Geographical place	Policies of place
City development managers City brand managers Citizens: ordinary people and audiences Local topography Extra material from city/region	Policymakers and politicians Online material from policy agencies Commissioners and commissioning agencies Access to policy documents Official policy documents and policy presentations

Table 2: Off-screen factors influencing location (based on and cited from Hansen and Waade 2017, 57).

Based on this, I position this dissertation as a *location-based production study*, where I use place and location as the primary analytical lenses and, not least, the focal point of my data collection, but with an emphasis on off-screen elements. In doing so, I partially deviate from location studies' focus on textual analysis and art history, among other things. At the same time, I wish to broaden the approach described above by approaching Greenlandic film history from the perspective of location, ranging from concrete productions to policies, hereby anchoring the overall analysis in questions around location.

Because of the considerations above, my methodological approach can be regarded as rather broad and, due to the limited existing research, also explorative in terms of gathering knowledge. I have conducted 20 interviews (see overview in Appendix 7) with film workers involved in my cases, participated in industry events, observed shootings in Greenland, compiled a registrant to create an overview of feature film and TV series productions made in Greenland (Appendix 2), received hundreds of pages of documents from the film industry association Film.gl (Appendix 3) and a large amount of data for my cases, including, for example, scripts, production plans, production design, project dossiers, and research material (Appendix 4-6).<sup>13</sup> In addition, I have conducted a comprehensive review of the Greenlandic newspaper *Atuagagdagdliutit/Gronlandsposten* from 1952-1999; reviewed political speeches in the Greenlandic and Danish parliaments on film discussions; reviewed the Greenlandic

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<sup>13</sup> I will present and discuss the specifics of the data in the respective case study chapters.

finance bills to follow developments in film policy; and reviewed various reports. In this way, I have attempted to describe both a film history and a contemporary screen industry that has not previously been described from the perspective of film policy or industry formation, making the explorative, location-based approach a particularly fruitful method. Before I dive into the specific approaches to the primary methods, there are, however, several challenges in the production and location study that need to be addressed, especially around *access*, time and *timing*.

## **Access, time, and timing**

Access is key in production studies (Bruun and Frandsen 2017; 2022). Getting access to research specific productions requires (good) contact with the different types of gatekeepers and either formal or informal agreements about access to specific locations and production processes or data. Establishing trusting relationships with the stakeholders involved is crucial, as this allows researchers to follow processes closely and gain insight into the often-hidden aspects of media production. However, these negotiations can be challenging for researchers, especially if they face scepticism or resistance from the organisation or industry professionals.

Based on my place-based approach, I needed access to the Greenlandic film industry, but also to the Danish, as two of the three case studies are formally Danish-led. My approach to gain access to the two production cultures has been quite different. When reaching out to the Danish companies – both SAM Productions and Manna Film – my supervisor Eva Novrup Redvall's contacts were indispensable as she knew the two producers Stine Kjeldgaard (*Borgen: Power & Glory*) and Maria Møller Kjeldgaard (*Kalak*) prior to the project. Her network and reputation thus acted as a kind of 'guarantee' for me as a researcher and the project itself to certain informants. The producers gave me access to crew lists and other information (including contact details), which I used to contact relevant production members.

In terms of access to Greenlandic filmmakers, I focused on establishing contact from the very start. I contacted several Greenlandic film professionals, a company (Ánorák Film) and an organisation (Film.gl) *prior* already when writing the PhD application that forms the basis of this dissertation since I had to be able to illustrate the project's feasibility, and in both cases my contact with the Greenlandic filmmakers was a precondition; no Greenlandic interest, no project. Fortunately, I received only positive feedback about the project idea,

with signed expressions of interest from several Greenlandic film professionals who have since then contributed to the project. This initial reassurance was crucial in showing that there was in fact Greenlandic interest in Danish research on filmmaking in Greenland.

The next important step in my relationship with the Greenlandic screen industry was around the release of the *Kosmorama* issue which I edited and wrote in 2021 (Grønlund 2021a). In research projects, the 'payback' is often at the *end* of the process, when the dissertation is handed in, which can then be presented to or circulated among informants. Considering the issue of hit-and-run research, I wanted a publication to present at the *beginning* of my project, but one where I was not the primary voice. Instead, I made an interview-based journal issue, where four out of five articles were long interviews with Greenlandic filmmakers. This proved effective, as I received both important and lengthy data for my dissertation, made the project visible, gained a 'calling card' to future interviews, and 'gave back' to the community through publicity.<sup>14</sup> This approach to conducting production studies of this nature – especially as an outsider and young researcher – I refer to as *dialogue driven* interviews<sup>15</sup> where the triple function as both access, 'giveback', and data works as a way to create a more equal relationship between researcher and informants, and a greater confidence in the usefulness of researchers beyond the more traditional academic contributions.

When engaging in production studies, time and timing is of paramount importance (Ryfe 2016; Bruun and Frandsen 2017; 2022; Andersen 2022, 50–51). As Bruun and Frandsen (2022, 92) explain, media organisations are influenced by political, economic, technological, and cultural conditions, which can determine whether researchers gain access. Changes in context make it harder for researchers to conduct time-consuming studies, and great changes give producers less time to help researchers and may cause reluctance to give access, especially in times of crisis – such as Covid-19. My case selection was linked directly to timing and possibility sampling, which was challenged by Covid-19 and constant postponements of production, influencing the performative aspect of timing, where “the researcher’s temporality should be aligned with the relevant, temporal patterns that characterise the

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<sup>14</sup> *Kosmorama* is DFI’s peer reviewed film journal published since 1954 which is now digital and open access (Kosmorama n.d.).

<sup>15</sup> This approach to interview-based releases is far from new, but has been done before my edition in *Kosmorama* (Thorsen and Redvall 2020) and in Danish (Hjort et al. 2014) and Greenlandic film research (Thorsen and Péronard 2021) in general. This is also a growing trend in Indigenous research in general (e.g. Turner 2022). My contribution is more specifically the usefulness of the approach in production studies in terms of facilitating access, especially as an (double) outsider.

production environments” (Brrun & Frandsen 2022, 92). This meant that my research plan was continuously reassessed in line with developments in both society and the actual productions.

A solution to time and timing was the use of what Andersen (2022, 47) describes as working *forwards* and *backwards*:

When doing a production study forwards, we are studying a particular production in situ as it is happening. [...] [While backwards] means that we can draw on retrospective data and sources that contain a valuable knowledge about a particular production’s history, events and details.

In all cases, I have focused on a broad data collection to gain a better insight into the non-observable processes through interviews, documents and other deep texts collected at various stages of the processes. The different temporalities present advantages as well as disadvantages (Pilegaard 2022, 206–7). One of the advantages of the retrospective position is that the interviewees may have undergone a process of reflection and might be more willing to share insights, as they are not subject to the same pressure or uncertainty about a process they are in the middle of. Nevertheless, the conditions of this project meant that the mixture of looking forwards and backwards has been an effective way of assembling a 'mosaic' of the processes via the broad data collection.

However, it is not necessarily an advantage to have access to a large– and potentially overwhelming – amount of data. Svend Brinkmann and Lene Tanggaard (2020, 36–37) discuss how an individual research project normally consists of 10-20 informants, but that it is very much about reaching a 'saturation point' – e.g. when interviewees repeat themselves across interviews – just as it can be a strategic considering what can be done within a certain timeframe. As Hansen (2018, 195–96) mentions in connection to production studies more generally, it is difficult to determine when you have collected enough data. It is crucial to have an overview of the desired data, while at the same time maintaining an openness to new, interesting information.

As described by Miranda Banks et al. (2015, xi), the successful production study is “is marked more by depth than by breadth”. In this project, I faced the challenge of deciding how much data to collect. I decided to be open to new aspects, which led me to research the historical background further and keep an explorative approach to interviews. As a result of

this approach, I ended up with a large amount of data, with more than 24 hours of interviews, thousands of pages of documents, a great variation in the amount of data for the individual cases. Because of this, I chose to opt out of a primary case along the way and give it a more comparative function (see Chapter 6), while other data was excluded, if it was not directly related to the research questions. While I thus began with a broad, explorative approach to data collection and later narrowed the data down, this time-consuming process was necessary due to the initial lack of comparative studies and knowledge in the field to guide a clear delineation from the outset.

## Choosing informants and conducting interviews

My main method has been the qualitative interview, in particular the approach described by Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann (2015) and later developed by Brinkmann and Lene Tanggaard (2020).<sup>16</sup> In this understanding, an interview is not just a conversation; it is a research tool to understand the *lifeworld* of the subject (the interviewee) aiming to reveal themes from the interviewee's everyday life from their own subjective understanding. This is done in an interpersonal interaction where questions are asked to uncover what the interviewee knows and how they feel about specific topics – all through the social construction that occurs between interviewer and interviewee shaped by various discourses, power relations, and ideologies (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015, 19–21). As such, interview knowledge is characterised by seven main features: being *produced*, *relational*, *conversational*, *contextual*, *linguistic*, *narrative*, and *pragmatic* which influence all levels of the interview-based research project (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015, 83–86).

In interviews, *who* you interview is crucial, and a natural part of the research design is to select and delimit. It is about previously presented dimensions of time, while selection is also characterised by access (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015, 164–67). I have made interviews for all case studies, just as I have made more general industry interviews. All 20 interviews (with 19 interviewees) have been with what Hanne Bruun (2014; 2016) calls *exclusive informants*. Rather than using a term such as ‘elite’ informant, exclusive informants coin the purpose of production studies delving into the hidden processes ‘backstage’ of screen production; Within this field, there are individuals with *exclusive* insights that are indispensable to the study

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<sup>16</sup> This section has greatly benefited from my participation in the Qualitative Methods 2020 course organised by Brinkmann and Tanggaard at Aalborg University.



(Bruun 2016, 134–35). *Cold calling* (Thomas 1993) can be a frustrating experience in production studies (Bruun 2016, 137). In addition, being sceptic to the information from interviews is key as researchers might be given *scripted answers* – “the coded and inflected nature of overt practitioner explanations” (Caldwell 2008, 346) – which is why the researcher, instead of seeing their data as indisputable reality, has to always be aware how informants want to *present* and *frame* themselves (Hansen 2018, 196).

As describes in more detail in case chapters, the selection of the individual participants was characterised by an initial access – usually to the producers. On *Borgen: Power & Glory*, they gave me an overview of crew members to contact, while in the case of *Kalak* in particular, it was my presence on set that gave an indication the most important people to contact when researching a particular location. As Waade (2013, 60) has argued, the producer is often key to exploring ideas and decisions around location use, while more obvious people – such as location scouts or managers – may not necessarily be able to explain the concepts or notions behind their work. Similarly, I have found that the producers of all the cases have offered the most valuable knowledge on aspects of location, not only from a production and financial perspective, but also from an aesthetic perspective, as they often engage in close discussions with screenwriters, directors, or production designers about the selection of locations precisely in the schism between the desired aesthetics and what is in fact possible.

All my interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015; Tanggaard and Brinkmann 2020a, 42–47) with interview guides prepared for each informant, based on Kvale and Brinkmann's (2015, 156–57) seven phases for an interview study: *Thematisation, design, interview, transcription, analysis, verification, and reporting*. All interview guides were shaped around basic themes such as *background information* (especially for Greenlandic filmmakers), *case and function, location work and value, collaboration, experiences with the Greenlandic film industry*, and *thoughts on the future*, that relate to the research questions and the presented theoretical approach (see table 3).

There were large variations in the interviews. One interview with a screenwriter focused more on development than on-location work, while other more industry-oriented interviews (e.g. with Film.gl's chairman) focused more on film policy and the industry in general. The focus was on around 20 basic questions with the option of elaborating and exemplifying questions. I then asked broad questions to create an opening for informants to speak from their own experience, probed for clarification, and took notes of meaningful junctures in the

informant's answers, which I could return to when appropriate to create space for a narrative grounded in the informant's experience (Galletta and Cross 2013, 46–47).

Themes	Description	Purposes
<b>Background</b>	This theme revolves around gathering background information on the interview subjects, particularly those who are filmmakers from Greenland.	To understand their personal and professional histories, including their education, early influences, career trajectory, and other experiences that shape their perspectives and approaches to filmmaking (in Greenland) and offer knowledge about the current industry.
<b>Case and function</b>	This theme might pertain to discussing specific cases or projects that the interviewees have worked with and understanding their roles or functions in those cases. This includes how and why cases occurred.	To gain insights into the workings of specific projects and the roles individuals played in them, potentially shedding light on the broader industry dynamics, why projects arise, and how they evolve.
<b>Location work and value</b>	The focus is on exploring the practical aspects of filmmaking, including development, location scouting, shooting, and the value that different locations bring to a production.	To understand the considerations and processes involved in selecting and working on various locations, the consequences of location, and how they can add value to the production from both artistic and economic perspectives.
<b>Collaboration</b>	This theme seeks to explore the nature of collaborations in the Greenlandic film industry, including partnerships and levels of participation between different stakeholders such as producers, directors, and other crew members.	To understand how collaborations function in the industry, the dynamics of working relationships, and the synergies created through collaborative efforts based on the CEL model.
<b>The GL screen industry</b>	Informants share their personal experiences of working in the Greenlandic film industry, including the opportunities and challenges they have encountered.	To paint a picture of the current state of the Greenlandic film industry through firsthand accounts, helping to identify both strengths and areas for improvement.
<b>The future</b>	This theme encompasses the informant's perspectives on the potential future developments in the Greenlandic film industry, including their hopes, predictions, and advice.	To gather forward-looking insights and opinions that could guide future policy and educational efforts, also potentially providing new insights into thinking about the industry in general and its lifecycle.

Table 3: Themes shaping the interview guide.

The purpose of the interview guide was thus to inform the semi-structured conversations rather than to set precise questions. While I wanted to cover a wide range of topics, it was important to adapt to each informant's expertise and comfort zone in relation to special clauses and internal conflict. While there are arguments for standardised questions to achieve consistent data, I see the value in adapting language and phrasing based on the informant's context. This is particularly relevant in second language interviews or with non-professionals where clarity and shared understanding is crucial. This is very much the case in trans-cultural interviews where there may be differences in the use of words, gestures, and cultural norms (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015, 198–99). I conducted all interviews – including with Greenlandic filmmakers – in Danish, as all participants spoke Danish fluently.

In line with the discussion of positionality, my status as a Dane was significant. Many Greenlandic informants clearly answered me as a Dane, often explaining the cultural differences and 'how Greenlanders are'. I did not experience resistance, but often a sense of joy that I was showing interest. I also experienced a general openness where personal, private matters were quickly shared. As such, it was very much about guiding the narrative back to the research objective, despite the importance of these personal stories for the informant. For some, it was also clear how I appeared as an opportunity to address, for example, the DFI, where lack of Danish funding was criticised, even though that was not part of my questions.

The Danish interviews were similarly characterised by positionality, and I experienced a great openness to talk about experiences in the Greenlandic collaborations – either on tape or afterwards. This might have been more subdued if a Greenlandic Indigenous scholar had conducted the interview. However, these interviews were more like elite interviews with the Danish informants being more experienced in interviewing – also in terms of scripted answers – while I was as an outsider, in this case, as a non-film professional.

It is worth mentioning, that factual information from interviews about dates, participants, or productions were not always correct, whether intended or not. As argued by Jensen (2020, 292), “interview statements are action in a context” influenced by the interaction between the two parties:

Interview discourses are, in a strong sense of the word, ‘data.’ They become sources of information through analysis and of meaning through interpretation [...] For one thing, interview studies ask people to put into discourse certain ideas and notions that otherwise may remain unarticulated, part of practical consciousness. For another thing, interviewers themselves have no perfect insight into either their own performance or the responses that they must process in a split second.

(Jensen 2022, 292)

Jensen thus articulates a fundamental problem with the interview study and supports the necessity of the triangulation I have undertaken.

In addition, the methodology for conducting interviews in production studies often hinges on the physical settings, influencing the responses of the informants. In this study, a flexible approach was employed, allowing participants to choose their preferred interview locations to facilitate comfortable and open discussions, while also offering the opportunity

to engage in spontaneous probing based on the surroundings. Many interviews took place in professional settings, such as SAM Productions' offices in Copenhagen and Filmiliortarfik in Nuuk, fostering a guest-host dynamic. Other interviews were held at the University of Copenhagen, where a controlled environment was maintained, especially concerning recording logistics. The pandemic and the project's transnational scope necessitated the use of Zoom for remote interviews, an approach that had the dual benefit of visual and verbal interaction while accessing informants' personal spaces, albeit with a distance (King and Horrocks 2010, 79).

Wherever the interviews took place, I emphasised being informative about the project, my role, their role and, most importantly, their rights. This was part of my overall ethical approach, where I draw upon Kvale and Brinkmann's (2015, 107-8) ethical considerations in the seven phases. I presented the informants with a written 'declaration of consent' (see Appendix 7) before the interview and reviewed as part of the interview briefing and debriefing. The declaration presents the project, clarifies their contribution in terms of future publications and use, and ends with underlining their right to withdraw their contribution at any time and to receive the final transcription for reading and approval. Due to the small nature of the Greenlandic screen industry, I chose not to anonymise the informants (for more information on the transcriptions, see Appendix 8), but instead make the transcripts themselves available exclusively to me, my supervisor, and the assessors of the dissertation. I told the informants about this, which seemed to be an important point in relation to their openness, especially about conflicts and disagreements. This approach was evaluated and approved by the Ethics Committee at the Department of Communication at the University of Copenhagen in October 2020.

## **Fieldwork and observation studies**

Originally, I had planned two fieldwork trips to Greenland to get concrete production experiences through observations and establish myself in the field by networking in on site meetings. During the fieldwork, the core goal was to enter the field to identify what Kirsten Hastrup (2020, 65) refers to as the 'materiality' of the study environment; a tangible quality that emerges from the interconnectedness of various elements like facts, experiences, narratives, the unspoken dynamics, institutions, and ideas, all becoming significantly apparent in the presence of the researcher. These qualities were to be centred around the shooting of

*Borgen: Power & Glory* and *Kalak*, but as previously reported, original plans were changed due to Covid-19. Ultimately, this meant that I did not get to do observation studies of *Borgen: Power & Glory*, but I had the opportunity to participate in a week of filming *Kalak* in the autumn of 2022. In addition, I attended several industry events such as NIFF 2022, North Atlantic Film Days in Copenhagen, film premieres in Denmark and Greenland, seminars and conferences, Q&A's with film professionals, and a visit to Filmiliortarfik. Furthermore, I was affiliated with the University of Greenland during my fieldwork, where I had the opportunity to teach, present in research groups, and give a public lecture. The latter was also a good entry point, as Greenlandic film practitioners both attend university and participate in the public event, engaging in discussions. The fieldwork thus had an important function in relation to the issue of positionality, as presentations and teaching 'gave back' to the film community and Greenlandic society, and also helped establish better contact with the field and the research community through various attendances.

My fieldwork was done through participant observation, where I participated – to varying degrees – in events, activities, and (production) processes. That is, from sitting in a room during a Q&A or a film premiere to being on set and – unintentionally – working with the production designer at *Kalak* on painting an apartment (see Chapter 7). As described earlier, observation studies can be a central part of production studies, and in the location study, there is also a naturalness in the physical presence of the researcher *on* location, both in connection with the production and in related events, which provides a deeper layer in the understanding of the place in question as a production site, geographical location, and destination as well as the significance of the policies in function (Waade 2013, 64; Hansen and Waade 2017, 56–57). Thomas Szulevicz (2020) distinguishes the observational study in its ability to describe and analyse the social, situated and particular in human practice. He emphasises several reasons to observe; to open up the field, build a relationship with the observed, be able to ask the 'right' questions, gain an intuitive understanding of the data, capture and address issues that are not possible with other qualitative methods, and describe a practice (Szulevicz 2020, 103–4). Similarly, my observations served as an entry point into the Greenlandic film industry as a field, creating a better insight across my data and possible hypotheses, as well as gaining insight into location work as a practice more concretely. Observations could be used to shape my interviews with questions, create better relationships with informants and, not least, become an important part of my data triangulation.

An important tool in this regard was field notes, which were taken physically and digitally in various ways, as circumstances allowed.<sup>17</sup> For example, all relevant speeches, Q&As and other public events were recorded so that I had the opportunity to revisit and transcribe passages if necessary. Field notes were taken for both *Borgen: Power & Glory* and *Kalak*; In the first case, I took written notes, while during *Kalak* I took written notes supplemented with a dictaphone. As Hastrup (2020, 81) argues, on-the-spot notes are not necessarily a good thing; it is often preferable making notes immediately after participation, as note-taking can block immediate understanding. To support this, I also took pictures on my phone when permitted. I have no photos from *Borgen: Power & Glory* where I instead was sent a wide range of behind-the-scenes material, while it was possible during *Kalak*. Similarly, I took photos during several observations of industry events and visits, including at Filmiliortarfik. Some of these photos were used to support analyses of, for example, location work and the institution Filmiliortarfik in chapters 5 and 7. Overall, I tried to integrate analytical considerations as soon as possible after the various experiences to make the shortest possible duration ‘from field to desk’ (Emerson et al. 2011, 48–51).

Along with the physical observations, digital observations were used to some extent, as several events – such as NIFF 2020 and 2021 or the Indigenous film festival imagineNATIVE – were partially online. This gave me easy access to especially panels, interviews, and Q&As, which proved to be a highly valuable source of information on how the industry presented itself and in relation to other (Indigenous) film communities. Similarly, I realised early on that social media in general was a good entry point to knowledge about the Greenlandic film industry. As Signe Ravn-Højgaard (2019, 70) points out, Greenland is among the most active users of Facebook, and it is clear that a lot of information is available on especially Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube. Overall, these digital platforms became effective sources of news about productions, just as Greenlandic filmmakers often share much of the production processes on their private profiles, channels, or public pages (e.g. for production companies or associations).

Where retrospective production studies are often limited to interviews or existing material such as existing interviews or behind-the-scenes material (Pilegaard 2022), the digital layer adds an extra dimension to data collection about an industry that is notoriously closed. In this way, digital ethnography is used. Related to this, Eve Stirling (2016) argues that an

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ethnographer should enter the spaces where participants reside to create an extra connection to the field of study. She emphasises that the digital world is composed of a myriad of interactions and platforms where people engage daily. Whether that is a status update on Facebook or an Instagram post, it is up to the ethnographer to uncover where it is most meaningful to focus attention. In this context, I have only used data that has been publicly available and with the same critical approach as in the interviews, as the postings and digital presence around the productions or the industry are intended as a public contribution.

## **Document and policy studies**

As Kenneth Lynggaard (2020, 185) describes, document analysis is probably the most widely used in social sciences, where it is hard to find a study that does not use documents in a broad sense, such as reports, court documents, or newspaper articles. Likewise, my study makes use of a wide range of documents such as reports, newspaper articles, written speeches, legal texts, film laws, Finance Bills, and the many documents related to Film.gl (see Appendix 3) and the respective cases (see Appendix 4-6) that have shaped both the historical reviews and case studies. In both cases, the aim has been to explore the field and existing (industry) knowledge, and thereby generate new knowledge through analysis and interpretation (Ingemann et al. 2022, 71).

Similar to Stine Agnete Sand (2018) use of document analysis in an article on regional Norwegian film policies, I use a variety of documents – not least policy and cultural documents – to analyse the Greenlandic screen industry from a macro perspective to provide insight into changes, objectives, and argumentation at a policy level, which, together with newspaper articles seeks a broader insight into contemporary film production as well as historical and current debates. Due to the postcolonial entanglement between Greenland and Denmark, these are both Greenlandic and Danish documents that together provide knowledge on a process that over time has created a distinctive production environment. This puts document analysis at the centre of the triangulation of my data, as will be shown in the next sections.

## Data analysis

Tanggaard and Brinkmann (2020a, 53–54) describe how the ideal analysis starts at the design phase in order to create material relevant for the analysis strategy, while remaining open to the material's structures, connections, contradictions, and fractures that every material will contain. Due to the explorative approach to the project, I was met with what initially appeared to be what Tanggaard and Brinkmann (2020a, 55) describe as a confusing and cluttered material that requires time, patience, and multiple read-throughs to comprehend. As argued by Laurel Richardson (1990), one solution to this is through writing as early as possible and using writing as an integral part of the analysis, thereby gaining an understanding of the material - for instance, by describing the processes or surprises in the interview material (Tanggaard & Brinkmann 2020a, 55). This approach to cross-material analysis has been central to my work, where I have continuously written and described my material as I have gained access to it, resulting in a mosaic of text that has ultimately formed the actual analyses as presented in this dissertation. In addition, I gained experience through writing articles and a book chapter<sup>18</sup> along with writing this monograph, where I utilised and tested parts of my data and theoretical approaches to different extents. Although it may seem like 'double the work' (as these publications could have formed an article-based dissertation instead) it was, on the contrary, a beneficial way to approach the data and maintain the more coherent monograph form.

Additionally, I have used Kvale and Brinkmann's (2015, 255–56) six-step analysis in connection with the interviews. This process begins during the interview itself, where the first three steps take place. In the first step, I have focused on letting the interviewees unfold their own life worlds through personal narratives and experiences, through my semi-structured approach with room for associations. This leads to the second step, where the informant starts reflecting on the subject during the interview, creating new relations and insights free from the researcher's interpretations, where I gave informants the opportunity to explore new contexts and deeper meanings through the conversation. In the third step, I engaged more directly in the conversation, working to interpret and condense the interviewees' stories, creating a 'feedback loop' where I presented my interpretations back to the informants for validation or asked for examples to create further nuance.

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<sup>18</sup> During my PhD, I have written three articles and a book chapter. Two articles have been published (Grønlund, 2021; 2022) and one article and the book chapter have been submitted and peer reviewed but have not yet been re-submitted (Grønlund 2024 forthcoming; Grønlund & Waade 2024 forthcoming).



After the interview, I began the fourth step where I transcribed and structured the material, separating the essential parts from the less important, all with a focus on fulfilling the objectives of my study led by the research questions. This involved a more formalistic approach by applying meaning condensation and concept-driven coding (Tanggaard and Brinkmann 2020a, 55–56). As presented by Robert R. Gibbs (2018, 61), the concept-driven coding demands that the researcher incircles thematic ideas which “can be taken from the literature and previous research but are also generated by reading through at least some of the transcripts and other documents such as field notes, focus groups and printed documents”. In my analysis, this has partly been driven by the theoretical foundation, where I have structured the analysis descriptions of, for example, location, degrees of participation, and descriptions of size factors. Together with my research questions, this helped guide my delimitation of the most important aspects of my broad and comprehensive data. At the same time, my approach has been characterised by an openness to new themes and trends in the material, which has created a broader thematic basis – for example, around gatekeeping and emotions – and in different ways shaped the case studies. Against this background, each case study follows the same overall track tied to theory and research questions, but at the same time, to varying degrees, follows what stands out in the individual processes similar to Stake’s focus on the particular.

According to Yin (2018), case studies can be approached through several general strategies and specific analytical techniques: The general strategies can be “based on theoretical propositions, working with your data from the ground up, using descriptive frameworks, or checking with rival explanations”, while the techniques consist of the five patterns of “pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis” (Yin 2018, 200). While a broad project as this draws on several of the strategies, I lean on a descriptive framework, accentuated through explanation building and time-series analysis. The focus is both towards explaining the explaining the spatial conditions that influence production processes – “or ‘how’ or ‘why’ some outcome has occurred” (Yin 2018, 179) – while having the “ability to trace changes over time” (Yin 2018, 182). This allows the researcher to identify variables in a causal sequence; not just descriptively, but analytically to compare the actual course of events with theoretical predictions. This approach allows the researcher to build a solid descriptive foundation, fortified by explanatory narratives while maintaining an eye on the temporal dimensions.

Returning to Kvale and Brinkmann (2015, 256), the fifth step involves re-interviewing informants to give the possibility of elaborating or commenting on the researcher's interpretations. While I only interviewed one informant twice, my integration of the fifth aspect was built together with my ethical considerations; every informant had the possibility of reading and commenting on the final transcriptions, which in several cases resulted in further information or nuances, usually through email. In addition, I sent two chapters to two informants where their quotes could potentially be controversial, which had the benefit of providing more depth to the analysis or correcting misunderstandings. In terms of the sixth step, Kvale and Brinkmann suggest putting the analysis 'into action' by making subjects act on the insights gained from the interview. As this approach is more geared towards therapeutic interviews or action research, this has not been a deliberate part of my analysis.

### **Validity, reliability, and generalisability**

Bent Flyvbjerg (2006) describes how case study research is often criticised for being difficult to generalise, most useful for creating hypotheses, containing bias towards verification, and difficult to summarise. Flyvbjerg (2006, 241–42) refers to this criticism as a misunderstanding, emphasising that case studies can offer in-depth insights that complement the breadth offered by larger samples and quantitative research. Similar points are formulated by Kvale and Brinkmann (2015, 226–27), referring to a range of 'standard critiques' of the qualitative interview as e.g. non-scientific (only reflecting common-sense), subjective, too person-dependent (thus not a scientific method), biased, subjective, and non-generalisable due to the few subjects involved. As they continue to argue, the standard critiques can be interpreted differently and turned on its head as the strengths of the method; the strength is the privileged access to life worlds and conscious use of the subjective perspective can foster new perspectives. Additionally, this understanding of generalisation stem from a postmodern idea of universal knowledge, which has been replaced by the realisation of situational knowledge rooted in context (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015, 229).

In the basic meaning of the word, *validity* refers to truthiness, accurateness, and strength of a statement, which often revolves around whether you are researching what you claim to be researching (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015, 318). In other words, the goal is to match findings with reality. By critically approaching notions of validity, John W. Ratcliffe points towards three principles arguing against understandings of validity and reality: First, "data do

not speak for themselves; there is always an interpreter, or a translator”, secondly, “one cannot observe or measure a phenomenon/event without changing it” and thirdly, “numbers, equations, and words share similar properties: they are all abstract, symbolic representations of reality, but they are not reality itself.” (Ratcliffe 1983, 149–50). It is thus not possible to capture an objective truth or reality, but rather several strategies can be used to validate your research. For one, Kvale and Brinkmann (2015, 320) introduce a seven-phased validation process that integrates validation throughout the study rather than at the end. In addition, an approach through the aforementioned triangulation, where multiple data sources can shed multiple perspectives on the same entity. However, as argued by Denzin and Lincoln (2011, 5), triangulation can be seen as an alternative to validation, as objective reality cannot be captured. In this way, triangulation is rather a strategy to ensure “rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, 5).

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2015, 318), *reliability* is then about the credibility and consistency of research results. This is an important factor in qualitative research, with the researcher as the ‘research tool’ and subjectivity necessarily shapes the research and makes it difficult for another researcher to replicate, also in terms of external features as qualitative research often takes place in “unique natural settings” (et al. 2019, 211). As argued by David Silverman (2011, 360), there are two fundamental ways to ensure the credibility of a qualitative study; 1) to be transparent and include a detailed description of data collection and analysis procedures and 2) to be transparent in the theoretical foundation and hence how to interpret – not least in relation to the possibilities and limitations it creates. In this study, a challenge has been to reconcile transparency with ethical considerations as most documents are confidential or contain personal data – and therefore not to be shared – while the premise for my informants was that their interviews were *not* published. One solution has therefore been to make transcripts available to the reviewers of the dissertation, while I have focused on making my approach clear both in this chapter and along the way, just as my theoretical foundation is the very starting point for the study. Within the framework of a production study, I therefore believe that my study is methodologically and theoretically transparent and thus reliable.

Assessing a study's reliability and validity may lead to questions about its generalisability—whether its findings apply only locally or can be extended to other situations. Kvale and Brinkmann (2015, 332) highlight a divide in the humanities: some argue every situation is unique, suggesting generalisation may not always be essential. Yin (2018, 20-21) points out

that the objective of a case study is more about forming broad theoretical conclusions (analytic generalisations) rather than making widespread statistical claims. Stake (2005, 447) further emphasises focusing on the unique aspects of each case rather than broad generalisability. This perspective cautions against prioritising generalisation at the expense of recognising a case's particularities.

Based on this, I position myself cautiously regarding the generalisability of case studies. While acknowledging the existing discourse which both challenges and supports generalisation in humanities research, I am inclined to focus on the unique and particular traits of individual case studies. However, I also recognise the potential for analytic generalisations to build and expand theories, a perspective echoed in Yin's stance. For instance, in my approach to constructing the ultrasmall framework, I maintain this balance, pursuing generalisable notions of ultrasmallness while valuing the necessity to adjust to the intricate particularities that each ultrasmall nation or community inherently possesses. This approach allows me to avoid overlooking the essential, distinctive aspects of each case, therefore promoting a research strategy grounded in an understanding of both the general and the specific.

Before I take these methodological considerations into the following historical chapters, I will briefly describe my approach to the writing of history with a particular focus on digital tools and so-called desktop analyses.

## **Writing desktop screen history**

As previously described, I realised early on that I needed a deeper insight into the industry and policy history that underpins contemporary screen production in and about Greenland with an emphasis on spatiality. This realisation is supported by Bruun and Frandsen (2022, 95), who emphasise the value of a historical focus even in more case-based analyses:

Even though no research has been carried out on the specific phenomenon that you are interested in, broader orientations in genre developments and historical changes around the genre may be highly relevant and may improve the quality of the more specific questions you wish to pose in a project.

With a case-based project that was also characterised by Covid lockdowns in the first two years, it was a question of how I could best approach this historiography with very limited

literature to draw on, no official overview of productions in and about Greenland, and a film history generally focused on representation rather than industry developments. My approach was therefore to create a registrant based on what was available to me, namely digital archives, newspaper articles, old overviews, and literature reviews (see Appendix 2), and use this as the basis for a historical analysis (Chapters 4-5).

As argued by Manuel Puppis and Hilde Van den Bulck (2019, 37), this kind of industry approach to historical analysis “allows for historicizing media policy-making processes and decisions. It helps to move beyond the here and now of a particular policy decision to unearth larger and longer-term patterns, processes, and power structures”. In this way, my approach was studying history ‘from the distance’, an approach far from unusual for research in the Arctic. On the contrary, as explained by Carina Ren and Robert Christian Thomsen (2020, 84):

much scholarly work has been carried out as what one might term ‘desk-observational’ research [...]. This kind of research has contributed greatly to building academic knowledge about historical developments and contexts, structures, discourses, and practices, and in that sense, the methodological approach has proved itself to be valuable.

While they do argue that this approach falls short for several studies, it has been a valuable and useful approach to the more in-depth investigations I have undertaken in my case studies.

Accordingly, the historical chapter is based on existing registrants supplemented with my own data collection to provide the broadest possible overview of the total Greenlandic and Greenland-related screen production (see Appendix 2). In addition to online databases – primary based on desktop analysis – the registrant as well as the chapters are based on interviews with exclusive informants that in one way or another provide insights into past, ongoing, or even previously (publicly) unknown productions as well as give voice to individuals who are part of the context being described. In an ultrasmall nation without any form of organised registration of local and foreign production, these alternative, person-borne sources of not only production processes but productions, in general, have proven to be important.

Finally, newspaper articles have been a great source of information about productions, premiers, reception, and production conditions such as locations, collaborators, and various

discourses related to screen production. Since my focus is on contemporary industry developments and screen production, my primary insight into this development was the Greenlandic newspaper *Atuagagdliutit/Gronlandsposten*.<sup>19</sup> I have conducted a review of all newspapers published since Greenland officially became a Danish *amt* (county) in 1953 to find film-related articles. The local media's focus on all major productions in Greenland, as well as coverage of festivals, (media) politics, interviews with filmmakers, and other film-related news in a local context has been particularly rewarding.

As with all digital methods that is based on especially user-generated content, this data must be approached with caution, which makes the cross-checking of information – both regarding the production's premieres, production place, and location – extremely important and a time-consuming process. However, it has been a rewarding process that has provided new insights – not least into the digital possibilities of writing history in relation to ultra-small contexts that do not necessarily appear as nation states. As argued by Julia Hallam (2010, 278), “a database model of film history focused on landscape and place poses interesting challenges to conventional ideas of national film culture as it is currently conceived in the scholarly historical imaginary”. This is consistent with my place-based approach and my theoretical starting point, which seeks to question national boundaries in the understanding of the screen industry.

Moving forward, this approach to the history and dynamics of Greenlandic screen production, steered through a mosaic of historical analysis and diverse data sources, aims to offer a comprehensive view that navigates between the past and present. By fostering a registrant, it seeks to provide a robust base for further academic explorations in the sphere of ultrasmall nation screen productions.

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<sup>19</sup> All issues of *Atuagagdliutit* from 1861-1999 has been digitalized and are available through the digital library *Timarit*: <https://timarit.is/page/3764102#page/n0/mode/2up>.

# Chapter 4:

## The emergence(s) of an ultrasmall industry

“I think there's something really seductive about the fact that all of us in the film industry are making history all the time. All the time. You always are when you're making films, but up here, it really matters. And we have to stick together.”

**Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg** (2021, PI, MT)  
Producer of *Alanngut Killiganni*

From the earliest days of moving images, Greenland has in various ways – and to various degrees – been part of film history. As I have published on earlier (Grønlund 2021), it is difficult to determine the exact beginning of Greenlandic film. While *Nuummioq* (Otto Rosing and Torben Bech, 2009) is often referred to as the starting point of an indigenous industry producing feature film, there are various preceding works such as Greenlandic short films and documentaries, as well as foreign films featuring Greenlandic actors or collaborating with Greenlanders in both below- and above-the-line positions.

This chapter examines this long history of screen production in and about Greenland with the purpose of providing a nuanced understanding of the industry's evolution, entanglements, and various characteristics as an ultrasmall industry. The review itself goes back to the earliest film history but focuses on post-war Greenland and during Home Rule. While the case studies focus on fiction formats, this chapter includes documentary genres in the form of individual works and not, for example, news reporting, and television, except KNR's fiction production. In terms of feature film and TV series, this is structured round the registrant in Appendix 2.

Due to the place-centred approach with a focus on runaway production, the review focuses on production taking place *in* and *about* Greenland. This broad approach sheds light on the ways in which the screen industry has interacted with and been influenced by other screen industries. Furthermore, it opens for new knowledge about which nations choose Greenland as either location or setting, what characterises these, and how this has changed over time. The focus on industry developments is to be understood broadly as the creation and dissolution of film-related companies in or about Greenland (such as Denmark-based companies aimed at producing Greenland-related content), the formation and dissolution of film-related infrastructure and institution-building, international collaboration, Greenlandic agency, and the shifting role of location and setting. The chapter itself is divided in three broad historical periods related to the political and colonial history briefly presented in the introductory chapter. Therefore, the first section covers the period from 1897 to 1938, before World War II dramatically changed the fate of Greenland. The next section covers this period up until Home Rule in 1979, while last section addresses these years of Home Rule until Self-Government in 2009. As the chapter will underline, the industrial and cinematic history is inextricably linked to the historical and technological contexts, where interests change, globalisation increases, and new collaborations emerge.



# 1897-1938

## Actualités and expeditions

The story of Greenlandic(-related) film can be traced back to the earliest days of cinema. In fact, the Danish and Greenlandic film history points back to the same origin in 1897 with *Kørsel med grønlandske Hunde* (*Driving with Greenlandic Dogs*, Peter Elfelt), often referred to as the first (surviving) film made in Denmark (Nørrested 2011, 11; Schepelern et al. 2003, 3). In a less than a minute-long sequence, a fur-clad character drives a dogsled harnessed two pairs of Greenlandic dogs in a snowy landscape. While the setting is supposedly Greenland, the trees and a fence in the background reveal that the location is in fact a park in Copenhagen.

The raison d'être of *Kørsel med grønlandske Hunde* is contested. The film could simply be a test or a staged reportage of reality common to the period (Tybjerg 2001, 15). Tess Skadegaard Thorsen, on the other hand, suggests categorising “the production and consumption of the film as the first Danish act of representation” (Thorsen 2020, 115). Instead of aligning contemporary trends of technological and industrial prowess as was the case with many *actualités*<sup>20</sup> of the period, it relies on Greenlandic symbols and traditions mimicking the landscape of a Danish colony: “Whether intentional or not, the first Danish film displays empire” (Thorsen 2020, 115). Regardless of assumption, *Kørsel med grønlandske Hunde* marked the beginning of two inherently entangled film histories. Furthermore, it writes Greenland into a tradition of early depictions of the Arctic more broadly as in Robert W. Paul’s *The Voyage to the North Pole* (1903) or Gerges Méliès’ fantastical *À la conquête du pôle* (1912) centred on Arctic exploration (MacKenzie and Stenport 2015, 4–5).

The tendency of *actualités* continues and from around 1909, cameras begin to companion ethnographers and explorers on their travels to Greenland thus initiating on-location photography. While many films are lost, such as Thomas Thomsen’s unnamed film allegedly containing scenes with traditional drum dance, the earliest surviving ethnographic film is

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<sup>20</sup> Actualités refer to the making of (very) short documentary films – or ‘factual films’ – consisting of non-fiction moving images beginning with everyday life – such as trains arriving at stations or factory workers leaving the factory – eventually searching for the sensational and a way to represent current political and social affairs (Kessler 2005).

William Thalbitzer's *Gronland 1914 I-III* (1914) with recordings of everyday life in the South Greenlandic settlements of Nanortalik and Sammisog (Nørrested 2011, 12–13).

The actualités can also be seen as initial to one of the largest categories of foreign films about Greenland from the period: the expedition films. Here, the Thule Expeditions stand as key events in a period where polar explorers such as Fridtjof Nansen, Otto Sverdrup, Peter Freuchen, and Knud Rasmussen were celebrated as contemporary Arctic icons. While the First Thule Expedition (1912-1913) was without camera, the Swedish photographer Thorild Wulff joined the second expedition (1916-1918) where he eventually lost his life along with the Greenlandic expedition member Hendrik Olsen (Nørrested 2011, 16).

According to Wulff's contracts with Pathé Frères and Rasmussen, Wulff was supposed to film solely in South Greenland. However, during the expedition, Rasmussen changed his opinion on this matter. The reason for this is unsure, but Anders Jørgensen (2003, 186) points to the fact that an American expedition, financed by the American Museum of Natural History, was stationed in North Greenland in 1913-1917 along with a photographer. In these years, Denmark's sovereignty over Greenland was not finally approved by the US, and as the Danish government did not want to upset the US by colonising North Greenland officially, Rasmussen was given permission to incorporate the region in other ways – in this case, through film (Jørgensen 2003, 187).

Rasmussen eventually got increasingly involved with film production and participated in at least eight productions as either director, producer, or expedition leader: *II. Thule Ekspedition* (Thorild Wulff, 1916-17), *Den store Gronlandsfilm* (Eduard Schnedler-Sørensen, 1921), *Med Hundeslæde gennem Alaska (With Dogsled through Alaska)* (Leo Hansen, 1924-27), *Morrisey Ekspeditionen* (Maurice Kellerman, 1927), *VI. Thule Ekspedition* (Svend Nielsen, 1931), *VII. Thule Ekspedition* (H.F. Rikken, 1932), *S.O.S. Eisberg* (Arnold Fanck, 1933), and *Palos Brudefærd (The Wedding of Palo, 1934)* (Jørgensen 2003, 204–5). Through this, the Second Thule Expedition was the beginning of a genre of films that propagated for expeditions and colonisation. The examples mentioned above show that Greenland on film is not only bound to a fascination with the exotic but also to geopolitical tensions caused by Greenland's (strategic) location.

Caused by the 'Jubilee Year' – marking the 200<sup>th</sup> year since the arrival of Hans Egede – 1921 was an important year in various ways. Initiated by the first royal visit, not only the telegraph was introduced, but also the silent film with the first screening in the settlement of Ivittuut (Pedersen 2003, 7–8). The visit itself resulted in several recordings – mainly of the

royal family's arrival to Nuuk and the travel itself with visits to the Faroe Islands and Iceland on the way. The Danish premiere of the Fotorama and Nordisk Film co-produced *Den Store Grønlandsfilm* also marked the first feature-length documentary following Freuchen's travels with a mining company ship prior to the Fifth Thule Expedition and thus covers the immediate period before *Med Hundeslæde gennem Alaska*.

From an international perspective, French and US interest was prevalent throughout this period, in the first case with productions such as *Sur les côtes du Groenland* (1920) and *Quatre du Groënland* (1935) – all privately produced films with ethnographic or explorational themes. The US interest is evident in e.g. *Robert Peary* (1909) and *Scoresbysund* (1931) with a focus on explorers, traveling, and Arctic peoples. Germany and Norway had similar interests with several ethnographic and expedition-themed documentaries and travel logs. In addition, more sporadic productions from other nations occurred such as the Italian *Locatelli's Flug* (1924), the British *Northern Lights* (1932), the Swiss *Die schweizerische Grönlandsexpedition* (1936), and the Soviet *Papaninoy* (1938) – all expedition-themed films highlighting national accomplishments.

As a result, the earliest years are a mesh of entanglements with not only European nations but American and Soviet interests. Screen production in and about Greenland was built on colonial and Western discourses of exploration and ethnography often tied to the star status of the polar explorers, the sublime landscapes, and an unquenchable thirst to discover, conquer, and defy nature.

## **Germany, Hollywood, and Danish Greenland films**

Though non-fiction continues to dominate the quantity of films about Greenland, the first feature film premiered in 1918. The German *Das Eskimobaby* (Walter Schmidhässler) was filmed in 1916, but the premiere was postponed by First World War. Asta Nielsen plays Ivigtit, an Inuk woman brought to Berlin by polar explorer Knud Prætorius (Freddy Wingårdh) to meet his parents, and the film is thus a humouristic *lustspiel* centred on a cultural encounter. Produced by Nielsen and Wingårdh's own company, Neutral-Film, it was one among eight films produced in the summer of 1916 in Union's largest studio in Berlin (Malmkjær 2000) with none of the on-screen plot taking place in Greenland. Instead, Greenland is embedded indirectly in the story through Ivigtit, her clothes, and the prejudices of the German upper class, she encounters. In this way, film is the first example

of creating a narrative that *writes out* the Greenlandic location through the movement of characters; one (narrative) solution to the problem of location.

Ten years later, the German *Milak, der Grönlandsjäger* (Georg Asagaroff and Bernhard Villinger, 1928) premiered. This time, the film is part-doubled having on-location footage from East Greenland as well as Svalbard, Norway. Combining landscape footage with ethnographic observations, it appears as a reminiscence of Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922), and nature is used as an active part of the story dramatised by blowing up icebergs and filming in the open air (Schöning 2018, 39).

Among the screenwriters were Arnold Fanck, who continued to have great influence in the German Greenland films that followed: *SOS Eisberg* (1933) and *Nordpol, Ahoi!* (1934). The former stands out as one of Fanck's last successful *Bergfilm* (mountain films) (Körber 2015, 149). As in Fanck's previous *Bergfilms*, the plot centres on the sublime nature, but this time in the shape of yet another Greenlandic expedition drama. A rescue team led by Johannes Krafft (Sepp Rist) departs to rescue Karl Lrenz (Gustav Diessl) who is stranded on an eroding iceberg. Eventually, Krafft strands as well along with the pilot Mrs. Lorenz (Leni Reifenstahl) who crashes a plane: The theme of Arctic isolation and an unforgiven nature is all-embracing.

The production of *SOS Eisberg* is one of the best described in the early film history related to Greenland as both Fanck, Reifenstahl, aviator Ernst Udet and consultant Ernst Sorge have described this *film expedition* vividly afterwards (Fanck 1973; Reifenstahl 1933; Sorge 1933; Udet 1935). Most of the film was made in Uummannaq on the West Coast of Greenland with an overwhelming amount of equipment made possible by Deutsche Universal-film's distributional cooperation with Universal:

large tents, two motorboats, technical and scientific equipment, two biplanes and an additional stunt plane [...]. It would later be sacrificed in a scene depicting a plane crash. Moreover, the film expedition brought enough (luxury) food and drink supplies with them to last a year, as well as three polar bears, a gift from Hagenbeck's Zoo in Hamburg.

(Körber 2015, 151)

This extravagant expedition had several challenges with polar bears and the Arctic nature with storms, crashes, and calving icebergs of which some are incorporated in the film. Despite this Greenlandic footage, the production is an early example of part doubling as Fanck supplemented the Greenlandic locations with footage from Switzerland.

Besides Udet, Rasmussen was part of the expedition as a consultant. It has caused some curiosity why Rasmussen and the Danish government supported German filmmakers with strong connections to the emerging Nazi movements (Jørgensen 2003, 203). In a letter, Rasmussen explains this as lack of funding: the Seventh Thule Expedition was expensive, and he needed money to fulfil his expedition ambitions as his books, previous film, and the trading post did not give significant profit (Jørgensen 2003, 203).

From the six months' worth of footage, three films were made: *SOS Eisberg*, the shorter, English language *SOS Iceberg* (Tay Garnett), and the beforementioned *Nordpol, Ahoi!* (Körber 2015, 151-152). This means that *Nordpol, Ahoi!* contained on-location footage from the Uummannaq area as well, though the film has been lost. What we do know, however, is that the film was a comedy which goes against the tradition of exploration dramas with a stronger kinship to *Das Eskimobaby*. A contemporary critic stressed the significance of the grandiose landscapes in an otherwise thin plot ultimately creating, from a narrative point of view, an acceptable film thanks to its leading actors (Freund 1934, 4). In the end, these four German films, *Das Eskimobaby*, *Malik, der Grönlandsjäger*, *SOS Eisberg* and *Nordpol, Ahoi!* are important in what can be referred to as the German influence in films about Greenland prior to World War II.

Less prominent, but still present, was Hollywood's attention towards Greenland in this period. The American *The Viking* (Roy William Neill, 1929) takes place during the Viking age, and Greenland functions as a stop on the way to search for land beyond this 'last outpost': "Greenland – that barren outpost of Norse civilisation where hard, stubborn paganism still held sway" (Neill 1929). The establishing shot of Greenland shows this scenery: a busy yard with people and livestock, wooden constructions, and mighty mountains in the horizon, all covered in snow. This could be a (stereo)typical image of Greenland if the rest of the outdoor scenes were not shot in bright sunlight with Vikings in short sleeves and a sudden lack of snow. Despite this, the rocky coastlines point to the merciless nature on 'the last outpost', though the landscape only serves as a backdrop for the storyline, clearly not shot in Greenland.

Similarly, the later *Man of Two Worlds* (J. Walter Ruben, 1934) is a fully doubled depiction of Greenland. This time, two British explorers visit an Inuit hunter and his wife and persuade the hunter to join them for an expedition into the wilderness to catch a polar bear for the London Zoo. This time, the film is carefully established "far from the voice of civilisation, in the remote wastes of North Greenland" (Ruben 1934) with title cards and a

'satellite zoom' and contains – in addition to large Greenlandic scenes built in studios – several Greenland-related cultural objects such as dog sleds and fur-clothing. Moreover, parts of the dialogue were written and performed in an alleged Inuit language (performed by white Hollywood actors) with English subtitles (AFI Catalog n.d.a).

The notion of *Danish* films about Greenland (what Gant (2003, 185) defines as the genre of *Danish Greenland films*) starts in 1930 with *Eskimo*, a high-end Danish/Norwegian co-production directed by George Schnéevoigt. The film was recognised as the first Scandinavian produced sound film in contemporary newspapers – an honour which later went to Schnéevoigt's following film, *Præsten i Vejlbj* (1931), while *Eskimo* sank to the domain of forgotten curiosities (Gant 2004, 124). Though produced in Denmark, it was solely with Norwegian and (West-)Greenlandic (Kalaallisut) speech and part-doubled mixing on-location exterior scenes – with the first-ever synchronised sound – from East Greenland with interior scenes in Denmark. The exterior scenes in Qeqertarsuaq and Ilulissat had 50 locals engaged, including the transport of equipment. Presumably based on the cost and anticipation of the production, it was poorly reviewed in contemporary newspapers as an artistic disappointment, but a technological triumph (Gant 2004, 125). Again, the film was praised for its picturesque landscapes which at the same time matched poorly with the interior shots (Piil 2000, 129).

In 1934, Friedrich Dalsheim's *Palos Brudefærd* premiered as the first Danish feature film about Greenland. The project was initiated by Rasmussen after viewing Dalsheim's *Die Insel der Dämonen* (*The Island of Demons*, 1933) in Berlin being impressed of the – as *Palos Brudefærd* – lifelike, ethnographic documentary style unifying documentary sequences with a feature film plot centred on a love story (Plessen 2022, 128; 138). Written by Knud Rasmussen and produced by Palladium, *Palos Brudefærd* shows a pre-colonial East Greenland as historical fiction, but with an ethnographical gaze upon its subjects:

The underlying idea of the film is thus that, at all costs, it should be true to life – in details, in manner of details and scenery. Only native actors were to be used [...]. The film should possess qualities which might appeal to the public at large. It was therefore not enough to take one wonderful picture of scenery and folklore after another; all this should be linked together by some plot, a progressive action, which might kindle the imagination and lead to the culmination of adventure, which we all long for (Gabel-Jørgensen in Gant 2004, 155).

In order to visually surpass its, in many ways, predecessor film *Nanook of the North*, the film presented spectacular images available through modern technology through aerial shots (Plessen 2022, 144–45). The film was a staged documentary with an inherent triangular drama between Palo, Salo, and Navarana and stands as an attempt from Rasmussen to disseminate and preserve a culture that is undergoing massive changes. On the other hand, as Kirsten Thisted argues:

this persisted memory is going to withstand so strongly that it far overshadows both the present and any future alternative. It is thus still 'Rasmussen's Greenland', the filmmakers, the writers and the tourists are desperately trying to spot – notwithstanding that 'Rasmussen's Greenland' already in his own time was a staged reconstruction.

(Thisted 2003, 36, MT)

Though Rasmussen had honourable intentions, Gant explains how the film also represented a mean to finance more expeditions that, to some extent, would include the production of film. At the same time, it had to be justified by something more than film: the truth about Greenland and its people (Gant 2004, 155).

## **Industry developments or representational discourses?**

It is difficult to find arguments for even an emerging Greenlandic film industry understood as a locally driven network centred in Greenland. Instead, the first decades show a foreign interest in Greenland, based on geopolitical interests, commercial mandates, and colonial fantasies from especially Denmark, Germany, and the US. While most of these early productions were produced exclusively in these nations, there are also cases of international co-productions with personnel and funding from multiple nations – a trait shared by film production in the Arctic more generally (MacKenzie and Stenport 2015, 6). More specifically, *Eskimo* and *SOS Eisberg* were respectively Danish-Greenlandic and American-German co-productions and bear witness to the relevance for international markets that appears to be found in content about Greenland. Here, the productions may be regarded as cases of both opportunistic and globalising transnationalism in order to finance the heavy-cost productions – especially in the case of *SOS Eisberg* – with a fundamental assumption that Greenland-centred content holds cross-border relevance and thus speaks a transnational grammar. Due

to the heaviness of on location-footage, most fiction was either fully or partly doubled. In addition, the film medium was seen as a tool to finance the film expeditions themselves.

With continued status as a colony and with a consequent isolation from global movements, Greenlandic agency in film productions was largely limited to functions as expedition members, actors, and extras in fiction, while the documentary genre had a general absence of insider perspective. However, this fundamental understanding risks overlooking the nuances inherent in both production conditions and contemporary understandings of past productions and, as argued by Thisted (2006, 67), to underestimate the agency and importance of Greenlanders in even very early productions.

Interestingly, the Greenlandic director and artist Inuk Silis Høegh – who decades later became the creator of the first Greenlandic short film *Sinilluarit* – points back to *Palos Brudefærd* as the inspiration for the first short film and not least his own agency as a filmmaker:

I think we kind of looked back in time and said: in 1934, there was *Palos Brudefærd* [...] It's like a fiction film from the East coast of Greenland by a Danish director. But actually, four Greenlanders worked on that film. Knud Rasmussen was one of them. That's kind of what we looked up to [...]. So, for us, that was one of the first Greenlandic films even though it was a Danish director.

(Høegh and Turner 2022, 115)

As this suggests, what is viewed as a *Greenlandic* production is both subjective and fluid. In this understanding, the mere recognition of Rasmussen as a Greenlander may appear controversial to some due to his strong connection to the colonial power and despite his undeniable ethnic heritage and cultural belonging that created a divided – or hybrid – public image with an ambiguous split solidarity (Thisted 2004, 143). In other words, even these early cases are up for discussion as to when one places the beginning of *Greenlandic* film production – and in that case, an almost impossible-to-answer question as to who is even considered to be a Greenlander at thus represent Greenlandic agency as such. Nevertheless, Høegh clearly shows how even a more marginally perceived Greenlandic influence can create a connection across decades of filmmaking and at the same time proposes one suggestion to the beginning of Greenlandic screen production. In this way, there may not be signs of a pioneering Greenlandic screen industry, but measured differently, there were already perceived Greenlandic agency.



Besides, in the case of *SOS Eisberg*, Greenland is clearly referred to as a *destination*. However, rather than a paradise-like destination such as Jamaica attracting business tourism in form of filmmakers based on a pre-existing identity as premier tourist destination (Ward and O'Regan 2009, 218), Greenland is a film *expedition*. It is tied to the pre-existing identity as a place of *expedition* and *exploration*; an identity still-present through Visit Greenland's brand to "Be a Pioneer" (Visit Greenland n.d.) and slogan of being an "Pioneering Nation" (Thisted 2015b, 31). Working together with exactly Visit Greenland, Film.gl has continued this slogan describing Greenland as powerful and pioneering explaining why foreign production should choose Greenland: "we call this the 'BE A PIONEER'-spirit. No one has ever done before what you are about to do, and that is exactly why you need to do it!" (Film.gl n.d.b). The discourse thus remains strong, and *SOS Eisberg* an early example of how the challenges of Greenlandic locations can be used for marketing; a marketing of 'the struggles of film expeditions in Greenland'.

While most early film production was closely connected with expeditions and ethnographic work, and there are therefore no signs of a pioneering phase as an indigenous screen industry, some of the strongest discourses in Greenlandic productions are born from these earliest decades. And – as it will turn out – these discourses continue to dominate throughout history.

# 1940–1978

## Colonial gaze, criticism, and Cold War

The beginning of World War II led to a series of changes; not just with because of the war itself, which created new relations between Greenland and the USA, but the war also resulted in the formal end of the status as colony in 1953 and the beginning of the Cold War in which Greenland really came into the international spotlight as a strategic location. According to Nørrested (2011, 48), the last footage of ‘old-fashioned’ expedition practice that resulted in Michael Hansen’s short *Med Gammaekspeditionen til Nordøstgrønland* (1939) and thus the end of ‘the romantic expedition period’ only to be revived in later anniversary expeditions and the continued patrolling by the Sirius Dog Sled Patrol. That is, if we do not count the recurring fictional revisits to the struggle of former expeditions as in the recent Icelandic-Danish *Against the Ice* (Peter Flinth, 2022). In other words, the years between 1940 and 1978 are truly times of change.

Despite the restrictive wartime environment, photographers in Greenland managed to create notable works. Among them was Jette Bang, who visited Greenland several times between 1936 and 1962, capturing life and landscapes with a focus on women, children, and everyday life. One of her significant works is the feature documentary *Inuit* (1940), which utilised colour film, a novelty introduced with Kodachrome film, catching the attention of audiences and tech companies (Jørgensen 2015, 240). Bang’s work is recognised for its ‘gentle gaze’ on the colony Greenland, a perspective supporting Denmark’s perception of being a kind and gentle coloniser, a narrative found in various media and scholarly texts (Pettersen 2012, 30). However, Bang’s later works show a shift in her stance (Jørgensen 2015, 242).

Due to the war and the coming events, this image of Greenland changed and moved towards images of modernisation and transformation. With the new connection to the US as supplier and protector, Greenland became open to the global economy. Furthermore, an agreement was made whereby the United States – in return for recognising Denmark’s sovereignty over Greenland – was allowed to establish military bases. This was done by Danish ambassador to the US, Henrik Kaufmann, and the controversial event and agreement – covered in Christina Rosendahl’s biographical feature film *Vores mand i Amerika* (*The Good*

*Traitor*, 2020) – still function as the legal support for today’s Pituffik Space Base (formally Thule Air Base).

As underlined by Nørrested (2011, 51-52), the war also led to the popularity of Greenland-themed lecture films and thus a business opportunity for amateur filmmakers – and for natural reasons, the stationed personnel were the only suppliers to this demand. A range of these amateur filmmakers were of institutional and commercial relevance for quite different stakeholders such as museums, ornithological societies, as well as oil and cryolite companies.

It was especially in the 1950s that new films on Greenland emerged in connection with the document “Grundlag for MFU’s overvejelser om Grønlandsfilm” (“The Foundations for MFU’s Deliberations on Greenland film”, 1950) which resulted in a wish for a feature-length documentary focusing on both the ‘old Greenland’ disappearing and the ‘new Greenland emerging’ and with a direct wish of underlining – especially to the US – that ‘Greenland is Danish’ (Nørrested 2011, 59). This put pressure on Nordisk Film to adapt the Knud Sønderby novel *De kolde Flammer* (which was never made) for which the director Hagen Hasselbalch was sent to Greenland to write a screenplay as well as shoot the Greenland summer sceneries. One of the results was the documentary *Grønland i sol* (1950) – the most requested film in the SFC’s<sup>21</sup> catalogue in the following 10 years – which was “the first film to hint at the tourist potential up in Greenland” (Nørrested 2011, 59). At the same time, Hasselbalch’s following film, *Blyklippens gåde* (1953), made him the first filmmaker to question the Danish activities in Greenland with a more ecocritical focus on mining in East Greenland.

While there does exist a wide range of state-funded productions from the post-war period – propagating a ‘new’ modern (Danish) Greenland in transformation – Bjarne Henning Jensen’s *Hvor bjergene sejler* (*Where Mountains Float*, 1955) stands as the “flagship amongst state-sponsored films about Greenland” (Nørrested 2011, 60) with its poetic tale of three generations moving from settlement to town in form of a dramatised documentary. As the first largescale Danish production shot in Eastmancolor, the genre-bending documentary was well received in the press for its colourful landscapes, music, acting performances (by Greenlandic amateurs), plot, and poetic tone resulting in the Grand Prix Documentary award in Venice and an Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary Feature. As an article in *Atuagagdliutit* underlines:

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<sup>21</sup> The Danish SFC (Statens Filmcentral) had the distribution of short and documentary films as the core area in its active years from 1938-1997. This has mostly involved films for educational use, but also the production of more artistic and experimental films (Dam n.d.).

The film is held in an optimistic tone – but there is fate and tragedy in the images of the old Greenland, which cannot and will not adapt to the necessary changes of the new age. You get the feeling that Denmark is a big country – and you get little sense of the task that Danes have in Greenland today.

(Atuagagdlitit 1956, 24, MT)

This underlines the state-supported ambition of *Danification* and the geopolitical tensions of the post-war period; Greenland is Danish, modernisation is a necessity, and state-sponsored productions is an effective way to stress it nationally and internationally. For the same reason, the film was met with resistance among audiences with more insight into Greenlandic affairs (Dusager 1956, 11; DFI n.d.a).

Hasselbalch's critical tone resonates more in the next decade where Jørgen Roos makes his mark with several major works. Although he was involved in Greenland-themed productions as early as 1950 – for instance with short documentaries such as Paul Hansen's state-sponsored *Gronland for de små* and *Sydvestgronland* – he directed his first Greenland-related documentary feature *Knud* in 1966. For this purpose, he co-established the production company Nunafilm in 1963 thus becoming the first explicitly Greenlandic-related production company (located in Copenhagen) financed through a variety of foundations and private actors such as mining companies (Atuagagdlitit 1963, 18). Roos, however, produced his remaining Greenlandic films through his own company Jørgen Roos Film, while Nunafilm never produced on the subject again.

While *Knud* was a more pathos-heavy celebration of Rasmussen's legacy, the strongest colonial criticism to date was expressed through films such as *Sisimiut* (1966) and *Ultima Thule* (1968), while the situation of Greenlanders in Denmark was discussed in *Kaláuvit* (1979). Despite being state-funded by the Danish government, these films expressed a strong critique towards the Danish Greenland policy and the G60 modernisation process (Dodds and Jensen 2019, 165).

According to Nørrested (2011, 79), it was the highly critical *Nálagkersuissut ok'arput tagssagóke* (*Da myndighederne sagde stop*, 1973) by politician and author Aqqaluk Lyngé and Danish artist Per Kirkeby that gave hope for the future indigenous production in Greenland despite being Danish produced. As the primary driving force, Lyngé created a documentary centred on the mine closures in the settlement of Qullissat, the subsequent settlement

closure, and the forced relocation of its citizens. The soundtrack of the film is particularly noteworthy as it is one of the earliest examples of the use of Greenlandic incidental music, provided mainly by Jens Hendriksen, whose music was recorded around the time of the closure and is of a strongly political nature (Lynge 2003, 148–49). In this way – though much less prominently – a partly Greenlandic critical documentarism fits into the 1970s wave of Greenlandic-language music critical of the Danish state.<sup>22</sup>

In other words, large parts of the finance-heavy productions are financed by the Danish state and handled by primarily Danish filmmakers in above-the-line positions. During the 1960s, Greenland was especially covered in the form of reportages by DR (Danish Broadcasting Corporation). As television became a property of the masses, the new formats naturally had a major impact on the types of productions and their distribution. Though Grønlands Radio (GR) was established in 1958, this was exclusively radio broadcasting, and while DR held a legal monopoly on terrestrial television transmission throughout the Kingdom of Denmark, they did not operate in Greenland. As a result, illegal broadcasting of foreign content was institutionalised and relied on individuals in Denmark taping programmes and sending them to the local television associations that emerged following the introduction of television in 1966 (Ravn-Højgaard 2021, 40; Fleischer 2019, 8). As underlined by Signe Ravn-Højgaard (2021, 40), this ended with the establishment of the Greenlandic TV Commission assigning the task of distribution and coordination to GR. In this period – and ultimately with the introduction of Home Rule – the normative role of media changed:

Media was previously regarded as a venue for intercultural understanding among Greenlanders and Danes in Greenland, and as a means for Greenlanders to learn Danish. The new paradigm in media policy emerged with the normative ideas of media as a vital venue for preserving Greenlandic identity and minimising foreign influence.

(Ravn-Højgaard 2021, 41)

Thus, television broadcasting reflects a discursive shift and ultimately one towards self-representation and nation-building.

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<sup>22</sup> For more information on the history of popular music in Greenland, I refer to work by e.g. Andreas Otte (2015; 2014; 2013) or Birgit Lynge (Lynge 1981).

While Danish state-funded content grew during the period, there was a continuing foreign interest with a natural, sudden absence of German productions. Here, the Cold War stood out as a major theme in Greenlandic as well as Arctic documentaries (and fiction) from the period (Stenport 2015; Dodds and Jensen 2019). With the new US-Greenlandic relations and a strong US geopolitical interest in Greenland, a range of US productions were made including that of military interest such as defence film which extended beyond the US national borders to Canada and Greenland, among others (Hamilton and O’Gorman 2019). This Cold War discourse continues up until contemporary productions and has only become more prevalent with the latest international developments with Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

In addition to France’s continued interest – for instance with the expedition film *Groënland vingt mille lieues sur les glaces* (1953) – several expedition-related Dutch productions in a period which – despite the growing critical Danish production and Greenlandic agency – remains a highly entangled production milieu. Here, the overall production continues in the same expedition-ethnographic discourses established in the previous period.

## **An anniversary feature, TV series, and the atomic bomb**

Starting with Lau Lauritzen Jr.’s feature film *Nordhavets mand* (1939), the period began with a part-doubled Greenlandic west coast. The Greenland-centred part of the story – where the two love triangle rivals Sigurd (Lauritzen himself) and Lorens (Poul Reichardt) are stranded as lone survivors of a boat wreck – is mixing studio scenes with footage from East Greenland made by Leo Hansen in the 1930s (Nørrested 2011, 42–43). Similarly, Universal’s feature film *Mutiny in the Arctic* (John Rawlins, 1941) – that follows two explorers’ Arctic survival – was made with an extensive use of stock footage from the Arctic including images from *SOS Eisberg* (AFI Catalog n.d.b). In this way, stock footage was used to depict Arctic landscapes through existing material rather than finance expensive second unit ‘film expeditions’ – especially in times of war.

The great cinematic event of the period was the later *Qivitoq* (1956) directed by Erik Balling. The largescale production celebrated 50th anniversary of Nordisk Films Kompagni and was also both the first Danish feature film in colour *and* Denmark’s first nomination Academy Award nomination for Foreign language film in 1957, despite a mediocre reception in the Danish press, which mainly praised the Greenlandic nature scenes and the Greenlandic acting performances (Gant 2003, 126). From a Greenlandic perspective, the film created the

first actual Greenlandic film star in the form of actor Niels Plateau, who played the Greenlandic lead alongside Dorthe Reimer and Justus Larsen next to the Danish stars Astrid Villaume and Poul Reichhardt, who had previously appeared in *Nordhavets Mænd*. The Greenlandic actors were duly credited in both promotional material and film texts, and the film was largely well received in Greenland (Pedersen 2003, 9).

As Gant (2003, 216) notes, domestication is an aspect of the film's representational strategy, for example by sending the popular Danish actors to the Greenlandic landscapes. Besides the interior scenes, the film was entirely shot on location in Greenland and primarily set – as *Hvor bjergene sejler* – in the settlement of Saqqaq. As such, Saqqaq is the centre of the 1950s most important Greenland films which, with its colourful houses and spectacular landscapes, were intended both to highlight technological advances and to celebrate Danish breakthroughs in an international context. A fact still used in the place branding of Saqqaq today (Olesen 2015).

The foreign (non-Danish) interest in Greenlandic locations during the period heavily relates to aviation, illustrated notably by large-scale films utilising aerial shots, beginning with Billy Wilder's *The Spirit of St. Louis* (1957). This film, chronicling Charles Lindbergh's transatlantic flight endeavours, incorporated second-unit aerial footage from Greenland. Similarly, Stanley Kubrick's UK/US co-produced dystopic comedy *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964) is a mosaic of several cross-continental locations ranging from the Shepperton Studios in England and location shoots in London to background aerial shots in Canada (Alberta, Québec, and the Northwest Territories) and the Arctic in the form of Greenland and Iceland (Krämer 2017, 114) to double USSR. To do so, a second unit was dispatched to the Arctic Circle in a hired B-17 plane. According to the Director of Photography Gilbert Taylor, the plane froze inside causing burning cold surfaces and – if heat was not supplied to the airplane at night – film tapes becoming dust during the three-week shoot flying 28,000 miles across the Arctic (Taylor in Naylor 2000). Again, these experiences of 'film expeditions' were used to market the film highlighting the struggles of Arctic nature.

More grounded – though still in the form of second unit shots – Greenlandic landscapes and wildlife were mixed with additional locations to create a fictional mythical Arctic island as well as unspecified high-Arctic scenery in Disney's *The Island at the Top of the World* (Robert Stevensen, 1974):

In arctic regions spanning from Alaska to Greenland, uncredited nature photographers Herb Smith and William Bacon, III, were aided by Coast Guard members as they captured footage of wild animals, such as walruses, whales, caribou, musk oxen, and polar bears.

(AFI Catalog n.d.c)

While the Arctic nature footage received praise in the press, the response to the film itself was mixed underlining the popularity of these types of high-Arctic depictions. Interestingly, the productions that are most involved in Greenland are the international British/Italian/French co-production of *The Savage Innocents* (Nicholas Ray, 1960) and somewhat surprisingly Herbert Achternbusch's German art film *Servus Bayern (Bye-bye Bavaria!, 1977)*.

*The Savage Innocents* almost takes the form of a colonial critique in a Western-like drama, where an Inuk man (Anthony Quinn) accidentally kills a Christian missionary causing him to be hunted by policemen which he subsequently rescues. The film opens with – and continues to consist of – spectacular Arctic scenery with floating icebergs, kayaks, and dogsleds sliding through snow-covered landscapes mixed with large studio recordings with polar bears and sea lions. While the plot is not specifically set in Greenland, the film ends with a note referring to the substantial location work:

The production gratefully acknowledges the co-operation of the Canadian and Danish authorities and the U.S. Army which made possible the actual filming of scenes in the Arctic Zones of Canada and Greenland. Organisation of Air Travel Services by S.A.S.: Scandinavian Airlines System.

(Ray 1960)

This underlines the need for close cooperation with the Danish authorities and experienced companies such as Scandinavian Airlines, while the co-production setup points towards a still-growing international interest in Arctic adventures.

The film *Servus Bayern* diverges as a dark comedy depicting a poet disillusioned with Bavaria and yearning for distant lands, where the “coldness of Bavaria segues into the blue-and-white icebergs of Greenland” (Rentschler 2015, 222). Shot in the summer, it juxtaposes typical grandiose aerial visuals of the landscape with bizarre scenes including a man grappling with another in a polar bear suit, and the eerie image of a naked man lying lifeless amongst the heather with icebergs in the backdrop. Greenland thus serves as a canvas for illustrating



extreme remoteness and artist's wanderlust in the narrative, although the rationale behind this expensive location choice remains undisclosed.

In addition to art film, new types of productions enter the realm of Greenland-related production in the form of television series. Here, episodes of *The Colgate Comedy Hour* (1950-1955, season 5, episode 13) and *The Outer Limit* (1963-1965, season 1, episode 8 named *The Human Factor*) encompass Greenland. The episode of *The Colgate Comedy Hour* is shot at the Thule Air Base – thus bringing a notion of comedy to the stationed troops – while the anthology episode of *The Outer Limit* also takes place at a military station. However, this is a supernatural episode, where the isolated station forms the isolated setting for a psychiatrist getting the ability to read his patient's thoughts with thrilling consequences. As with the other contemporary productions, Greenland as location is only involved through aerial shots of vast landscapes.

To conclude, while a notion of an indigenous screen industry does show in Greenland mostly in the form of collaborative projects such as *Da myndighederne sagde stop* or signs of film stardom in *Qvitiog*, the vast majority continues to come from the outside. However, as the immediate period following Home Rule will show, some of the traits started in this period do seem to spark a real pioneering phase of the Greenlandic screen industry that goes beyond collaboration and into indigenous production.

# 1979-2008

## Growing indigenous production

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is difficult to determine the exact beginning of Greenlandic filmmaking and thus the emergence of a locally anchored screen industry. One way to understand this is by pinpointing the first productions financed exclusively by Greenlandic stakeholders. According to Nørrested (2011, 77), this happens with the beginning of Home Rule and more specifically when the Danish producer Claus Hermansen began shooting so-called *municipal films* such as *Narssaq – en ung by i Grønland* (1979):

*The film on Narsaq [sic] is only the first in a series of films about towns and areas in Greenland. I work closely with the local councils on these projects in such way that the councils pay for the costs of the production whilst I arrange the distribution side of things. So, for example, right now I'm in the middle of negotiations with the Danish Foreign Ministry and the Danish Tourist Authority about making copies of the Narssaq film with foreign sub-titles.*

(Hermansen in Nørrested 2011, 77).

In other words, the production was an economically interesting venture initially outsourced to Danish producers and continued with Hermansen's *Sisimiut pillugit takormarianut* (1979) for the then Sisimiut Municipality, while Roos made the 250th anniversary film of Nuuk's founding, *Nuuk ukiut 250-íngorneráne*, in 1979.

The Home Rule Government's first production, however, was Greenlandic Mike Siegstad's educational film *Hvis der skal være havgående fiskeri* (1980). Roos' *Grønland* (1981) was also produced in this period with support from, among others, the then Nuuk Municipality and Grønlandsbanken. In Denmark, the film was considered the first Greenlandic-produced film though it contained a “an officious, bombastic Danish tone” (Nørrested 2011, 78-79). Instead, as written earlier, the critical *Da myndighederne sagde stop* can be seen as the first film pointing towards Greenlandic indigenous production due to its substantial Greenlandic agency through Aqqaluk Lyngé.

As a director, Lyngé continued to make critical, indigenous-rendered documentaries in the form of *Aasivik 77* (1980) about the Inuit summer gathering Aasivik, which in 1977 was held in Qullissat and *Nabo til Nordpolen* (1985) on the work to preserve the remote settlements

and their traditional occupations. As *Da myndighederne sagde stop*, both films were produced by the Denmark-based production company Flip Film Productions which produced a range of ecocritical and anti-imperialist documentaries during the 1970s and 1980s. In this period, Siegstad was a strong advocate for Greenlandic produced television. In an interview made in relation to the premiere of *Aasivik 77*, Siegstad described how

you entertain Greenlandic TV viewers with European produced programs evening after evening. These are programs, which cannot be said to harmonise with Greenlandic lifestyle and identity, - and therefore they cannot avoid affecting our minds in daily life.

(Siegstad in Atuagagdliutit 1980, 28, MT)

While the decades following Home Rule otherwise can be described as a cinematically quiet period (Fledelius 2002), filmmakers such as the Latvian-born director Ivars Silis – father of Greenlandic filmmaker Inuk Silis Høegh – made ecocritical documentaries like *Vor enestående tid* (1994), took the temperature of modern Greenland in *Gronland på vej – Hjemmestyre siden 1979* (1996), and looked (positively) towards the future in a small settlement in Southern Greenland in *Andala & Sofiannguaq* (2002). The same year, the first documentary made by a woman Greenlandic director premiered with Laila Hansen's *Inuk Woman City Blues* which – as Roos' *Kaláuvit* – portrays the life of Greenlanders living in Denmark, but with a focus on Greenlandic women addicts in Copenhagen.

Naturally, the launch of KNR in November 1982 was an important step towards an independent industry, where increased media awareness and the need for technical staff was created along with the production of Greenlandic content focusing on Greenlandic issues from Greenlandic perspectives (Fleischer 2019, 8). However, when asked of KNR's effect on the development of Greenland's film culture, Inuk Silis Høegh is more critical:

I think there's a strong divide. What they're doing – they're very set in a TV kind of way, or even radio way, of doing things. All the people who were making radio, when they started deciding that they wanted to make TV (also for KNR) – it was radio people when starting out. They kind of had the same ways of doing things, which were not visually very exciting, or not being very personal in their way of expressing themselves.

(Høegh and Turner 2022, 115)

Interestingly, a similar pattern emerged in my research interviews where no Greenlandic filmmaker mentioned KNR in relation to filmmaking – even when talking to a filmmaker like director Malik Kleist (2022, PI) who has a long history in KNR. Whether this has to do with the limited number of fictional formats being produced or a perceived conservatism is difficult to determine, but despite KNR's size and outreach there seems to be a low level of crossover of personnel between the film and television sector of Greenland – especially in KNR's earliest years.

However, the filmmaker Peter Jensen has been responsible for some degree of a crossover process between television and film starting as a self-taught technician at a local television station in Qaqortoq in 1978 where he made short documentaries such as *Puisit inuussutigaaarput* (1983). After working in the company Nanok Film TV from 1985 (which I will elaborate on in the next section), he established the company Inuk Video Produktion (later Inuk Media) with Kim Larsen working primarily with Greenlandic stakeholders – such as the Home Rule government and music videos for local bands – with contacts in Europe and the US (Thygesen 1998; Inuk Media 1994). While Jensen never produced feature-length content, his substantial production introduced alternative formats made by Greenlanders for Greenlanders and went beyond national borders winning prizes in, for instance, Denmark (Atuagagdlitit 1998, 14).

While Jensen positioned himself within the television industry, he formulated a critique similar to Høegh's in 1998:

KNR is good at journalism – but it's radio all over again. There must be someone in the country who can do something more cinematic. We're the only ones with that experience. Not because we've done feature films, but we're capable of doing more cinematic stuff [...] I've been knocking on politicians' doors. I've held meetings with KNR and suggested all kinds of cooperation. But all that happens is that money is pumped into KNR, but no funds are allocated to anyone outside that institution [...]. It's as if KNR has seen us as competitors, and that's ridiculous. It has been a demand from the public that they want more Greenlandic produced content, like drama. But it hasn't really come to anything.

(Jensen in Thygesen 1998, MT)

This suggests a national focus on establishing a sustainable news media system through rather than exploring government-supported fiction formats. In addition, the television industry does crossover in terms of the commercial companies such as Inuk Media, where ambitions

toward filmmaking are more present. In terms of KNR, there seems to be a lack of mandate towards producing drama, focusing mostly on journalistic demands.

In general, a sudden emergence of television-related Greenlandic productions happens through journalists and filmmakers such as Hans A. Hansen (sometimes under the synonym Albert Nuka), Isak Kleist, and a long list of people credited for single productions, but with Jensen and Silis being the most productive Greenland-based documentary filmmakers of the period – most often financed by the government. However, this does not mean that Danish and foreign interest is declining. On the contrary, there is a continuous interest from especially Danish, German, French, but also American, Canadian, Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish, and Icelandic filmmakers and production companies to produce documentary content in and about Greenland. With the Home Rule government as the biggest stakeholder financially, this also resulted in Greenlandic-Danish co-productions or co-financed projects such as *Tunit – det forsvundne folk* (1998) or Roos' *Gronland* (1981).

## Short films and Christmas calendars

Turning towards drama production and fiction more broadly, the years following Home Rule are important and appear remarkably overlooked in literature on screen production in Greenland. Here, the focus is usually centred on the year 1999, when the first Greenlandic produced (fiction) short film *Sinilluarit* by Inuk Silis Høegh premiered at the newly established cinema in Katuaq. The film had a script by Høegh and Kunuk Platou and kick-started a wave of Greenlandic productions in short formats. With a budget of 250,000 DKK (Jakobsen 1999a), the film was screened at the 12<sup>th</sup> Nordiske Filmfestival in Nuuk, eventually travelled to additional European festivals, and was a local audience success as a Greenlandic comedy (Jakobsen 1999b, 24). According to Emile Hertling Péronard (2021, PI, MT), this was a key event in the development towards a Greenlandic screen industry:

I was sitting in Katuaq at that premiere, and I had this experience of “God, there's a film that's not like the other films”. Which is our own film somehow. [...] And many people have had that experience when they've seen *Nuummioq*, or when they've seen *Qaqqat Alanngui*, or when they've had that ‘okay, this is a story told to us and by us’-feeling.

As such, *Sinilluarit* stands out as an important film – as a truly *Greenlandic* production – to the emerging group of Greenlandic filmmakers such as Péronard and the director Otto Rosing

(2021, PI) who initiated his filmmaking in connection with Høegh's following short film, *Eskimo Weekend* (2001), and eventually debuted as a director with the documentary portrait of writer and artist Jens Rosing, *Den evige flyver (Eternal Flight)*, in 2004 followed by *Nuummioq* in 2009.

Similarly, Platou was a central part of this generation, eventually becoming the first Greenlander educated at the National Film School of Denmark with the first Greenlandic animation film *Nanoq* (2000) as his graduation film. As a Greenlandic/Danish co-production, with funding from the Danish Film Workshop (Filmværkstedet), *Sinilluarit* can also be seen as the first example of transnational milieu-building which successfully launched a (small) generation of filmmakers still active today.

However, in terms of indigenous fiction film and even feature film productions, there was already activity in the 1980s around the establishment of KNR, where Hans A. Hansen's (under his synonym Albert Nuka) *Takorluukkat Sisamat (Four Visions, 1985)* premiered. Despite this, the film is only mentioned briefly as preceding *Nuummioq* as the first Greenlandic feature film (Thisted 2015a, 99). Similarly, Birgit Kleist Pedersen has argued that *Takorluukkat Sisamat* is the first Greenlandic feature film at the film festival Greenland Eyes in Berlin in 2012, but without argumentation (at least in the related newspaper article) (Hansen 2012).

In short, the film is about alcohol abuse across generations, jealousy, violence, and tensions between Greenlanders and Danes with a primary focus on Ujarak's (Anda Kristiansen) death spiral towards his own abyss of despair caused by alcohol. Though primarily a social realistic melodrama, the film takes the form of a crime fiction (with a murder) and court drama and consists of a relatively advanced film language with imaginative transitions, flashbacks, point of view perspective, and an open ending raising doubts about the fate of Ujarak. In terms of location, *Takorluukkat Sisamat* primarily takes place in apartments, shops, and on the street of Nuuk, as well as on a fishing boat and on the shore making use of the spectacular snowy landscapes and sunsets.

Despite this, it does not seem that the film was seen as an actual cinematic event, with almost no coverage in the Greenlandic press other than small notices such as in *Atuagagdliutit*, announcing that "The first Greenlandic produced video tape can now be rented in most video renting shops across Greenland" (Atuagagdliutit 1985a, MT). Though the notice does acknowledge the film as the first Greenlandic (video) production, its launch does not seem

to be – in any way – a cinematic event in the time of its production or in contemporary Greenland.

This can be explained by the background of the film's production and the resulting plot; It is produced by the newly established production company Nanoq Film TV for the Home Rule government's information service Tusarliivik as part of an alcohol campaign (Atuagagdliutit 1985a, 28). For this reason, the film was categorised as “the Greenlandic alcohol debate film” (Atuagagdliutit 1985b, 39, MT) in the contemporary KNR program schedule. One explanation, then, is that the film – despite being clearly fiction – has neither been categorised nor considered as entertainment. As a government-initiated project with a clear agenda of alcohol prevention, the film was likely viewed more as a (feature-length) commercial or public information resulting in its quick disappearance from KNR programme schedules and public consciousness. Additionally, the film premiered as a television film without ever going screening in cinema.

Still, the film is interesting – and important – as it marks a clear cinematic ambition in a feature film format more than 20 years prior to *Nuummioq*. Furthermore, several of the actors, such as Anda Kristiansen or Knud Kleist, continued their acting in largescale Danish feature film projects such as *Lysets hjerte* (*Heart of Light*, Jacob Grønlykke, 1998), while others, such as Naja Rosing Olsen, had fresh experience from the Danish feature film *Tukuma* (Palle Kjørulff-Schmidt, 1984) and later contributed further in terms of Indigenous screen production in the Greenlandic Christmas TV series *Avannaarsuani Nissit* (KNR, 2000).

Overall, this is part of a less described Greenlandic cultural production in 1980s Greenland and especially at KNR.<sup>23</sup> For example, fiction productions such as *Suna tamarmi killiffissalik* (Hans A. Hansen, 1984), an adaptation of Siiva Lange's short story *Sooquna taamaattut?* aired as a TV play the year before (Fleischer 2019, 9). Both speak into the cinematic movements in 1980s Greenland, which are overlooked in the literature and the collective consciousness.

Another interesting aspect of *Takorluukkat Sisamat* is the history of the film's production company Nanoq Film TV. Initiated by Hansen, the company produced – in addition to works of fiction – several television programmes and reportages. The company had from the beginning ambitions for fiction production – among other things by filming or remaking successful Greenlandic theatrical plays by the group Silamiut or with the production of music

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<sup>23</sup> This gap in research on the early years of the KNR is being filled by Aviaq Fleischer and her forthcoming PhD dissertation on KNR in the 1980s at Ilisimatusarfik.

videos. For instance, their first production was a 20 minute ‘music film’ with images of contemporary Greenland through the text and music of Greenlandic musician Ulf Fleischer (Atuagagdlitit 1984, 13) in addition to other fiction projects initiated by public institutions such as the TV play *Angsten for Aids* (1990) written by Jens Brønden and produced for PAARISA (the health promotion council) (Atuagagdlitit 1990d).

Interestingly, the company was the result of a collaboration between Nordisk Film and the Greenlandic television association Nuuk TV. Both contributed with appr. €33.000 to the establishment and had representatives in the board of the otherwise independent company (Atuagagdlitit 1990e, 16). However, Nuuk TV and Nanoq Film TV had the same director, Laila Ramlau-Hansen, from 1988 (Atuagagdlitit 1988a, 2).

According to Brønden (1999, 13), who wrote Hansen's obituary after his passing in 1999, Hansen had a close relationship to Nordisk Film's Erik Balling. In this regard, Nordisk Film seems to have a never fully realised interest in screen production in Greenland through Nanoq Film TV; for instance, a largescale feature film with a budget of appr. €4.500.000 focusing on the life of Minik Wallace was developed but never made (Atuagagdlitit 1987, 4). According to *Atuagagdlitit*, the Swedish Film Institute promised to support the project directed by the Swedish siblings Staffan and Ylva Julén (Atuagagdlitit 1988b, 1) who had previously directed the documentary *Inughuit - folket vid Jordens navel* (1985) in Wallace's home region. In the obituary, Brønden also describes how one of Hansen's last tasks at Nanoq Film TV was a “detailed synopsis – some sections as script – to a TV saga from a Greenlandic settlement in the colonial period. The series was ordered by Nordisk Film, but never initiated” (Brønden 1999, 13, MT). The reason why none of these largescale projects were initiated remains unknown, but it seems in the case of the Minik project to be a lack of funding.

In the case of the television series, Brønden does insinuate issues in the structure of Nanoq Film TV which caused the company to never fully realise its alleged potential:

The company produced on 16 millimetre and could have developed into a solid platform for the film production that gradually emerged among Greenlandic writers and Greenlandic and foreign filmmakers. Regrettably, one of the shifting boards of Nuuk TV got the nifty idea that Nanoq Film TV was just Nordisk Film's attempt to stick »a straw into Nuuk TV's (the association owned half the company) cash register«. Nothing was more wrong, and the dissolution of the company was a regrettable mistake.

(Brønden 1999, 13, MT)



With apparent bitterness, this section on the lost potential and closure of Nanoq Film TV gives some indications on the tensions associated with the company in general. The mentioning of ‘shifting boards’ indicates a lack of stability, whilst the straw metaphor indicates an imperialistic discourse and affective entanglements causing doubts of the intentions of Nordisk Film and their activity in Greenland. Irrespective of the exact reason, Nordisk Film left the collaboration with Nanoq Film TV on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1990, and gave their share of ownership to Nuuk TV (Atuagagdlitit 1990e, 16).

Regardless of its fate, the company had an indisputable influence on Greenland's own production in the 1980s with big ambitions for the local industry. For instance, the company applied to the then municipality of Nuuk for money to build a combined facility with film studios and a cinema in an old shipyard in 1984. Later, the company tried to get permission from the municipality to take over a closed heliport and establish a cinema, film studio, conference centre and theatre together with the theatre group Silamiut (Brønden 1997, 14). None of these ideas came into reality; the heliport was taken over by KNR, and the first cinema opened in 1997 as part of the culture centre Katuaq.

Similar to *Takorluukkat Sisamat* and Nanoq Film TV's less described history and significance for early industry formations, another important part of the period was the emergence of Greenlandic Christmas TV series calendar's at KNR. As a format most-often attached to Denmark and the Nordic countries, these 24-episode serials of fiction are broadcasted every day each day of December up until Christmas Eve (Agger 2013; Kallehauge and Overgaard 2018). While Danish Christmas calendars had already been broadcasted with Greenlandic versioning, KNR airs the first Greenlandic produced television calendar in 1985. To do so, KNR wrote a contract with Silamiut to create the series together with technical personnel from KNR. The series was shot in October 1985 and premiered in December the same year (Atuagagdlitit 1985c, 40). The result was *Nissikkut*; a series with the traditional 24 episodes with a duration of approximately 15 minutes.

*Nissikkut* is far from the only example of these larger projects (creating about six hours of Greenlandic produced drama) as several calendars have premiered since. Firstly, ‘extended’ versioning such as in *Trolderikkip ullorsintai* (1995) emerged, where the Danish calendar *Trolderiks Posthule* (1992) was versioned and supplemented with locally produced introductions by Hanne Rosing shot at Arctic Gave Shop in Nuuk with songs by Juaaka Lyberth (Atuagagdlitit 1995, 4). In addition, the calendars *Atsa Rosap Jullimut piareersarnera*

(*Atsa Rosa's Preparations for Christmas*, 1994), *Avannaarsuani Nissit* (*The Elves High in the North*, 2000), and *Meqqat 24-rmiut* (*The Children in Blok 24*, 2005) were produced in-house at KNR as original series with public mandates.

In all cases, the productions had significance beyond KNR. In *Atsa Rosap Jullimut piareersarnera*, singer and actor Agga Olsen plays the main character Atsa Rosa, which made her character very popular among Greenlandic children (Kurt Kristensen 1995, 24) and led to a role in Bille August's feature film *Smilla's Sense of Snow* (1997) (Kleinschmidt 1996, 8). In *Avannaarsuani Nissit*, Naja Rosing Olsen continued her acting as the main character together with child actor Eqaluk Høegh who later had a main role in the Greenlandic horror feature *Qaqqat Alanngui* (2011) and became host of the popular satire show *Labrador' Kangian'* on KNR. Additionally, *Qaqqat Alanngui's* director and scriptwriter Malik Kleist and filmmaker and later co-founder of Film.gl Karsten Heilmann had several technical roles as KNR employees – for instance on *Avannaarsuani Nissit*. As such, the productions functioned as early production experience for filmmakers or actors such as Kleist, Høegh, and Olsen and paved the way for larger productions – in Greenland and beyond.

## **Santa Clauses and co-productions**

While the productions mentioned in the above were examples of Greenlandic productions in the period, another important aspect of those years was that of foreign ones. In terms of television series, one interesting – and once again unstudied – case is that of DR's *Nissebanden i Grønland* (*The Christmas elves team in Greenland*, DR, 1989). Directed and written by Flemming Jensen – together with respectively Per Pallesen and John Stefan Olsen – the serial was a success with more than one million Danish viewers when it was rerun in 1993 and it achieved DR's highest average viewing figures for a Christmas calendar ever (Kallehauge and Overgaard 2018). With several reruns, *Nissebanden i Grønland* is an important part of how Greenland is portrayed in fiction on Danish screens, being based on a mythical tale of Santa in Greenland with lots of spectacular arial shots of fjords and dogsleds crossing eternal ice caps – spectacular images not usually being part of the genre of Christmas calendars.

Both the preparation, production, and (positive) reception is well-covered in contemporary Greenlandic media, focusing on the choice of location in and near Uummannaq and the settlement Ikerasak where Jensen worked as a teacher from 1973 to

1975. While all interiors were made in studios in Denmark, the Greenlandic exteriors were shot in below 25 Celsius by a 25-person crew:

The recordings are technically controlled from a caravan, which is specially designed as a small TV studio. The camper came to Uummanaq with the last ship and is pulled across the ice from location to location.

(Nørreslet 1989, 8)

In addition, *Atuagagdliutit* focus on Greenlandic agency through the work of Karl Kristensen from Thule who was hired by DR to build the igloo used in the serial (Nørreslet 1989, 8). The production casted its actors among locals, for instance Malik Niemann as the main character Inuk and Johannes Therkildsen as his father (Jakobsen 1989, 16; Fleischer 1992, 2).

While the articles offer some insight into the difficulties of location work in Greenland – and how the production itself and the media put forward these difficulties – a particularly interesting aspect is the following developments. In *Nissebanden i Grønland*, the team of elves venture to Greenland to help Santa Claus who – according to Greenlanders and Danes – lives in Greenland; a ‘fact’ heavily contested by other nations believing him to live in places like the North Pole or Finland. According to Jensen, one aspect of the serial was to both broaden the knowledge on Greenland in general and to brand Greenlandic Santa: “it is about time that someone brands the Greenlandic Santa before for example the Fins convince the world that Santa has moved to Finland” (Jensen in Pedersen 1989, 9, MT). Exactly this branding potential seemed to spark something – not only in Ikerasak and Uummanaq, but in Greenland as a whole. In his New Year speech in 1990, the Greenlandic prime minister Jonathan Motzfeldt praised the serial for being more than ‘just entertaining’:

It is nearly the first time our fellow members of the Kingdom of Denmark are taught about everyday life in Greenland in a fun, exciting, and very enlightening way. I would like to thank DR and the people who have worked on the production for the good initiative [...]. Now there can't be any doubt on whether Santa lives in Greenland.

(Motzfeldt in *Atuagagdliutit* 1990a, 14, MT)

This positivity and vision of the serial as ‘more than entertaining’ was shared by the economic department of the Home Rule government. They initiated a small seminar a few months

after the airing of *Nissebanden i Grønland* focusing on the economic opportunities as the “PR value that TV’s Christmas calendar made must be taken advantage of” (Atuagagdliutit 1990b, 16, MT).

With the establishment of the company Santa Work Shop A/S in Nuuk, the business adventure began and already the same year, the Home Rule government invested two to three million DKK in the branding of the Greenland Santa (Atuagagdliutit 1990b, 9). The company was created and funded by the government through the fund Santa Claus of Greenland to create 100 jobs and 100 million DKK in revenue as well as growing tourism and the export of Greenlandic products (Røjkjær 1990, 7; Atuagagdliutit 1991, 23). Moreover, the first hotel opened in Uummannaq the same year that the production aired and Santa’s hut – made as an empty shell solely for exterior shots – was transformed into a liveable space for tourists to visit with financial support from then municipality of Uummannaq (Madsen 1995, 3). In addition, you could even get a guided tour by the Greenlandic main actor Malik Niemann (Atuagagdliutit 1989, 16).

Though the business adventure of the Greenlandic Santa continued for years, it eventually crashed, dragging behind it a long list of bankruptcies and changing addresses for Santa. Following these bankruptcies, Santa’s huge mailbox has travelled across Greenland to Nuuk and Ilullissat – causing large international awareness due to the news value of a bankrupt Santa – eventually bringing the mailbox to Uummannaq, where

it was part of the city's profile as the town where *Nissebanden* was filmed. In this way, the story of the Greenlandic Santa Claus has come full circle – after all, it was the success of *Nissebanden i Grønland* that inspired Greenlandic politicians to invest in Santa Claus in the first place. (Hansen 2022, MT)

*Nissebanden i Grønland* was thus not solely seen as initiating this largescale business in 1989 but is also widely regarded as such in present day media. As follows, the serial clearly sparked an interest in the potential of screen production.

This remarkable interest was not necessarily solely sparked by *Nissebanden i Grønland* but might also be supported by the largescale UK/US co-produced feature film *Santa Claus* (Jeannot Szwarc, 1985) which was partly shot in Greenland where it received some media attention. With a focus on the production’s research team flying over Paamiut and Narsarsuaq and the historical budget of \$50.000.000, the press described the context of the

film and the enormous setup (Atuagagdliutit 1985d, 28; Sørensen 1984, 22). Greenland was (once again) only used as double through background shots on a story set in the North Pole. The film might have created an interest and not least a focus towards the (financial) opportunities of both Santa and screen production among Greenlandic politicians four years prior. While educational films, as well as tourism-related municipal films, had already been produced for decades, there was perceived potential in what can be derived from successful foreign screen productions. In this way, the screen-induced tourism and resulting Santa Claus project was seen as part of the Home Rule government's interest in and financing of land-based industries such as soap production, stonemasonry, and hotel business (Skifte 1990, 9).

While the Greenlandic agency on the creative aspects of *Nissebanden i Grønland* is limited, there is more (credited) activity in above-the-line roles in the before mentioned contemporary Danish feature films *Tukuma* (Palle Kjærulff-Schmidt, 1984) and *Lysets hjerte* (*Heart of Light*, Jacob Grønlykke, 1998). Like the creative influence of Aqqaluk Lyngé in *Da myndighederne sagde stop*, both productions have Greenlanders credited – in these cases as scriptwriters. As has often been the case, foreign productions are preceded by research tours, where primarily scriptwriters and directors travel on 'inspirational trips' to Greenland before the script is written; in other words, a very different practice from the usual one of the directors travelling on location with a more or less finalised script in hand (Grønlund 2021a). This was also the case with *Tukuma* that saw director Palle Kjærulff-Schmidt and screenwriter Klaus Rifbjerg go on a two-month research trip to Uummannaq in 1982 where the film was later shot. Here they stayed with the then school's headmaster – and later politician – Josef 'Tuusi' Motzfeldt. Through this, Motzfeldt gained influence on the film and credit as screenwriter alongside Rifbjerg and Kjærulff-Schmidt, as he became, as the latter writes in his memoirs, the "absolutely indispensable guarantor to ensure that Klaus Rifbjerg's and my depiction of Greenland was truthful" (Kjærulff-Schmidt 2018, 115, MT). In addition, Motzfeldt served as co-director of the Greenlandic-language shoots (Gant 2003, 134).

Similarly, *Lysets hjerte* had Greenlandic writer Hans Anthon Lyngé as scriptwriter alongside director Jacob Grønlykke. Grønlykke wanted to make the first feature film on Greenlandic terms, in Greenlandic, with Greenlandic actors, and with as few Danes as possible on the production team (Nørrested 2011, 91). Growing up in a colonised Greenland – born in the forcibly closed settlement of Qullissat – it is obvious how Lyngé's strong influence on the script shines through in the film's postcolonial perspectives (Rygaard and Pedersen 2003, 168). In this regard, one could argue – like Gant (2004, 225) – that Lyngé and Motzfeldt are

only written in as ‘stamps of authenticity’ without any real influence on either production and thus degrees of tokenism. Again, I follow Thisted’s (2006. 67-68) argumentation that this statement is based on a historical view that undermines the actual Greenlandic influence and limits their work to insignificant extras in a Danish project. This is unlikely given the films’ – especially *Lysets hjerte*’s – plot and language-use, Lyngø and Motzfeldt’s political and cultural status, and their contemporary and later accounts of the processes. In Greenland, the film is often referred to as “the first Greenlandic feature film” (Eistrup 1998, 18, MT) – not Danish-Greenlandic.

In addition, there are even signs of milieu-building beyond writing and acting, as ASA Film looked for technical personnel; something actor Niels Platou was offered in connection with *Qivitoq*, where he was given the opportunity to become a lighting man at Nordisk Film, which he – with later regret – declined (Ramlau-Hansen 1998, 16). For instance, ASA Film looked for two Greenlanders to become apprentices as lighting assistants as part of the shooting of *Lysets hjerte* with half of the education taking place at ASA’s studios and one half on-set in Ilulissat partly funded by the Home Rule government (ASA Film 1997, 17). Furthermore, perhaps due to the large involvement of Lyngø or the success of *Nissebanden i Gronland*, the Home Rule government supported the expensive *Lysets hjerte* with one million DKK – a significant figure for the support of a Danish film. This caused some negative reactions; for instance from Peter Jensen, who connected this with his bitterness towards the government’s focus on KNR:

I've been knocking on politicians' doors. But all that happens is that money is pumped into KNR, but no funds are allocated to anyone outside that institution. There is no support for these kinds of different productions. But as soon as someone from the outside comes along – they're happy to give them [*Lysets hjerte*] million-funding.

(Jensen in Thygesen 1998, MT)

As such, the Home Rule period apparently saw potential in foreign productions which – according to Jensen – in some cases exceeded the support for local actors. However, in most cases, industry professionals looked positively at the effect of the film (Schultz-Lorentzen 1999, 17, MT). In other words, *Lysets hjerte* was – despite its formal status as a Danish production – an important window for a ‘new generation’ of filmmakers. As both milieu-building and as a way of modernising transnational collaboration, the film illustrates the

importance of close cooperation and productive partnerships to create broader experiences in an emerging industry.

In terms of foreign production – with less Greenlandic agency – there was also high activity with more fiction productions than in the previous two periods combined. Especially the US had their eyes on Greenland with productions such as Clint Eastwood’s *Firefox* (1982), Disney’s *Eight Below* (Frank Marshall, 2006), or *Fantastic Four: The Silver Surfer* (Tim Story, 2007). Despite major plot and genre differences – as Cold War drama, expedition adventure, and fantasy – all films had large budgets and used several different locations. In these productions, Greenland only played a minor role with second-unit shots to double other locations or non-specified Arctic scenery.

In *Firefox*, this was in the form of a ‘traditional’ areal shoot with a special flight consultant flying across the Western US to the Thule Air Force Base in Greenland with \$150,000 worth of camera equipment shooting a range of footage used as a bluescreen backdrop in the film’s areal scenes (AFI Catalog n.d.d). In *Eight Below*, Disney once again filmed in Greenland to double Antarctica with an entirely US second unit crew filming in Ilulissat and Kangerlussuaq. However, actor Ortu Ignatiussen – who plays a minor role in the film – is credited as ‘production assistant’ in the end title along with a ‘thank you’ dedicated to the “Greenlandic Home Rule, the cities of Ilulissat and Kangerlussuaq, and the people of Greenland” (Marshall 2006).

In addition, Ignatiussen worked as actor on the Icelandic-Danish-Norwegian feature film *Ikíngut* (Gísli Snær Erlingsson, 2000) and – more surprisingly – in *Gravity* (Alfonso Cuarón, 2013) as a Greenlandic hunter speaking on the phone with Sandra Bullock (Kleeman 2013, 26). In the seven-minute sequence, Ignatiussen speaks East-Greenlandic to an uncomprehending Bullock. The film does not take place in Greenland, but it still gives a small glimpse of the Greenlandic language and culture in a Hollywood blockbuster.

While these examples are productions where Greenland was chosen to double other locations – likely given its relative proximity to Western US – there are also examples of the opposite. For instance, the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard is used to double Greenland in the Norwegian thriller *Kjærlighetens kjøtere* (*Zero Kelvin*, Hans Petter Moland, 1995), chosen for its resemblance to Northeast Greenland and accessibility as Norwegian territory. In general, most feature film productions of the period are international co-productions such as the Danish/German *Smillas Sense of Snow* (Bille August, 1997) partly shot in Ilulissat and the Italian/Danish *Quando i Bambini Giocano in Cielo* (Lorenzo Hendel, 2005). As more

alternative formats, the 2000s also introduced the British two-episode mini-series *Shackleton* (2002)<sup>24</sup> and the successful largescale animated Danish-French *Drengen som ville gøre det umulige* (*The Boy Who Wanted to be a Bear*, Jannik Hastrup, 2003) respectively continued the expedition discourse and introduced feature length animation.

## The first wave

Something is happening. The young people is full of energy. They agree that something must happen now. We must show the world that we can do it. We are not just the poor Greenlanders we are always made out to be. We must show the world that we can do it ourselves. We are not there yet. But it is close.

(Jensen in Thygesen 1998, MT)

This quote by Peter Jensen springs from an optimism in late-90s Greenland in the wake of *Lysets hjerte* and just before the premiere of *Sinilluarit*. This coincided with other key events, such as the opening of Greenland's first cinema in the culture house Katuaq in 1997 as well as the organisation of the film festival Nordiske Filmdage in 1999 where *Sinilluarit* premiered. The year before, the director of the DFI, Mona Jensen, explained the thoughts behind placing a film festival in Nuuk: "When we place a festival in the peripheral areas, it is of course very much to stimulate the film environment in that place, and *Lysets hjerte* has been a good engine to do so" (Jensen in Politiken 1998, MT). As such, there is already a perceived film environment in Greenland to be stimulated and thus an inherent ambition of mileu-building both through the festival and through collaborative projects such as *Lysets hjerte*.

Around the turn of the millennium, the first sign of a collective institution of filmmakers were created through the association Assilissat consisting of 18 members around its establishment with the goal:

- 1) to stimulate new Greenlandic talent in film and TV production, 2) to give the Greenlandic storytelling tradition the opportunity to use modern techniques and forms of expression, 3) stimulate an increased growth base for the film and TV community in Greenland, 4) create a broader knowledge of Greenland's history and culture; and 5) develop a number of scripts with the aim of producing a number of short films in collaboration between Nordic and Greenlandic filmmakers.

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<sup>24</sup> Though set in the Antarctic, *Shackleton* was shot partly in Greenland doubling the Antarctic wilderness.



(Brønden 1998, 10, MT)

As formulated in a contemporary article, Assilissat gave Greenlandic filmmakers “the opportunity to create a counterweight to foreign film productions, and more importantly, to give audiences in Greenland a chance to watch films which the people of Greenland can identify with” (Jakobsen 1999b, 24, MT). In other words, a more structured collective of Greenlandic filmmakers working for Greenlandic filmmakers saw the light of day as a clear sign of a pioneering industry with ambitions for Greenlandic storytelling. In addition, Assilissat held a four-day film festival in Nuuk in the Easter of 1998, including expedition films, the Finnish/Greenlandic short *Qulleq* (1997) and *Lysets hjerte*, which later travelled to Danish cities in collaboration with Danish stakeholders (Brønden 1998, 10).

However, despite initiating what could be regarded as the pioneering stage of an indigenous industry life cycle, the development seemed to stagnate in the 2000s with few productions and the slow dissolution of Assilissat. The most obvious reason for this is that the optimism of the 1990s was not supported financially, politically, and by enough filmmakers to have a sustainable association or industry. Perhaps in line with Jensen’s critique of the government’s alleged sole focus on KNR (television formats) or largescale collaborations with foreign professionals, there did not seem to be a solid foundation for an industry to grow.

However, while the wave might have lost its force, I would argue that the period from 1985 to 2000 can rightfully be referred to as the *first wave* of Greenlandic cinema carried forward by filmmaking pioneers like Hans A. Hansen, Peter Jensen, and Inuk Silis Høegh and indigenous or collaborative projects such as *Takorluukkat Sisamat*, *Lysets hjerte*, or *Similluarit*. This is not – in any way – to underestimate the importance of earlier productions, filmmakers, or actors, but rather to emphasise the wave created in this period and especially around the turn of the millennium both in terms of productions, productive partnerships, agency, and institutions. As such, there are several splashes throughout history, which only manifest themselves as a wave a hundred years after the first Greenland-related production. Initiating a pioneering period, this went into a sudden decline with an industry that did not keep up the collective momentum in the 2000s. But as I will present in the next chapter, this changes in the contemporary screen industry.

# Chapter 5

## Contemporary screen production and the second wave: 2009-2023

“When you make a film and you come from a minority population, or you come from an Indigenous population, it's just political. It's ideological, idealistic, every time you make a film. And it doesn't matter if it's a fiction short film or some very political documentary. It's always political. There's always some kind of activism in making those films.”

**Emile Hertling Péronard** (2021, PI, MT)

Producer and co-owner of Polarama Greenland and Ánorák Film

## Policies, ultrasmall institutions, and stakeholders

As is relatively well documented in the literature on Greenlandic film (Thisted 2015a; Nørrested 2011; Thorsen and Péronard 2021; Grønlund 2021a), the sudden development of Greenlandic screen production in 2009 is closely linked to the same year-premiere of Otto Rosing and Torben Bech's feature film *Nuummioq*, which made Greenlandic screen production an international affair and kick-started a small boom in Greenlandic-produced content. The purpose of this chapter is to build on this existing knowledge and an in-depth presentation and analysis of the period to date, focusing on otherwise unaddressed (industry and policy) perspectives of contemporary screen history.

### 'Economic no-man's-land': Greenland and the Danish Film Act

Following the implantation of Home Rule, Greenland took over the area of culture from the Danish government. However, for the Greenland artists – whether it is painters, authors, or filmmakers – this has meant that despite being Danish citizens, they do not necessarily have access to Danish public funds unless they are residents in Denmark. Similarly, they do not necessarily have access to Greenlandic funds if they are residents in Denmark. In a news article from 2018, artists are thus described as being “caught in economic no-man's-land” (Elmelund 2018). In terms of filmmaking, one particular part of the funding scheme has been criticized, namely the issue of the Danish Film Act.

While Greenland was not mentioned in the Danish Cinema Acts of 1922, 1933, and 1938 – still formally being a colony – Greenland appears in the first Danish *Cinema and Film Act* in 1964. Here, Greenland is mentioned along with the Faroe Islands as a final concluding remark in section 38: “The Act, which does not apply to the Faroe Islands and Greenland, will be up for revision at the latest in the parliamentary year 1970-71” (Danish Film and Cinema Act 1964, 8, MT). This was revised in the following *Film and Cinema Act* of 1972, where an entire section more openly concludes that the Act (still) does not apply to Greenland and the Faroe Islands, “but may be put into effect in Greenland by Royal Decree with such derogations as the particular conditions of Greenland may require” (Danish Film and Cinema Act 1972, 7, MT). While this section was kept in the following *Film Act* of 1982,

this was once again changed in 1989 to the shorter and more consistent formulation: “The Act does not apply to the Faroe Islands and Greenland” (Danish Film Act 1989, 5, MT). This wording is kept in the still-functioning 1997 version of the Film Act (DFI n.d.b).

Over time, these sections have caused many debates between politicians and frustration among Greenlandic filmmakers. The issue caught particular attention around the production of *Nuummioq* starting with frustration from the film’s producer, who could not apply despite being a Danish citizen (Sommer 2008). This issue continued to the Danish parliament, where Greenlandic politician Juliane Henningsen Heilmann asked then Danish Minister of Culture Brian Mikkelsen whether this was the true and – if so – whether it was “reasonable that films produced in Greenland/Faroe Islands, which is part of the Danish realm, are not eligible for support?” (Heilmann 2008). In an official response letter, Mikkelsen referred to the *Film Act* and the fact that Greenland took over the area of culture as part of Home Rule:

I am aware that it may be difficult to maintain a profitable Greenlandic film production. One of the options available to Greenlandic producers is to enter into co-operations with Danish producers, cf. Section 17 (3) of the Film Act, which states that co-productions may also receive support.

(Mikkelsen 2008, MT)

This discussion has continued in waves until today with the same answers from the successive Danish ministers of culture. For instance, Greenlandic politician Sara Olsvig raised a similar question to then minister Uffe Elbæk with a similar response (Elbæk 2012). In this way, the discussion reached a dead end, with Greenlandic politicians and filmmakers talking about responsibility and coherence, while Danish politicians refer to legal texts and self-imposed Greenlandic self-government. At a meeting between Greenlandic filmmakers and the DFI, DFI director Claus Ladegaard referred to this as the "Gordian knot" (Ladegaard 2022) in the Danish-Greenlandic collaboration since the DFI is subject to the *Film Act* and therefore has no legal basis to support unless the Act is revised.

Contrary to the discourse of collaboration, Greenlandic politician Doris Jakobsen opposed efforts to amend the Danish Film Act, viewing attempts to seek Danish funding as akin to 'begging Denmark for more money,' and undermining Greenland's self-sufficiency (Duus 2012). Instead, Jakobsen suggested elevating Greenlandic film support, promoting local artistry, and facilitating international collaborations, thus fostering a self-reliant film

industry (Kristensen 2012). This stance, advocating for self-reliance over Danish financial assistance, sparked a divisive debate within Greenland; While Demokratiit's spokesman Anda Uldum praised Sara Olsvig's dedication to altering the Danish Film Act, and disagreed with Jakobsen's characterisation of the efforts as 'begging,' a wider consensus emerged emphasizing the dual potential of nurturing Greenlandic cinema *and* enhancing economic prospects, both aligned with narratives of nation-building and economic independence (Duus 2012a). However, Jakobsen's proposition met rejection from the Greenlandic government, citing a necessity to explore Danish funding avenues before allocating substantial sums from Greenland's own budget, highlighting a continuing complex interplay of self-determination and reliance on Danish support in Greenlandic policymaking (Duus 2012c).

In other words, the discussions of Greenland and the Danish *Film Act* fall into affective, postcolonial discourses creating continuing tensions and a fundamental divide between Greenlandic and Danish film culture, which on the one hand hampers Greenlandic film and on the other forces the film industry to look towards other options when Danish co-production is not desired and direct funding not an option.

While the discussion has continued, there has been a noticeable shift favouring collaboration over financing. During the 2020 opening of the Danish parliament, a period contemporaneous with the promotion of *Borgen: Power & Glory*, Greenlandic representatives emphasised the burgeoning screen industry in Greenland in their speeches; for instance, Aki-Mathilda Høegh-Dam (2020) highlighted the increased Danish interest in Greenland, urging for greater inclusion of Greenlandic artists and professionals to ensure authentic representation and storytelling in media content about Greenland, proposing collaboration and active involvement over mere financing.

## **Greenlandic film policies: from theatre and film to Arts fund**

In the Greenlandic funding landscape, funds such as NunaFonden, NAPA, National Lottery Fonds, and various local public and private stakeholders have persistently supported national filmmaking. Contrarily, the government subsidy scheme has seen several changes. Initially, in 2003, a joint funding pool for theatre and film was introduced with a budget of DKK 1.320.000 (€175.000), which lasted until 2006 when it was divided, allocating DKK 420.000 (€56.000) specifically for film projects emphasising artistic expression (Greenland Home

Rule Government 2003, 420; 2006, 395). However, this allocation system, controlled by changing ministers without adhering to the 'arm's length principle,' raised questions. In 2022, a significant change occurred when the individual film funds were absorbed into the newly formed Greenland's Arts Fund, marking an end to film-specific governmental funding, as I will elaborate on later.

As figure 5 shows, the grant itself grew steadily until then with two major allocations of DKK 1.000.000 (€130.000) in 2016 and 2019 when the grant peaked at DKK 3.905.000 (€520.000). In 2016, this was directly commented on in the Finance Bill: “The grant for Film activity has in Finance Bill 2016 been allocated additional DKK 1,0 mio. with the aim of giving a significant boost to the scale of Greenlandic film production” (Greenland Self-Government 2015, 413, MT). In other words, there was political will to transfer funds to the film sector.

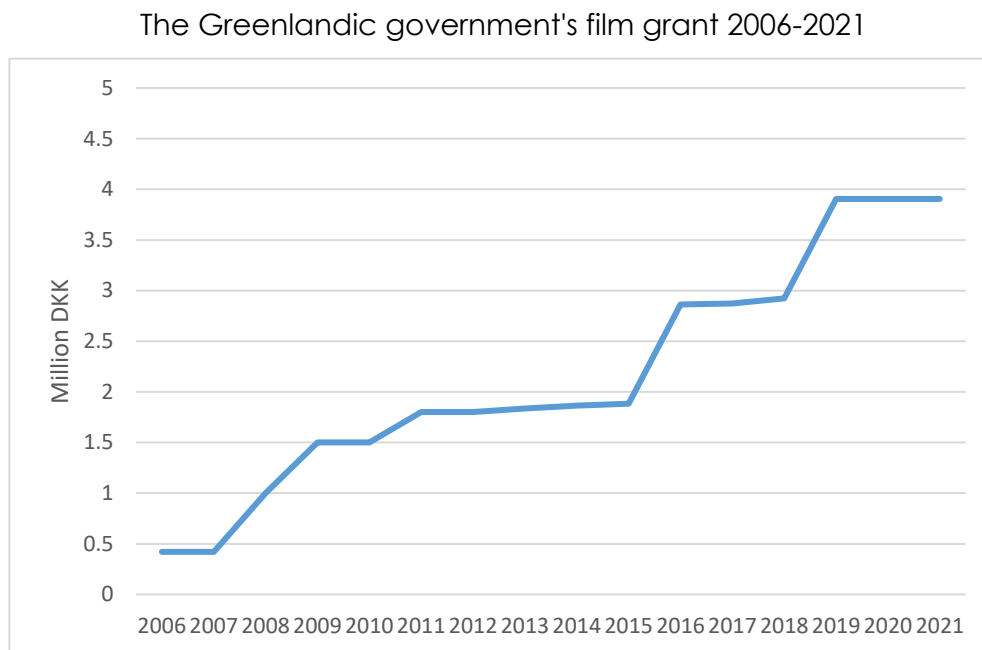


Figure 5: Overview of the Greenlandic government's grant for Film Activity from 2006-2021. Based on the Greenlandic Finance Bills 2006-2021.

Additionally, three major film-related changes were implemented in the financial bills of the period. Firstly, it was specified in the 2013 finance bill that the grants “can be awarded to applicants with permanent residence in Greenland, possibly in co-production with a partner in Denmark or another country” (Greenland Self-Government 2012, 282, MT). Until then, residence requirements were not specified and thus to be decided by the relevant minister. In addition, the legislation opens specifically for co-production similar to the Danish *Film Act*.

Secondly, support to a film workshop (now Filmiliortarfik) is mentioned for the first time in the Finance Bill of 2019 where a workshop can be supported upon application (Greenland Self-Government 2018, 447). It is classified as a “special priority cultural project” (Greenland Self-Government 2022, 460, MT) meaning that the grant is supplied from a pool that is separate from the Film Activity grant. This change has taken place following a prioritisation of the cultural sector in 2018, when the Self-Government allocated special funds to culture “to improve conditions for filmmakers, including by establishing a film workshop” (Greenland Self-Government 2017, 212–13, MT).

This growing priority coincides with the third major change with the establishment of a tax rebate annotation in 2020. Here, Nalaakkersuisut is authorised to reimburse up to DKK 10.000.000 (€1.340.000) yearly on a number of taxes and fees which a film production company has paid in connection with shooting and producing of one or more films in Greenland. As I will elaborate on in the next section, this tax incentive was heavily critiqued by Greenlandic filmmakers due to its low practical applicability.

Overall, the emergence of government funding mirrors sentiments expressed around 2004 to leverage media, especially film, to portray Greenlandic culture globally. As stated by politician Georg Olsen (2004): “Through film, our country can become more visible in other countries, which can also have positive economic consequences. We [Inuit Ataqatigiit] therefore believe that the National Council's willingness to develop this is extremely positive and necessary” (Olsen 2004, MT).

Despite these developments in the Greenlandic film policy, there is dissatisfaction among many Greenlandic filmmakers on the lack of political understanding and prioritisation of the film sector, caught between being seen as a cultural endeavour and a business venture. According to Emile Hertling Péronard (2021, PI) and Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg (2021, PI), politicians fail to grasp the dual function of filmmaking, which encompasses both cultural enrichment and substantial economic opportunities.

Another issue is the merger of the specific public film grant into the broader Greenland's Arts Fund, a move initiated on 1 January 2022. This amalgamation sees the film sector competing for a share of a DKK 8,614,000 (€1.156.000) fund, pooled with six other creative disciplines. Klaus Georg Hansen, chairman of Film.gl, has publicly voiced concerns that the new structure could potentially restrict the financing available for film projects, arguing that the decision fails to recognise the film industry as a serious business (Josefsen 2022; Hansen 2022, PI).

Hansen (2022, PI) underscores the nascent stage of film infrastructure in Greenland, attributing it partly to film production not being ‘born into’ the Home Rule Finance Bills as other traditional arts such as literature or music. Furthermore, Greenland's historical administrative alignment with Denmark, a country without a film commissioner, contrasts starkly with other Nordic nations that boast well-funded, location-centric screen industries supported by film commissioners and film institutes. This ongoing dialogue in Greenlandic film policy echoes a persistent dichotomy between art and business, influenced by historical, structural, and postcolonial dynamics.

Despite recent initiatives like co-production and tax rebates, the transition to Greenland's Arts Fund and the ensuing competition for resources highlights a lingering reluctance to fully embrace the film industry's economic potential. This move, juxtaposed with past political endorsements of the sector, underscores a slow evolution in policymaking. Moreover, the change potentially diverts Greenlandic filmmaking away from nurturing a *national* film culture to seeking alternative, possibly international pathways, including increased collaborations with other Indigenous groups, leveraging external funding opportunities. This development could steer the industry towards a *regional* or global focus.

## **Fragmentation and organisation: From Assilissat to Film.gl**

As the last chapter emphasised, a voluntarily organised association focusing on filmmaking is not a completely new phenomenon but started in the first wave and the establishment of Assilissat. While the association eventually ended, a new one was established on November 20, 2012, in the form of FILM.GL.<sup>25</sup> In an announcement, then-chairman Lars F. Andersen explained the foundation as an opportunity not only to bring film professionals together, but also to counteract the trend towards outsourcing and runaway:

By founding a film association, we want to focus on film and media productions in Greenland. We hope that skills development can be created and at the same time we will work to improve communication to avoid sending as many assignments out of the country as is the case [...]. At the same time, it is also important to improve working conditions so we can get a lot more films produced in the cultural, information, and entertainment areas here in Greenland.  
(Andersen in Langhoff 2012, MT)

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<sup>25</sup> As described by current chairman Klaus Georg Hansen (2022, PI), the spelling has since officially changed to ‘Film.gl’.



Film.gl was established in the wake of *Nuummioq*, which had revitalised discussions on Greenlandic film production and shown that it was not only a possibility, but also something the outside world was interested in. Although there have been changes along the way, Film.gl's purpose has remained the same since its founding. As can be seen from all the statutes (A3.21-23<sup>26</sup>, MT), Film.gl exists to fulfil two purposes:

Paragraph 1: The purpose of the association is to support and promote professional conditions and interest in creating films in Greenland and contribute to a vibrant cultural life among the citizens.

Paragraph 2: The association shall develop the film environment in Greenland.

Throughout contemporary developments, Film.gl has remained a central actor with shifting boards consisting of Greenlandic filmmakers. Throughout its more than 10 years of existence, the core aims of Film.gl has been double. As stated on their website:

Founded in 2012, FILM.GL aims to professionalize the local film industry, create better financing conditions for Greenlandic filmmakers, and raise international awareness on Greenland as a film producing nation. [...] FILM.GL is not only promoting film content from Greenland, but also setting up joint talent schemes within the North Atlantic region, marketing Greenland as a location for filming, as well as inviting film professionals to share with us their experiences of setting up film industries in small communities.

(Film.gl n.d.a)

The double purpose is then to focus on both indigenous production *and* production services where both are seen as intertwined: Promotion creates awareness and increased activity on foreign productions, and collaboration creates experience; experience is professionalisation, which can then be utilised in indigenous productions – ideally.

As underlined in the very beginning of this dissertation, this is not without its difficulties; while the increased attention to Greenland has created more activity, it has also created new dilemmas as it being ”on one hand, really great, because there is a lot of work for the Greenlandic film professionals. On the other hand, there is also a risk of being carried away by telling other people’s stories“ (Péronard 2022). To understand these dilemmas, Film.gl is

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<sup>26</sup> Appendix 3, document 21-23. This style of reference will be used continuously.

particularly interesting because, as the only specifically film-related NGO in Greenland, it has special insight into not only the industry but also these challenges and the dynamics of the ultrasmall conditions. Therefore, the following will focus on the role and status of Film.gl in the contemporary screen industry based on data presented in Appendix 3.

To start, Film.gl has always been a voluntary association. This has a significant limiting factor, as all work for the industry under Film.gl has been done in parallel with members' employments elsewhere. This has been an issue throughout the existence of Film.gl stating at a board meeting that 2018 should have the motto “No more working for free” as Film.gl was already “past the point where it can all be done on a voluntary basis” (A3.1, MT). When going through minutes from board meetings (A3.1-6), chairman's reports (A3.7-12), activity plans (A.13-18) and newsletters (A19-20), Film.gl has been very active on several levels of Greenlandic film throughout the years, despite this issue.

Considering Andersen's words, it is clear from board minutes how the topics discussed reflect the strategy and developments of the industry since the establishment where focus has been on talent development, policy improvements, as well as participation and presence at film festivals and other industry events. One major ambition of Film.gl have been to unite Greenlandic media professionals whether these have worked within technical areas, creativity, and management, or in fiction, documentary, advertising, or animation. The starting point here has therefore been a fragmented industry working independently without an official unifying organisation. To assess the extent to which this ambition has been realised, it requires an overview of the industry itself and its stakeholders. In relation to Greenland, this remains unclear, as the number of filmmakers – here understood as individuals who are part of the screen industry – is a subjective assessment that requires both a definition of the industry itself and what qualifies a member.

As the previous section on film policy showed, the Greenlandic film industry is recognised at national and political level. How large it is, however, is uncertain, also among the industry's own members and at Film.gl. According to the *Arctic Business Analysis* report, “it is estimated that about 50 people (0.09 % of the population) are working professionally in film and TV production” (Nordic Council of Ministers 2018, 20) in Greenland. This number remains frequent when interviewing Greenlandic filmmakers, although the specific circumstances of these individuals are often discussed. For example, Péronard describes:

We [the Greenlandic filmmakers] usually say that the industry consists of 50 individuals, and we're talking about people who work independently in film production, either professionally or semi-professionally, and who are not permanently employed by KNR, for example. And then there are an incredible number of small units, small companies. Almost every person has their own CVR number and their own production company.

(Péronard 2021, PI, MT)

This points to several characteristics of the Greenlandic industry. Firstly, it points back to the historical division between film and TV, which has existed since the establishment of KNR. In addition, the quote points to two key factors: the difference between professionals and semi-professionals and the individualised aspect of one-person companies and the ultrasmallness.

In terms of degrees of professionalism, this stands out as one of the major issues of the contemporary industry. According to producer Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg, this issue of minimal threshold and degrees of professionalism is a bigger constraint than national funding opportunities:

I'm not really worried about the industry as such. I can get impatient sometimes. And that has nothing to do with the funding, with the money. It's more that it's still a small industry. And there aren't that many of us doing it. [...] And the great thing about film is that there's room for everyone. Whether you make music or you sew clothes or do make-up or whatever, there's room in film... and even more so in Greenlandic film, right? Because we hardly have any. So even though you [the interviewer] say it's a relatively large industry, I would almost dare to say that there are still only 7-8 of us, maybe, who do it full-time.

(Skydsbjerg 2021, PI, MT)

This statement reflects an angle that is not concerned about funding, but rather the fact that the film industry is ultrasmall. She highlights the ability of film to accommodate a wide range of talents and skills, and then emphasises a point that Greenland – by virtue of its ultrasmall size – is particularly open to involving anyone with an interest in filmmaking. In other words, it creates an inequality in that the professional filmmakers (here measured as full-time working film workers) are a minority in an industry of semi- or even non-professionals engaged in filmmaking activities to various degrees.

In terms of the individual companies, this also comes forward as a characteristic in many interviews. For instance, filmmaker and former chairperson of Film.gl Pipaluk Kreutzmann Jørgensen (2022, PI, MT) describes how Greenland “remains to be the land of the individualists as we're sitting by ourselves”. As there is no official register of film companies, it is difficult to determine exactly how many exist – and at the same time, new companies are created and closed frequently. However, Film.gl has registered its members and their companies for participation in industry events, and while these lists do not cover the industry as such, they do emphasise Péronard and Jørgensen's points about individualism. Here (A3.24), 18 out of 19 companies on the list are one-person companies, while the remaining company – Ánorák Film – is co-owned by Péronard and Inuk Silis Høegh. Péronard has retained this two-man constellation in his later company Polarama Greenland, co-owned by Jørgensen, who, by virtue of Péronard's residence in Denmark, benefits from being physically present in both Greenland and Denmark with the opportunities and proximity it creates financially, network-wise, and policy-wise (Péronard 2021, PI).

In terms of Film.gl, the question then is to which degree it has managed to organise these fragmented filmmakers. Looking at older material such as member lists from 2015 and 2017 (A3.25-26) as well as newer interviews (e.g. Smith 2020), there has been a steady increase of members from the establishment of Film.gl until the 2020s ranging from about 20 to 40 members. According to the statutes (A3.23), the requirements for membership are relatively broad:

Paragraph 1: Membership is open to active filmmakers with permanent residence in Greenland. An active filmmaker is defined as a person who alone and/or together with others creates contemporary works in all genres. Admission is subject to the board's approval.

Paragraph 2: Greenlandic filmmakers residing abroad may be admitted with the approval of the board. Passive members may be admitted

Looking at the actual member lists, these criteria are even broader in practice, in the sense that some members may be active in Greenlandic filmmaking but without residential or family ties to Greenland as such. In other words, what makes a member Greenlandic is very much determined by the sitting board. In addition, many members are not resident in Greenland – as paragraph 2 allows – but are diaspora filmmakers living in countries such as Denmark, Sweden, or Germany.

Returning to the beforementioned industry of approximately 50 individuals, this seems that Film.gl represents most Greenlandic filmmakers. However, with more focus upon filmmaking nationally and internationally, there is a new generation of filmmakers who do not necessarily register with Film.gl making the current number of filmmakers increasingly uncertain. Also, there has been a negative development for Film.gl in relation to membership. According to the last 3 years of chairman's reports (A3.16-18), the number of members has declined, and according to activity plans (A3.14-18) there has been a focus on increasing the number of members since 2020. Current chairman of Film.gl Klaus Georg Hansen underlines the beforementioned issues of fragmentation and problematise the current industry, which he describes as unorganised, and that Film.gl currently represents too small a part of the fragmented industry to be an actual umbrella organisation. When asked for the reason for this, Hansen (2022, PI, MT) continues to reflect some of the issues of the industry once again connected to size; more specifically, internal conflicts – here in relation to Film.gl:

It has to do with many things. But it's the size, it's the culture. [...] It's very person-specific. It's an integral part of dealing with conflict. It's making it very personal... It's hard to let go. The fact that you can disagree professionally, but [...] the lack of distinction between the personal and the professional is a thing that is very common in Greenland.

This issue of integral, person-specific conflicts is also evident in other interviews (Fleischer 2022, Jørgensen 2022, Skifte 2021, PI) – emphasising how size-related community conflict has been a significant factor. As argued by Kleist (2022, PI; MT): “Things can become a little more complicated if some people don't want to co-operate with each other. Especially when the film industry is so small. A lot of things could happen if people co-operated more. [...] That's the only way forward.”

In addition, the various institutions in Greenland have segregated in recent years starting with Filmiliortarfik becoming an independent legal entity with its own board in 2019 (A3.10). This way, Filmiliortarfik is not officially connected to Film.gl but continues to collaborate closely. The same separation seems to have happened in relation to NIFF as a separate organisation with its own board consisting of current or former members of Film.gl. Summing up some of the issues faced by Greenlandic filmmakers and Film.gl, Hansen (2022, PI, MT) says:

We [Film.gl] are not neutral. We are not the public sector. Even though we act as such in more and more areas. So yes, the size of the industry and well... We have some challenges. It is that we are self-taught, we are individualists, and we have conflicts in the system, which are system-created or person-created, or whatever they are, which means that we can find it difficult to find common ground. And to be so few and not be able to find common ground... It's a hell of an uphill struggle.

When Hansen speak of system-created conflicts, this is closely connected to the political system, where he – after many years of work in Greenlandic politics and administration – sees a fundamental, structural problem in political processes in Greenland around policymaking.

In this way, Film.gl's development underlines several challenges which to a large extent reflect conditions of size as well as frustrations with systemic and structural conditions. Despite fluctuating optimism, Film.gl displays another characteristic of Greenland – a fundamental strength:

We don't have a drive from anything external. It is the industry itself. It's very much self-grown within the industry, and I think that's an incredible strength of it [...]. I'm just the current one trying to get something created. Those who have preceded me have also really had the ambition to do so. I don't know of any other field in Greenland where you can trace such an attempt to really create an industry or a profession, or whatever you want to call it, from the bottom up, from the grassroots. I don't know it from anywhere else. All others have been supported in one way or another by some kind of public institution.

(Hansen 2022, PI, MT)

The citation underscores the dependency of small screen industries on persistence to thrive. In this persistence, Film.gl emerges as a vital force in nurturing synergies through events and workshops, fostering knowledge exchange, and lobbying with the government through continuous meetings and reports. While fragmentation exists, Film.gl continues to be a central organisation, advocating for its members in the political space, showcasing a commitment to enhance dialogue and collaboration in the industry, even as entities like Filmiliortarfik and NIFF flourish independently.

## Education and distribution

The education landscape surrounding filmmaking in Greenland is characterised by a combination of formal education initiatives and a significant emphasis on hands-on, learning-by-doing approaches. The four high schools in Greenland, located in Aasiaat, Nuuk, Qaqortoq, and Sisimiut, offer some degree of film-related programmes, predominantly through their Media Studies courses. In addition, there are resources such as the online textbook *It's alive - Tusagassiutilerineq* (Andersen 2020) to support Greenland-specific media education. The University of Greenland, Ilisimatusarfik, does offer BA and MA programmes in Language, Literature, and Media, but it only encompasses media and film studies as a minor segment, focusing mostly on textual analysis and incorporating a smaller segment on practical media production elements. Noteworthy individuals such as filmmaker Inuk Jørgensen have occasionally served as guest teachers which is otherwise often done by Danish scholars from Danish institutions. A significant portion of film-related education for Greenlanders occurs in Denmark, with many pursuing studies at institutions such as Media College Denmark, European Film College in Ebeltoft, and the Animation Workshop in Viborg. Some individuals have branched out further, attending schools like the Vancouver Film School, institutions in the UK, and the New York Film Academy. These details are confirmed in the *North Atlantic Talents* report (Jonsson et al. 2016), which highlight the role of technicians from the Katuaq cultural centre.

However, Greenlanders entering the field have primarily done so through self-education. According to producer Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg, the industry operates mostly on a learning-by-doing basis:

That's how I got into it myself. [...] And it may well be that I didn't have that much experience, but we just can't afford to discard people based on that in Greenland. [...] If you see a potential, if you see some opportunities, especially as an established self-employed person or almost no matter what, who you are or where you work in Greenland, if you spot someone who has potential to develop, then I think you have a responsibility to contribute to that development as much as you can. And even more so in these smaller industries, because nothing will happen in the film industry if we don't bring in new people.

(Skydsbjerg 2021, PI, MT)

The sentiments echoed by Skydsbjerg find resonance in other voices in the industry, including newer filmmakers such as Nivi Pedersen (2021, PI) and established names such as Pipaluk K. Jørgensen (2022, PI), highlighting a cohesive community nurturing newcomers through collaborations and mentorship.

However, a significant step in formalising the educational landscape for filmmakers in Greenland was the establishment of Filmiliortarfik in 2018. This institution, conceived to foster practical filmmaking over other dimensions like political or distribution aspects handled by bodies like Film.gl and NIFF, was envisaged as a response to the growing international interest in Greenland as a film production location, addressing the gap in the availability of skilled local film professionals. This initiative sought to nurture local talents, giving them practical experience with filmmaking, and enhancing Greenland's screen related profile on several fronts (A3.27-29).

Under the leadership of Malik Kleist and governed by a board of five members, Filmiliortarfik stands as a vital pillar supporting young talent through events targeting both youth and professionals. It enables networking and awareness while fostering collaboration with international institutions like Institut français and the Goethe-Institute. The specific goals of the institution involve identifying and nurturing film talents, aiding the development of diverse film genres and expressions, and facilitating collaborative initiatives with other artistic and business areas (Filmiliortarfik n.d., Kleist 2022, PI). The facility offers an array of services including advice on film production, provision of production and post-production equipment, assistance with productions, and a host of educational initiatives through workshops, talent camps, and lectures.

Today, the facilities are located in an industrial area of Nuuk in a larger ground floor apartment with kitchen facilities, sofas, offices, meeting room, and editing rooms. When I visited the film workshop on several occasions in October 2022, it was clear that a large part of the work emanated from these premises, which in many ways signalled an unpretentious atmosphere rather than a strictly professional one. As image 1 and 2 shows, this is emphasised through board games and decorations, and the rooms contain several framed posters from Greenlandic, but also international productions.





Image 1 and 2: Showcasing of various films at Filmiliortarfik. Photograph by the author, October 1,1 2022.

This also reflect the aim of attracting new and young talent encouraging creative expression. In this regard, the posters not only serve as decorative elements, but have an important symbolic value celebrating Greenlandic filmmaking and creating awareness of filmmaking in Greenland. This symbolic value emphasises the importance of Filmiliortarfik as a Greenlandic institution and a way to create a platform for a Greenlandic film culture that goes beyond the industry itself and towards new generations.

The symbolic value of Filmiliortarfik as a Greenlandic institution is particularly evident through a mural depicting Greenlandic myths and elements of Greenlandic culture (see image 3):



Image 3: Mural at Filmiliortarfik painted by Nicholas Rosing Petersen. Photograph by the author, October 11 2022.

This mural was initiated by former workshop leader Aka Hansen and painted by Greenlandic artist Nicholas Rosing Petersen and serves as a strong visual symbol of identity. Filmiliortarfik and its visual elements thus emphasises the importance of the workshop being *the* Greenlandic film-specific institution. The posters and mural serve as visual representations of Greenlandic filmmaking and cultural identity and the Greenlandic screen industry as a local force.

## Old and new entanglements: From Nordic to Indigenous

As presented in the previous chapter, film festivals were already central in the first wave of Greenlandic filmmaking, for example when *Sinilluarit* premiered as the first Greenlandic short film at the 12<sup>th</sup> Nordiske Film Festival in Nuuk in 1999 initiating what Péronard described as his first “this is a story told to us and by us-feeling” (Péronard 2021, PI). The Greenland Eyes International Film Festival, starting in Berlin in April 2012, marked a pivotal moment in the promotion of Greenlandic cinema and culture, helping to rectify the unbalanced representation and stereotypes pervading the portrayal of Greenland in films (Frank 2019, 340; Just and Körber 2012, 92–93). Pioneered by Danish-Greenlandic filmmaker Ivalo Frank, the festival, inspired by a collaboration between the Northern Europe Institute and Ilisimatusarfik, became an important venue for screening Greenlandic films and facilitating discussions on Greenlandic screen production (Hansen 2012). Throughout its existence until 2015, the festival transformed into a global phenomenon, travelling to various countries and assembling a community of around 10,000 attendees and 7,500 online followers (Frank 2019, 340) challenging predominant outsider perspectives, promoting a more nuanced understanding of modern Greenlandic culture and identity. The festival culminated with the premiere of the documentary *Sumé – Mumisitsinerup Nipaa* (*Sumé – The Sound of a Revolution*, Inuk Silis Høegh) in 2015, spotlighting the influential Greenlandic rock band from the 1970s, Sumé, and their role in shaping Greenlandic identity and the pursuit of independence (Frank 2018, 341).

This landmark event underscored a growing collaboration among Indigenous populations in the Arctic region and beyond, signalling a transformative epoch in the representation and perception of Greenlandic cinema on an international platform. When asked about the connection to other Indigenous communities, producer of *Sumé* Emile Hertling Péronard highlights showcasing at imagineNATIVE and Berlinale as key events, not just commercially but in terms of finding an identity as a film community:

Well, I think it's just another example of the fact that when you're so small, you're at least a little bigger if you find someone else to stand with. [...] I remember that when we had to submit to imagineNATIVE, we had to tick which tribe we belonged to [...]. We weren't used to that. I think the whole thing about being an Indigenous population is something that has come to Greenland a little late. This identification is new and super exciting.

(Péronard 2021, PI, MT)

While a Greenlandic identity connection to other Arctic peoples predates *Sumé*, for instance through the membership with a political NGO organisation such as Inuit Circumpolar Council founded in 1980, this statement shows how the identity as an Indigenous *cinema* came relatively late. This may be due to the long and continued association with Denmark and the Nordic region.

For other filmmakers, such as director Pipaluk K. Jørgensen (2022, PI) through her work with theatre, the connection to other Indigenous peoples far precedes that of cinema. When touring with her dance performances *Tulukaq* and theatre performance *Oqarit inuullutillu* in 2009 and 2010 in Canada, this created new collaborations which she took with her into her film career, and which today are woven together with other filmmakers' experiences from the festivals:

On that journey, I made a lot of the important contacts that my work today is still based on [...]. In Canada, we met Inuit, Métis, Anishinaabe, and Mohawk. We sought a shared identity with other Indigenous peoples, as Tuukkaq Theatre had done before us, because we felt it was time to find that community again.

(Jørgensen in Krebs 2021, 18, MT)

As explained by Jørgensen, this collaboration gained momentum with the participations in imagineNATIVE and Berlinale where Greenlandic filmmakers have participated annually since then. As shown in the most recent activity plan of Film.gl (A3.18), the collaboration with and attendance at exactly imagineNATIVE and Berlinale remains a central part of the function of Film.gl along with a continued strong Nordic and European connection to festivals such as FOCUS in London events such as Nordic Script and Nordic Filmcamp as well as memberships in e.g. Nordic Film Commissions. The dual affiliation continues into other film-related areas such as funding, where new opportunities have emerged both within the Nordic and Indigenous spheres. Two examples are NORDDOK and the Arctic Indigenous Film Fund (AIFF).

The NORDDOK initiative, launched in Denmark in 2019 with a fund of DKK 10.000.000, was designed to support filmmaking in Greenland and the Faroe Islands, encouraging narrative diversification in the region's cinema (Turnowsky 2019a). However, it faced criticism from Greenlandic filmmakers for issues such as a predominant focus on documentaries, short deadlines, insufficient emphasis on competency-building, and the

inequitable distribution of funds, as noted by the controversy surrounding the standard production budget based on a Danish model rather than the economic realities of the respective nations. One specific complaint was on the focus on and support to three productions as based on a Danish model and not on the basis of the respective nations, as Greenland can make films ‘on a tenth of that budget’.<sup>27</sup> Responding to this feedback, the subsequent NORDDOK II initiative, backed by a DKK 27.100.000 grant from the Danish Finance Bill, is set to run until 2024, emphasising the need for competence and network building as core focus areas, rather than solely filmmaking.

The NORDDOK initiative can be seen as part of a growing focus on Greenland from the Danish side, especially around the 300<sup>th</sup> marking of Hans Egede's arrival in 1721. This can be seen in a number of DR releases such as the series *Historien om Grønland og Danmark* (DR, 2022), *Borgen: Power & Glory* (DR/Netflix, 2022), and *Kongehuset* (DR, 2021-2022). However, Klaus Georg Hansen (2022, PI) suggests that such initiatives are not necessarily about fostering Greenlandic content but more about *damage control* within the Danish-Greenlandic relationship, aimed at maintaining a static status quo from Denmark's perspective. According to Hansen, Denmark has historically been reactive, only instigating changes in response to international pressure or demands from Greenland for increased autonomy, showcased by actions such as the granting of Home Rule and Self-Government or investments in Greenland to counter Chinese influence. Denmark's efforts, seen in governmental support for filmmaking portraying a cohesive Danish-Greenlandic relationship, are viewed as attempts to reinforce cultural and emotional ties through epiphanic transnationalism and preserve Denmark's position in Greenland amidst growing international interest in the Arctic region from countries like the US, China, and Russia. In this understanding, the Danish (public service) interest is seen as Denmark building narratives that emphasise shared history and identity, aiming to solidify the argument for Greenland's continued association with the Danish Kingdom.

Counterbalancing this trend is the growing collaboration with other – most often Arctic – Indigenous peoples which has manifested itself in AIFF, among other initiatives. As a large collaboration between Nunavut Film Development Corporation, UArctic, International Sámi Film Institute (ISFI), Canada Media Fund, Sundance Institute, Telefilm Canada, and Film.gl, AIFF is placed in Kautokeino in Sápmi (Norwegian side) to support Indigenous

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<sup>27</sup> These references are based on personal notes from a Zoom meeting between DFI, Greenlandic filmmakers, and Faroese filmmakers on NORDDOK I on January 17, 2022.

films and filmmakers (AIFF n.d.). Established in 2018, the goal is to become a self-sustaining organisation producing returns of investments as a reaction to the limited possibilities of funding (AIFF 2018). As formulated by Péronard (2021, PI, MT), this stands as a concrete example of a decolonisation of film funding:

It's simply about dissolving the boundaries that colonisation has created. And that's what we often talk about when we have the production called *Twice Colonized*, which is a co-production between Greenland and Inuit in Canada. It's structured around a traditional co-production model, but it's still an example of working together, of Inuit working together across colonial borders. And that's really how decolonisation also lies in that mindset, that you have to think that it's possible, that it makes sense to break those colonial mindsets or structures. To recognise that there is a community that precedes these boundaries.

In recent times, this decolonial thinking shared by several filmmakers has led to the establishment of Greenland's first distribution company TulluT by Bill Bering (2023, PI), who most recently co-organised the new CPH Native Film Festival described as the Nordic region's first festival for films produced by Indigenous peoples (Empire Bio n.d.). Similarly, Greenlandic delegates took part in the first-ever Indigenous co-production forum at Cannes in 2023 along with Indigenous filmmakers from Sápmi, Aotearoa (New Zealand), and Australia (Girimonte 2023) which points to changes on a global scale that can transform the conditions for Greenlandic filmmakers within both Indigenous, Nordic, and European networks.

As such, AIFF is part of a larger, international tendency among Indigenous communities, where collaboration in both production and funding is increasing. For instance, AIFF has been used as an example of how Pacific nations can collaborate, as AIFF “demonstrates the potential for regional cooperation to support film production, particularly, in this case, of Indigenous communities in a region where access to resources is also very unequal” (Stupples et al. 2021, 6). In line with this, the Greenlandic screen industry uses the phrase ‘nothing about us without us’ (Schmidt 2023), which is a widespread phrase among Indigenous filmmakers – not least by ISFI in their *Ofelaš – Pathfinder* guidelines for responsible filmmaking with Sámi culture and people (The Sámi Film & Culture Advisory Board 2021, 6). At the same time, the phrase is used in Greenlandic politics, for instance in recent debates on defence of Greenland in the work for more power in decision-making processes that affect Greenland (Krog 2022).

One area where Greenland's placement between Nordic and Arctic Indigenous is particularly evident is around its own festival, the Nuuk International Film Festival (NIFF). The independent festival came about as a bit of a coincidence when Pipaluk K. Jørgensen (2022, PI) was asked in 2017 to organise a film programme for the already established Nuuk Nordisk Film Festival. Since 2017,<sup>28</sup> the festival has become an annual event in collaboration with Katuaq and sponsored by a wide range of national and international stakeholders such as the municipality, the national theatre, Institut français, Nunavut Film Development Corporation, NAPA, and Naalakkeruisut (NIFF 2022). Over time, the festival has grown both in scope and visibility, with increasing international participation and screenings of Indigenous films in particular. Artistic Director of the 2021 festival Bill Bering (2023, PI) describes how over 3000 films were submitted that year which resulted in an overwhelming number of screenings underlining the international awareness.

The growth of NIFF reflects the evolving landscape of Greenlandic cinema, which has transitioned from a smaller part of Nordic cinema to a dynamic entity collaborating extensively with other Indigenous groups on creative, production, and financial fronts. This change represents a dual narrative: 1) maintaining Danish-Nordic cooperation grounded in colonial history and ethical obligations and 2) fostering 'natural' collaborations with other Indigenous communities through shared cultural and historical ties in a decolonisation effort. This duality thus facilitates various collaborative opportunities.

This has brought with it several collaborations that in different ways shape the continued development of Greenlandic film. While all of this can be seen as part of a nation-building process, it is also a movement towards *region-building*, where Indigenous homelands in the Arctic are described and processed collectively. For example, it is remarkable that for a presentation on Arctic film and media at the Arctic Parliamentarian Summit in Nuuk in September 2022,<sup>29</sup> none of the panellists spoke of nation-building, but instead emphasised the importance of collaboration with other Indigenous peoples – especially in the face of a lack of sufficient national support.

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<sup>28</sup> I attended the online festival in 2021 during Covid and the 2022 festival on site.

<sup>29</sup> I attended the summit and more specifically debate two of the programme "Arctic Film and Media" with panelists producer and tattoo artist Paninnguaq Lind, director Marc Fussing Rosbach, and Peter Jensen which was moderated by Klaus Georg Hansen. I thank Hansen for inviting me to the summit.

## Screening Greenland: Tourism and location

While the collaborations between film companies and tourism agencies are decade-old in Greenland, it seems to have intensified with the establishment of Film.gl. According to Klaus Georg Hansen (2022, PI, MT), the government-owned tourism agency Visit Greenland preceded Film.gl in the sense that foreign filmmakers contacted Visit Greenland prior to their establishment:

They received a lot of inquiries about filmmaking, [...] they have placed the inquiries that have come to the tourism organisation from outside with foreign producers, and then they have sort of an agreement with some people from the film industry. [...] And Film.gl's website was born into that concept because they needed to channel the inquiries they received about film production somewhere.

As Hansen underlines, Film.gl and Visit Greenland had a lot of collaboration, especially in the early years, when Visit Greenland was involved in building the website. As stated here, Film.gl 'teamed up' with Visit Greenland in 2016 "to build this website, and both entities also have strong relationships with the national air carrier Air Greenland as well as the hospitality sector in the country" (Film.gl n.d.a). Furthermore, the website has a sub-side with the heading 'Why Greenland' listing five main reasons for choosing Greenland as location (Film.gl n.d.c):

1. Ice paradise and wild landscape
2. Safe, modern society
3. Close proximity to Europe and North America
4. Seasonal variety
5. The 'Be a Pioneer'-spirit

In the text, Greenland is presented as a unique film destination with its icy landscapes, fjord systems, and colourful cities. It underlines that there are few bureaucratic laws and regulations that hinder filming, making it easy for smaller film crews to work in public areas without specific permits. In addition, Greenland is presented as a safe and modern society with a small population and low crime rate with larger towns being globally orientated with modern facilities and infrastructure. Furthermore, Greenland's strategic position between

Europe and North America is underlined. Greenland's variation in seasons is also emphasised, from total darkness in winter with Northern Lights to midnight sun in the summer. Finally, the pioneering spirit of Greenlanders and the opportunity to 'be a pioneer' as a film director is emphasised as presented in the previous chapter referring to the plenty of unexplored possibilities and a story of survival in harsh environments, which has caused Greenlanders to welcome "the unknown and by fixing problems when they occur with all physical and mental tools at hand" (Film.gl n.d.b.). Overall, the text presents Greenland as an attractive film destination with its spectacular landscapes, relaxed regulations, modern facilities, easy access, and the opportunity to capture unique and unprecedented footage.

These points seem to be the result of the work that Film.gl has done in connection with two location conferences held in 2015 and 2016. Film.gl, in partnership with the Nordic Institute in Greenland, hosted the 'Location Greenland' conferences that gathered international guests and local stakeholders to discuss the development of Greenland's film industry. According to a conference document (A3.31), they sought to strategise on marketing Greenland as an attractive, although expensive, filming location and fostering international collaborations for local producers.

The 2015 conference highlighted four critical questions about creating a platform for Greenland in the international cinema landscape and positioning the film industry as a viable business sector (A30.3, MT). It emphasised the need for trust and collaboration between Greenlandic and foreign producers, suggesting the formulation of a 'one door principle' through a film institute and promoting regional partnerships for mutual growth and knowledge exchange. The conference also recommended establishing a database to facilitate film productions with detailed descriptions of Greenlandic filming locations and their unique qualities, aligning with tourism operators to offer a seamless filming experience (A3.30).

The following conference in 2016, Location Greenland 2.0, continued the discussion, bringing in more international representatives and focusing on realistic geographical potentials, emphasising the need to streamline locations to foster professionalism and efficiency in productions. It explored potential collaborations and how to efficiently market Greenland's diverse landscapes and cultural stories globally. The discussions culminated in a manifesto affirming Greenland's 'boundless commercial potential' in film and television (A3.33). Following these conferences, the Film.gl website showcased Greenland's film production potential, categorising the nation's varied locales into twelve sections to attract international productions, demonstrating the direct commercial impacts of these conferences



in shaping the Greenlandic screen industry's presentation and strategy for growth (Film.gl n.d.c.).

Greenland's depiction in recent commercial narratives embraces a 'be a pioneer' phraseology, aligning with age-old exploration narratives featuring terms like 'boundless', 'exotic', and 'untapped' (Cooper n.d.). This seems to conflict with the present Indigenous discourse of inclusive representation guided by the 'nothing about us without us' principle, creating a dichotomy between commercial objectives and indigenous self-representation.

Today, the focus leans more towards collaboration than mere location branding, with the industry striving to reposition filmmaking from being just a cultural entity to a full-fledged business segment or an 'experience industry' (Hansen 2022, PI). This has seen a more commercial shift with the relatively new production service company Polarama Greenland – owned by Emile Hertling Péronard and Pipaluk K. Jørgensen – as an independent subdivision of Icelandic Polarama. For VisitGreenland, filmmaking has been a smaller part of the strategy, with only a few articles such as a 'top 5 watchlist' of films about Greenland (Cooper n.d.). However, as the case studies will show, there has been an increased interest in the wake of developments and collaborations with SVoD actors – not least around *Borgen: Power & Glory*, and as the next section will demonstrate, the many advancements presented in this chapter have led to significant progress in screen production.

# The formation of a second wave

## An ultrasmall production boom

As I have written elsewhere (Grønlund 2021a), the Greenlandic screen industry existing today took off around the introduction of self-government in 2009 and the sudden emergence of several Greenlandic-produced feature films. While most local Greenlandic screen production takes place in and around Nuuk, the first feature of the period was shot in Sisimiut as an amateur no-budget youth comedy by actor Ujarneq Fleischer made with a budget of approximately DKK 500 (Kleeman 2008; Olsen 2014, 25) and sponsored locally by Sisimiut TV.

In the following years, Fleischer continued to make two additional no-budget features based on the earnings from the first: *Akiniaaneq Killeqaleraangat* (2010) addressing violence in society (Kleeman 2010) and *Ikuala Zeeb* (2015) focusing on the difficult youth of a young man – again as a no-budget amateur film sponsored by local stakeholders and family with all involved working for free (Müller 2015, 2). Once again, the feature film premiered in Sisimiut, this time in the community centre, where Fleischer described his time as a filmmaker since the premiere of his first film:

I started by making a comedy to catch the attention of the Greenlandic audience. It was an easier way to do it. I could have started with a drama film, but I know the Greenlandic audience, so I started with a comedy.

(Fleischer in Müller 2015, 2, MT)

In this way, Fleischer used a genre film to access the Greenlandic audience in focus, while the subsequent films shifted to more social realistic dramas about challenges in society. After *Ikuala Zeeb*, Fleischer remains a central figure in Greenlandic filmmaking as an actor in both national and international productions and at the national theatre.

In stark contrast to Fleischer's debut film, Otto Rosing and Torben Bech's landmark feature film *Nuummioq* premiered the following year well-covered in both Greenlandic and international media as a film-historical event. As the best described production in recent research (e.g. Thisted 2015; Nørrested 2011, 102–104; Grønlund and Dybdal 2020b), the production process was highly challenging due to a tight budget, unpredictable weather, and

ongoing personal and technical challenges closely linked to climatic and infrastructural conditions. The same applied to financing, as production began before the funding was secured because of the exclusion from Danish funding. Therefore, Rosing and producer Mikisoq Hove Lyngé founded their own production company 3900 Picture which was later shut down, and the movie never received international distribution due to several personal and professional challenges (Rosing 2021, PI; Ludvigsen 2012).

Rosing, who was already active in Greenlandic film as part of the team behind *Eskimo Weekend* in 2002 and the documentary portrait *Den evige flyver* (2004), returned to feature filmmaking in 2019 with the New Year/Christmas comedy *Ukiutoqqami Pilluaritsi*, co-written by Rosing's brother, Micheal Rosing, and Henrik Fleischer. Ten years from *Nuummioq*, there was still a strong local commitment through local support and sponsorship, and not least a share model where cast members received a share every day they appeared, with 10 % of all shares going to Greenlandic children (Grønlund 2021a) if the film would make any profit (which it so far has not).

In 2009, one can see an alternative approach to Greenlandic cinema than *Nuummioq*'s drama in the form of the low-budget feature film *Hinnarik Sinnattunilu* (Angajo Lennert-Sandgreen, 2009):

*Hinnarik Sinnattunilu* handles the expectations of what a Greenlandic film should be about in a completely different and radical way. While *Nuummioq* had a budget of about \$1 million, *Hinnarik Sinnattunilu* was produced for barely 200,000 kr. (approximately \$36,000). Quite unpretentious, it is aimed at local young people rather than international film festivals.

(Thisted 2015a, 101)

Along with *Hinnarik Sinnattunilu* was the establishment of the production company Tumit Productions founded by filmmakers Aka Hansen and Malik Kleist. The company continued as a key entity in Greenlandic cinema during the 2010s producing Kleist's horror films *Qaqqat Alanngui* (*Shadows in the Mountains*, 2011) and *Unnuap Taarnerpaaffiani* (2014) – though the latter was with Kleist as sole producer – and the KNR Christmas calendar *Nissit Angakkeuatillu* (2012) as the largest project. In addition to being well-received, the Christmas calendar gave rise to some criticism from the filmmakers and especially Hansen, as the national film grant did not include TV series (Langhoff 2012). As a result, *Nissit Angakkeuatillu* was primarily funded by NunaFonden along with a range of public, commercial, and private contributions

to cover the demanding production that was shot in towns and settlements across Greenland (Duus 2012d).

Following *Hinnarik Sinnattunilu*, Tunit Productions got more public awareness resulting in commercial jobs which made it possible to buy additional gear. In 2011, Kleist's biggest success, the horror film *Qaqqat Alanngui*, premiered as a larger production with a crew of more than twenty people, written and directed by Kleist and produced by Hansen. The latter raised approximately €225.000. The limited budget made it necessary to use the company as leverage and thus €70.000 credit in the bank creating a total budget of appr. €300.000 (Kleist 2017). Fortunately, the film was popular, becoming the biggest audience success at the time after its premiere in Katuaq, where it beat all previous Greenlandic films and especially the most watched film in the Katuaq cinema so far, *Titanic* (James Cameron, 1997).

Kleist followed the success with *Unnuap Taarnerpaaffiani (When Night is Darkest, 2014)* with the two main characters Minik (Qillannguaq Berthelsen) and Hansi (Martin Brandt) spending the night in an abandoned – and very haunted – house in Nuuk. Kleist wrote the script and shot it in Nuuk with a smaller budget (€105.000) shot in four weeks, which had an audience of 10.000 in 2014 (Kleist 2017). Despite numerous economic and production difficulties, Kleist continued with his third feature film *Alanngut Killinganni* which premiered at the Nuuk International Film Festival in 2022 – this time produced by Nina Panninguaq Skydsbjerg through her company PaniNoir.

While Tunit Productions continued until 2018, Kleist and Hansen went their separate ways in 2014 eventually establishing their own companies – respectively Uilu Stories and iMalik Productions. Hansen remains an important part of Greenlandic film as both producer and director through short films like *Half & Half* (2014) about Greenlandic-Danish identity or the documentary *STG* (2016) about the Greenlandic band Small Time Giants. In 2018, she also became Greenland's first graduate producer from Super16 and remains a vital part of national and international debates on decolonisation.

In general, short films have a huge impact on Greenlandic cinema today, giving more established and up-and-coming filmmakers experience and publicity. A key filmmaker in this regard is, for example, Inuk Jørgensen, whose climate-critical, documentary, and identity-seeking short films *Home* (2018), *Hedtoft* (2019), *In the Shadow of the Tugtupite* (2020), and *Where Dreams of Forgotten* (2023) have screened extensively and won multiple international awards. Thus, short films play a major role in the circulation of Greenlandic content, where

filmmakers such as Berda Larsen, Hanne Sørensen, Marc Fussing Rosbach, and Nivi Pedersen have made their mark in Greenlandic film as short film directors.

Returning to feature films, indigenous film production has continued the genre film trend that began with Fleischer's and Lennert-Sandgreen's comedies and Kleist's horror films. In this tendency, Marc Fussing Rosbach has made his mark with the fantasy films *Akornatsinniittut - Tarratta Nunaanni* (*Among Us - in the Land of Our Shadows*, 2017) and *Akornatsinniittut - Kiinappalik* (*Among Us - The Masked Man*, 2021) produced by his own company Furos Image in close collaboration with family members. He's often referred to as a 'one-man army' (Péronard 2021, PI, MT) as he directs, writes, edits, and acts in his own work, emphasising the self-taught and multifunctional nature of the industry. However, he has a longer history of filmmaking – particularly visual effects – where, at the age of 17 in Ilulissat, was part of the production of *Nissit Angakkuatillu* 'headhunted' by Tunit Production to be part of the emerging Nuuk-based industry in need of new talents (Duus 2012a).

Continuing with visual effects in e.g. Kleist's *Unnuap Taarnerpaaffiani*, Rosbach is a good example of the interconnectedness of local Greenlandic filmmaking, where filmmakers – to a greater or lesser extent – engage across each other's projects, and also how the practical experience and involvement of young talent is an important part of the local film ecology. Rosbach is also a great example of the value of trans-Arctic collaboration with Indigenous peoples. For instance, his latest short film *Imagnik* (2022) is made in association with ISFI and imagineNATIVE Original Indigenous as part of the initiative Arctic Chills where five horror short films were made by emerging Indigenous filmmakers.

As was the case with her extensive work with NIFF and early contacts from the theatre world, Pipaluk K. Jørgensens (2022, PI) has also utilised her network of Indigenous filmmakers for her feature film *Anori* (2018) making her Greenland's first woman feature film director. As a modern mythical tale of (tragic) love set between Greenlandic landscapes, Nuuk, and New York, the film is more in line with internationally oriented dramas like *Nuummioq* rather than the previous locally-oriented genre films. Though partly funded by ISFI, the production of *Anori* once again underlined the difficulties of Greenlandic filmmaking with a modest budget of €190.000 only possible by selling her car and apartment in Copenhagen, actors working for free, and a personal loan of €33.500 (Krebs 2021, 18).

In this way, Greenlandic feature films illustrate two trends towards locally orientated genre films and internationally orientated drama films – all with strong Greenlandic narrative

or visual characteristics. It is clear how genre films have the most traction with Greenlandic audiences – a view Fleischer already emphasised in 2008 – where Kleist is by far the most popular director locally and his feature film debut is still the most watched film in Greenland. On the other hand, *Nuummioq* and *Anori* have gained less popularity in Greenland, but more popularity abroad. One of the most interesting aspects is that none of the Greenlandic feature films work explicitly with colonial history or as explicit colonial criticisms, as was the case elsewhere, e.g. in Sápmi with Amanda Kernell's *Sameblod* (2016) or in Nunavut with Zacharias Kunuk's *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* (2006).

Instead, Greenlandic feature films focus more on Greenlandic society, by – as Kirsten Thisted has emphasised – focusing on the modern, global Greenland and ‘cosmopolitan Inuit’ as shown in *Nuummioq* or *Hinnarík Sinnattunilu* (Thisted 2015a, 103–4). While the focus on genre film may be an expression of this globalisation mindset, it equally emphasises a Greenlandic focus on its own audience – on creating relatable, Greenlandic-language content within accessible genre films.

First and foremost, it is about closing a gap in the entertainment that for so many years has been dominated from the outside – and here it is about entertaining a Greenlandic audience that has grown up in an increasingly global reality brought up on Hollywood genre tropes. According to the producer of Kleist's latest horror film, Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg, it can also be because of a media saturation around negative, postcolonial representations:

I think it shows a sign of energy that you can also make genre films, you can also make comedies, you can also make ordinary films that aren't about terrible things. Because of course we must give ourselves the strength and energy to overcome these things, the social challenges that we do have. [...] You have to remember that Greenland is also many other things.  
(Skydsbjerg 2021, PI, MT).

Following this, the films reflect both a desire to *entertain* a *Greenlandic* audience with Greenland-centric genre films, and a desire to *educate* more globally about modern Greenland in response to a century of misrepresentation. And here, the exclusive focus on Greenland – intentionally or unintentionally – is precisely political:

When you make a film and you come from a minority population, or you come from an Indigenous population, it's just political. It's ideological, idealistic, every time you make a film.

And it doesn't matter if it's a fiction short film or some very political documentary. It's always political. There's always some kind of activism in making those films.

(Péronard 2021, PI, MT)

Péronard reflects on how even the Greenlandic audience-oriented fiction addresses degrees of *empowerment*, which is closely related to the nation-building process that Greenland is already undergoing and at the same time, it connects Greenlandic filmmaking with filmmaking among other Indigenous peoples. In this way, *not* addressing colonial times and social problems in fiction is an expression of agency in one's own storytelling, where the focus is not on the former colonisers, but instead on one's own population and audience. Instead, it is Danish feature film that directly deals with the colonial era through productions such as *Eksperimentet (The Experiment)*, Louise Friedberg 2010), which critically tells the story of the removal of 16 Greenlandic children from their parents and their placement in Danish foster families in order to turn them into 'elite Danes' and role models in 'the new Greenland' in the 1950s (DFI n.d.c).

The case is quite different in terms of Greenlandic documentary filmmaking that has continued the legacy of Greenlandic social and colonial critiques starting with Aqqaluk Lyngé and *Da myndighederne sagde stop* in 1972 and continued with documentaries such as *Sumé*, Paninnguaq Lind's *White Paper* (2021) about a possible mining project close to the settlement of Narsaq, or Nivi Pedersen's *Pilluarneq Ersigiunnaarpara* (2019) about two Greenlanders' confrontation with sexual abuse in their childhood. Most recently, the already mentioned documentary *Twice Colonized* (Lin Alluna, 2022) continues this critical discourse by following lawyer and activist Aaju Peter confronting her past and changing the present by reflecting on personal traumas and the consequences of colonialism. The production constellation is particularly interesting here, as it was the result of an Inuit co-production between Greenland and Nunavut gaining international attention e.g. by screening at Cannes and opening the Danish CPH:DOX festival in 2023.

This underlines a central part of the second wave of Greenlandic screen production, where collaborations – both Nordic and Indigenous – have resulted in several key industry events with Greenlanders increasingly uniting through productive partnerships. The latest example of this is the Danish-Greenlandic co-produced short film *Ivalu* (2023), directed by Anders Walter and Pipaluk K. Jørgensen, which was nominated for the 2023 Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Film. As a result, it received substantial international media attention

and was named a historic success for the Greenlandic screen industry due to the substantial Greenlandic agency on- and off-screen (Møller, 2023). For this reason, it was also used as destination branding by Visit Greenland, who published a longer article about the production, its problematic narrative of abuse, and the current state of Greenland filmmaking (Por 2023). This highlights the movement towards Greenlandic filmmakers achieving greater control and voice in communicating own narratives. The quote also interweaves several discourses in this chapter – about 'nothing about us without us', the importance of landscapes in place branding, and an evolving industry where participation is important. Here, *Ivalu* illustrates how collaboration can result in even problematic narratives that benefit both foreign and Greenlandic filmmakers, as well as spreading to other sectors such as tourism.

## Choosing Greenland or running away?

In the period since 2009, foreign interest has grown with Greenland as location and/or setting in everything from single series episodes to major Hollywood feature films. In the latter, productions such as *The Last Airbender* (M. Night Shyamalan, 2010) continued the trend from *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer* by using Greenland as a location for key scenes in a large-scale fantasy feature shot on locations around the world. In *Rise of the Silver Surfer* the area around Ilulissat doubled Antarctica and Although only nine out of 80 days of filming were in Greenland, this part was well covered both through behind-the-scenes material and news articles: "When it comes to film locations, few could be considered as forbidding as Greenland. After all, 85% of the land is covered in ice. [...]. And there wasn't a film tax credit in sight to take advantage of" (Verrier 2010).

Similarly, Richard Linklater's *Where'd You Go, Bernadette* (2019) used Greenland to double Antarctica's landscapes, where Bernadette (Cate Blanchett) goes to reconnect with herself. This involved the main crew sailing to Greenland, which – according to Blanchett (in Canfield 2019) – was a big part of the filming experience and a 'worthwhile challenge':

the quality of the light and the experience of being there. We went to Greenland and got caught in, I don't know, a Category 20,000 hurricane [...]. That was an extraordinary part of the shoot. It was fantastic.



Again, it is Greenland's spectacular Arctic landscapes that are significant, with Bernadette sailing between icebergs. As the quote supports, it is again the spectacularism of the Greenlandic location that is emphasised, as an *expedition* and a battle against nature.

On the contrary, Greenland is not chosen as a location in productions such as *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (Ben Stiller, 2013) and *Greenland* (Ric Roman Waugh, 2020) despite Greenland being the setting for key parts of the films. In both cases, however, the Greenland-set scenes were shot in Iceland. In the disaster film *Greenland*, the plot is about getting to exactly Greenland, where there are bunkers around Thule Airbase that can save the main characters from a comet destroying most of Earth, but the Greenlandic scenes were filmed around Reykjavík (Waugh in Douglas 2020). While this doubling is less noticed in the press, *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* has become one of the main examples of foreign filmmaking creating an implausible Greenlandic place (Cooper n.d.). Here, the town of Stykkishólmur was used to double Tasilaq as the town's architecture and scattered, colourful buildings was seen as similar to Greenlandic urban landscapes (Grønlund 2022a, 216). The only Greenlandic influence was therefore through the actors Maariu Olsen and Makka Kleist.

For many filmmakers today, the film is a 'bad' example of location doubling, which has negatively influenced the depiction through its implausibility – for instance Otto Rosing (2021, PI, MT) refer to it as a “a little insult”. Similarly, the film has been viewed as a key example of a runaway production as “the Greenlandic scenes were filmed in Iceland, and Greenland missed a great opportunity to promote the country on Hollywood's biggest stage” (Løvschall-Wedel 2015, MT).

While Greenland continues to feature as a small, spectacular location in Hollywood productions – both as the one that doubles and the one that is doubled – French filmmaking has increasingly taken the form of more localised, ethnographic narratives with strong roots in Greenlandic communities with feature films such as *Inuk* (Mike Magidson, 2010), *Le Voyage au Groenland (Journey to Greenland)*, Sébastien Betbeder, 2016), and *Une Année Polaire (A Polar Year)*, Samuel Collardey, 2018). Especially Magidson's *Inuk* is an important example. The film follows the boy Inuk (Gaba Petersen) from a troubled home in Nuuk who ends up in an orphanage in Uummannaq. Unlike the Hollywood films, there is a historically high level of community engagement, with all actors being amateurs and a large number of children and staff from the Uummannaq Children's Home. The institution's director Ann Andreasen was involved as associate producer (Uummannaq Polar Institute n.d.) and Greenland explorer Ole Jørgen Hammeken as co-writer and main actor. The film was an international

success and was also praised in the Greenlandic press, e.g. by Greenlandic filmmaker Peter Jensen (in Ullerup 2012, MT) as being a “great contribution to showcasing Greenland to the world”. Though still a French-led project, the film thus has a high degree of community power in the upper rungs of the CEL model with partnership and delegated power greatly influencing the production and an example of how productive partnerships can result in international successes.

Overall, the period shows an international interest that continues representation discourses and country interests through films such as the UK exploration mockumentary *Beyond the Pole* (David L. Williams, 2009) which – similar to *Journey to Greenland* – is about two friends travelling to Greenland, here with a goal of reaching the North Pole. Or the German adventure-comedy *Checker Tobi und das Geheimnis unseres Planeten* (*Checker Tobi and the Secret of Our Planet*, Martin Tischner, 2019), which – similar to *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* – follows a young man travelling the world, including Greenland. But there has also been film production from more surprising origins such as the Mexican ‘Cronenbergian’ body-horror *Halley* (Sebastián Hofmann, 2013) and Filipino drama-thriller *Nuuk* (Veronica Velasco, 2019).

In *Halley*, Greenland is only part of the ending, where a five-minute sequence of dramatic Greenlandic rural landscapes, probably around Ilullissat, shows floating icebergs and snow-covered mountains which become the destination in the tormented protagonist's escape from Mexico and towards the 'end of the world' – in this case Greenland. *Nuuk*, on the other hand, is – as the title suggest – anchored in Nuuk and shot on-location as a story about love, suicide, and abuse portraying Greenland and its landscapes as cold and depressive and generally in a different, darker perspective than the French romanticisations. At the same time, the film thematises a meeting between Filipino and Greenlandic culture and history as well as Greenlandic past and present, including shots in front of the Hans Egede statue in Nuuk, which draws connections between Filipino and Greenlandic colonial history. Furthermore, it points to a Greenlandic present where Filipinos are today Greenland's largest immigrant group (not counting Danes) (Statistics Greenland 2023, 8).

However, the most significant breakthrough in the period is in terms of formats, where especially TV series with Greenlandic settings are increasingly being produced. However, the most significant breakthrough in the period is in terms of formats, where especially TV series with Greenlandic settings are increasingly being produced. These are mainly single episodes of series where individual episodes are set in Greenland, starting with season 1, episode 4 of

*Borgen* (DR, 2010-2013), where a geopolitical crisis occurs when a plane with CIA prisoners are proven to land at the Thule Air Base forcing the newly established government led by Birgitte Nyborg (Sidse Babett Knudsen) to travel to Nuuk and straighten things out with the Greenlandic Prime Minister Jens Enok Berthelsen (Angunnguaq Larsen). As formulated by the main producer Camilla Hammerich, this changed the political series “into a thriller about Denmark’s big-brother relationship with Greenland and little-brother relationship with the US” (Hammerich 2015, 230). Production-wise, it consisted of a small crew flying to Nuuk to shoot exterior shots with Nyborg and Berthelsen at key locations in Nuuk, supplementing the dominant close-up interior shots with Greenlandic landscapes.

The international interest of *Borgen* caused the series to be mentioned directly as an argument for supporting screen production in the Greenlandic parliament, when Doris Jakobsen mentioned the possibilities of foreign collaboration and the economic benefits of filmmaking exemplified through the popularity of the first season:

When the Danish TV series ‘Borgen’ was shown in the UK, it was the first time many Brits discovered Greenland. As a country and as a tourist destination. Film support can therefore also help to spread knowledge about our country, and thus create a breeding ground for both more tourism and better exports. The money we give out to support some of our talent is money well spent. Not only for our culture and our talents, but also for our economy.

(Jakobsen in Kristensen 2012, MT)

The interest from Danish TV producers continued with series such as season 3, episode 2 of *Arvingerne* (*The Legacy*, DR, 2014-2017), where the area around Nuuk is the setting for a dramatic activist art event and a subsequent fatal accident.

The US examples are instead both examples of location doubling, where season 3, episode 17 of *MacGyver* (CBS, 2016-2021) is set in Northern Greenland with Angus MacGyver solving the disappearance of a technician at an international seed vault hidden in the Greenlandic permafrost. While all scenery here is CGI, the most recent example of *Vikings* (2013-2020), season 6, episodes 14-15, follows its 1928-predessor *The Viking* by taking Vikings to an unforgiving no-man's land rather than an expected ‘golden land’. Here, Greenland is portrayed as brown and barren with no possibilities for the settlers which drives some crazy and makes the rest flee.

Following *Journey to Greenland*, SVoD platforms continued their interest in Greenland resulting in the additional Netflix Original feature film *Against the Ice* (Peter Flinth, 2022) and

the Swedish/Icelandic series *Tunn is* (*Thin Ice*, 2021) and *Borgen: Power and Glory* (DR and Netflix, 2022). While I will analyse the latter in chapter 9, I will briefly address the other two series here as they are interesting examples of recent developments in the Greenlandic screen industry. In my recent article on the *Thin Ice* (Grønlund 2022a), I analyse the serial as a recent example of *Arctic noir* which Anne Marit Waade (2020, 39) have framed as a genre that follows traits of Nordic noir but takes the Arctic environment and climate a step further by integrating it into the crime fiction plot and creating a visual aesthetic that reflects regional discussions on geopolitical tensions, postcolonial relations, and rights of Indigenous peoples. As such, *Thin Ice* is an example of how a general interest in the Arctic has resulted in increasing production from and about the Arctic causing a range of Noirs such as *Fortitude* (2015-2018), *Midnatssol* (*Midnight Sun*, 2016), or *Ivalo* (*Arctic Circle*, 2018-).

Overall, the second wave of Greenland film points towards an industry in the making. While the first wave did see the start of e.g. production companies and a filmmakers association, the contemporary screen industry has established several government-funded initiatives along with an increasing amount of production companies. Following in ICL model, the first wave thus never managed to pass the pioneering phase, ultimately closing the filmmaker's association and loose momentum. This has changed and based on the increasing amount of companies and institution building, the industry is arguably in an early growth phase especially due to institution-building, though still very vulnerable to changes and dependent on fragile funding opportunities. This is also in terms of branding, where Greenland increasingly frames itself as an investment destination (Kaur 2020) and an expedition destination for foreign filmmakers (Ward and O'Regan 2009, 218). As the next chapters will illustrate, this state of the industry is put to the test with three types of productions taking place within the Greenland conditions, starting with the Indigenous feature film of *Alanngut Killinganni*.

# Chapter 6

## *Alanngut Killinganni*

“Please support the greenlandic film business, this movie has been made by a very little amount of money. And the next many movies from Greenland will probably be low budget movies. We know we can do much better than this, if we just had more support & economical freedom. And if we had no restraints from the deadlines, because we can’t afford more time. The will can only survive a number of years of fights but not a lifetime of fighting.”

[sic]

Text at the end of the credits of *Alanngut Killinganni*

When Malik Kleist's first feature film *Qaqqat Alanngui* premiered in 2011 as part of the early second wave, it beat the previous record holder *Titanic* as the most watched film ever in Katuaq Bio (Frederiksen 2011; Redaktionen 2011). Made in a strong Greenlandic context merging it with horror genre tropes, it clearly appealed to a Greenlandic audience and continues to be the most-watched film in Greenland with limited screenings abroad. When news of a sequel spread around Greenland in 2019 when shooting began, it naturally caused excitement and media coverage; because how would Greenland's greatest success to date be continued?

The result is the horror film *Alanngut Killinganni (In the Edge of the Shadow)*, which premiered in September 2022 and is thus the latest example of a Greenlandic feature film (see Appendix 4 for summary). In the following, I will present a case study on the process focusing on the particularities of Indigenous filmmaking in Greenland, funding, location work, and reception. To start, I will introduce the data that forms the basis of the analysis.

## Introducing the data

As presented in Chapter 3, the case studies are based on a variety of qualitative data. As a long process with shooting in 2019<sup>30</sup> – before this research project began – most of the produced data is retrospective. These are primarily four interviews with the most central persons involved, namely two interviews with the film's main producer Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg (2021; 2022, PI), an interview with director and writer Malik Kleist (2022, PI), and one with the film's distributor Bill Bering (2023, PI) who have continuously answered emails and further questions about the process. Skydsbjerg and Kleist are the only individuals who were involved in the project from beginning to end, making them invaluable sources of information, particularly regarding the creative and financial aspects.

In addition, I received key data on the creative process in the form of a final script, story board, and press material (A4.1-3). I also received behind the scenes material such as photos, videos, social media posts, and vlogs<sup>31</sup> that give an impression of the timeline, different project stages, and circumstances on-location. I have also participated in several key industry events around *Alanngut Killinganni (AK)*, not least the world premiere at NIFF in September

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<sup>30</sup> When the film was shot in 2019, I studied at the University of Greenland in Nuuk. Although I was not actively researching during this period, the news of an upcoming film and the media attention was significant.

<sup>31</sup> In particular, Skydsbjerg's company PaniNoir's Facebook page (A4.4-23) and vlogs from Kleist's Youtube channel @TumitProduction.

2022 and the subsequent Danish premiere in Copenhagen. Like so, the case is bound together by both collected and existing data collected physically and digitally in Greenland and Denmark.

As supplementary material, I have interview data and behind-the-scenes material from another Greenlandic production, *Ukiutoqqami Pilluaritsi* (UP), which was deselected as a primary case when I gained access to the newer and fully Greenlandic funded case of AK. However, interviews with Otto Rosing (2021, PI) and screenwriter Henrik Fleischer (2022, PI) from UP will be included as supplementary material and thereby create more depth and support points about Greenlandic film production. This also includes behind-the-scenes material sent by Rosing, including thousands of images, video clips, and self-made interviews for a never-published bonus material project. Together with the general industry interviews often discussing Kleist, Skydsbjerg, or AK (e.g Pedersen 2021; Péronard 2021; Hansen 2022, PI), this provides a comprehensive insight into the making of the film and the context in Greenland.

In this way, AK has emerged as a case study that, as perhaps the most anticipated Greenlandic film ever due to the success of *Qaqqat Alanngui*, is also the best contemporary example of how the conditions of place influence the production process when working within the Greenlandic production and funding conditions from 2017 to 2022. As of latest, AK was the first Greenlandic film to be nominated for the Nordic Council Film Prize in August 2023 motivated by the film's ability to combine "modern storytelling techniques with humour and horror from Greenlandic oral storytelling tradition", where the "Greenlandic landscapes are also a key component in the film, where breath-taking views of the mountains and the sea form a fantastic backdrop for the action" (Nordisk Film & TV Fond 2023). Overall, the nomination points towards an increasing awareness towards indigenous filmmaking.

## Starting a project

According to director, writer, and executive producer Malik Kleist (2022, PI), the idea for AK came already during the filming of *Qaqqat Alanngui* in 2010. However, it was not until a four-month work grant in 2014 allowed Kleist to dedicate himself to the writing process that he took on the project, resulting in a first draft. In the following years, Kleist worked on the

larger, international-oriented project *Angut Tarraqanngitsoq*<sup>32</sup> which was discarded due to lack of interest from Danish partners. Kleist therefore continued his Greenlandic project with Skydsbjerg as producer in 2017, when they went through the script and did multiple drafts. From here, a series of process delays began:

We were actually ready to start filming in 2018, but we didn't have enough money. So, we ended up delaying the project by one year. And then in 2019 we started filming it, and then when we finished filming it, we stopped again for a year because we didn't have enough money for post-production. Then we had to apply for money again. When we got the money, we started post-production in 2020. [...] Then we finished the film in 2020, but due to [Covid] restrictions and so on, it was a bit difficult. [...]. When we finally had time and everything ran properly again, the cultural centres had already been booked to other events, so I had to wait a few months again. But then in September [2022] we finally got the premiere.

(Kleist 2022, PI, MT)

Kleist points to fundamental characteristics that characterise Greenlandic film production in general (in addition to Covid-19). First, the quote underlines the challenge of Greenlandic financing; As it was an important part of the identity of *Nuummioq* to be a *Greenlandic* produced and financed film, AK was carried by the same ambition (Skydsbjerg 2022, PI). For Skydsbjerg and Kleist, funding became a constraint meant as a statement and to allow creative freedom. However, as Kleist describes, his previous project was unrealised because of a lack of interest from a Danish company, which indicates that foreign companies make high demands and thus shut down desired collaborations themselves (rather than Greenlandic filmmakers actively choosing not to): “So we changed tactics and went back to the low-budget one that could be made up here, where it was more of a pure Greenlandic production” (Kleist 2022, PI, MT).

The choice of Greenlandic funding had consequences. Skydsbjerg (2022, PI) confirms Kleist's description of the process and puts it in the context of funds consistently giving half of what was applied for which ended up with a total budget of appr. DKK 3,000,000 [€400.000]. She describes how Greenlandic funds are generally managed by people without film-related experience:

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<sup>32</sup> Though never realised, the film was announced as a large Greenlandic project in local media involving a wide range of established filmmakers as a collaboration between Tunit Production and Pipaluk K. Jørgensen's company Karitas Production written by Kleist and Inuk Silis Høegh with a hoped-for premiere in autumn 2017 with Skydsbjerg as line-producer and production manager (Isaksen 2016, 16).



there wasn't a great understanding of what film was and why it's so expensive. You can say without blinking that [DKK] 3 million is not much, but it is up here and especially for one film. [...] We don't have that history [for filmmaking] like other countries [...], it's something we must show through the results we create: 'That's why it costs money.' And Malik also said in his speech at the end [of the AK premiere] that there were some things that could have been much better if we had had a better economy.

(Skydsbjerg 2022, PI, MT)

This is far from an isolated case: *Nuummioq* was funded continuously during the project; Kleist took a personal loan for *Qaqqat Alanngui*; and Pipaluk K. Jørgensen sold her apartment and car and took a loan to finance *Anori* (Krebs 2021, 18). Similarly, UP appears to be a reaction to this, as the film was initiated in frustration over funding challenges; "At one point I was just so desperate, and I thought, fuck it, we're making UP. And we had zero money, we had nothing" (Rosing 2021, PI, MT). Despite being a Greenlandic-Danish co-production (primarily with Greenlandic funds), UP left Rosing with a debt of DKK 200.000.

To avoid taking loans, Skydsbjerg chose to finance the entire film before shooting, starting with the first payouts as early as 2017, e.g. from the Sermersooq Municipality Culture Fund (Sermeq Puljen) in 2017 of DKK 200.000 where she, as co-producer, also raised DKK 50,000 for UP (Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq 2017). Overall, the long funding process is not a result of Skydsbjerg not being experienced in the system. On the contrary, she received media attention during the period when she received by far the most from the self-government's cultural funds in 2018 receiving DKK 500,000 for three different projects in the third application round, of which DKK 200,000 was for AK (Schultz-Nielsen 2018). Skydsbjerg managed to assemble a budget that was entirely Greenlandic financed primarily through the self-government's film grant and the municipality of Sermersooq, as well as – as is characteristic of all Greenlandic feature films – support and sponsorship from a wide range of Greenlandic local and private stakeholders.

In this way, AK was a low-budget film characterised by a lengthy process with continuous postponements. Although this was partly due to the focus on Greenlandic funding, all Greenlandic feature films are characterised by challenging funding processes. The result was a two-hour 'thriller' – a thriller-horror (A4.23) – produced by Skydsbjerg's production company PaniNoir in collaboration with Kleist's company Imalik Film and composer and visual effect artist Marc Fussing Rosbach's company FurosImage, all one-person-companies.

## Assembling an ultrasmall crew

As one of the clearest characteristics of the ultrasmall, assembling a crew and cast was very difficult within Greenland. The talent pool itself is not only ultrasmall in numbers but even more due to unavailability caused by the most sought-after filmmakers and actors being occupied on other productions – or if they work part-time, occupied by their everyday jobs (Skydsbjerg 2022, PI).

As the only ones involved from start to finish, Skydsbjerg and Kleist worked closely together on both creative and production aspects, while continuously assembling a team of experienced and new Greenlandic talent around the project, as well as two non-Greenlandic crew members which represents the tangled nature of the Greenlandic film industry – both between generations and productions. For instance, co-founder of Film.gl, photographer, and producer (e.g. *Updated*, *The Fight for Greenland*) Jørgen Chemnitz was involved as executive producer, actor (*Thin Ice*, *Unnuap Taarnerpaaffiani*, UP) and technician (e.g. sound in *Anori*) Qillannguaq Berthelsen worked with sound, and Rosbach was both composer and VRX supervisor.

The project has a Nordic influence in the form of Kleist's regular Director of Photography Icelandic Freyr Líndal Sævarsson<sup>33</sup> and Danish Nikolaj Tarp who is credited as executive and line producer. According to Skydsbjerg (2021; 2022, PI), Tarp was very central to the success of the production due to the pressure on Skydsbjerg, who emphasises an important point about roles and collaboration:

We had external people that we had brought in for our production. And I like that balance and order: Greenlandic idea, Greenlandic project, Greenlandic film. We don't mind collaboration, but it's our film, our story we have to tell.

(Skydsbjerg 2022, PI, MT)

It emphasised that even though external forces were involved in the production, what makes it Greenlandic is the distribution of power; the narrative sovereignty. Skydsbjerg's approach as a producer reflects the general pattern in Greenland that follows the phrase 'nothing about

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<sup>33</sup> According to Kleist (2022, PI), he and Sævarsson became close collaborators by coincidence when they needed Greenlandic photographers for the filming of *Qaqqat Alanngui*. He has subsequently been DoP on all Kleist's films as well as Jørgensen's *Anori*.

us without us' which, rather than excluding foreign productions, encourages collaboration within a framework adapted to Greenlandic conditions with as much local influence as possible. Even though this does not fit directly into the CEL model – as the AK was initiated by the Greenlanders themselves and thus community filmmaking – the starting point here is arguably community control, where the top rung exactly 'have majority control over the decision-making process' being 'fully responsible for management and decision-making aspects and have the power to negotiate the conditions under which 'outsiders' participate'.

In terms of casting, there were the same challenges despite the flexibility of the cast, as only two roles from the previous film, Mike Thomsen and Angunnguaq Larsen (Skydsbjerg 2022, PI), were needed in the sequel. Larsen is arguably the most popular and utilised Greenlandic screen actor nationally and internationally. In addition to *Qaqqat Alanngui*, he has had leading roles in films such as *Eskimo Weekend*, *Nuummioq* and *Anori*, while he has also appeared internationally in *Thin Ice*, *Borgen*, *Borgen: Power & Glory*, *The Experiment*, and most recently *Ivalu*. However, Larsen is not a trained actor, but instead has a background as a musician<sup>34</sup> and is currently employed as a technician at Katuaq. Thus, he emphasises the characteristic of Greenlandic film, where several of the popular actors – such as Nivi Pedersen (2021, PI) – do not work full-time in acting and are not educated actors, which means they cannot be members of the Greenlandic actors' union SILA (Hansen 2022, PI).

As Skydsbjerg (2022, PI) underlines, it was more challenging with the remaining cast, where the other main character, the police officer Malina, ended up being Arnârak Patricia Bloch. Unlike the other main roles, Bloch was not known from the creative industry, but as works in public health research (Kleist 2023, 10). Bloch's role is similar to the lead role of Malik in *Nuummioq*, played by the inexperienced Lars Rosing; a carpenter from Nuuk. While Bloch and most of the central cast were contacted directly by Kleist, minor roles, extras, and crew members were found through Facebook posts throughout the production process (A4.5-7; 11; 19). In this way, filmmakers make use of the fact that Greenlanders are among the most active users of Facebook which acts as a fast sharing of information between citizens in and across cities and settlements (Ravn-Højgaard 2019, 70).

For the post-production phase, Kleist describes how the low budget influenced the process:

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<sup>34</sup> For instance, Larsen was guitarist in the popular band Chilly Friday started in 1999, where Kleist was lead singer (Otte n.d.).

We were only two people doing all the finishing work. And that's because we had to save as much money as possible. And that's the thing, we don't get a lot of money in Greenland. And we really try to do everything as cheaply as possible. Even though it looks good, it can be a huge challenge. [...] With the money you have, that's what you can do.

(Kleist in A4.26)

With the two being Kleist and Rosbach, there was plenty of experience, but few hands – something that also characterises the remaining production process, not least during the actual filming in the mountains, which I will describe in more detail in the next section.

More atypically for recent local productions, all cast members were contracted and paid a flat fee (Skydsbjerg 2022, PI), rather than working for free such as actors in *Anori* (Krebs 2021, 18) or most of the participants on UP who were paid in a never-realised share model (Rosing 2021, PI; Fleischer 2022, PI). In general, there is a great willingness to participate in Greenlandic productions despite low or no salary. This points to local Greenlandic filmmaking as community filmmaking, which at the same time takes place in a close-knit and more informal space without contracts and special requirements. Actress and filmmaker Nivi Pedersen (2021, PI, MT) describes this as an intimate space of local filmmaking where “you help each other, you work together to make this happen. [...] And then you meet all the time in all kinds of circumstances, [...] you're much more together, we see each other all the time.”

As such, Greenlandic filmmaking can be said to exist despite its ultrasmall conditions by virtue of its communal spirit and a desire to create *Greenlandic* content; a desire that Skydsbjerg (2021, PI, MT) links to a perceived opportunity to write history:

I think there's something really seductive about the fact that all of us in the film industry are making history all the time. All the time. You always are when you're making films, but up here, it really matters. And we have to stick together.

This sentiment was also reflected in the assembling of the crew, where a Facebook post to get a boat and a captain for location shooting played on this: “Do you want to make a difference in the Greenlandic film industry?! Then help us with that” (A4.12).

## Writing, choosing, and working location

Like most Greenlandic filmmakers, Kleist is self-taught in many parts of the filmmaking process, including scriptwriting. With a technical education in film and TV from Media College Denmark, Kleist worked several years as technician at KNR but has many years of experience in film production starting as sound and light assistant in 1998 during the shooting of *Sinilluarit*. As a musician and lead singer of the rock bands Chilly Friday and Malik, Kleist has a long history of creative work, though he only got into film making as a co-writer on *Hinarik Sinnattunilu* and then as the main writer on his subsequent projects as a director. Beyond that, Kleist (Kleist 2022, PI, MTI) points to a workshop organised by Film.gl with Danish director Christina Rosendahl as the only training in writing and otherwise “just try to follow the Hollywood Model”.

In this way, he was – from a Greenlandic perspective – relatively experienced when he wrote the various eight drafts of AK. The result is a 119-page script which – despite a few discrepancies, for example in the dialogue – are consistent with the final film (A4.1). As described in one of Kleist's vlogs, a storyboard was created based on the script by graphic designer Malik Chemnitz in May 2019 a few months before shooting (Kleist 2022b). This resulted in a 231-page storyboard covering 106 scenes with 920 individual frames which shows the entire film in relative detail (A4.2). As shown in an extract from the storyboard (see image 4), Whether it is the environment, characters, perspective, angles, dialogue, and technical details like drone shots. The starting point for the filming was thus relatively controlled, based on a specific shot-to-shot plan to streamline the production process, which



Image 4: Page 41 from the storyboard of AK drawn by Malik Chemnitz (A4.2).

was compressed into a total of six-week shoots, one in Nuuk and five on-location in rural areas.

In terms of location, the film is similarly tied to a small number of locations in Nuuk and the majority of screen and production time on-locations in the fjord Eqaluit Paarliit, one of them being the most central location from *Qaqqat Alanngui* around a hut that belonged to Kleist's family at the time. Since it is no longer in the family and there was no access, the location was only a small but important part of AK, who instead had to place most of the shooting elsewhere (Kleist 2022, PI). At the same time, the production was partly funded by the municipality of Sermersooq through Sermeq Puljen, meaning that activities had to be located within the municipality (Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq n.d.).

While the local locations are limited to, for example, the local police station and an apartment in a well-known apartment block close to the city centre, the rural locations are chosen based on a natural affinity and a one-day research trip to better visualise the story and write them into the particularities of the geography (Kleist, 2022, PI). According to Kleist, the locations of both *Qaqqat Alanngui* and AK were well-known from his childhood such as the hut and several abandoned settlements. With AK, the thoughts started at the abandoned town of Kangeq, located half an hour by boat (Kleist 2019). Eventually, Kleist changed his mind changing the main location to the abandoned settlement Nuup Narsaa south of Nuuk (see image 5).



Image 5: Nuup Narsaa from the seaside, May 15 2019. Screenshot from Kleist's vlog from one day of location scouting with production designer Naleraq Eugenius (Kleist 2022a).

As a Greenlandic horror film, the use of abandoned settlements as filming locations can reflect different aspects and themes of the film. These elements can help create an

atmosphere of fear and suspense as well as explore historical, cultural, and visual dimensions. Firstly, the use of abandoned settlements allows the film to emphasise a sense of isolation in a country already known for its rural landscapes and scattered population. Secondly, the use of abandoned settlements can support the integration of supernatural elements into the film's plot. By utilising the abandoned settlements as settings, the film can incorporate these cultural and spiritual elements and create a horror film with a supernatural twist. As underlined by Skydsbjerg (2022, PI, MT), “Nature is a big part of Greenland. And in relation to these films, such as *Mountain Wanderers*, *fjeldgængere*, that is with mountains. And the whole concept of *qivittoq* is that they are away from society.” Thirdly, the abandoned settlements can act as symbolic representations of Greenland's history and socio-economic challenges. Due to colonisation, urbanisation, and economic conditions, many small settlements in Greenland have experienced depopulation and forced displacement. By using these locations, the film can touch on themes such as societal decay, lost communities and the consequences of depopulation and settlement closures. Kleist thus uses the “specificity of the real place, including local topography, and its aesthetic appeal and influence” (Hansen and Waade 2019, 107) to unite a distinctive Greenlandic landscape with the genre tropes, which can also be interpreted in an underlying political context.

By doing so, Kleist and Skydsbjerg used a location type already marketed as destinations among Greenlandic tourism operators who have organised tours to places like Nuup Narsaa and Kangeq (Inuk Travel n.d.; Kang Tourism n.d.) which is collectively marketed as a place where aesthetics, atmosphere, and history meet as *ghost towns* by Visit Greenland; “The term is both scary and exciting, and it’s easy to let your mind wander. What stories do these places hide – are there really haunted houses – and why were they abandoned in the first place?” (Egede n.d.). As several of the settlements are also relatively accessible by boat, they are ideal locations for production teams, which has been the case with *Ivalu* and *The Experiment*, both of which have used Kangeq as a location; in the latter to double 1950s Nuuk.

One aspect of AK that sets it apart from most Greenlandic films is the extensive use of outdoor locations and from screen productions in general by being shot in the summer – Greenlandic examples of this are *Nuummioq* and *Qaqqat Alanngui*, while *Qivittoq* (Erik Balling, 1956) is a rare main example of a foreign production shot mostly outdoors during summer. The explanation is the accessibility – and hence economy – of summer landscapes, avoiding the months of snow, storms, and general instability. However, as both Skydsbjerg and Kleist (2022, PI) describe, summer is not synonymous with easy, but rather a costly and

cumbersome affair simply by virtue of having to shoot for extended periods of time in nature. According to Skydsbjerg (2022, PI), a third of the budget was spent on the six weeks of production itself – around DKK 1,000,000 [€135.000] – mainly related to salaries and on-location filming in the two main locations in Eqaqut Paarliit and Nuup Narsaa.

Here, five of the six weeks of filming were spent with the team sailing out into the fjord for five days of filming and returning to Nuuk for the weekend. To do so, tent camps were set up at the two locations (see image 6). A natural challenge here was logistics, which was solved by hiring the Greenlandic company Xploration Services Greenland who organised both the camp itself and all meals (A4.21). Interestingly, Xploration Services Greenland is an established service provider for the exploration and mining industry, which has worked mostly with logistics, staffing, catering, and administration for international mining companies with long-term assignments and drilling in Greenland. However, the company has previously worked in screen production by providing “logistics, staffing, catering, administration and other services for Moxy Pictures” (Xploration Services Greenland n.d.) during the production of the reality TV series *Ice Cold Gold* (2013-2015).



Image 6: The second camp in Nuup Narsaa after Eqaqut Paarliit managed by Xploration Service Greenland. Screenshot from Kleist’s last AK vlog (Kleist 2022d).

As with the tourism sector, there is a crossover between the screen and mining industry that reflects some of the challenges and solutions that exist within the specific conditions in Greenland; With no dedicated film-related service providers available, filmmakers have to look for alternative solutions among the existing companies in the area. It also reflects a pragmatic approach to filmmaking, where filmmakers seek to maximise the resources available to them by utilising the expertise and logistical capacity that already exists.



The production itself went pretty much according to plan with no missed deadlines. First-time actor Thorbjørn Friis – who plays a Danish tourist – describes the experience of filming:

The biggest part of the adventure is really the local community and all the local forces coming together. It's very impressive. You sail out into the middle of nowhere outside Nuuk and start filming and helping each other through all of this. That's actually the biggest thing. It's an impressive result that has come out of all these local forces.

(Friis in A4.26, MT)

Here, Friis discusses an interesting aspect of Greenlandic filmmaking that touches on both community filmmaking and, not least, the way roles are assigned. The Greenlandic filmmakers interviewed all describe how everyone works on set, and one of the most consistent metaphor of the work is that Greenlandic filmmakers "wear many hats" (e.g. Pedersen 2021, PI; Rosing 2021, PI; Fleischer 2022, PI) to describe the fact that Greenlandic filmmakers fulfil many roles at once. The reliance on the local network and living in small communities leads to frequent meetings and interactions between filmmakers, ultimately shaping the film community in Greenland – and also challenging it as discussed in Chapter 5. In relation to AK, Skydsbjerg (2022, PI, MT) describes Greenlandic film people's 'many hats' - i.e. multiple roles - as the defining feature of Greenlandic filmmaking:

That right there, that's Greenlandic film! This is also reflected in the credits, which read Nina, Nina, Nina, Nina – Malik, Malik, Malik, Malik, Malik. And several of the other names too, behind the camera, right? In front and behind. [...] You do what you have to do to make it work. It's not just about the Greenlandic film industry, it's very common in the creative industry in Greenland.

In this way, the creative industry in Greenland is described as having a strong collaborative culture, something that is also reflected in the general local engagement around filmmaking, collating with the fifth characteristic of the ultrasmall screen industry as being characterised by multifunctionalism.

This contrasts with descriptions of the Greenlandic screen industry as the 'land of individualists' (Jørgensen 2022, PI), with local productions being highly collaborative and often volunteer-based. At the same time, it also speaks to the issues of lack of specialisation, as Greenlandic filmmakers – due to their small numbers – must work across multiple roles

rather than specialising. At the same time, Skydsbjerg (2022, PI, MT) recognises these challenges and their connection to budget and the lack of specialisation:

You might have a little less time and there might be fewer people and stuff like that. You don't have specialists, so each position has maybe three areas of responsibility, and when you're not super experienced in a field, you just do what you think is right, and there's something charming about that. But it's a bit at the expense of quality.

It points to the limited resources and lack of specialists in Greenlandic filmmaking as a critical point. Small productions with fewer people mean that each person has multiple responsibilities, and while this creates a perceived intimacy, it is also a source of frustration. This creates a production space that on the one hand inscribes itself as community filmmaking, but at the same time is marked by the ultrasmall and geographical conditions.

## **Arctic chills and mythical ecocriticism**

As already described, much of AK's anchoring in the horror genre is achieved through Greenland's geographical locations, with abandoned settlements in particular. These naturally occurring landscapes in Greenland hover between urban and rural in an already scattered and sparsely populated nation. Thus, AK – and Kleist as a filmmaker in general – is seen as part of a trend called *Arctic Chills* named after an initiative initiated by AIFF which resulted in a group of young Indigenous filmmakers creating a supernatural horror anthology (Holmberg 2019); from Greenland, this resulted in Rosbach's post-apocalyptic short film *Imajuk* (2022). At NIFF 2022, this also resulted in the panel *Indigenous chills*. Here, Kleist, Rosbach, and Nunavut director Nyla Innuksuk described this trend, where recent “years have seen a wave in Indigenous horror, sci-fi, and adventure films. The films reach new global audiences, and put a twist to Indigenous history and futures” (NIFF 2022, 31). Similar to AK, Innuksuk's alien invasion sci-fi-horror *Slash/Back* uses Hollywood genres within an Indigenous context, where a group of young Inuit girls fight shapeshifting aliens in the small community of Pangnirtung – also by utilising the distinct landscapes and on-location footage.

Similarly, AK is centred on the distinctive Greenlandic landscapes, where the eternal summer sun never leaves scenes in the darkness that normally characterises the horror genre; often experienced in spectacular super totals, and often through drone shots from above or from the side, emphasising the vast expanses on which the action takes place (see image 7-8).



Image 7-8: The ship sailing in and fjord and Tuuma and a police officer on the run from qivittoq through the sun-drenched Greenlandic landscape (screenshots from film).

As in *Qaqqat Alanngui*, the mere representation of summer goes against the dominant representation of the Arctic since the 19th century as "Frozen, inhospitable, static and sterile" (MacKenzie and Stenport 2015, 3). Instead, the landscape is sunny and vibrant, and the history and changeability are clearly shown using the abandoned settlements with colourful houses which together add strong local colour to the film.

At the same time, the film draws on traits from Nordic noir and, not least, comedy. The first part is a new element in Greenlandic cinema and is featured through the police officer Malina, whose vigorous character is reminiscent of Sarah Lund in *Forbrydelsen* (*The Killing*, 2007-2012) or Saga Norén in *Broen* (*The Bridge*, 2011-2018) supplemented by action through a frequent use of her gun (see image 9). It also points back to the previously described branch of Nordic noir that emerged with Arctic noir that goes beyond the boundaries of Nordic



Image 9: Arnârak Patricia Bloch in the role of the tough police officer Malina (screenshot from film).

noir, elevating the importance of the Arctic setting and climate within the crime narrative's plotline and visual style frequently delving into regional discussions concerning geopolitical tensions, postcolonial dynamics, and the rights of Indigenous peoples (Waade 2020).

There is also an extensive use of comedy, which is a recurring theme in Greenlandic films, with everything from *Nuummioq* to Rosbach's fantasy films using an unmistakable Greenlandic humour to support the otherwise genre-typical films. In *AK*, there are both interactions between actors, but also several humorous inputs aimed at Danes and not least (Danish) tourists, providing comic relief. Notably, the film frequently teases Danes, especially tourists. For instance, in a central exchange of worldviews through a conversation between Tuuma and one of the tourists and later, when they do not show up (subtitles translation):

Tuuma: We are in the wild. There is no Facebook, Snapchat or Googlemaps. You have to watch where you are going. It's very easy to get lost here.

Tourist: I've got a good sense of place.

Tuuma: Yeah right. Watch the clock. Remember, you are Danish. You always come on time. Preferably five minutes early.

[...]

Tuuma: Where the hell are they? What's their names again? Hey Danes! Danes! 'I have a good sense of place.' My ass! Danish people!

Through this humorous highlighting of cultural differences, the film plays with Danish stereotypes around punctuality, overconfidence, and underestimating nature – taking the historical Danish stereotyping and reversing it.

Furthermore, *AK* incorporates Greenlandic mythology, like the *qivittoq*-legend, referring to an individual who, after suffering social exclusion, becomes an inhuman, mythical being in the mountains (Mikkelsen 1998). In *AK*, the *qivittoq* has a dual function as both monster and protector of nature, which is directly articulated towards the end when one of the *qivittoqs* speaks to Tuuma and Malina: “You always leave the nature in cracks. You make fun with our bones at our graves. You are splitting the elements from each other. You!” (subtitles translation). This adds another layer to *AK* as a climate-critical film rooted in Greenlandic mythology and nature merging genre codes from horror, Nordic noir, and comedy.

*AK*'s narrative, centred on Greenland's unique geographical and cultural context, illustrates a fusion of global film genres and local mythology. With its combination of genres,

humour, critique, and cultural heritage, AK illustrates how Indigenous cinema can combine global filmmaking techniques with local history and culture to create meaningful works primarily aimed at a domestic audience.

## Premiere, distribution, and reception

As the sequel to Greenland's biggest success, AK was the most anticipated Greenlandic film with a release date that was pushed back and forth due to Covid until the final release date on September 17<sup>th</sup> as part of the closing ceremony of NIFF 2022. Three years before, Kleist uploaded a trailer teaser on his Youtube channel where the connection to *Qaqqat Alanngui* were established through a slow travelling drone shot through a grey Greenlandic landscape with gloomy background music, eventually ending at the iconic cabin from the first film (Kleist 2020). The film thus played with mediatisation and intertextuality by quickly placing the Greenlandic audience in the familiar universe through what is arguably the most iconic location for the Greenlandic audience.

When the new premiere was announced three years later, a new teaser was released along with the trailer itself. Furthermore, Kleist uploaded five behind-the-scenes videos in the weeks leading up to the premiere, with the last one the day before (Kleist 2022d). This created hype in Greenland, not least in Nuuk, which culminated in a big celebration, red carpet at Katuaq, and a packed Hans Lyng Hall. The on-site reception was overwhelming, with screams and laughter from the audience and a standing ovation, with all the filmmakers taking to the stage and bowing to the still applauding audience (see image 10).



Image 10: Crew and actors on the stage after the AK premiere in Katuaq during NIFF. Photo by the author.

While this was unmistakably a great Greenlandic cinematic event, Kleist also took the time to describe the challenges behind the film's production – which were also directly reflected in the credits we had just seen. As it was stated at the end of the credits [sic]:

Please support the greenlandic film business, this movie has been made by a very little amount of money. And the next many movies from Greenland will probably be low budget movies. We know we can do much better than this, if we just had more support & economical freedom. And if we had no restraints from the deadlines, because we can't afford more time. The will can only survive a number of years of fights but not a lifetime of fighting.

In his speech, he continued this message by directly criticising the conditions under which Greenlandic filmmakers produce, underlining the limited funding. In this way, a systemic criticism was woven into the celebration, giving the impression of filmmakers like Kleist who are still frustrated despite recent developments – especially with a project created entirely within the funding framework of Greenland.

Kleist thus emphasises a vulnerability that is also reflected in distribution and screening closely linked to the tiny domestic market. In addition to being ultrasmall, there have been major challenges with piracy, an issue Kleist also experienced with the local success *Hinnarík Sinnattunilu* which, as Thisted (2015, 103) describes, was stolen, copied, and spread along the coast before it was even finished.

In general, Greenlandic filmmakers are very dependent on the three cinemas in Greenland and especially Katuaq Bio in relation to tickets sold. According to Bering (2022, PI) – who is the former cinema manager at Katuaq Bio – he helped establish a special arrangement for Greenlandic filmmakers, whose films have better conditions than foreign films. This is confirmed by current manager Ruth Heilmann (A4.24). Rather than the usual 50/50 distribution of entrance fee, Greenlandic filmmakers receive

60/40 distribution of entrance fees and film rental of DKK 1500.00 per contract. It is required that the film crew is a resident with an address in Greenland. [...] They [the filmmakers] say they get very little revenue from streaming channels like Vimeo. In some places, films are shown with a PC and projector in the school auditorium, but mostly educational films/documentaries are shown without admission.

(A4.25, MT)

In other words, there is an important special arrangement in Greenland that enables Greenlandic filmmakers to earn more, when screening for the domestic audience. At the same time, filmmakers are dependent on the cinemas and this special arrangement, which makes the constellation even more vulnerable with three national cinemas, changing management, and unforeseen challenges such as Covid. Like *Qaqqat Alanngui*, AK became a Greenlandic cinema success as the most watched film in Katuaq Bio in 2022 (despite premiering in September) with 6,130 tickets sold, more than twice as much as runner-up *Avatar 2: The Way of Water* (James Cameron, 2022) on the top 10 most-watched list of Katuaq Bio which otherwise consists exclusively of American feature films (A4.24).

Meanwhile, the time around the premiere revealed another issue, as Skydsbjerg chose to quit the film industry<sup>35</sup> for personal reasons:

I told Malik that he could have the film. It was a gift from me to him. So, all the rights, all the earnings, all that I wanted to give to him. If he organised the premiere. And it wasn't under contract [...] On all the papers, on everything, the film would probably appear as mine, because I'm the producer, and it's financed through me and all that, but now it's Malik's film. And he can sell it wherever he wants, he can do whatever he wants with it.

(Skydsbjerg 2022, PI, MT)

This emphasises two things. Firstly, the informal nature of Greenlandic cinema, where deals are not made on contract, but instead through trust and verbal agreements. Secondly, it emphasises the dependence on individuals, which is emphasised by Kleist (2022, PI, MT):

there might be [...] 6-7-8 people who are the frontrunners. And if just one of those frontrunners disappears or decides to go into another industry, we're going to lose a really big area or a really big person. That's what can be really dangerous about having such a small film industry. And that's why we need as much support as possible. That those frontrunners don't end up saying one day or another 'I don't want to do this anymore'. It can mean so much.

Through this, Kleist highlights the issue of the ultrasmall as being dependent on few individuals, which is further problematised here, as Kleist may feel that they can give up

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<sup>35</sup> Since the interviews, Skydsbjerg announced that she has returned to the screen industry.

under the conditions in Greenland. Overall, the statement points to the fragile nature of the ultrasmall, where a few key individuals have a decisive influence.

After its premiere AK became part of a small historical event when Bering launched the first Inuit-owned distribution company for Indigenous production, TulluT, based in Copenhagen:

It's still in the start-up phase, and the whole idea was that there should be a company for Indigenous peoples like Greenlanders, where they have their own distribution and a sales agent who understands their identity and mindset. I've experienced being out at festivals that it's a very cut-throat industry, so you have five minutes to explain why I should buy your film. That's the way the international market works, and many Greenlanders don't have the opportunity to do that in five minutes. Greenlanders are not that short and to the point and tough. [...] I would like to be that bridge between the two worlds, but that doesn't mean that I'll succeed, [...] it's a learning-by-doing thing.

(Bering 2023, PI, MT)

According to Bering (2023, PI, MT), one issue in Greenland is filmmakers who focus primarily on the film itself, but “when it's finished, they don't know what to do with it”. As a result, there has been a lack of distribution and, not least, distributors who focus on the post-production and post-premiere part of the process, so that films have the best opportunities to travel globally. In this regard, Kleist became Bering's first customer with AK, where the agreement was again made verbally: “We have made a Greenlandic contract. It's that we trust each other” (Bering 2023, PI, MT).

Through TulluT, AK became the first Greenlandic film with distribution to Danish cinemas. In the press material, Bering describes how AK is the “sequel to Qaqqat Alanngui: Greenland's most watched film, surpassing films like Avatar, Titanic and James Bond [...] *already seen by over 11,000 people in Greenland*” (A4.3). At the same time, he focused on Greenlanders living in Denmark by informing cinemas about how many Greenlanders live in the different Danish cities and convince them of an existing audience already interested in Greenlandic cinema. In the end, AK was screened in over 10 Danish cinemas – many with Q&A with Kleist – and reportedly resulted in around 300 tickets sold which is significantly less than in Greenland (Bering 2023, PI).

This way, the time around and after the premiere has emphasised a significant part of the challenges facing the Greenlandic screen industry, just as small initiatives such as



Danish distribution have set things in motion that could potentially change the situation over time. But development is still slow, the situation for filmmakers is vulnerable, and AK's actual afterlife is still uncertain, as the film will not have its streaming premiere until the end of 2023 at the earliest (A4.27). But it promises to be a local success like *Qaqqat Alanngui*, which e.g. is available on Air Greenland's entertainment system on transatlantic flights (Suluk 2019, 46). Global success does not seem to be happening in the near future, but it has never appeared to be the goal either. Rather than a commercial, internationally-orientated film, this is a locally rooted film aimed at a Greenlandic audience. However, as the recent nomination to the Nordic Council Film Prize show, the industry is looking beyond national borders to spread awareness of Greenlandic filmmaking.

## Summary

AK is an illustrative example of contemporary Indigenous filmmaking in Greenland and its challenges, strongly influenced by the context in which it is produced. The production's uncompromising approach to funding within a Greenlandic framework provides insight into the financial implications and dependency on ongoing, limited disbursements from the government's film fund, municipal funds and a range of grants and sponsorships from local and private stakeholders. Not to mention the challenges around distribution, where even historical Danish distribution has yet to prove a financial success. In contrast, AK emphasises the local demand for Greenlandic content, where Kleist continues to produce 'ultrasmall blockbusters' that far outperform foreign content. It also reflects a dependency on Greenlandic screenings, influenced by additional factors such as piracy and additional informal screenings. This creates an industry that struggles with specific conditions difficult to solve within a national framework, and the opportunities to move on from an early growth phase seem dependent on regional collaborations.

Based on the ultrasmall framework, AK also expresses several of these issues, not least around multifunctionalism and dependence on a few individuals, in addition to the tiny domestic markets and other structural disadvantages. Furthermore, the industry is challenged by a lack of people – both due to low numbers and competition – which is solved through crossover functions and the use of, for example, inexperienced actors or by bringing in key personnel from abroad. Despite this, AK stands out as an example of narrative sovereignty where Greenlandic filmmakers “have space and support to tell their own stories on their

own terms” (Hurtubise 2021, 162) with the highest degree of community power, which does not exclude a transnational crew.

The production itself was – based on, for example, municipal funding – located in and around Nuuk with long periods in rural areas. This required a lot of preparation and the use of existing services, e.g. around mining, which allowed for longer stays in the fjord. Here, naturally occurring locations such as abandoned settlements were utilised, which supported the film's genre roots in horror and in the reality of its Greenlandic audience. In doing so, the film joins the dominant trend of genre films in Greenland and other Indigenous communities, which, unlike Sápmi, for example, does not work directly with the consequences of colonialism in its fiction. As discussed in Chapter 5, these audience-focused films – focusing on *entertaining* rather than educating – at the same time express empowerment in *not* addressing colonialism. The focus is not on the former coloniser; it is on the audience to close an entertainment gap historically filled by foreign content. Instead, it is dealt with by Danish filmmakers, with films such as *The Experiment* and, not least, *Kalak*, which will be examined in the next chapter.

# Chapter 7

## *Kalak*

“It’s more common to see documentaries set in Greenland than fiction films, but we wish to position *Kalak* as the grand film about the relationship between Denmark and Greenland, the oppressor and the oppressed, the molester and the survivor”

**Maria Møller Kjeldgaard** (A5.5, MT)

Producer of *Kalak*

The publication of the autobiographical novel *Kalak* in 2007 by Danish-Norwegian author Kim Leine marked the beginning of a successful writing career often centred on Greenland. Leine has since published a wide range of literary works, including novels, short story collections and, not least, the Greenland trilogy, which has secured him bestseller status and contributed to a significant trend in Danish literature in the 2010s focusing on Greenland and the Danish-Greenlandic (Dybdal and Grønlund 2021, 35; Dybdal 2021, 116). The novel deals with topics such as incest and abuse, which have often been problematically discussed in an international context in relation to Greenland. However, in *Kalak*, it is Kim himself who is abused by his father (in Copenhagen) and becomes the abuser (Thisted 2011, 269). The title *Kalak*, which means ‘true Greenlander’, but with a critical undertone that can also mean ‘dirty Greenlander’, refers to Kim’s own attempt to immerse himself in the country, its collectivist culture, language, and women.

Therefore, the announcement of the film adaptation of *Kalak* (see Appendix 5 for a summary) was also met with scepticism. As this chapter will show, discussions arose both in the press and between the director and the Greenlandic producers regarding the problematic story, which could risk reinforcing stereotypes (Lundberg 2020; 2022; Lindberg 2022). Despite these concerns, the project still materialised as a large-scale European co-production, with Polarama Greenland as co-producer with Greenlandic funding. It was an extensive project that differed from many other film projects by shooting all Greenlandic scenes – both exteriors and interiors – on-location in Nuuk and the small East Greenlandic settlement of Kulusuk, with Greenlandic personnel involved in front of and behind the camera. In this way, *Kalak* becomes a particularly interesting case study, providing insight into the co-production of a rare Greenlandic feature film, the collaboration, the development of a controversial theme and the unique work with location. The case thus tests the limits of both the content and the capabilities of the film industry in Greenland within the framework of the production and ambitions of a Greenlandic-based project.

## Introducing the data

Data (see Appendix 5) has been collected continuously since March 2021 until July 2023, thus before the premiere in September 2023.<sup>36</sup> The process started with my interview with Péronard (2021, PI), one of the co-producers of *Kalak*, which was subsequently followed up with ongoing emails and conversations in Denmark and Greenland. The case has been particularly dependent on my contact with producer Maria Møller Kjeldgaard, who since June 2021 has kept me updated and sent me most of the material that forms the basis of Appendix 5, namely two drafts of the script (3<sup>rd</sup> and shooting), production concept, project dossier, production plans, week schedule, finance plan, budget, crew lists, and timelines (A5.1-11). Through ongoing contact before, during, and after production and a subsequent interview (Kjeldgaard 2022, PI), it has been an invaluable source of knowledge and, not least, access and transparency.

Also, *Kalak* is the case where I had the best access to observation in the form of a week of filming in Nuuk when it began during my research stay at Ilisimatusarfik. This involved shooting around the city, in apartments and at different times of the day. Coincidentally, I also ended up working as a crew member for one day when there was a staff shortage due to illness, so I was contacted by Péronard and Kjeldgaard to help production designer Josephine Farsø paint an apartment. This gave me unexpected insider knowledge as well as a long day of great conversations with Farsø and other crew members during work and lunch, and exclusive insight into the processes of production design and location challenges.<sup>37</sup> In addition, I assisted – as a visiting scholar and guest lecturer at University of Greenland – extras coordinator Aviana Steinbacher by communicating the need for white and Inuit extras to my temporary colleagues and students.

The physical presence on location also gave me particularly good opportunities to talk to different staff on set, which meant I quickly found the most relevant to my interest, which subsequently led to interviews with project manager Nathan Kreutzmann (2022, PI) and production assistant Arnánguak Skifte Lynge (2022, PI), who also both have minor acting roles in the film. I had ongoing conversations with them on and off set that gave an insight into the process and the key roles involved in these types of location work.

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<sup>36</sup> With world premiere on September 23, seven days prior to the hand-in of this dissertation. Therefore, the premiere and the response to it will not be included in the analysis. Furthermore, my textual analysis is based on a earlier version of the film send to me by producer Maria Møller Kjeldgaard on March 28 2023.

<sup>37</sup> Although Kjeldgaard offered payment, I declined, so I have not received payment in connection with the fieldwork. I am included in the film's credits under the "Thank you" section.

In addition to the already mentioned interviews, I have several supplementary interviews that deal with *Kalak* to a greater or lesser extent. This is especially with co-producer Pipaluk K. Jørgensen (2022, PI), the initial co-producer through PaniNoir Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg (2021; 2022, PI), and Malik Kleist (2022, PI) who as head of Filmiliortarfik was loosely affiliated to the production. Furthermore, newspaper articles have been a rewarding entry point for the discussion around *Kalak*, which has taken a different shape than the previous case by concentrating more on development, location work, and collaboration. In this way, the structure of the analysis is built around the data obtained.

## Starting a transnational project

The film project *Kalak* started with Eklöf's personal interest in adapting the novel, which led to early contact with Leine to ensure the rights (Kallesøe 2022). Eklöf continues thematically in the line of her graduation short film from The National Film School of Denmark *Noter fra kælderen* (*Notes from Underground*, 2011) – where a man holds a girl captive in his basement, subject to sexual abuse and psychological terror – and adaption-wise with her first feature film *Holiday* (2018) which is similarly an art film based on novels. Here, the story of a love triangle on the Turkish Riviera takes place with a female protagonist trapped in a criminal environment of sexual violence and drugs (Schepele 2020).

This way, *Kalak* is a continuation of Eklöf's explicit depictions of sexuality, violence, and abuse, which in *Kalak* are continued through the protagonist Jan, who was sexually exploited by his father in his youth and ends up in a drug addiction during his years as a nurse in Greenland. Together with Eklöf and the experienced screenwriter Sissel Dalsgaard Thomsen, Leine then co-wrote the script (A5.1). Additionally, Nadim Carlsen was – as in *Notes from Underground* and *Holiday* – Director of Photography developed a stringent concept for the visual style presented in the project dossier (A5.4) with Josephine Farsø as production designer.

In terms of the producer setup, Maria Møller Kjeldgaard was line producer on *Holiday* which led to the collaboration on *Kalak* as her first feature film project as producer through her company Manna Film. Kjeldgaard (2023, PI) describes, how the film production was originally intended as a Danish/Greenlandic/Swedish co-production, but for various reasons ended up as a largescale European co-production between Denmark, Greenland, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, and Finland. Kjeldgaard initially applied for approximately

€270,000 from Eurimages, but was rejected, necessitating the inclusion of two additional countries: Norway, due to the natural connection to Leine's Norwegian roots and the casting of lead actor Emil Johnsen, and the Netherlands, due to the existing collaboration from the film *Holiday*, which was also a transnational co-production with Dutch co-producers. Covid-19 created additional challenges, including travel restrictions without insurance coverage and increased costs. Production was postponed twice and then involved a Finnish co-producer to counter price increases. In total, six countries were involved in the film primarily for financial reasons, with a total budget of €3,056,660 (A5.7), which is significantly higher than the average budget for a European fiction film (European Audiovisual Observatory 2023), despite being a relatively small production in terms of crew and shooting days. Here, the total Danish support was 66.49% of the budget – with almost half covered by the DFI – while Norway contributed 9.60%, the Netherlands 8.01%, Sweden 7.64%, Finland 4.37%, and Greenland 3.90%.

The Greenlandic co-funding was made by Polarama Greenland collecting €119.277 from mainly the Greenlandic government film grant for development, production, and talent development, as well as larger amounts from NAPA and the Sermersooq Municipality Culture Fund (Sermeq Puljen). Thus, *Kalak* is not only a rare Greenlandic co-produced feature film, but also the one that has received the largest Greenlandic support since self-government<sup>38</sup> and is roughly the same size as the Greenlandic support for *Heart of Light*, which came exclusively from the Home Rule Government as presented in Chapter 5.

In terms of Greenlandic funding, the governmental film grant led to a requirement for talent development, and Sermeq Puljen is given to projects that take place in Sermersooq Municipality. In relation to the latter, most of the film was shot in Nuuk and the East Greenlandic settlement of Kulusuk both of which belong to the municipality. Here, the production chose early on to film all Greenlandic scenes – indoors and outdoors – on-location in Nuuk and Kulusuk "utilising the gifts that the unique and specific location gives the film that is hard to replicate elsewhere" (A5.3). In this way, *Kalak* is a relatively rare example of an – from a Danish perspective – artistic runaway to “artistically service the story” (McDonald 2007, 900) completely without artificial and natural economic reasons, as neither tax rebates were utilised nor wages were lower than Danish standards (Kjeldgaard 2023, PI). In addition, *Kalak* chose a more challenging location on the east coast to further achieve

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<sup>38</sup> For instance, 3900 Pictures co-produced *The Experiment* (Louise Friedberg, 2010) and received funding from the Greenlandic film grant (Sommer 2009).

authenticity in the representation of place, also in relation to the novel as parts take place in Kulusuk. This choice of on-location shooting for a feature film on the East Coast has not been done since *The Wedding of Palo*, which was shot as part of Knud Rasmussen's last Thule Expedition (Volquardsen 2015, 215–16).<sup>39</sup>

As described by Kjeldgaard (2023, PI) and stated in the early production concept (A5.3), it was also central to have Greenlandic influence on the production with as many Greenlandic crew members as possible – both to fulfil talent development requirements, use the existing experienced filmmakers in Greenland, and at the same time create the best starting point for creating a potentially controversial narrative in Greenland. This way, *Kalak* took the form of a co-production rooted in milieu-building transnationalism (Hjort 2009, 18–19), where an experienced international film crew involved less experienced filmmakers in Greenland, who could then transfer experience; for example, through Filmiliortarfik, which had an employee attached to the production as a sound recordist assistant – an involvement that, as Kleist (2022, PI, MT) describes, "can be felt. When he comes back, I can feel that he has gained a lot of experience".

Overall, several Greenlandic participants – such as Arnáguak Skifte Lyng (2023, PI) and Nathan Kreutzmann (2023, PI) – gained their first experience with filmmaking from a management perspective coming from tourism and television, respectively. However, as the next section will emphasise, there was a longer series of challenges surrounding the production of *Kalak* that are closely related to affective entanglements and postcolonial tensions that have affected production in various ways since the early stages of development.

## Argumentation, involvement, and gatekeeping

Many film directors and screenwriters take the easy way when it comes to portraying minorities, for example. My thesis is that these people know this deep down, even if they proclaim that film is just pure entertainment. Because that's *bullshit*. Films matter. These are active, important choices you make about these things. [...] I'm stuck with it being an outsider's view. In a novel like 'Kalak', which is told from the inside, people by nature become functions around the main character. [...] The basic problem probably lies in the sexual encounter

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<sup>39</sup> As presented in chapter 5, *Thin Ice* also takes place on the east coast (in the city of Tasiilaq), but is here primarily doubled through the Icelandic city of Stykkishólmur. To read more about this, I refer to my article and case study on the series in relation to location work and plausible placemaking (Grønlund 2022a).



between the main character and the Greenlandic women. How do I tell this story through a visual medium without it becoming exoticising and objectifying in exactly the way we have seen too many times before?

(Eklöf in Lundberg 2020, MT)

In this quote, Eklöf describes a central challenge in the *Kalak* project; the fundamental narrative. The interview was conducted two years before shooting, and thus provide insight into the challenges and considerations that have influenced the project to avoid ‘exotification’ and stereotyping indicating a personal awareness of the potential problems of portraying a culture and society that she is not native to, resembling some of the issues I discussed around positionality in Chapter 2.

In the interview with Kjeldgaard (2023, PI, MT), this is also an early theme discussing arguments for and against engaging in the adaption:

I'm worried about that too – precisely because it's so sensitive and there are so many layers to the story. So I had a hard time... Also the justification for telling it, and I think we'll keep coming back to that. The main character is an outsider, that's why we can make it. If it had been a Greenlandic main character, it wouldn't have been our story to tell.

As with Eklöf, the argument is then rooted in the main character and not least the main character in a plot “about abuse and assault and alcohol and drug abuse for a white man. He is the one in deroute, not the Greenlandic society” (Kjeldgaard 2023, PI, MT). In this way, both the Danish media and the quotes point to the problems surrounding *Kalak*'s basic plot and setting, which the article describes as a potential "identity politics minefield that should be approached with extreme caution" (Lundberg 2020, MT). It thus refers to global discourses on diversity and justifications for telling stories from outsider perspectives that have previously been an issue and caused tensions in the Danish-Greenlandic relationship.<sup>40</sup>

From a Greenlandic perspective, the project was also met with some ambivalence. Originally, the production was associated with PaniNoir, where Kjeldgaard and Eklöf visited Skydsbjerg (2022, PI) during early research trips, before temporarily retiring from the industry and handing over the co-production to Péronard and Jørgensen and the newly

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<sup>40</sup> E.g. Danish Kenneth Sorento's documentary *Kampen om Gronland (The Fight for Greenland, 2020)*, which, despite Greenlandic co-producer and co-director Malik Kleist, could not be screened at imagineNATIVE due to Sorento's ethnicity (Lindberg 2020). Sorento's critique of the decision was met with opposition from Greenland in particular, who later made Sorento apologise for his statements (Morovati 2020)

established Polarama Greenland. From the beginning, Péronard (2021, PI, MT) expressed ambivalence, but this was overcome by the same arguments found with Eklöf and Kjeldgaard – namely about the approach to location and, not least, the focus of the narrative:

As for *Kalak*, it is the vision of filmmaker Isabella Eklöf that her films should have a higher level of authenticity. So there's also an artistic thing to say, this just has to be shot on location. There's no way round it. [...] It's a difficult project in many ways because it's a controversial story. I'd never read the book, and when I heard about the project, I thought it was a difficult one to take on because it's about all those clichés that we think are wrong. Or that we think are over-represented in the international view of Greenland. But it was reading the script that changed my mind. I could see that it was a story that had a completely different perspective. It wasn't about Greenlandic history, it was a story from the perspective of a Norwegian-Danish man, and in every scene, in every scene, in every encounter in this film, he is the one who is the laughingstock [...] Then it becomes exciting, then it goes in and touches on something without trying to appropriate some of our own stories.

Once it became clear that the story in *Kalak* had a different perspective, it caught his interest and made the project exciting rather than solely problematic. Kjeldgaard and Péronard both touch upon discussions of narrative sovereignty and the “ability of the nations to have some measure of control over the stories that are told about themselves” (Nickersson 2019, 7), here taken into an 'in-between' context that justifies the project from both the Danish and Greenlandic side. In addition, the thoughts around *Kalak* made Péronard reflect more generally on collaborations, community responsibility, and other challenges faced by Greenlandic filmmakers:

This is also something that is very central to my work and our work for Greenlandic film. That we have to tell our own stories. And of course, it's also part of all the considerations about what kind of projects we get involved in. [...] We often meet people who come to us and just want to make some exciting story that they've heard about but haven't asked themselves whether they're the right people to do it. And there we will always have some kind of gatekeeper role, which is quite stressful. Because there's always going to be pressure on us to relate to different stories and vouch for them. But it's not always something we get a lot out of ourselves. [...] Often, the co-producer setup is also something that seems a bit like a formality, like a brown-washing of a project. As if to say that we check the box where there should be a Greenlandic co-producer. What exactly is the co-production? What exactly is the

collaboration? And I'd rather not see scenarios like that. But it's true that there is a huge responsibility on the filmmaker because there are so few of us, and because our stories and our films are so few.

Péronard's reflections on engaging in the project thus points to a central aspect of Greenlandic filmmaking and, not least, collaboration, which stems from Greenlandic filmmakers' sense of responsibility for the productions they engage. They try to avoid degrees of tokenism and non-participation, where Greenlandic filmmakers are 'led to believe that they have real power in relation to film production' and instead providing validation to "authenticate something for an outsider" (Hurtubise 2021, 6). Interestingly, Péronard use the concept *gatekeeper* to explain his and other Greenlanders' role who, through their participation, feel that they are validating the project they are part of. As formulated by David Manning White (1950, 383) in his landmark article on gatekeepers and the selection of news, the gatekeepers "have to make the initial judgment as to whether a story is 'important' or not". Paraphrased to the context of filmmaking in Greenland, the role of the community gatekeeper is 'to make the initial judgement as to whether a story is 'appropriate' or not'.

As further explained by filmmaker and actor Nivi Pedersen (2021, PI), these emotions are linked to negative experiences from past misrepresentations and fundamental issues – stemming from the ultrasmall size – that the Greenlandic filmmakers has to face the society being portrayed when the production is over:

We've experienced so many times film crews coming in from outside, telling a story, and then leaving again. [...] It's not that we should close ourselves off and say that these are our own stories. But it has to be done properly when someone from the outside comes in. Because in my view, people are very welcome to come and tell something from here. But it must be done with respect for those who are here and those who are here, live here, live in it. If you come and tell a story, you must also be able to follow up on it. We have a completely different responsibility towards our own population. [...] Right now, there is no control over who comes and wants to do something in Greenland.

(Pedersen 2021, PI, MT)

The statement critiques what can be – again with reference to Chapter 2 – described as 'hit-an-run' filmmaking by foreign companies shooting in Greenland with little or no involvement of the community portrayed. In addition, it emphasises the view that

Greenlandic filmmakers act as gatekeepers with a perceived responsibility for the productions they choose to participate in to ensure that the film projects are in accordance with the local context. The gatekeeper function thus works on an individual level (due to a lack of framework and institutionalised gatekeeping) *and* a societal level in the sense that individual filmmakers are influenced by the cultural or ideological conditions of the society they represent (Shoemaker and Vos 2009, 105–6). As formulated above, this is seen as a ‘responsibility’ and ‘quite stressful’, pointing to the role as a pressure that comes from being part of the ultrasmall community being portrayed; emotions that are only amplified by the ultrasmall size of the industry. As further explained by Péronard (2021, PI, MT), this is connected to the political nature of Greenlandic filmmaking, intentional or not:

When you make a film and you come from a minority population, or just an Indigenous population, it's just political. And it's ideological, idealistic, every time you make a film. And it doesn't matter if it's a fiction short film or some very political documentary. It's always political.

The political here is not only about the indigenous films, but also about the collaborations filmmakers enter, all of which speak into a discourse around representation and narrative sovereignty, which is only enhanced by the affective entanglements between Greenland and Denmark.

This discussion also raises the question of how Greenlandic filmmakers can navigate between preserving their cultural integrity while utilising the economic and creative opportunities that can arise through collaboration with foreign productions. Fundamentally, issues of subjectivity follow as to which film projects should be accepted or rejected; It can be difficult to find an objective standard for what stories are ‘appropriate’ or respectful to Greenlandic culture and society, which can also create dilemmas between artistic freedom balancing and cultural considerations. At the same time, it is positive that foreign companies chose to involve – which they are not obliged to – but it can create further challenges for the gatekeeper, as the choice to participate can be interpreted as a validation (and then used as justification from the foreign company).

In *Kalak*, the justification was first and foremost through narrative, but also around the production itself, where there was a desire for involvement from the start (A5.3). This is evident in the production material and interviews, and has also been highlighted in press material and articles:

Now the film [...] has started shooting, with ‘many Greenlandic forces’ involved both in front of and behind the camera. This is stated in a press release, which also cements Kim Leine's own involvement in the project and his approval of the Greenlandic representation in particular. ‘It has been my strong wish that it should be so,’ the author says about the Greenlandic co-creation and also acknowledges ‘the willingness of Isabella [Eklöf] and Manna Film [...] to achieve it’, before adding: ‘Greenland is full of brilliant, creative people in all art forms, something that unfortunately tends to be underestimated in Denmark. Hopefully, the film can help to correct that.’

(Lundberg 2022, MT)

More specifically, the above-mentioned involvement implies both above and below-the-line staff in the form of co-producers (Péronard and Jørgensen) and director’s assistant (Mikisoq H. Lynge), just as several (primarily assistant functions) within lighting, sound, management, casting, and location. In the early phases, project manager Nathan Kreutzmann was a central part of the research trips made by e.g. Kjeldgaard and Eklöf to both Nuuk and Kulusuk. At the script level, 'storytelling workshop' was held and recorded with 15 Greenlanders (primarily women), who met on a weekly basis and provided perspectives on production and themes in relation to representation. Despite this fundamental wish for involvement, Kjeldgaard explains how there were several challenges in achieving it:

We have tried as much as possible [to hire locally], and of course it has always been limited by what was possible, both because it is such a small film industry – there are very few people who actually have film experience – and also at a level where they can manage [a production of that size] and many of those who have the most experience are also booked long in advance and do their own things. That's where you can really feel how small a community it is. [...] I think it ended up, behind the camera, that about a third were Greenlanders. Originally, I thought it would be more like 60-50%. [...] The idea was that the entire production department should have been Greenlandic, including a Greenlandic line producer and production manager. But it was not possible to find someone with enough experience or who could fulfil the task who lived in Greenland.

(Kjeldgaard 2023, PI, MT)

This way, the Greenlandic screen industry seem to suffer from the fundamental relationship between size and demand seen across the Greenlandic society. Overall, the extract reveals the challenges associated with building and maintaining a sustainable screen industry in Greenland; Limited resources, lack of experienced filmmakers, and competition for resources are all factors that can hamper growth and development.

In a recent brief on Greenlandic diplomacy, Ulrik Pram Gad (2022) underlines some fundamental issues, which can be transferred to the Greenlandic screen industry:

Greenland's mantra is 'Nothing about us without us'. However, as one diplomat notes, 'That's easy to say, but the reach needs to be negotiated every day when the Arctic is one item among twenty on the agenda of all kinds of fora, wide and narrow.' [...] But everyone in Nuuk is tied up. Every August, politicians suffer from 'delegation fatigue' when colleagues from abroad all want to visit. Foreign journalists find it difficult to get anyone to pick up the phone. Mailboxes at the university overflow with invitations to research projects on Arctic security. [...] Hence, success in Nuuk involves a flexible approach to resources and ownership.

Following this, the Greenlandic screen industry seems to be suffering from 'filmmaker fatigue' as interest from foreign filmmakers increases and Greenlandic filmmakers demand influence but do not necessarily have the time, desire, or opportunity to be involved. In this way, the industry faces internal challenges due to size, but also navigates a complex international environment where resource allocation and engagement of local stakeholders can be challenging. This emphasises the struggle of finding a balance between a growing interest both in Greenland and in involving Greenlandic filmmakers and being able to engage in them while dealing with the limitations and challenges that come with an ultrasmall societal and economic base; a struggle that might need a similar 'flexible approach'.

## **Choosing and preparing for location**

As mentioned earlier, *Kalak* is characterised by what appears to be an uncompromising approach to location selection. In the novel, the story takes place in several settlements on the West and East Coast, whereas the film centres the narrative on the more challenging – in terms of weather and infrastructure – East Coast and the settlement of Kulusuk:

We actually took a trip to the west coast, to some other settlements and towns to see if we could do the whole Kulusuk part there instead. And we couldn't, it turned out, creatively. We decided to go with Kulusuk, which was completely insane. [...] [that's] why we didn't - as many others have done - shoot in Iceland or Northern Norway or something like that. Which also looks completely different, both in terms of nature and how the houses are [...]. I really tried to tell Nadim [Carlsen] and Isabella [Eklöf] to be 'okay, look at the possibilities - can it be something else then? I know it's not going to be Kulusuk'. [...] But there it was pretty clear to see, no matter how you looked at it, that suddenly there are more than 1,000 people living there, it's a completely different atmosphere somehow. I could see that myself. You were just so nervous about how the hell it was going to be possible in Kulusuk. [...] It was just really hard to imagine that you suddenly had to take over a small village of 200-250 people, where we come with a maybe 50- or 40-person crew.

(Kjeldgaard 2023, PI, MT).

This description shows the importance of place and local colour in the location decision-making process, where Eklöf's interest in perceived authenticity and detail was a decisive factor to, as stated in the production concept (A5.3), "utilise the gifts that this unique and specific location brings to the film that is difficult to recreate elsewhere". In other words, Kulusuk – and the Greenlandic locations in general – are perceived as having solely an 'artistic/aesthetic' production value (Waade 2013, 100), whereas the economic/practical production value not described in any other context than how to produce *despite* economic and practical challenges. Overall, the citation demonstrates that the choice of location in film productions is a complex process where factors such as perceived authenticity, detail, and local colour play a crucial role.

However, *Kalak* was not centred solely in Kulusuk, but also in Nuuk and a small part in Copenhagen, where scenes at the beginning and end take place. According to the production plan (A5.5), this was originally a seven-week plan starting with one week in Copenhagen, three weeks in Nuuk, and finally three weeks in Kulusuk with a total of 32 days of filming 111 scenes. Overall, it required a production plan that was flexible, as already described in the preparation phase (A5.3): "A consequence of working in places and locations that are cut off and dependent on the weather is that we need to create a flexible way of working that can accommodate this". In the post-shoot interview, Kjeldgaard (2023, PI, MT) describes how that flexibility paid off in the end with a period that, despite challenges, succeeded within the plan:

We were running five-day weeks, ten-hour days. But we could change the schedule so that we could swap days around and take a weekend day against another day being a day off if the weather required it. We had to make that flexibility [...]. I think it was also hard for the crew, the DoP, production; the constant readiness, having to move things around because of something with the weather, or there's an actor sick, a location is challenging or something. We also had a week and a half between Nuuk and Kulusuk for that move, and then we also had to have some prep in Kulusuk, but also in case the planes would be delayed due to weather. That's what actually ended up happening. They should have flown on Saturday, but ended up arriving on Tuesday.

This again highlights financial and logistical considerations connected to film production in Greenland; Flexibility in the production schedule was considered essential to accommodate unforeseen issues of first and foremost weather, cost control, and the need for a concept that fits available resources and location constraints. Overall, these points - which have also been created in collaboration with Greenlandic partners - are in line with the general advice Péronard has given to foreign filmmakers with shooting plans in Greenland, seeking to turn challenges into strengths:

Listen to the locals. And be open to schedule changes. In Greenland, the nature is so vast and powerful that you immediately understand that it controls you and not the other way around. [...] When you have a flexible schedule, you can also make use of all the unexpected gifts that shooting in Greenland always provides!

(Péronard in Por 2023)

The Greenlandic locations are thus seen as fundamentally unpredictable – conditions that characterise not only the shoot itself, but also all logistics in and around Greenland. For *Kalak*, this also meant that large parts of the equipment (e.g. light) and props (set design, furniture, costumes etc.) had to be shipped in containers from Denmark to Greenland as part of the preparation phase, as Greenland still do not offer sufficient equipment loans. For instance, Filmiliortarfik is often contacted in terms of loan of equipment, but as explained by Malik Kleist (2022, PI, MT), they are rarely able to provide assistance:



Often they [foreign production companies] try to ask about equipment and what we have. And most of the time, they think our equipment is too small. I understand that. [...] I also understand that there are often some productions that just move their productions from Greenland to Iceland because in Iceland they have all that equipment. And the infrastructure to have such large productions coming to them. We don't have that yet. Of course, we hope it will come in the future, but that's the thing: We do have the locations [...], incredibly beautiful locations, but our film production companies are not geared up for it yet.

This challenge is partly related to the stage of the industry, its size, and the opportunities available financially and economically. Instead, the majority of offers from Greenlandic filmmakers, institutions, and companies are around human resources, contacts, as well as local and cultural knowledge, which is closely related to more consultative roles on productions as per the previous section on developing a potentially controversial project.

## **From Nuuk to Kulusuk**

In the preparation and shooting phase of *Kalak*, it was the local knowledge that played a key role in completing on-location filming in Nuuk and Kulusuk. Before joining the first week of shooting in Nuuk, I received a week schedule of the shooting days from October 10<sup>th</sup> to Friday 14<sup>th</sup> (A5.6). Over the course of five days, the crew was shooting at 10 different location and of those, two of the days were on the same location, making the remaining days were very changeable with shootings both in both day and night time and with changing weather. Here, I followed various shootings in the first four days, while I worked at another location with Farsø on the last day of shooting. As shown on image 11-14, filming took place in central and local locations across Nuuk, with exterior scenes exposed to rain, sun, snow, and wind. In this way, the production used a broad representation of local places and colour that in different ways reflect everyday life in Nuuk, far from the settlement portrayals that otherwise characterise Greenlandic film history.



Image 11 to 14: Shooting of *Kalak* at four locations: Queen Ingrid's Hospital (11), Blok 7 (residential building) (12), the colonial harbour (13), and a supermarket in Nuussuaq (14).

At the same time, the on-location day emphasised some key characteristics of location work. First of all, there is the location work itself, which, as the images show, took place in areas in the centre of Nuuk and in a small settlement like Kulusuk, which naturally affects everyday life in places that are not used to large production teams, which in Nuuk meant stopping and rerouting traffic, longer stays, renting out rooms and apartments, blocking off corridors in buildings, and generally disrupting flows of everyday life. In this regard, the Greenlandic-speaking crew members were indispensable, as they could contribute local knowledge and act as a link between the local population and the international crew in terms of information and questions. As Kjeldgaard (2023, PI) describe, this was also the case in Kulusuk, where especially Kreutzmann and Lynge had key roles as both translators and local contacts– and, as I will discuss later, also in relation to issues of the geographical place understood as “the specificity of the real place” especially factors around “local topography” and “ordinary people” (Hansen and Waade 2019, 107).

A particular challenge for the production was obtaining the right props and materials. For instance, the story in Kalak is set in the 1990s, making it difficult to find appropriate cars to authentically recreate a 1990s Nuuk. This was especially challenging in a country with extreme sub-arctic weather and no connecting roads. In Kulusuk, the art department faced problems too when running out of paint with difficulties procuring more (A5.18). Additionally, other local challenges, especially regarding location and lodging, impacted the production. For example, housing shortages have been a major issue and political hot spot for many years, not just in Nuuk, but all around Greenland (Qvist 2012; Schultz-Nielsen 2019a; Kristensen 2022). With all Greenlandic scenes being shot in Greenland – including the interior – the logistics of finding accommodation, locations, *and* additional rooms for the film crew before, during, and after filming (such as headquarters, lunch room, etc.). Therefore, it was a major task for the production team – including the Greenlandic location scout – to gain access to apartments in Nuuk (A5.14) and houses in Kulusuk (A5.16) through posts on Facebook.

In Nuuk, the solution was to rent several apartments in Blok 7, a residential building close to Nuuk centre (see image 12), which meant walking from flat to flat, recording on one floor and eating lunch on another. Similarly, production had to rent space in different locations in Kulusuk, creating a production hub around the settlement. In both cases, accommodation was a central feature – in Nuuk more obviously with a (for Greenland) large hotel capacity and the possibility of other accommodation, and in Kulusuk, which despite the small size of

the settlement has a relatively large hotel that was rented for the entire production period (Kjeldgaard 2023, PI). In addition, both Nuuk and Kulusuk made use of already existing location opportunities – as *Alanngut Killinganni* did with abandoned settlements – namely indoor climate challenges leaving several empty buildings across Greenland (Schultz-Nielsen 2019c; 2019b). In Nuuk, this meant that *Kalak* was given access to an apartment in a closed building close to Nuuk city centre, which is precisely the apartment where I assisted production designer Josephine Farsø with painting work. This naturally gave Farsø free rein to create the space she wanted, which included painting all the walls and decor. Overall, the approach to the production design reflected the stated approach to colour in the production dossier:

We're pushing to move away from the traditional monochrome of the Greenlandic landscape and grey council housing, but want to celebrate the lust for life present in the colourful cottages and brightly coloured lights, textiles and knick-knacks that adorn traditional Greenlandic houses. We can use the natural monochrome of snow, ice, sky and walls to really bring a specific, well placed bright coloured object to the forefront with intense saturation.

(A5.4)

This approach to production design is based on the natural monochrome rural winter landscapes and the vibrant colours found in the Greenlandic settlements and cities. In the interior design, this approach to colour is taken indoors throughout the film, exemplified here with the aforementioned apartment (image 15-17). In this way, the design concept creates a warmer, colourful setting underlining Jan's attraction towards the warmth and collectivistic nature of the Greenlandic homes and culture as well as creating depth and contrast in each frame – an approach similar to Farsø and Eklöf's approach to colour in *Holiday* (Aggerholm et al. 2020, 98) – here added local coloured elements that characterise Greenlandic interior design.

In Kulusuk, this use of abandoned residential made a key scene possible in the form of an actual on-site burning of an abandoned house as stated in the production concept (A5.3, MT):

A potentially big location and challenge is Nikoline's burning house, which we want to solve on set as much as possible [...]. The current plan is that since Kulusuk is full of abandoned, empty houses that are scheduled to be demolished, we have started a dialogue with 60° North Greenland, who is responsible for the demolition, to get permission to burn one of the houses before they demolish them.

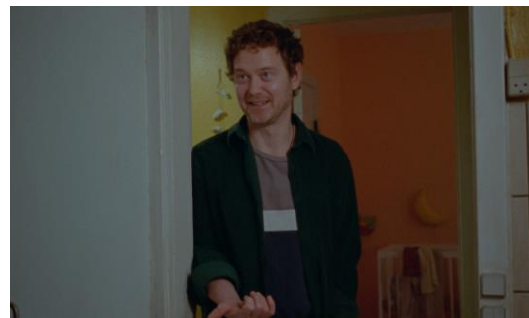


Image 15-17. Transformation of the empty apartment in Nuuk (photograph by the author) and screenshots from the apartment in the film. ©Manna Film.

Working with local authorities, the burning was accomplished through what Lynge (2023, PI, MT) describes as an emotional scene due to the small community's close connection to the people in Kulusuk.

However, this sensitivity to location was not unique to the burnt house, but instead a common thread throughout the production, emphasising the importance of key Greenlandic actors such as Lynge and Kreutzmann. As Kjeldgaard (2023, PI) confirms, local knowledge and language skills were essential to complete the production, which was not only seen as controversial by the press and the filmmakers themselves, but also with scepticism from the communities themselves often tied to affective relationships of coloniality and past representations. On location in Nuussuaq (image 14), I witnessed an angered citizen shouting at the production team that their presence at the supermarket was 'disrespectful'; an affective incident where a Greenlandic crew member was then able to engage in dialogue and avoid further escalation, allowing filming to continue.

Although I only experienced a few episodes like these in Nuuk, Kjeldgaard, Kreutzmann, and Lynge all mention a specific episode in Kulusuk that stems from a similar affective relationship – but here more directly grounded in previous media representation discourses:

We didn't feel resistance as such, but it was only when production started in Kulusuk that people were like 'Okay, what exactly are they doing?' In August on our first trip, we made flyers explaining the project and what we need, what we expect from them, and that they should just contact us or me if they were unsure about anything. We thought they were very clear about the project, but then when we started filming, people started thinking 'Okay, wow, what are you guys doing?' We were looking for all kinds of extras for different scenes. For example, for house burning, and then the dog attack, those scenes. Then people started to think 'well, there haven't been those incidents in Kulusuk', so many of them wondered if we were going to portray them badly. So, there was a bit of a panic when production started.

(Kreutzmann 2023, PI, MT)

As further explained by Lyngé (2023, PI, MT), this was connected to bad experiences of previous community representations with "a lot of uncertainty about why we were there, whether we were once again just a film crew that wanted to highlight the bad things in society" creating a reluctance that "got louder and louder and the extras started to leave". This is likely linked to the strong preponderance of negative portrayals of East Greenland and the area around Tasiilaq, which has been the centre of critical documentaries such as *Byen hvor børn forsvinder* (*The City Where Children Disappear*, DR, 2019) about sexual abuse, addiction, and suicide. The film had significant consequences – including the resignation of the mayor of Sermsooq municipality (Ritzau 2019) – but also for the local community itself, as the documentary was criticised in Greenland for showing local people in humiliating situations that harmed the entire community (Larsen 2022). In this way, the episode points to the entanglement between the hypermediatisation of a city, postcolonial affectivity, and repetitive misrepresentation, which impact the production of *Kalak* directly.

Again, the challenge was solved through dialogue, with the production inviting to a discussion meeting in Kulusuk's community centre (A5.17): "There was a tense atmosphere at first, but in the end everyone was happy and they felt like they knew more about the project and understood a bit more what we were doing" (Kreutzmann 2023, PI, MT). Here, all informants describe how the basic premise of the film adaptation was, just as the small community ultimately appreciated the activity that a large film crew brought to the settlement in the form of labour and income to a community struggling with unemployment (Lyngé 2023, PI).

This points to the importance of local dialogue and, not least, the Greenlanders involved, especially Kreutzmann and Lyngé's positions as the link between production and community.

With his broad role as 'production manager' Kreutzmann had several roles already during the research trips, where he visited Kulusuk with several of the above-the-line people. As Kreutzmann has previously been news anchor at KNR, acted in a Christmas calendar, and made a number of other media appearances, he is a familiar face in Greenland:

It was a kind of entry point, because in the beginning they couldn't just say hello to Maria [Kjeldgaard] or Ann-Sofie [Grøndal, production manager], so it's always me they contact. And who they feel comfortable with. So, it was a lot of contacting people and coordinating locations.

(Kreutzmann 2023, PI, MT)

In addition to these tasks of community contact, translation, location, fixer, and general management, both Kreutzmann and Lyngé ended up having on-screen roles in the film beyond extras. As in the last chapter, this points to the fundamental characteristic of multifunctionalism, where the few Greenlandic filmmakers quickly take on more roles than they necessarily anticipated (or agreed to). Similarly, Kjeldgaard (2023, PI, MT) continues the 'several hat' metaphor by pointing toward Greenlandic filmmaking: "in Greenland, it's more about having functions that are very organic and flexible with ten hats on [...] with smaller crews and greater flexibility". However, this is also related to the fact that it is difficult to find enough experienced Greenlandic labour and extras which also meant that the extras coordinator was casting while filming was taking place in Nuuk.

Lastly, the roles of Kreutzmann and Lyngé exemplify how Greenlandic companies like Polarama Greenland must utilise people in key roles who do not have actual experience within filmmaking, but in related fields. This creates extensive use of crossover in the search for Greenlandic labour, as more experienced filmmakers are often assigned to other projects – often their own – or they refuse to work on productions that are characterised by a lot of translation work and fixing rather than more creative roles. According to Greenlandic co-producer Pipaluk K. Jørgensen (2022, PI, MT), it is crucial to recognise opportunities in people who work in similar industries or have special qualities despite little or no experience:

it was incredibly important that we could get Nathan [Kreutzmann] on the production, even though he has no film experience. He's done a lot of TV. Because Nathan is so well-liked in Greenland, everyone knows him. It's hard for someone like Maria [Kjeldgaard] to get into Kulusuk. Even here [in Nuuk].

Therefore, other qualities benefit the production, whether it is knowledge of flight capacity and travelling patterns for Lynge (2023, PI) or privileged access to the local environment for Kreutzmann (2023, PI). However, both Kreutzmann and Lynge exemplify some of the challenges of a centralised film environment around Nuuk. As Lynge (2023, PI, MT) describes, "we city dwellers in West Greenland are not used to East Greenland either, there was just an adjustment period for us [...] as it was for outsiders". In other words, another challenge is getting film crews that represent all of Greenland's diverse locations, cultures, and dialects.

Finally, Kjeldgaard (2023, PI) describes how the Greenlandic film industry appeared to be still in a developing phase, not always able to fulfil the tasks expected for these types of productions – either due to getting involved in too many and too large projects or insufficient alignment of expectations. Here, the screen industry still appears to be emerging, taking on more work than there is necessarily capacity for as the use of crossover positions indicates, exceeding the maturity of the industry which can have several impacts.

Firstly, the limited talent pool can have a direct impact on production quality and the ability to realise projects in the desired way. Recruiting professionals from other industries can be a temporary solution, but it can also lead to compromises in areas such as expertise and specialisation as the performers do not necessarily want to have a career in filmmaking, so the invested talent development risks leaving the industry. Secondly, the Greenlandic screen industry may face challenges in handling large-scale tasks that go beyond its maturity pointing towards insufficient infrastructure and existing experience. The lack of maturity can affect the overall quality and efficiency of film production, which in turn can disappoint the producer's expectations and may discourage future productions from choosing Greenland.

Overall, the production of *Kalak* demonstrates several of the challenges facing the Greenlandic screen industry and international location work, stemming from ultrasmall conditions, affective entanglements, and the particularities of the geographical locations. *Kalak* is an effective entry point, as its uncompromising approach to location, involvement of a Greenlandic co-producer and controversial subject matter has revealed more than a similar sized production necessarily would.



## Between new and old: Notes on on-screen elements

As earlier presented, *Kalak* is characterised by a clear design concept similar to Eklöf's *Holiday* which was also carried forward by her, Carlsen, and Farsø. This is done through a series of approaches to cinematography, production design and mise-en-scene that draws on a wide range of sources both in filmmaking and art, while trying to avoid stereotypical and mainstream representations of Greenland, its people, and landscapes (A5.4). To begin with, the visuals are fundamentally shaped by the format of 16 mm celluloid, creating a clear yet gritty appearance that supports the film's focus on materiality, texture, and contrast between darkness and daylight. This approach is also reflected in a consistent handheld camera with mainly medium and medium close-ups, while the more 'common' long shots of Greenlandic landscapes are only used very limited for e.g. establishing shots (image 18-19) with an overall attempt to “approach what the human eye sees” in order to “film something that looks and feels like realism while being perfectionistically staged” using “the unique architecture, light and surroundings of Greenland while painstakingly manipulating colour, texture, choreography and light to bring out the [desired] mood and iconography”, as described in the project dossier (A5.4).

As shown in image 18-19, this creates a strong contrast between exterior and interior scenes, with the latter characterised by the use of colour and closer framings. At the same time, the two main Greenlandic spaces are used quite differently, consisting of visual differences between Nuuk (the city) and Kulusuk (the village), which underpin Jan's mental journey further and further away from Copenhagen, culminating in an actual burning down (of a house) that pushes Jan's addiction over the edge. Through this, *Kalak* make use of existing tensions between city and settlement, where Nuuk has been called 'little Denmark' criticised for it's “cultural ambiguity”, while the “the pure and real Greenland” is to be found “out there somewhere” (Sørensen and Forchhammer 2014, 29, MT).



Image 18 and 19: Establishing shots of part 1 in Nuuk and part 2 in Kulusuk. ©Manna Film.

Through this, *Kalak* follows a long tendency of Greenland-set films using Greenlandic landscapes – either wilderness or settlements – as an enabler for an outer *and* inner journey where the (male) main character returns more grounded in themselves through new experiences in the encounter with Greenlandic nature and culture. These often fall within century-old tropes such as *going native* or *white-vanishing* fitting the subcategory of Elspeth Tilley (2012, 56) named *indigenised whites* as “proximal figures who approach and stand in for indigeneity by taking on some of its projected negative and positive characteristics, but who ultimately remain white”. In this way, *Kalak* has affinities with other Danish films such as *Qivitoq* and *Tukuma* or the newer tendency of French location-oriented ethnographic romanticisations such as *Inuk* or *Journey to Greenland*. However, this physical and mental journey into - and usually back from – ‘the new’ is also present in Greenlandic films like *Nuummioq*, where the protagonist, due to his existential crisis from a cancer diagnosis, goes out into nature and returns more clarified about his destiny. With terminology of Henri Lefebvre (2011, 63–64), Greenlandic cinematic landscapes tend to be *autonomous landscapes* as a pictorial concept distinct from settings being subordinate to the story itself. Instead, Greenland-set films tend to use cinematic landscapes pointing back towards the concept of *arctic sublime* (Morgan 2016) through a romanticised, mythological fascination with Arctic landscapes that represents nationalism, imperialism, and the (male) explorer.

In *Kalak*, there seems to be a deliberate continuation and thus confronting the common use of tropes and landscapes. First and foremost, it is characterised by using the problematic narrative of ‘the white man in the (post)colony’ engaging with the locals, especially the women, but using it *consciously*, which seems to be the whole basis for the film's *raison d'être* – especially with Greenlandic co-production. The autonomous landscape is also used in *Kalak*, but at the same time they are constantly seen in connection with Jan's psyche, which alternates between cold and heat, just as the brutal landscape reflects Jan's urges, where landscape and body merge, underpinned by the sexual explicitness of *Kalak*, not least in the shadow of the sexual abuse from his father in Copenhagen. Overall, rather than evoking clear 'arctic spectacles' and centuries-old landscape painting gazes, *Kalak's* indentured realism – or “stylised naturalism” (A5.4) – seems to be more closely related to contemporary photography that addresses postcolonial entanglements and everyday life, such as that of Greenlandic photographer Inuuteq Storch, and project dossier openly points towards photographers such as Anders Petersen and Antoine D'Agata in its search for intimacy, vulnerability, and male sexuality (A5.4).

*Kalak*'s closest relative in Greenland film visually, however, appears as *Heart of Light*, which similarly uses colour grading to create a grey and gritty urban environment of abuse, drinking and tragedy. As evident in image 18, Nuuk is not presented in a romanticised light, but rather grey and misty, and it is also the starting point for the abuse of women and substances that characterises the rest of the story. Where it was Greenlandic Rasmus who was the addict in *Heart of Light*, it is Danish-Norwegian Jan who is at the centre of all the misfortune. They also both clearly deal with postcolonial issues, but where *Heart of Light* is a story about regaining identity rooted in a Greenlandic main character, *Kalak* joins the growing tradition of Danish films that directly address and self-criticise their own colonial history, as is the case in films such as *The Experiment* and *Viften* (*Empire*, Frederikke Aspöck, 2023), signalling emotions of scanguilt (Oxfeldt 2016; 2018).

In *Kalak*, Greenland is far from barren and dead, nor is it romanticised, but rather alive, collectivist, changeable, and diverse, underlined in various ways through the cinematography despite the heavy theme of addiction and despair. Overall, *Kalak* emerges as a complex representation of Greenland that is entangled in representations of the past and discourses of the present.

## Summary

As the latest example of a Greenland-set production and, not least, a Greenlandic co-production, *Kalak* provides insight into several aspects of contemporary screen production. It illustrates different perceived values of location that relate to different aspects of plausibility, authenticity, and legitimisation. The latter is particularly related to aspects of the narrative in general, just as Greenlandic contributors attach similar legitimisations to the perceived controversial production. This brings in aspects of argumentation and Greenlandic gatekeeping, just as the degree of involvement itself is included as a strong aspect of external legitimisation. Here, production is again challenged by ultrasmall conditions, making extensive use of crossover functions, but ultimately having to opt out of Greenlandic staff due to a lack of experienced labour. Thus, the CEL model is challenged, when community engagement is the ambition, but the possibilities are sparse. As such, Greenland is faced with 'filmmaker fatigue', which necessitates a flexible approach to resources and ownership.

From a production perspective, *Kalak* illustrates the expenses and difficulties of choosing and working on-location in Greenland due to factors such as weather, infrastructure, and

accommodation. Similarly, finding and working on the locations themselves were difficult, highlighting the vital role of local expertise and language skills. The film's portrayal of Greenland required sensitivity, given previous negative portrayals of the region, where Kreutzmann and Lynge eased tensions and facilitated community discussions. The production underscored the value of flexibility and community engagement. It underlines the need to account for the affective entanglements and multiple emotions associated with the Greenlandic space that permeate not only the sites themselves but all stages of production.

Visually and narratively, *Kalak* approaches Greenlandic landscapes with gritty visuals countering historical romanticisations and leaning towards negative discourses of a decaying society; however, this is linked to Jan's character rather than the Greenlandic society – an important factor in the legitimisation for both Danish and Greenlandic filmmakers. Here, *Kalak* showcase capital and settlement settings reflecting the protagonist Jan's internal journey and attraction towards Greenlandic culture. Drawing on longstanding Greenland film tropes, *Kalak* thus confronts and reinterprets these narratives, expressing elements of scanguilt. Overall, *Kalak* presents a multifaceted representation of Greenland, influenced by both historical and contemporary discourses. Like *Alanngut Killinganni*, this does not appear as place or destination branding, but rather a way for Greenland and Greenlandic film to gain international attention, both as a culture and as a filmmaking nation.

However, in the next case of *Borgen: Power & Glory*, the many possibilities of screen production are showcased taking departure in the international success of *Borgen* (DR, 2010-2013).

# Chapter 8

## ***Borgen: Power & Glory***

“Naturally, some producer’s assistant would say ‘do you know, we could do it for half if we do it in Iceland where they actually had a thing called infrastructure and they also have a working film industry and stuff like that?’. [...] But I think it would have been a complete betrayal of the ideals behind this new season if we had shot it on the Faroe Islands and a bit in Iceland”

**Adam Price** (A6.24)

Creator and writer of *Borgen: Power & Glory*

When the Danish political drama series *Borgen* (DR, 2010-2013) premiered in 2010, it quickly gained success beyond the Danish audience despite its focus on the distinctive Danish political landscape. Following the career of politician Birgitte Nyborg (Sidse Babett Knudsen) struggling between political ambition and personal life – guided by the public service concept of *double storytelling* (Redvall 2013, 67) – the series explored themes of power, morals, modern politics, and media; among other things, by following several characters such as journalist Katrine Fønsmark (Birgitte Hjort Sørensen) and her work in Danish news coverage on the fictional channel TV1.

As Eva Novrup Redvall and I have presented elsewhere (Grønlund and Redvall 2022), this resulted in significant research focusing on aspects such as its entanglement of politics, family life, and the media (Hochscherf and Philipsen 2017, 143), its kinship to Nordic noir (Hansen and Waade 2017, 7; Hansen et al. 2018, 11) and not least ‘why the world fell for *Borgen*’ as part of “the emergence of a truly globalized media network of trade and fiction exchange” (McCabe 2020, 59). In addition, the series got attention discussing the relationship between reality and fiction (Jacobsen et al. 2013, 132; Nitsch et al. 2021; Boukes et al. 2022) that remains to characterise the reception of *Borgen* (Hansen 2023).

After the third season in 2013, there were no signs of a sequel when DR announced in April 2020 that the *Borgen* franchise would continue; this time as a stand-alone season co-financed by Netflix making it the first collaboration between DR and Netflix. The result was *Borgen: Power & Glory* (BPG), which directly continues the *Borgen* universe, only almost 10 years later and with Nyborg as Minister of Foreign Affairs (for summary, see Appendix 6). However, the format has also changed, as the series now follows one political case in all eight episodes, rather than the episodic narrative structure of previous seasons, which featured a new political case in each episode. This main plot is the discovery of oil in Greenland, which throws Nyborg into a wide range of political issues around climate, geopolitics, and decolonisation. From a production perspective, this also meant that much of the action would now take place in Greenland, where the season's production company SAM Productions planned weeks of shooting in collaboration with the newly established production service company Polarama Greenland.

In other words, BPG is a case that provides insight into a wide range of interesting conditions and developments – both in terms of new collaborations, the importance of streaming services in Greenland, location work, and the opportunities it offers in and for Greenland.

## Introducing the data

The data (see Appendix 6) has been collected continuously since November 2020, where my primary contact has been BPG's producer Stine Meldgaard, who has kept me updated by email and given me indispensable access to both material and sets. In this way, it was my first case and the only case I have followed from the time it was announced to the Danish premiere February 13, 2022, on DR and internationally on Netflix March 15, 2022. For the same reason – and due to the size of the production, it is also my most extensive data collection, but which has also been clearly influenced by being a Netflix-collaboration. As explained by Vilde Schanke Sundet (2021c), these global platforms can be notoriously closed. The same applies to several circumstances in this constellation, as the Netflix collaboration affects access and interviewing all the way through production, with contracts and other legal issues affecting the ability of even peripheral members of productions to express themselves.

Despite this and the many limitations of Covid-19, I have received and collected a large amount of data (see Appendix 6), primarily through interviews with key people in production on the Danish and Greenlandic teams and various documents received from Meldgaard as well as associate producers Nina Quist and Michel Ryddeskov. These consist of shooting drafts of the first to episodes (A6.1-2), crew list (A6.3), various production plans (A6.4-6), list of 'research persons' or experts (A6.7), research pamphlets for the development phase (A6.8-11) along with various drawing connected to production design made by production designer Niels Sejer (A6.12-21). Moreover, I received access to behind-the-scenes material (A6.22-23) to gain better insight into the shooting days I missed. In terms of interviews, these are primarily with Quist (2022, PI), Ryddeskov (2022, PI), writer Emilie Lebech Kaae (2022, PI), location manager Kenneth Berg (2022, PI), location assistant Karen Buus (2022), reader Alberte Parnuuna Lings Skifte (2022, PI), production service producer and director's assistant Pipaluk K. Jørgensen (2022, PI), and the early interviews with production service producer Emile Hertling Péronard (2021, PI) and actor and director's assistant (post-production) Nivi Pedersen (2021, PI). In addition, I participated in a one-day filming of Greenlandic scenes in Denmark June 24, 2021, and I have participated in events, including a presentation with Q&A by creator Adam Price (A6.24). Together with the massive press coverage and subsequent publications – including from Visit Greenland – it has provided a comprehensive insight.

## Starting a project

According to Price (A6.24), and confirmed by Quist (2022, PI), BPG is based on an existing project about an oil discovery in Greenland. In 2016, politician Martin Lidegaard drew his attention to an issue in the Greenland Self-Government Act stating:

If the state subsidy to the Greenland Self-Government is reduced to DKK 0, cf. section 8, negotiations shall be initiated between Naalakkersuisut and the Government on the future economic relations between the Greenland Self-Government and the state, including on the distribution of revenue from mineral resource activities in Greenland  
(Statsministeriet 2009, MT)

It was, in Price's (A6.24) words, “an invitation to drama” as the conditions of these negotiations are so unclearly described and will probably “bring up all the bad blood from the colonial days”. In other words, Price had a project in the pipeline that dealt with themes such as geopolitics, climate crisis, and neocolonialism. Then when Price was given the opportunity, this was an obvious story to integrate into the *Borgen* universe.

This was the starting point for what became the first collaboration between DR and Netflix, the latter of which, according to Price (A6.24), had shown interest in the series since they established themselves in Europe:

Six or seven years ago when they were establishing the company in Europe I had a meeting with them in Paris and they said ‘could we have *Borgen* on Netflix?’. And I said ‘ I don’t know. [...] I own the writer’s rights for it, but it’s owned by DR.’ [...] And at that time, Netflix was almost the archdevil if you asked DR, because they were ‘the big ghost of streaming’ [...]. Then we managed to bring Netflix and DR together at a table

This collaboration did not go unnoticed, but was criticised by the left wing in particular, which caused the then Minister of Culture Joy Mogensen to explain the collaboration by referring to a statement from DR:

DR and Netflix have signed a licence agreement to finance a new season of *Borgen*. DR fully owns the upcoming series and has full editorial and artistic control over the production of the new season [...]. The sale of the streaming rights to *Borgen* does not reflect a general shift in DR's strategy and co-operation with the market.



(Mogensen and Søndergaard 2020, MT)

As the statement reflects, it was emphasised how Netflix was not given creative influence – despite funding most of the production – but instead allowed the development process to proceed similar to the first three seasons as explained by Price:

I think, on behalf of DR, that part of that deal was that Netflix could *never* interfere with the writing process at any time even though they paid most of the check. The golden opportunity for Netflix would be to get all the seasons of *Borgen* on Netflix and they would pay for that, but they wouldn't get editorial rights for the project. [...] I never got a single note on behalf of Netflix.

(A6.24)

In this way, DR pre-sold the license to Netflix after an exclusive Danish premiere and run on DR (February 13 2022) prior to a world premiere on Netflix (March 15 2022) then having worldwide distribution rights (Grønlund 2022b). BPG was labelled as a 'Netflix Original' and, with the terminology of Afilipoaie et al. (2021, 311), as a *licensed original*, as Netflix bought distribution rights, but “only marketed as originals in the territories negotiated, but not in the country of origin, where the broadcaster/production company keeps distribution rights”. However, this category describes how Netflix has not financed the production, which is why BPG appears in combination with the category *continuation deal* with “Netflix acquiring a licence deal, either for worldwide rights or for specific territories, and adding to the production budget, after a first season of a production was released”. With this combination, it was not a direct continuation in a legal sense, as the season directly continues the plot from *Borgen*, but as a stand-alone season titled *Borgen: Power and Glory*. The fact that this was *not* a fourth season was important for one producer to emphasise (Ryddeskov 2022, PI).

There was also a difference in terms of production, as the series was produced by the company SAM Productions – co-owned by Price – rather than an in-house DR production which necessarily also means that there are a wide range of differences in the production circumstances in relation to producers and other primary functions. In addition, as described, the narrative changes with one plot arc anchored in Greenland meant that a collaboration had to be established around this. To do so, SAM Productions initially worked with the experienced Icelandic production service company Truenorth but switched early on to the

newly established Polarama Greenland – becoming their first-ever customer (Péronard 2021, PI) for various reasons:

We did that after long discussions, both because Polarama Greenland was based in Greenland, whereas Truenorth is Icelandic. [...] There was some kind of distance to Greenland [...]. There was also a clear feeling that when we got up there, people were very sceptical. There's a huge fear that we're coming to repeat some history [...] that everyone thought we were coming to screw them over.

(Ryddeskov 2022, PI, MT)

This is very similar to the descriptions from *Kalak*, where scepticism and justification are important – in addition to the anchoring in the Greenlandic company – for the change and choice of production service company. Similarly, affective entanglements shine through, creating a more tension-filled space with an underlying fear of misstepping on the Danish side as formulated by Quist (2022, PI, MT):

We also knew that we had to step carefully. [...] None of us have ever had the intention of telling a story on behalf of Greenland. We wanted to tell it from a Danish perspective. And we have tried to show the prejudices that Denmark has towards Greenland, and contrarywise, we have also tried to show the prejudices that Greenland has towards Denmark. [...]. Generally speaking, we want to do it respectfully.

The same need for justification thus arises both in terms of production and in relation to location choices and collaborations. Likewise, there is – as in *Kalak* – a justification in the narrative around BPG, which Ryddeskov (2022, PI, MT) describes by paraphrasing the season's conceptual director Per Fly: “We are not here to tell a story about Greenland, we are here to tell a story about Greenland as seen through Danish eyes”. In other words, a large part of the justification lies in the storytelling position itself, where the narrative from the Danish side is that it is not a story told on someone else's behalf; On the contrary, it is framed as a Danish story whose Greenlandic setting requires Greenlandic involvement.

According to Ryddeskov (2022, PI, MT), the desire for more involvement was challenged by several things – not least the centralisation of Greenlandic filmmakers in Nuuk:

it's almost as expensive to fly people in from Nuuk as it is to fly them in from Copenhagen. And you still have to pay for hotels, diets, all the things that are expensive when you have people staying outside, which is why you often want to find local labour when making films outside of Copenhagen [...]. And then you're suddenly faced with the dilemma of flying someone up from Nuuk [...] [or] an experienced assistant from Denmark, where you know what you're getting.

As a result, the involvement consisted largely of the involvement of Polarama Greenland as production producers and the work on location in Greenland such as director's assistant, production leader, pre-production leader, extras coordinator, runners, and postproduction director's assistant. As the next section describes, there was also a greater amount of involvement of Greenlandic perspectives in the development process, especially around the script. In this way, it is a production that to a lesser extent – compared to *Kalak* – makes use of Greenlandic involvement but also a very different production both in scale and format.

## Researching and writing Greenland

As described by Quist (2022, PI, MT), "a big part of *Borgen* is that it rests on a kind of credibility", which refers to the fact that it is important for the creators that the scenarios must be plausible and reflect a political and social reality. This characterised both the development and reception of the first seasons and has similarly been a major part of the development of BPG, where research into political conditions in Denmark has been combined with extensive work to reflect a plausible Greenlandic political and social reality. As I have listed earlier (Grønlund 2022b), the writing of BPG is based on a substantial amount of research tied to three interconnected main approaches of 1) research trips, 2) 'research persons', and 3) a Greenlandic 'reader'.

In terms of research trips, this not something new in scriptwriting or in Greenland. In Greenlandic film history, as described in Chapter 4, inspirational trips to Greenland are often part of the preparations; for instance, with *Tukuma* (1984) when director Palle Kjærulff-Schmidt and writer Klaus Rifbjerg took a two-month research trip to Uummannaq without having a history at hand but taking inspiration from Greenland as a genius loci. With BPG, there were several research trips by several members of the crew to both develop the script and prepare production, one of them being Ryddeskov (2022, PI, MT):

I was in Greenland on the first trip up there, actually our very basic research trip, where we went around to see Nuuk, Ilulissat, and did a whole lot of research on the different towns with different target groups to find out basically what is going on in Greenland right now. [...] In addition to seeing a whole lot of things, we met with Greenlandic politicians and had focus group interviews with artists, young people, and politicians. [...] We met with the film workshop up there, to find out what kind of possibilities there were.

The research trips built the foundation for production, where functions such as writers, producers, conceptual director, and location manager travelled to scout locations, develop the script, and talk to local collaborators.

The citation also points to the use of point two, namely experts, who are often referred to as 'resource persons' or 'research persons' around the production (A6.7; Quist 2022, PI). Specifically, it consists of over 30 persons with expert knowledge on relevant matters concerning Greenland (A6.7) in areas like politics, culture, activism, resources, journalism, infrastructure, education, food, or jurisdiction. It thus stems from a desire for plausibility, which is also present in the use of Danish research persons covering areas such as Danish politics, journalism, climate activism, or defence. This list of research subjects has then been primarily used by a hired researcher (Amalie Holmggaard Mersh) and Quist (2022, PI) to answer ongoing questions from production teams and writers to fact-check a wide range of topics.

Lastly, Quist (2022, PI, MT) explains how a reader was connected to the writing phase:

We had a Greenlandic reader who read all the scripts at a certain stage in their development. And that was really useful, both in terms of being able to say something purely practical [...] [and] to make it realistic and to avoid stumbling over such small examples where we could have been wrong. And it was also really, really interesting to see what she picked up and what she actually thought about what she read. If there was anything that offended her. [...] It was really valuable that we got her on board.

The mentioned reader was Alberte Parnuuna Lings Skifte (2022, PI), hired by SAM Productions to what she first thought was a position as a 'cultural consultant' with tasks such as script reading "to see if there were any cultural things that were off. And then I also ended up translating and had some small ad hoc tasks, whatever they decided to give me" (Skifte

2022, PI, MT). The reader focused on cultural aspects answering questions such as ‘what do Greenlandic kids eat for breakfast?’, ‘is it normal to have rifles in the shed?’ or more culturally sensitive subjects concerning misrepresentation. Moreover, Skifte did several translation and pronunciation tasks until she concluded that she did not have sufficient language skills to do so.

According to Skifte, her biggest objections were around representation and stereotypes, particularly around the character Malik, who has a drug addiction and ends up (possibly) committing suicide. However, these were not comments that were included, but instead the counterargument was that it was part of Greenlandic society and that the production "wanted to include all the nuances" (Skifte 2022, PI, MT). In this context, writer Emilie Lebech Kaae (2022, PI, MT) describes how it was the purpose to “show different sides, so you're not ‘look how beautiful it is’, ‘look again how beautiful it is’, ‘here's a polar bear’ [...]. So we kind of tried to create a nuanced picture, and we've also shown things that are ugly” which points to a balancing act between the romanticised and the critical representations that have characterised films about Greenland. In this regard, Skifte describes how she acted as a way of creating 'credibility' in the narrative, although her involvement took place at a time when the script was already quite advanced, and her role was, therefore, more consultative than creative, perceived as a more tokenistic role than delegated power. As mentioned in the CEL model, the fifth rung of consultation includes community members being consulted ‘and given the opportunity to share their opinions and perspectives on the film production. Decision-makers can take these opinions into account, but they are not obliged to integrate them’.

As for the writing process, there seem to be similarities and differences from the procedures around the original *Borgen*, whose circumstances around the writer's room have been presented in detail by Eva Novrup Redvall (2013, 131-158). Again, a small writer's room was made with main writer Price and episode writer Maja Jul Larsen (who joined *Borgen* in season three) and the new co-writer Kaae rather than the original first two seasons constellation of Price and writers Jeppe Gjervig Gram and Tobias Lindholm. In addition, Kaae (2022, PI) worked as Creative Producer, working mainly with casting, and Quist (2022, PI) was responsible for the overall script plan and research functioning as a link between, for example, research persons and writers' rooms. Using a meeting room filled with white boards and post it notes, the series was thus written as a collective process, which (as in previous

seasons) had Price as the indisputable main writer both in the writing process and in the press, despite credits to Kaae and Larsen.

According to Price, the writing process involved Greenlandic collaborations, though not in terms of co-writers:

I didn't have Greenlandic co-writers, but I went to Greenland several times to do research. And we met with the Greenlandic actors and Greenlandic politicians to make it as true to current affairs in Greenland as we possibly could. And we were very thorough in our research and constantly asking out Greenlandic actors: 'Would you say this? Would this be a proper way of showing modern Greenland?'. And asking the politicians there. [...] It would have been difficult to find Greenlandic serial writers because I don't think there are any. But one of the greatest young Greenlandic novelists, [...] Niviaq [Korneliussen] [...], she was actually our translator for the scripts into Greenlandic.

(A6.24)

Again, this points to a process characterised by extensive research and limited opportunities in relation to Greenlandic co-writers and filmmaker fatigue, which merges with the research that already exists in the development phase around *Borgen*. Instead, research and below-the-line personnel acts as legitimisation.

As I will elaborate on in the next section, one of the reasons for choosing Greenland as location was the public service obligation that seemed inconsistent with choosing a runaway solution through Iceland and consequently opting out of a nation within the Kingdom of Denmark. Similarly, the choice of Greenland and the Greenland-set story – involving Inuit characters and use of Kalallisut – was a big advantage for the Netflix collaboration. As formulated by Price (A6.24): “I think that every time you work with Netflix, they will always mention representation [...]. They didn't, at any time, mention it during this, because they knew that representation was taken care of”. The Greenland-set season thus fitted well within Netflix' strategies of representation – “by committing to more inclusive stories” – and indigenisation “to present itself as matchmaker, supporting local creatives, introducing local talents to the world, and vice versa” (Asmar et al. 2022, 8–9).

From a Greenlandic perspective, the involvement also seems to open for representation, whereby one of the legitimisation bases from this side is to have the opportunity to counteract historical misrepresentation, which is evident, for example, in an Instagram post from Péronard after the premiere:

Happy to have contributed to this. #borgen airs on Danish @dr1tv every Sunday and will be available on @netflix in 190 countries from April. Hopefully we'll destroy a few stereotypes along the way

(A6.25)

In this way, the constellation of DR, Netflix, SAM Productions, and Polarama Greenland created a complex production with desires and demands from different (cultural) perspectives. For example, although Netflix did not claim to have no creative influence, it explains how they viewed the development of the project from an international perspective; for instance, concerns regarding how China was portrayed (Kaae 2022, PI) or “is right to start with whale flensing? Well, it would be perceived as controversial in many parts of the world. And that's something Netflix has an eye for, and something that DR hasn't necessarily seen as much of a challenge” (Quist 2022, PI, MT). DR has a public service based awareness towards Danish audiences, Netflix towards international audiences (and avoiding potential controversial representations or imagery), while the Greenlandic members take on cultural consulting roles similar to the gatekeeper function described around *Kalak*.

## Choosing location, working location

When asked the reason for shooting *Thin Ice* in Iceland rather than Greenland despite an exclusive Greenlandic setting, producer Søren Stærmosé (2021, PI, MT) explains how shooting on-location was never regarded as an option due to factors of economy and infrastructure:

I knew from the start that we couldn't shoot in Greenland. We could do certain second unit shots in Greenland, so we could ‘create’ Greenland, but we knew that there were no significant economic incentives in Greenland at all. There are no tax break systems, and there is no infrastructure in terms of well-established, experienced film workers.

As he points out, the Greenlandic main setting (Tasiilaq) was created by doubling it with the Icelandic settlement of Stykkishólmur and incorporating second unit shots made by a three-person crew flown to the Tasiilaq area. Then, through extensive CGI work along with

implementing cultural specificity on-location in the form of (seemingly) Greenlandic architecture and other elements of local colour, the goal was to create a plausible Greenlandic setting through a visual mosaic (Grønlund 2022a, 213–16). Therefore, the choice of filming in Greenland in relation to BPG is a breakthrough for the series format, which has otherwise only been used in one or two episodes in e.g. season 1, episode 4 of *Borgen* or season 3, episode 2 of *Arvingerne (The Legacy)*, DR, 2014-2017), also with small teams for exterior shots, or full location doubling in e.g. season 6, episodes 14-15 of *Vikings* (History, 2013-2020).

The reason for choosing to do ‘more than usual’ on-location in Greenland is already presented earlier in this chapter as part of legitimisation and – with the wording from Adrian McDonald (2007, 933) in terms of runaway production – a step away from “deceptive filmmaking” asking ethical questions rather than purely economic or legal ones. However, according to Quist and Ryddeskov (2022, PI, MT), there were initial discussions about whether BPG should be (at least partly) shot in Iceland, which was eventually rejected for several reasons. For one, the collaboration with DR and the public service obligation<sup>41</sup> made it difficult to defend location doubling in addition to the choice to shoot all interiors on-set in Denmark. Also, Covid-19 made it “super complicated to produce across three borders” (Quist 2022, PI, MT), why there was a practical element to the decision-making process causing Quist to describe the choice of Greenland as being valuable “in terms of production value and culturally”.

According to Kaae, Ryddeskov, and Quist (2022, PI), the choice of Ilulissat as main setting – and thus main location – was the result of the research, where geologist Minik Rosing identified the area around Ilulissat as one of two of the most likely areas for oil discoveries, with the other being far up in North-East Greenland and thus a more difficult location. However, as Ryddeskov (2022, PI, MT) notes "it's a nice physical payoff that there's also the icefjord". Ilulissat is placed at the UNESCO heritage site Ilulissat Icefjord offering naturally occurring picturesque Arctic landscapes making it the tourism centre of Greenland just as Chapters 4 and 5 have described how it is also the most used location in film production in recent decades. Here, aesthetic coincides with other outcomes of tourism in the form of increased hotel capacity that counterbalance some of the negative aspects, namely that Greenlandic film workers predominantly based in Nuuk. The choice of

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<sup>41</sup> For instance, the Media Policy Agreement 2019-2023 describes how DR must "cover minorities in the borderlands, Greenlandic and Faroese conditions, the Nordic countries, the EU and communicate international perspectives" (Kulturministeriet 2018, 3).



exclusively shooting (exterior) in Greenland was thus tied to arguments on public service, practicalities, and plausibility, while Ilulissat serves purely aesthetic and plausibility purposes building on the narrative and aesthetic (production) value of the Arctic city.

In the end, the 'location compromise' was part doubling in the sense that interior sets were built in Denmark along with several Danish locations such as the parliament and Nyborg's office (A6.15-21). This approach is more common, also done in feature film's such as Erik Balling's *Qivitoq* (1956) and was one of the reasons why the choice of Greenland was possible as "a way to be economical about it and get fewer days abroad, but then get the real Greenland" (Ryddeskov 2022, PI, MT). For instance, one of the main Greenlandic settings of Hans Eliassen's house (image 19-21) and a hotel room was built from the ground up a long with a boat, physically located in Ilulissat through the use of movable LED screens on ceiling tracks (A6.14-15). These were designed by production designer Niels Sejer, who, as images 20 and 21 indicate, built their home around Greenlandic local colour in the form of elements and décor, including rifles and scattered toys that point to Greenland as unpretentious, family-orientated/collectivist, and not least as hunters. At the same time, a hybrid space is created as the Greenlandic elements interact with the use of Danish design furniture, creating a duality between the Greenlandic and the Nordic.

While the interior scenes are created under fully controlled conditions, the location shooting in Ilulissat was more complicated and dependent on the specificity of the place. While the creative parts were shaped by e.g. writers, director, or production designer, much of the location work was handled by location manager Kenneth Berg (2022, PI), who was already involved in script reading process. As he explains, this work is thus split between fulfilling the ambitions of the creatives and the possibilities of the locations:



Image 19-21: Establishing shot of Hans Eliassen's home on-location in Nuuk and two interior shots from the dining room and utility room. Screenshots from episode 2 and 3.

one thing is an understanding of their needs, but of course it's also quite concrete and important to go out and knock on a door [...]. There are the specifics of the locations, but also the surroundings. That is, authorities, neighbours, municipalities, regions, and now in this case a completely different part of the country or part of the world, who are completely uncomprehending when we come roaring with our 'Danishness' and would like to impose on them what we would like. Again, it's something that the director and production designer want, but it's not always the case that it goes hand in hand with the context we enter. So, it's my primary task to convey their wishes and ideas to the society [...] we end up in.

(Berg 2022, PI, MT)

Again, an awareness is made towards affective entanglements, here through the potential conflicts of implementing more than 40-person crew in a small Greenlandic city of less than 5000 inhabitants. Berg also relates to an important and complex dynamic between Danish productions and small, Indigenous communities like Greenland, emphasising the need for a profound change in the approach to these communities:

We look different, we speak a different language, and we behave in a different way and of course we have to have the necessary respect for the local community and that can be difficult when we have a daily programme and a plan that has to be achieved within a given time, especially when we don't know what the weather will be like tomorrow. It's about executing a lot of things and producing a lot of things at a blazing pace, and that pace is completely different up there [...]. We had to meet somewhere in between. As I said, we weren't going to tell them what to do, but on the other hand, we also wanted them to help us. And an agreement up there can very quickly just become a spit in the fists and then that's it. That is, if they haven't gone hunting that day.

(Berg 2022, PI, MT)

In this way, Berg emphasises how there were challenges around capacity, weather, and infrastructure, as well as around cultural differences that, in various ways, were a poor match for the tight execution of TV series shoots. In terms of weather and infrastructure, Berg (2022, PI, MT) exemplifies how, for instance, snow could disappear causing last-minute change of plans, and one episode where filming on the ice cap was suddenly cancelled at a few minutes' notice when a pilot was sick and there were no alternatives; "It was a staggering amount of work we had to do to find it [the location], and then it was cancelled in less than five minutes". As such, location is again characterised as uncertain and vulnerable.

In terms of cultural differences, this is a recurring theme, where Ryddeskov (2022, PI, MT), for example, points out when working with locals:

There is a different pace, from when you start something to when something happens [...]. There are some cultural things that are really difficult about working in Greenland... It's really tricky that they speak Danish [...] because when they speak the language, you take things for granted [...] and the Greenlandic people, they talk slower, and because they pause like that, it doesn't mean they're done talking, but if you start talking into that pause, they feel that you're violating something. You're being rude. [...] We had many cultural bumps that have taken us a long time to learn.

Overall, the statement provides an insightful insight into the complexities that arise when working in a different cultural context. It highlights the importance of cultural competence and adaptability to successfully collaborate and adapt to the local culture when working in Greenland or similar culturally diverse environments, in this case further complexed by postcolonial entanglements.

These tensions and cultural challenges are common in my conversations with Greenlandic filmmakers, for instance Nivi Pedersen (2021, PI) describing how she has turned down otherwise attractive projects if she could see them “require a lot of cultural translation”. This use of the term *cultural translation* has also been used by Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg (2021, PI, MT) explaining one of the benefits of Indigenous collaborations as “you have to spend a little more time understanding each other or translating cultures when it comes to people who are not Indigenous”. This understanding of cultural translation is thus not the same as the common meaning from cultural anthropology, which is more literally about language translation that includes not only words, but also cultural concepts, values, and norms between two cultures, preserving the original meaning and sentiment while making it meaningful to the target culture. This approach has been used, among other things, in working with language translation in Indigenous filmmaking (e.g. Sterk 2020). So while cultural translation “is a term currently much used in a range of discipline [...] – and in very different ways” (Buden and Nowotny 2009, 196), it is used by Greenlandic filmmakers to describe having to explain your country and culture to a foreign film crew.

In BPG, one of the ways to work with assistant functions in primary areas around the Greenland shoots and especially using local location assistant and director's assistant during filming and in post-production. In Ilulissat, Karen Buus (2022, PI) was hired as location

assistant working closely together with Berg using her local network and skills from her everyday job in the tourism sector, once again exemplifying the use of cross-over functions. Overall, Buus describes a positive process where, with comparative experiences from the Netflix feature film *Against the Ice* (Peter Flinth, 2022), she experienced BPG as a production that was more in tune with the locals and self-conscious about how they appeared in the cityscape:

And I think one of the reasons why it worked was simply that everyone was so aware that we need to have a production that is not the ‘colonial master’ coming [...]. Where the Icelandic production, it was just... It was really a machine [...]. It was all so minute-prioritised that many people in the city were talking about how they actually didn't think it was funny that it was here. Whereas I think the thing about *Borgen* being a bit more aware [...]. I think *Borgen's* production was really good at embracing local life, unlike *Against the Ice*, which just had to get some recordings and then go home again.

(Buus 2022, PI, MT)

According to Buus, there was thus a big difference between “the Icelandic film kings” and the crew of BPG and the way they approached location work in a small community. She refers to a consciousness that is also the clear impression from the Danish interviews, where the affective entanglements and worry of misstepping seem to create a postcolonial self-awareness that positively characterises the approach to location work from Buus's perspective.

This challenge is also described by Malik Kleist (2022, PI, MT), who points to cultural differences and ultrasmall scale as a potential challenge for large and upcoming productions:

The population is also very different here than in Denmark. And perhaps also a little more sensitive. For example, if you offend someone, it can be quite difficult to find someone to cooperate with. Because society is so small, as soon as you've offended someone, it spreads very quickly. [...] So if someone is acting like a bunch of Hollywood production people who just think they can have everything [...] and just behave like a jerk or something, then the offended person [...] tells their family and they start talking and pretty soon a production gets a reputation for being a bad production. [...] So that's why it's very, very important that there are some Greenlandic production people involved who are familiar with it, and that you respect the culture up here.

This quote supports several points about the necessity of involvement, where Greenlandic film workers act as intermediaries and conflict resolvers in a society where a bad reputation can quickly affect production.

In addition to experiencing the BPG production as understanding and flexible, Buus (2022, PI, MT) felt that she was heard and involved based on her expertise, which gave her a sense of agency:

There was a lot of trust in my ideas, and there was a lot of trust that when we as locals came up with an idea for what can be done to solve a specific scene, they listen to it [...]. I also experienced that there was a very good dialogue with the local assistants to support their managers, but that the managers also really listened to the local helpers.

This extract describes a positive experience where the person in the assistant role was given significant trust, responsibility, and the opportunity to contribute their own ideas to the production. They felt valued and included in the decision-making process, which gave them a sense of having a significant role in the work.

Similarly, production service producer and director's assistant Pipaluk K. Jørgensen (2022, PI, MT) describes an overall positive experience from the perspective of multiple functions:

My task was to work with Emile [Hertling Péronard] and find out what the team should be and 'what can we do in Ilulissat?' We're from Nuuk, so we know a lot here, but there's only so much we know in Ilulissat. So, of course, it was a challenge. But when we got into production, my job was to be director's assistant, because I want to be involved in the creative side of things and not so much in the production.

Important here was the collaboration with conceptual director Per Fly, which was experienced as a valuable creative collaboration:

We got along really well and had a lot of conversations about the story and what my opinions and attitudes were in relation to where Greenland was today, because it had to be as realistic as possible within the characters. Then I also attended rehearsals with the actors to kind of guide a bit in... How we would do it, how I see it, or how do we see it as Greenlanders.

Again, focus is upon involvement and the ‘nothing about us without us’ discourse, where Jørgensen once again exemplifies multifunctionalism in screen production where many fluid roles are given to each Greenlandic person involved, as was the case with Skifte and Nivi Pedersen, who was both lead actor and director's assistant on post-production. In addition, there were again, as in *Kalak*, signs of filmmaker fatigue, for example, there were major challenges in casting Greenlandic actors, which is why the lead role of Hans Eliassen went to the inexperienced Svend Hardenberg, who was spotted by Fly during the research phase; a relationship that also received a lot of press attention (Vraa 2022; Redaktion 2022; Munk 2022).

Overall, the production seems to be – despite involving no co-production and mostly assistant functions – placed on the upper end of the CEL model within the lowest degree of community power in the form of partnership, as Greenlandic filmmakers were ‘given the possibility of negotiating and discussing the production process and their influence. Their input and ideas are considered and (partially) integrated into the screen production.’ Though some stages, such as Skifte’s position as reader, seemed more within the realm of tokenism due to late involvement and unclear role more in the form of placation or consultation, as there may be space to share opinions and perspectives, but without obligation to integrate them. Overall, however, the production demonstrates a process that considers basic conditions that also emphasise the complex nature of location management in ultrasmall contexts and across administrative and creative levels. Ilulissat was a challenge that requires careful preparation, experience sharing, and adaptability due to its Arctic climate, ultrasmall conditions, small Indigenous population, and colonial history requiring local collaborations to have an understanding of the local environment, its cultural nuances, and social dynamics. As I will discuss in the following sections, this also involves aesthetic and narrative possibilities and commercial opportunities through place branding with the possibility of attracting an international audience. This combination of challenging management and commercial potential creates an exciting and complex production situation. It requires a balanced approach that recognises local values and the geographical place, sites of production, and various policies – suggesting a greater focus on history and cultural differences within location studies (Hansen and Waade 2019, 105–6) – while utilising the opportunities that Greenland offers.

## Greenland as contested landscapes

Overall, BPG writes itself into a growing tendency of geopolitical television series consisting of high-end drama engaging with (real) world politics through fiction “defined by engagement with international issues including terrorism, the refugee crisis, nuclear deterrence, and climate change” (Saunders 2020, 1) often in the context of Nordic noir. BPG thus utilises the complex and often overlooked dynamics between Greenland and Denmark as a powerful source of inspiration for a narrative with global relevance. This speaks into discussions of climate change and geopolitics, exploring the political and economic aspects of Greenland's relationship with Denmark and the international community, initiating a discussion about power, resources, decolonisation, and regional dynamics.

On-screen, the Greenlandic setting naturally changes the use of characters and landscapes starting with the introduction of several Greenlandic characters such as Greenland's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Raw Materials, Hans Eliassen (Svend Hardenberg); Greenlandic government official Emmy Rasmussen (Nivi Pedersen); and several minor roles played by known actors such as Ujarneq Fleischer and famous Greenlandic singer Rasmus Lyberth. As such, there is a broad Greenlandic representation of Inuit in a wide range of positions that point to more agency politically and culturally, as well as resulting in several dialogues exclusively in Kalaallisut.

In terms of landscapes and aesthetics, the majority of the season still takes place in Copenhagen, often shooting in iconic urban landscapes, grey Copenhagen streets, or within dark corridors of the parliament, these make a sharp contrast to the picturesque Greenlandic landscapes of endless fjords, snow-covered mountains, or the colourful city of Ilulissat infusing the season with a large amount of Greenlandic local colour building on the series' traditional aesthetic roots in Nordic noir. Despite still being a political drama – with most scenes taking place indoors in meeting rooms, cars, newsrooms, or in private, the season still falls within the growing number of Arctic noirs through the distinct use of Arctic landscapes in narrative and aesthetics. As coined by Anne Marit Waade (2020a, 207), “Arctic noir narratives take Nordic noir a step further by making the Arctic setting and climate significant to the plotline of the crime narrative as well as in the visual aesthetic” and often address geopolitical challenges, the climate crisis, or Indigenous perspectives through postcolonial tensions (Grønlund 2022a, 207).

Taking departure in a shot-to-shot analysis of the opening of the first episode, it starts with a fade from black to a quote by American political economist and journalist Henry



George which presents the overall theme of the season: 'Man is the only animal whose desires increase as they are fed'. In this way, themes of greed and overconsumption are merged into *Borgen's* basic theme of power struggles and political conflicts. In other words, the basic conflict in BPG is presented, reflecting both a personal and global greed that anchors the narrative firmly in ecocritical discourses and geopolitical crises.

As is evident in the following two-minute opening scene (see image 22-28), this theme merges with a distinct use of different, contrasting landscapes alternating between hunting and oil extraction. opens with a long drone pan showing the capture of a bowhead whale (in Danish, literary a 'Greenland whale') and the subsequent flensing, thereby opening with a distinctly Greenlandic scenario - very different from the usual Nordic series openings - that



Image 22-28: Screenshots from the opening scene with whale flensing, arctic landscapes, oil discovery, and a final total of the drilling area.

cements the season's roots in Greenland and, considering the aforementioned scepticism from Netflix itself, potentially controversial by virtue of its explicitness. In BPG, it underpins the series' rootedness in Greenlandic conditions, where this traditional hunting contrasts with – and thus underpins – the cultural and geographical distance to Denmark and the Western cultures. From the images of whale flensing, it cuts to an abrupt silence and the sound of calving icebergs and super-total of the character Josva Johansen (Rasmus Lyberth) sitting at his distinctive colourful Greenlandic house overlooking the icy fjord (image 25). Then a young Inuk woman (Kiki Godtfredsen) enters the frame and cuts to semi-close shots of the two talking to each other. As a result, the first lines of BPG is in Kalaallisut and all shots are characteristically Greenlandic, expressing local colour geographically, architecturally, culturally, and linguistically.

Central to the opening scene is the contrast that is emphasised as a helicopter roars through the air (image 26) and breaks the silence. The contrast is further emphasised by the camera filming upwards into the sky for the first time, underlining a fundamental difference between waterborne hunting and helicopter flight – like an old discourse in films about Greenland, between the traditional and the modern. The helicopter is then used to take the story from the capture scenario to an oil drilling site, where the prisoners have been replaced by oilmen in orange suits and large machinery. Here, representatives from the Canadian oil company jump out of the helicopter standing by the oilmen inspecting a find – and happily announces: 'Congratulations, boys. You found oil!' (image 27). In this way, the contrast to the previous scenario is stark. Something landmark has happened, change is coming that will affect the future of the nation. This change quickly becomes more ominous as the final frame emerges (image 28), where the oil drilling site is seen in a total shot as a huge metal construction placed unnaturally in the Greenlandic landscape. This is emphasised by the huge tower on which a container clearly bears the Canadian oil company's logo with a distinctive Canadian red maple leaf. The construction site thus becomes a symbol of corporate neo-colonialism, where foreign corporations hold power that quickly – as in BPG – becomes a geopolitical affair.

These themes are continued in the season's title sequence (see image 29-38), consisting of a range of highly symbolic imagery where the series' plot, central characters and, not least, landscapes are intertwined. As main character, Birgitte Nyborg is shown in several frames with her profile on drifting icebergs (image 29) that later turn into torn documents (image 31-32) and flames (34) underlining the political and climatic themes of the series. In addition,

images of a rain-soaked Copenhagen (image 30) and iconic buildings from Nuuk (image 33) and Ilulissat (image X) are shown, which, like Nyborg's profile, are falling apart, emphasising the division within Greenland and the threat from outside. Similarly, the last frames before the title becomes an image the church in Ilulissat (image 36) and the Danish parliament (image 37), which is similarly disintegrating, entrenching internal and political conflicts.

BPG cements the fact that Greenland – and the Arctic in general – is a contested landscape and echoes a century of tradition in film history, where Greenland has been



Image 29-38: Screenshots from the title sequence.

included as an element to be discovered and taken over, first through voyages of expedition films, later Cold War films, and now today with geopolitical series such as *Thin Ice* or BPG. Now, however, the stories are characterised by other factors that point to the current climate crisis and minority issues that characterise the creative industries globally and in different ways speak to geopolitical issues in general, with increasing Indigenous agency and dilemmas created by climate change. BPG uses the specific – and for the most part unknown – tensions between Greenland and Denmark to create an internationally relevant narrative touching upon themes of climate change, geopolitics, and decolonisation. Here, landscapes are no longer (merely) spectacular and intimidating in their grandeur; They are threatened and unstable. The global relevance is also evident in the subsequent media attention, and the use of landscapes also initiated a new focus on screen production from tourism stakeholders.

## **Watch *Borgen*, visit Greenland**

Due to *Borgen's* existing popularity, the reception of the new series was also widely covered in Denmark and internationally, where major media outlets had podcasts and weekly articles in newspapers, with politicians commenting on each episode considering their similarity to political reality. For instance, the Danish political news site *Altinget* had a podcast and a panel of reviewers consisting of former Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, former Foreign Minister Mogens Lykketoft, and editor-in-chief of the Danish newspaper Berlingske Mette Østergaard to review the latest episodes (Altinget n.d.). Similarly, there was also a focus from Greenland with sitting member of the Danish parliament Aaja Chemnitz Larsen doing weekly reviews from her perspective as a Greenlandic politician who also had an eye for the representation of Greenland and its people. For instance, her review of the first episode more critically engages with these perspectives:

The episode opens with scenic footage, which I think is a bit stereotypical, as it's always the beautiful nature or social challenges that characterise us in fiction. The introduction was therefore ambivalent for me because on the one hand, our nature is just unique and amazing. [...] On the other hand, it quickly becomes a caricatured depiction of the beautiful country with the noble people who are submissive  
(Larsen 2022, MT)

This criticism gradually becomes less pronounced over the course of the season as Greenlandic politicians gain more influence, and the series also receives praise from Greenland's other member of the Danish parliament, Aki-Mathilda Høegh-Dam (2022), who uses the series as a springboard to highlight the tensions between Denmark and Greenland and cultural differences: “You can tell that the author Adam Price and his co-author Emilie Lebech Kaae had researched the Greenlandic and Danish political environment. We have a very different culture than the Danish”. The focus is again on plausibility – both in social and political reality – but also very much as a continuation of the postcolonial tensions that characterised the production itself.

In Danish and especially Greenlandic press, the Greenlandic actors received a lot of attention with articles describing their experiences with BPG, especially the main actors Svend Hardenberg and Nivi Pedersen both underlining the professionalising element of participating in such large productions (Redaktionen 2022; Rasmussen 2022b; Ellegaard 2022) framing the season as a cinematic event in Greenland. In an interview with *Atuagagdliutit*, Pedersen underlines exactly these milieu-building benefits of the Greenland-set production:

It's so great with the experience I've gained, also on the director side, says Nivi Pedersen, and emphasises that it provides a common frame of reference for all the actors from Greenland, both in front of and behind the camera. At the same time, she emphasises, like Svend Hardenberg, that it made an impression to play together with experienced Danish colleagues. (Rasmussen 2022a, MT)

This continues the learning-by-doing structure that has characterised Greenlandic film culture, where experiences from productions that have involved more limited involvement lead to more involvement in future projects or larger Greenlandic projects.

In this context, it is particularly relevant how BPG was used in a branding context, both in relation to actors and the production itself. As presented in Chapter 5, the first season of *Borgen's* Greenland-set episode already caused political attention in the Greenlandic parliament, when Doris Jakobsen used it as a way to discuss the economic and cultural possibilities of filmmaking. This has continued with BPG, which is underlined through the article "When Borgen goes to Greenland" published by Visit Greenland in connection with the premiere of BPG (Por 2022) presenting a collection of several of the multimedia releases

about *Borgen* from Visit Greenland itself and Greenlandic news media – including Larsen's reviews. Furthermore, the article introduces a range of facts about Greenland aimed at international readers including political history, colonial history, fun facts, an introduction to the *Borgen* franchise, and more season-focused introductions to the connection to Greenland, its connection to reality and main themes of independence, oil exploration, and geopolitical tensions. In addition, the article has three 'actor spotlights' with small videos and interviews with four of the main Greenlandic actors along with links to their Instagram accounts: Angunnguaq Larsen, Svend Hardenberg, Nivi Pedersen, and Kiki Godtfredsen.

In their videos, they introduce different perspectives of Greenland and everyday life, all pointing to their favourite place in Greenland. For instance, Larsen introduces his family, the Greenlandic passion for music, and his favourite place being the colonial harbour in Nuuk, Nuutoqaq as "you can almost see and feel the history of Nuuk". Similarly, Hardenberg introduces his passion for fitness and coffee roasting locally in Nuuk, and his favourite place being the ski slope by the airport. In this way, the two introductions capitalise on the attention around the series to present Nuuk as a vibrant city with nature, history, sports opportunities and, not least, freshly roasted coffee like any other modern capital city. While Larsen and Hardenberg introduce the possibilities locally in Nuuk, Pedersen and Godtfredsen underline the possibilities of the landscapes:

One of the things that I love about Greenland being my home is that nature is right there. [...] I am immediately at my peaceful spot. You know, it's just a nice little break from busy everyday life. Just look out the window.  
(Pedersen in Por, 2022)

Or outside Nuuk in the possibilities of sailing and hiking:

When I really need to get away from everything, I like to sail to Kapisillit fjord with my family and have some free time. Just have some great food and also a little bit of free time from social media, and, when I really get tired of my family, I can just go out with some warm clothes and hike up to the mountain and have a little free time for myself and just get to breathe a little.  
(Godtfredsen in Por, 2022)

Visually, the videos also underline these and further possibilities for hobbies and shopping, branding Greenland as a tourist destination. In this way, the use of BPG is similar to earlier

branding campaigns made by Visit Greenland, for instance during the 2016 Arctic Winter Games in Nuuk. As presented by Carina Ren et al. (2019, 171), the events were also used to make ‘behind-the-scenes’ content presenting Greenland through a hybrid narrative “mixed with cosmopolitan and Nordic tendencies as Greenlandic, colonial and pop cultural references are woven into a coherent and seemingly uncontested narrative”.

This ‘new era’ of collaboration between tourism and filmmakers is underlined in a later article on the making of the Oscar-nominated short film *Ivalu* (Por 2023). Here, Péronard emphasised the potential of film productions to boost tourism in the region. Highlighting the filming locations of popular productions like BPG and *Ivalu*, Péronard noted that these productions not only place Greenland on the global map but offer a powerful platform to showcase the country's captivating locales through compelling narratives, fostering a growing interest in Greenland's unique destinations (Por 2023). This sentiment, shared on the Visit Greenland website, suggests an encouraging trend of leveraging the rising popularity of Greenland-set films and TV series to develop strategic and sustainable place branding for Greenland, enhancing both tourism and filmmaking.

## Summary

BPG illustrates the increasing interest in Greenland and Greenlandic landscapes from SVoD platforms further exemplified by *Thin Ice* and *Against the Ice* or the growing number of Arctic noirs and geopolitical series. Contrary to *Thin Ice* and *Against the Ice*, BPG shot all external scenes on-location in Greenland and mostly the Arctic city of Ilulissat, showcasing the various challenges of manoeuvring a large, international film crew in a small Greenlandic community. Furthermore, it exemplifies a complex development phase of ‘writing Greenland’ and creates a plausible place and political setup involving over 30 Greenlandic experts, research trips, a Greenlandic reader, and other roles such as director’s assistants and production service producers. As such, the production works at the upper-middle end of the CEL model, between consultation and partnership and thus degrees of tokenism and community power. However, due to the ultrasmall conditions of filmmaker fatigue, crossover, and multifunctionalism, it remains difficult to describe the actual level of engagement.

As *Kalak*, BPG showcases some of the emotional aspects of Danish-led production in Greenland and the importance of legitimising both through location choice, Greenlandic

participation, and narrative perspective for both Danish and Greenlandic personnel. On-site shooting in Greenland brought its own set of cultural and practical challenges. This underlines the importance of the location manager and collaborations with local Greenlandic professionals to navigate these challenges. Among other things, the case study illustrates how BPG has shown more understanding and flexibility than previous productions from other countries, which can point back to the emotional nature of Danish (public service) production in Greenland.

Overall, the series itself points towards the possibilities of Greenlandic landscapes as inherently contested, drawing on discourses of expedition and Cold War film. The discovery of oil raises themes of neo-colonialism and regional futures and presents Greenland as increasingly important and changeable landscapes in global discussions of geopolitics and climate change. In addition, the Greenland-focused story aligned with Netflix's goals for diversity and representation and opens up the commercial possibilities of the landscapes highlighted by both the SVoD interests and an increased interest from tourist operators and politicians.



# Chapter 9:

Ultrasmall, borderless, global

As analysed in the previous chapters, screen production in and about Greenland is characterised by several factors that have changed throughout history in line with political, technological, cultural, and commercial alterations. While some conditions have changed fundamentally, several discursive traces and conditions are still present to some extent despite the movement towards indigenous production and growing influence. In this chapter, I discuss screen production in and about Greenland as both a spectacular and contested space and how the screen industry navigates this tension. To do so, I start by summarising and discussing the case studies comparatively in relation to historical developments and the five characteristics of ultrasmallness introduced in Chapter 2. Following this, I broaden the perspective by comparing Greenland to its ultrasmall Arctic and North Atlantic neighbours, namely the Faroe Islands, Nunavut, and Sápmi to discuss how these correspond and differ from the Greenlandic conditions and developments. This comparison leads to an overall discussion of the concept of ultrasmallness considering contemporary opportunities and challenges.

## Ultrasmall and beyond

Looking back at Chapter 2, one of the theoretical contributions was five characteristics of the ultrasmall drawn from a large body of literature on being small, minor, and micro with conditions similar to that of islands. I argued that ultrasmall screen industries:

1. has a population size making it impossible to sustain a commercially based indigenous screen industry.
2. is commercially dependent on foreign interest and productive partnerships.
3. is vulnerable to and dependent on decisions taken elsewhere.
4. is connected to certain structural disadvantages created by a lack of capacity and resources, tiny domestic markets, a weak public sphere, low degree of specialisation, and dependence on recourses from the outside.
5. is characterized by multifunctionalism and dependence on few individuals.

First and foremost, all productions in Greenland are influenced by the population size fundamentally shaping the possibilities of productions. In local filmmaking, exemplified by the most recent production of *Alanngut Killिंगanni*, there is a total dependence on public funds

– especially the former governmental film grant and the municipality of Sermersooq. In addition, there are public funds aimed at general cultural production as well as strong community engagement with various types of more or less formal contributions. Although there is a screen industry – dating back to the introduction of Home Rule – it is still very limited, especially in terms of full-time employment. With recent developments following the first development phase around the 1990s and early 2000s, I have argued for the Greenlandic screen industry being in its second growth phase due to institution building, although it has not reached a critical mass which is fundamentally challenging the possibilities of both indigenous production and sufficient production service causing several issues as evident in both *Kalak* and *Borgen: Power & Glory*. As director and writer Malik Kleist (2022, PI), producer Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg (2022, PI), and distributor Bill Bering (2023, PI) underline, the purely Greenlandic-produced feature film creates a range of challenges related to limited political focus and perceived limitations due to the lack of sufficient funding opportunities, slow processes, formal education, an overarching ‘filmmaker fatigue’, and the continued reliance on screenings in the Katuaq cinema emphasises the issues of ultrasmall markets. Based on these challenges, it seems unlikely to achieve a sustainable screen industry within a national framework.

This naturally leads to other characteristics, where developments in the Greenlandic screen industry seem closely linked to a dependence on productive partnerships as evident in two overall tendencies. Firstly, a Nordic/Western-orientated track with (post)colonial roots, which both *Kalak* and *Borgen: Power & Glory* are part of, and with new successes like the Oscar-nominated *Ivalu* or AK’s nomination at The Nordic Council Film Prize. These are built on various forms of transnationalism including milieu-building, globalising, and in some cases opportunistic types, as Greenlandic and Arctic narratives are increasingly of global interest.

The second tendency is the growing Indigenous and pan-Arctic collaboration marked by initiatives such as AIFF and the funding models around productions such as *Anori* and collaborations between e.g. Greenland and Iceland in *Polarama Greenland*. While these collaborations also seem to be grounded in milieu-building transnationalism, they are more epiphanic “to bring shared culture that may not actually be fully or focally recognised as such into public awareness” and affinitive by “giving rise to shared core values, common practices, and comparable institutions” (Hjort 2009, 16-17). In this regard, *Alanngut Killinganni* stands out as an exception that fully exemplifies the difficulties that can emerge from only having

Greenlandic funding and the necessity of collaborations with private actors outside the screen-specific area, emphasising the need for continued strong community support.

In this context, screen production in Greenland is vulnerable to and dependent on decisions taken elsewhere. Initiatives such as AIFF, subsidy programmes such as NORDDOK, or international interests greatly influence Greenlandic production and the possibilities of filmmakers. The vulnerability applies when countries like Iceland and the Faroe Islands continue to focus heavily on tax rebates and generate more reasons for Greenlandic runaway productions. This creates a (sub)Arctic ‘location race’ where Greenland is caught in a fragile situation despite recent initiatives for improvement and dialogues with politicians. In addition to the absence of a film institute and a functioning tax rebate system, one major factor in this is the ‘economic no-man’s-land’ caused by the exclusion from the Danish Film Law when Greenland claimed the cultural area with the introduction of Home Rule. As *Alanngut Killinganni* illustrates, this has ‘locked’ the Greenlandic screen industry within a narrow national context with severely limited funding opportunities in direct competition with other types of culture in Greenland – not least after the introduction of the Arts Fund in 2022.

Overall, these examples reflect some of the structural disadvantages of ultrasmallness, where every case demonstrates issues of capacity and resources – both in terms of film professionals, infrastructure, and equipment. While the tiny domestic market is already mentioned from a local perspective, it is also evident that neither *Kalak* nor *Borgen: Power & Glory* have chosen to integrate Greenlandic perspectives to cater to a Greenlandic audience as a market. Location selection and collaboration – in *Kalak*'s case co-production – is more about geographical realism and access, with varying degrees of community power being a way to achieve this and, more importantly, to achieve ‘responsible’ filmmaking based on participatory practices rather than tokenism. The (spectacular) landscapes, culture, and inherent narratives play an essential role in these choices of setting and location, which have historically made Greenland an inherently transnational screen industry, underpinned by a growing orientation towards the Arctic in the face of rising geopolitical tensions and climate change.

The last characteristic of multifunctionalism and dependence on few individuals stands as one of the most prominent challenges across the case studies, which point to issues of a low degree of specialisation and the need for crossover. In *Alanngut Killinganni*, multifunctionalism is also a result of other challenges, not least economic, which lead to a

few key people such as Kleist and Skydsbjerg being involved in multiple roles across production. However, this is not solely due to economy, but as *Kalak* and BPG illustrate also due to a consequence of 'filmmaker fatigue' as it is difficult to find experienced Greenlandic personnel for productions. As a result, a large degree of cross-over happens, especially with individuals from tourism and TV. In addition, multifunctionalism is linked to infrastructural issues and centralisation in Nuuk, where Greenlandic crew is not necessarily cheaper than flying foreign film professionals in. This adds an additional layer of internal centres and peripheries to the dilemmas of economics and inclusion. For the Greenlandic filmmakers involved, this fatigue often results in 'unplanned multifunctionalism', as the foreign filmmakers want to use the few Greenlandic film workers as much as possible – not least in relation to local knowledge, language, and cultural understanding – across the productions.

While these characteristics reflect consequences of size, there are several factors that cannot be explained solely by ultrasmall conditions, but rather as expressions of the particularities that characterise Greenland as a nation, culture, and geography. These demographic conditions, high costs, and the affective entanglements with Denmark marking all stages of the production circumstances highly influence the dynamics of collaboration. These factors thus affect both the industry as such, transnational collaborations, and the location choices, where the arguments against on-location seem to outweigh the arguments for. As history shows, the choice of Greenland and the Greenlandic locations is most often the choice of the spectacular, where the landscape plays a significant role across genres and formats. Based on these experiences about the importance of landscapes – and not least their emotional layers – I therefore propose to expand the five characteristics with a sixth pointing to a dependence of a 'unique selling point'. In the case of Greenland, this selling point is the locations.

## **Location as a unique selling point**

Recognising that location has always been of paramount importance to many nations, it is evident that whether it is Hollywood representing the allure of California or Eastern Europe acting as a hub for runaway productions, there are multifaceted reasons behind such choices. In the Czech Republic, the choice of location often revolves around natural economic features, such as lower wages (Szczepanik 2016). Similarly, the rise of Iceland as a destination for runaway production can be linked to economic downturns (Norðfjörð 2015), while both

countries have also later implemented comprehensive tax incentives to further boost runaway production. These locations do not merely offer unique sceneries, but also an increasing amount of experienced film professionals and an infrastructure that amplifies the production value inherent to each location. In the context of Greenland, however, many layers that typically guide location choices are absent. Given the lack of educational opportunities, economic flexibility, and both film-specific and general infrastructure, the primary offering of Greenland in the global cinematic landscape is its unique locations, culture(s), and inherent narratives.

As Ravinder Kaur (2020) posits, this reliance on a singular trait is not unusual for postcolonial nations. However, in an ultrasmall context like Greenland's, it seems especially critical. Greenland might not offer an extensive cadre of experienced film professionals, low wages, tangible tax benefits, efficient infrastructure, affordable goods, or abundant resources. Rather, Greenland offers locations as its unique selling point, further enriched by the local colour rendered through Greenlandic culture and language. Thus, the sixth characteristic of the ultrasmall screen industry is that it:

6. relies on a unique selling point that compensates for ultrasmall factors.

The challenge then lies in arguing that Greenland's location is so distinct that it cannot be replicated elsewhere. With the terminology of Adrian McDonald (2007, 900), Greenland offers neither artificial nor natural economic incentives; its only attribute in this regard is to attract artistic runaways and hence to sell this uniqueness and emphasise the importance of local colour, authenticity, and participation, so that similar and cheaper locations are not chosen in, for example, Iceland.

For some international productions such as *Kalak*, the desire for authenticity and an alignment between setting and location is paramount, making the location choice quite natural but also putting pressure on producers in terms of financing and generally compensating for the challenges that this entails. Other productions, e.g. *Borgen: Power & Glory*, seems to find the use of actual locations crucial for similar reasons, likely due to the series' association with public service funding. Historically, when Greenland has been chosen as a filming location, it has typically been for films with vast budgets or those for which shooting elsewhere was an impossibility, as seen in French ethnographic feature films rooted in Greenlandic locales, like *Inuk* (Mike Magidson, 2012) or *The Journey to Greenland* (Sébastien

Betbeder, 2016). From a Danish perspective, contemporary examples of location doubling are rare. Instead, Greenland is chosen as location and occasionally – as in *Borgen: Power & Glory* – paired with Danish interior shots. This choice is undoubtedly influenced by postcolonial ties and the Danish audience's familiarity with Greenlandic landscapes, where a runaway production would be noticed and likely criticised.

As I will explore in subsequent sections, promoting one's unique selling point is not necessarily easy or straightforward. This often sparks internal tensions, oscillating between commercial interests and cultural values, branding Greenland and its locations versus nation-building and resisting the colonial narratives that might accompany engaging with global film culture on Western terms. In the Greenlandic-Danish context, this interplay manifests as what Sara Ahmed (2004) describes as 'emotional economies' with various strong emotions circulating between individuals. In this regard, location is not just a static entity to be utilised, but a deeply emotional space influenced by historical and political contexts. As I will discuss, this proves to be both a strength – bolstering arguments for location choices – and a challenge, as postcolonial tensions influence the transnational, hybrid Greenlandic spaces with emotions and roles from both Greenlanders, Danes, and beyond.

## **Greenland off screen: (scan)guilt, gatekeeping, and hypermediatisation**

In the following, I will expand on my points from the case studies on (scan)guilt and emotions, Greenlandic gatekeeping, and the role of mediatisation, and compare them internally and in relation to the Greenlandic screen history. Focusing on transnational as well as local productions anchored in Greenlandic locations, the dissertation thus offers insights from both outsider, insider, and community perspectives showcasing additional (emotional) challenges that lie alongside geographical, demographic, political, economic, or environmental issues.

The predominantly Danish cases of BPG and *Kalakk* embed an undertone of postcolonial guilt resulting in the necessity of including Greenlandic perspectives and critically reflect on history and contemporary relations. This can be seen as part of a broader confrontation with Denmark's own role and self-image as a 'soft coloniser' which manifests itself on several levels in Danish culture and politics. The result of this is a fundamental uncertainty in the approach of Danish filmmakers, where narrative, location selection, and production

composition are carefully considered and communicated clearly – or rather defended – to avoid the pitfalls of signalling cultural imperialism and the continuation of historical discourses of misrepresentation or stereotyping.

For these reasons, there seems to be some degree of scanguilt in the production process, operating on multiple levels and slightly different from the original meaning to describe the complex emotional landscape of Scandinavia. To recall Elisbeth Oxfeldt (2016; 2018), scanguilt refers to the Scandinavian experienced happiness due to privilege and prosperity, but it also manifests itself as a ‘privileged discomfort’ in – or as a result of – global inequality. This inner conflict arises when Scandinavians are confronted with global inequalities, colonialism, climate change, and similar issues reflecting how Scandinavia sees itself globally and relates to its history, such as Denmark's colonial past, and the challenges of today. However, the concept can also point to a superficial self-reflection, where recognising problems does not lead to real change, but rather to suppression to maintain a positive (national) self-image.

In *Kalak* and *Borgen: Power and Glory*, these emotions seem to be present, as a high degree of uncertainty characterises the entire process from development to distribution. In these instances, it is important for the Danish filmmakers to explain their justification for initiating the project in the first place; arguments that are often centred around the narrative being rooted in Danish perspectives and characters, so they are not 'telling other people's stories'. At the same time, it has been central to the productions to appear inclusive, building on milieu-building transnationalism with the involvement of Greenlandic film professionals in as many functions as possible and especially in connection with on-location work, just as the process of location selection itself has been a central part of the legitimisation.

Danish screen production in Greenland thus reflects issues stemming from a complicated colonial past. This is reflected in different aspects of the film production process. When the concept of scanguilt is applied, a picture emerges of a production that navigates with an awareness of these historical power relations although this awareness is challenged by the ultrasmall size and the development of the Greenlandic screen industry, which makes it difficult to determine whether the productions are examples of participation or tokenism. At the same time, the inclusion of Greenlandic filmmakers in the production shows a realisation that a one-sided Danish narrative is insufficient, and that a more nuanced and inclusive approach is needed. Scanguilt, in this context, becomes more than just a concept; it is a



practical reality that filmmakers must deal with when deciding to produce in and about Greenland.

In an article on Danish ethnographic documentarism, Mette Hjort (2018) introduces the concept of *guilt-based filmmaking*, where guilt is included as a definite motivation for filmmaking, and guilt is clearly articulated in – in the case of the article – the documentary film itself. Although it is not ethnographic documentary filmmaking, *Kalak* in particular is characterised by these issues, as are questions of guilt in Danish filmmaking in general – for example, around several new feature films about Danish colonialism. In a similar vein, questions of guilt affect media responses, where the media often focus on these issues, which was particularly evident already in the reception of the news about the production of *Kalak*. Rather than guilt-based, it can instead be described as *guilt-inflicted* filmmaking, where emotions of guilt are part of a complex emotional system that are evident at all levels that have been self-selected by the foreign (here Danish) production. In this way, the emotions appear as self-inflicted; the historical background and current power relations constantly influence the decision-making process and how filmmakers choose to present their stories. These emotions become a reality that ties directly to location; a factor which affects productions to the same – or greater degree – than other realities such as weather and policies.

From the Greenlandic filmmaker's perspective, the power of emotions is also evident in 'the burden of gatekeepers', which is experienced by several Greenlandic filmmakers as discussed in Chapter 7. As with scanguilt, this manifests itself in a series of arguments that legitimise the involvement in foreign production as something more than just economy, whether it is correcting misrepresentations, addressing stereotypes, or bringing prosperity to the community or nation. As explained by Nivi Pedersen (2021, PI, MT), "we have a completely different responsibility to our own population". Emile Hertling Péronard (2021, PI, MT) describes how these feelings are also clearly involved in international collaborations: "We're always going to have some sort of gatekeeper role, which is quite stressful. Because there will always be pressure to relate to different stories and vouch for them". Greenlandic filmmakers' unique position as representatives of their culture in a global film industry thus puts them in a special gatekeeper role that comes with possibilities as well as challenges.

On the one hand, this position allows Greenlandic filmmakers to correct misrepresentations and confront stereotypical perceptions that the wider public may have about Greenland. This commitment goes beyond just financial gain or personal recognition;

it is about correcting the damage that misrepresentation can cause and presenting Greenland in a way that reflects the realities of Greenlandic culture or contemporary Greenland. But on the other hand, this role also brings with it a burden; Greenlandic filmmakers can feel like they are always under a spotlight, especially when collaborating with international partners. Their decisions about which stories to tell and how to tell them can be seen as representative of all of Greenland, creating a pressure for the filmmaker to assess how a given story might be perceived both internally in Greenland *and* abroad. This pressure can be overwhelming, especially when you consider the cultural, historical, and political nuances that need to be considered. Furthermore, this gatekeeper role can affect how Greenlandic filmmakers are perceived by international colleagues; They may be seen as ‘watchdogs’ or ‘vouchers’ rather than creative partners, which can affect the dynamics of international collaborations and risk tokenism.

This leads directly to the third aspect linked to the hypermediatisation of place as an important factor in the two issues mentioned above. As Susanne Eichner and Anne Marit Waade (2015, 6) explain, hypermediatisation is different from mediatisation in being “a far more complex process comprising how people act, behave, perform and navigate in places because of spatial mediatisation” and is often associated with tourism. I argue that a similar hyper-mediatisation has occurred in Greenland, making the use of Greenlandic locations a complex process that goes beyond geography, local film policy, and climatic conditions. A century of misrepresentations and 'hit and run' productions have created a particular image of Greenland that continues to shape not only the perception of Greenland, but also Greenlanders themselves. Locations therefore carry not only their physical and cultural characteristics but also a legacy of media representations. The Greenlandic communities live in the effects of these portrayals causing new film projects to be met with scepticism and reservations as this history of representation is deeply embedded in the consciousness of many people. Filmmakers therefore face challenges in gaining access and trust, and productions of today – such as *Borgen: Power & Glory* and *Kalak* – write themselves directly into this. This has led to the dynamic where Greenlandic filmmakers act as gatekeepers to counter these images, while Danish filmmakers are showing an increasing awareness of this legacy that guides their production decisions.

Over time, there have been changes in how Greenland is portrayed on screen. It is a complicated development, caught in emotions, power relations, and an ultrasmall context affecting all levels of production. While screen production in Greenland is in many ways a

hybrid space characterised by many forms of transnationalism, the dichotomies are often sharply drawn into a 'them' and 'us'; who has a voice, who should have a voice, and who speaks?

As mentioned, these issues appear as basic conditions in choosing and working on location making it an essential element in the study of exactly location. In this regard, the mediatisation of the place historically – or place as political and colonial history – is an essential factor in line with the other elements that location studies forefronts. It is thus important to dive deep into these 'histories of place' since it is not just about choosing and finding the right locations, but also about understanding the deeper context and history filmmakers are stepping into, leading to a balancing act between past and present, economy and emotions, and commercialisation and culture. More concretely, this suggests implementing 'history of place' as a fifth factor among the off-screen factors presented by Kim Toft Hansen and Anne Marit Waade (2017, 57).

As discussed in Chapter 5, Indigenous feature film production interestingly seems relatively 'free' of these misrepresentations in the sense that it does not focus on colonial and political issues, but instead on *entertaining* a Greenlandic audience (through genre film) rather than *educating* an international one. Instead, Danish films such as *The Experiment* and *Kalak* directly discuss and convey colonial history with the aforementioned traces of scanguilt. The popularity of genre cinema in Greenland reflects a global trend in Arctic Indigenous filmmaking, but also a unique focus on a Greenlandic audience, where Greenlandic filmmakers strive to produce relatable, Greenlandic-language content, which appears to be an attempt to close an entertainment gap that was previously filled by foreign content.

However, as argued in Chapter 6, there is a notable dissatisfaction with prolonged misrepresentations in film. Producer Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg (2021, PI) highlights a weariness with negative stereotypes. Filmmaker Otto Rosing's frustrations with such stereotypes led to *Nuummioq*. In this sense, Greenlandic cinema is not just about entertainment; it is a political instrument, echoing Emile Hertling Péronard's (2021, PI) sentiment that films from minority communities inherently carry a political weight and are activist in nature. Thus, Greenlandic films can be seen as political even without overt political content; they emphasize empowerment and nation-building. As Skydsbjerg (2022, PI) notes regarding *Alanngut Kallinganni*, control over the film process does not need to be fully Greenlandic, acknowledging the hybrid and transnational nature of Greenlandic space. The shift is in the increasing local control and involvement.

This makes the Greenlandic landscape appear contested both on and off screen, which in the above particularly manifests itself in the relationship between the foreign and the local. At the same time, internal discussions point to the Greenlandic landscapes as contested *internally*. This contest manifests itself – as in Chapter 5's section on Film.gl – in personal and structural conflicts, but also more generally in discussions about the cultural and the economic, between indigenous production and production service. This speaks back to the quote from Chapter 1, where Péronard articulates the growing interest from foreign filmmakers:

From production companies and streamers and broadcasters wanting to come to Greenland to shoot [...]. And I think, in terms of the Greenlandic film industry, this is, on one hand, really great, because there is a lot of work for the Greenlandic film professionals. On the other hand, there is also a risk of being carried away by telling other people's stories. I think that is something, we really need to safeguard. That we also preserve the time to do our own film projects. [...] So it's quite a tricky balance.

(Péronard 2022)

In Greenlandic screen production, the tension between the commercial and the cultural is a prominent theme, reflecting the different intentions, values, and aspirations that drive filmmakers. On the commercial side, the approach is often market-driven, with a focus on creating films or making production service for foreign production companies that appeal to a global audience.

This is reflected, among other things, in Visit Greenland's increasing interest in the film medium as branding, as well as economic arguments from both politicians and filmmakers, which bring to mind Kaur's (2020) concept of a brand new nation and Greenland as an investment destination. The main goal here is financial return, which may involve collaborating with international partners, using Greenland as a backdrop, or attracting major production companies to film in Greenland as it has been a sub-goal of Film.gl from its conception. This can be used to brand Greenland, increase tourism, promote national interests, or change international perceptions of Greenland.

Culturally driven filmmaking seeks to present an 'authentic' (and often exclusively) Greenlandic voice and perspective, free from stereotypical portrayals as part of a nation-building process. This is a way for Greenland to take control of how the nation's stories are told and by whom. Through film, traditions, stories, and languages can be preserved and

passed on, which is vital in a time of globalisation where many Indigenous cultures are struggling to maintain their cultural identity. The conflict between the commercial and the cultural is not unique to Greenland, but it has a particular resonance in a context where national identity and self-determination are at the centre.

While commercial discourse can bring financial gains and international recognition, this also risks compromising cultural integrity. As a result, some Greenlandic filmmakers find themselves balancing between these two ends of the spectrum, trying to reconcile a desire to tell Greenlandic stories with the need for financial sustainability and broad appeal. In this context, commercial and cultural discourses may collide and create fundamental dilemmas for Greenlandic filmmakers and the industry. How this dilemma is navigated will undoubtedly shape the future of Greenlandic screen production.

## **Between ultrasmall neighbours**

In the area immediately surrounding Greenland, there are many communities and nations, including several that fall into the ultrasmall category despite different circumstances of dependency, history, demographics, and economy. For instance, the Faroe Islands, Nunavut, and Sápmi all have a rich cultural heritage, but also with unique challenges due to their geographical location and ultrasmall populations. These territories, although characterised by different histories, languages, and cultural expressions, share many of the same challenges and opportunities. By comparing Greenland with the Faroe Islands, Nunavut, and Sápmi, I want to uncover the specific conditions that affect screen production in each of these regions. How do they manage their small sizes and what opportunities and limitations arise from this? Through this comparison, I hope to shed light on the potentials and obstacles for screen production in ultrasmall communities and how these communities can thrive.

## The Faroe Islands: Shared histories and demographic advantages

Greenland and the Faroe Islands are often compared to each other due to their shared statuses as autonomous territories within the Kingdom of Denmark.<sup>42</sup> Often also as part of the (postcolonial) North Atlantic together with Iceland through their shared histories as Danish dependencies (Körber and Volquardsen 2014) and with coastal Norway (Thisted and Gremaud 2020a; 2020b). Within the developments around emancipation, the Faroe Islands were several decades ahead of Greenland as an amt since 1816 and a self-government arrangement since 1948, while it has never had official colonial status (Wåhlin 2011). In addition, the Faroe Islands has historically identified themselves – and have been seen – as part of a Germanic, North-European community, while Greenlanders were often perceived as Europe's 'primitive Others' (Thisted et al. 2021, 21). Nonetheless, the Faroe Islands and Greenland fall under the same postcolonial discourse, just as the Faroe Islands' distinctive (Nordic) language and population of around 53,000 is similar to that of Greenland, though concentrated in less than a 1500<sup>th</sup> of Greenland's territory as an archipelago of 1,396 square kilometres with strong infrastructure, tunnels, and thus connections between many cities and settlements.

This entanglement can also be seen in film history, where the earliest Faroese film history consists of footage shot by Nordisk Film, often in connection with royal visits (Føroya landsstýri n.d.). As argued by Bradley Harmon (2020, 137), filmmaking in the Faroes Islands is “inherently transnational” and is similar to Greenland's film history in several ways. Firstly, the first feature films are German with *Schatten über den Inseln* (*Shadows over the Island*, Otto Meyer, 1952) and *Barbara: Wild wie das Meer* (*Barbara: Wild as the Sea*, Frank Wisbar, 1961). Additionally, Erik Balling followed his 'North Atlantic' success with *Qivitoq with Tro, Håb og Trolddom* (*Faith, Hope, and Witchcraft*, 1960) which similarly mixes exterior shots – here from the Faroe Islands – with Danish interior shots in a narrative that also deals with mythologies, love intrigues, and not least spectacular Faroese landscapes.

Though Greenland has historically attracted more filmmakers than the Faroe Islands, both nations have been used in documentary and feature films focusing and everyday life,

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<sup>42</sup> As an example of this, I was asked to write a comparative chapter on Greenlandic and Faroese cinema to the anthology *Handbook of Nordic Cinema* edited by Gunnar Iversen and Mariah Larsson. I did so with the chapter "Ultrasmall Cinemas of the North Atlantic: Greenland and the Faroe Islands", which was submitted in June 2023, and has not yet returned from peer review (Grønlund 2024, forthcoming).

nature, and distinct cultures. In both cases, this led to early ethnographic and exploration films and often stereotypical portrayals which, over time, have been challenged by desires to control the narratives. While foreign influence still exists, both nations have established distinct film cultures, blurring the line between national and international cinema. In the Faroe Islands, feature film production started in the mid-1970s with *Rannvá* (1975), *Páll Fangí* (1975), and *Heystblómur* (*Autumn Flowers*, 1976) – all shot in the Faroes and with Faroese-speaking casts – by Spanish newcomer Miguel Marín Hidalgo arguably becoming the first examples “of a domestic construction of Faroese identity on screen” (Harmon 2020, 140). As in Greenland with the establishment of KNR, the same-year establishment of Faroese public service broadcaster Sjónvarp Føroya (now KVF) in 1984 also initiated domestic fiction production with e.g. Eir í Ólavstovu’s *Alfred* (1986). However, the status as the first Faroese director continues to be held by Katrin Ottarsdóttir educated from the National Film School of Denmark in the 1970’s and her breakthrough in 1989 with the comedy *Atlantic Rhapsody: 52 myndir úr Tórshavn* (*Atlantic Rhapsody*) and later the road movie *Bye Bye Blue Bird* (1999). According to Ottarsdóttir, her films tried to counter the:

romantic image of the Faroe Islands as the unspoilt country where development has stood still and where everyone lives in harmony with each other and nature. Instead, I wanted to show a modern country and that Faroe Islanders are like everyone else – for better or worse.  
(Ottarsdóttir in Jensen 2021, MT).

In this way, the beginning of Faroese cinema is similar to that of *Nuummioq* with an explicit desire to go against misrepresentations and present a ‘modern’ and diverse nation, thirty years earlier.

As presented by Eilen Anthoniussen (2017, 14), Faroese filmmaking took the next step around the 2005 establishment of the media workshop Klippfisk focusing on local training and providing an emerging generation of Faroese filmmakers with equipment. This was associated with the youth TV programme *Agurk*, where the films were aired. Since then, the Faroe Islands has seen emerging local filmmaking in great development with filmmakers such as Sakaris Stóra, Rannvá Káradóttir, Marianna Mørkøre, Johan Rimestad, Trygvi Danielsen, and Maria Winther Olsen, often addressing challenges in Faroese society, youth, gender, and the conservative and religious issues that characterise contemporary Faroe Islands. A key example of this is Stóra’s feature film *Dreymar við havið* (*Dreams by the Sea*, 2017)

with two Faroese girls dreaming themselves away from the capital Tórshavn and their life with religious and abusive parents. Furthermore, the film caught attention due to its production through an extensive use of Faroese talent in front of and behind the camera, causing the Faroese Film House leader to label it as:

the biggest event in the Faroese film industry in modern times [...]. It is the result of the great deal of hard work that has been put into establishing a film industry in the Faroes. That work is now starting to bear fruit. It is now proven that we are able to produce Faroese feature films of high quality, using Faroese talent.

(Jørgensen in Hanssen, 2017)

As the quote emphasises, there is also an important industry development focus in the period connected to the establishment of Klippfisk. This has not just been a focus on local Faroese production, but also on an international market. Structurally, the main events in this regard are the establishment of Filmshúsið, the Faroese Film Institute, in 2018 and the same-year introduction of a 25% reimbursement scheme for budgets up to €500,000, and in 2023 plans were announced for a 35% incentive for productions with larger budgets (Mitchell 2023). In this way, the Faroe Islands try to attract foreign productions, that fulfil formal requirements, including:

- 1) The production shall take place wholly or partly in the Faroe Islands
  - a) The production shall contribute to the development of artistic and technical knowledge and skills in the Faroese film sector
  - b) The production shall have a budget of approved costs amounting to least 500.000 DKK.
- 2) The production shall contribute to the dissemination of Faroese culture, history or nature.
- 3) At least 25% of the budget for the production in the Faroe Islands shall be funded from outside the Faroe Islands.

(Johannesen 2017, 1–2)

This unites cultural and financial desires in a country like Greenland, which is characterised by a lack of film infrastructure and formal education opportunities. These initiatives have led to the Viaplay Original series *Trom* in 2022; a European co-production with extensive Faroese involvement created and written by Torfinnur Jákupsson in the form of a Nordic noir crime



series rooted in the Faroese landscape through extensive use of e.g. super totals and drone shots. Furthermore, the opportunities of location doubling brought largescale Hollywood productions to the Faroe Islands, e.g. the James Bond-film *No Time to Die* (Cary Joji Fukunaga, 2021) with the island of Kalsøy as a prominent setting doubling a Japanese island. Since then, local tourism operators have actively capitalised on these productions, utilising place branding strategies to promote locations and potentially create screen tourism (Guide to Faroe Islands, n.d.).

Despite remarkably less focus on a global level and thus lesser foreign production historically, the Faroe Islands has created a fast-growing screen industry with political support, international interest, and continued local production. In the few reports in this area, the Faroe Islands therefore appear to be noticeably stronger than Greenland both in terms of policy support and economic activity (Nordic Council of Ministers 2018, 21). Overall, the Faroe Islands seem to be heavily inspired by the development and strategy in Iceland, where the film industry is on a massive rise as a runaway nation.

When reflecting on the development of the film industry in Greenland and the Faroe Islands, it becomes evident that both nations' historical and cultural connection with Denmark has influenced their respective screen cultures. This is also through the NORDDOK fund, which in the Faroes has resulted in e.g. the successful documentary *Skúl* (Cecilie Debell & Maria Tórgarð, 2021). Greenland's landscape attracts filmmakers, but the lack of a film infrastructure and formal educational opportunities have limited the growth of an indigenous film tradition. In contrast, through strategic initiatives such as Filmshúsið and Klippfisk, the Faroe Islands has built a stronger screen industry that both celebrates their cultural identity and attracts international attention, and the Faroe Islands' demographic and geographical advantages, earlier steps towards autonomy, and identification with Northern Europe have positioned them favourably within the global screen ecology. However, it would be a mistake to attribute the Faroe Islands' cinematic success solely to their historical advantages and privileges. Their strategic decision-making, investment in infrastructure building and policymaking indicate an awareness of the power of screen production to shape and propagate national identity and stimulate the economy. As this indicates, it is the combination of historical background, strategic planning, and available resources that ultimately determines an ultrasmall nation's cinematic success, not solely its demographic and population metrics.

## Nunavut: Heritage, genres, and pioneers

Due to colonial conditions and, not least, borders, Greenland has often looked towards Europe in its collaborations. Although there was already a big move in this direction with the establishment of the Inuit Circumpolar Council in 1977 (ICC n.d.), it is only quite recently that collaborations began in filmmaking. In recent years, there has been increasing cooperation with Greenland's closest neighbour, Nunavut, which became Canada's largest territory with the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* in 1999 with partial self-government over limited areas such as wildlife and resources. The collaboration between Greenland and Nunavut has resulted in several agreements, so-called Memorandum of Understandings (MOU), first in 2000 and most recently updated in 2022. In the press release following the 2022 update, it was emphasised how Greenland and Nunavut are deeply connected culturally, linguistically, and ethnically:

Nunavut and Greenland have a long history and a common Inuit Heritage, dating back thousands of years. This shared historical, cultural, social, and geographic relationship sets the foundation for joint work and cooperation between the two jurisdictions. [...] With this MOU, the Governments of Greenland and Nunavut recognize the interest and aspiration to bolster cooperation in a number of key areas including culture and arts; education, travel and tourism, marine infrastructure, fisheries, and green energy.

(Government of Nunavut 2022)

As such, the connection between the two territories appears natural and is rooted in the extensive ancestral ties that were (temporarily) cut with colonisation. At the same time, the almost two million square kilometres of territory and around 40,000 inhabitants create demographic conditions comparable to Greenland (Statistics Canada 2023).

As argued by Mark David Turner (2022), this has created what can be called Inuit Cinema, where the collective production of Inuit is seen as a unified production to counterbalance non-Indigenous dominance. In the development of Inuit Cinema, (what became) Nunavut has been a key territory due to the early establishment of the Isuma collective, based in the capital of Igloolik since the 1990s. Among the founders was celebrated director Zacharias Kunuk, whose debut film *Atanarjuat - The Fast Runner* (2001), was praised as the first feature film entirely in Inuktitut and for a community-based production method (Bredin 2015, 33). This 'Inuit' way of filmmaking intertwined with

hunting and participation which also had a commercial significance, as filmmaking contributed financially to a society affected by poverty and unemployment (Wachowich 2020, 109).

Unlike Greenland, filmmaking in Nunavut and by Inuit in Canada has generally been characterised by more attention from both researchers and the (Canadian) government. For example, AIFF has several Canadian partners and collaborators, such as Telefilm Canada and Canada Media Fund (AIFF n.d.), and Nunavut receives support through broader Canadian organisations such as the Indigenous Screen Office in Toronto. The most important organisation, however, is the Nunavut Film Development Corporation (NFDC) established “for fostering and promoting the development and growth of the film, television, and digital media industry in the territory” as a non-profit non-governmental organisation (Nunavut Film Development Corporation n.d.). As in Greenland, there is a double focus on local production to “support and develop a vibrant screen-based industry in Nunavut” and “to increase economic opportunities for Nunavummiut in the screen-based industry, and to promote Nunavut as a world-class circumpolar production location” (ibid.) with a management budget of approximately €250.000 and a funding budget of appr. €805.000 distributed through eight funds (Nunavut Film Development Corporation 2022, 3–6). In recent years, this has created a growing body of feature films such as *Tia and Piujuq* (Lucy Tulugarjuk, 2018) and *Slash/Back* (Nyla Innuksuk, 2022) which is part of the growing tradition of genre films in Inuit Cinema as presented in Chapter 5. In other words, the situation in Greenland and Nunavut is very similar, with slight differences, as Nunavut appears to have a more developed industry, exemplified by Nunavut stakeholders and companies sponsoring Greenlandic initiatives such as NIFF or co-producing the Greenland-led documentary *Twice Colonized* (Lin Alluna, 2023).

Overall, Greenland and Nunavut share an Inuit cultural heritage, but their film traditions have developed in different directions. Colonialism greatly affects both regions, but its influence has manifested itself differently in their respective film industries, primarily influenced by their relationship with their colonial/settler nations. Nunavut's film tradition, heavily influenced by directors like Kunuk, has been based on using film as a medium to delve into the region's colonial history in contrast to Greenland's focus on genre films. Kunuk's influence in this regard cannot be understated, as its early international success continues to influence filmmaking in Nunavut, and presumably

underpins the considerable amount of funding programmes available in a territory with fewer inhabitants than Greenland. Through the important work of Kunuk and Isuma TV, Nunavut has been able to benefit from Canada's broader support systems, while Greenland remains secluded due to the area of culture being solely an issue of the Greenlandic government and the subsequent exclusion from the Danish Film Law.

This underlines a critical point of comparison: Greenland's film industry, unlike Nunavut's, has not had a figure of Kunuk's calibre to pave the way internationally. Greenland has produced films aimed primarily at local audiences, and there is no international front figure with international recognition to facilitate greater (funding) opportunities for the region on the world stage. In ultrasmall communities like Greenland and Nunavut, individual actors like Kunuk can make waves far beyond their own personal contributions. They can shape entire industries, attract international attention, and pave the way for new talent. In this regard, Greenland faces the challenge of finding or nurturing such a figure who can take its film industry to the next level, both nationally and internationally.

## **Catching the Sámi wave**

In recent Greenlandic film history, Sápmi has become a significant entity, already mentioned several times throughout this dissertation. In what appears to be a short period of time, Sámi filmmakers have taken a centre position in Arctic and Indigenous filmmaking. This has happened despite Sápmi's complicated history and, not least, its continued status as a region spread across four (colonial) nations, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. As a result, the Sámi people live across four settler states, which, especially in the Nordic countries, are represented by representative bodies in the form of three Sámi parliaments, all joined together in the Sámi Parliamentary Council. Due to the fragmentation and a colonial history characterised by assimilation policies and identity dilution, it is difficult to determine the exact Indigenous population, which in all guesses remains within the ultra-small range of around 100,000 (Arctic Council n.d.; IWGIA n.d.). The fragmentation across settler states has also made Sámi film history complicated to uncover, as it has to be found across the four nations in particular, also in relation to a lack of structured registration, fluctuating definitions of what Sámi film is, and highly fragmented funding characterised by several nations' guidelines simultaneously (Mecsei 2018, 83–84).

Looking at the Sámi screen history, it shares similarities with the Greenlandic as dominated by an external gaze based on stereotypes and exoticisation, and with the representation of the Sámi with an emphasis on ‘Sámi mysticism’ (Kääpä 2015, 45). While the first Greenlandic fictional character was a young Inuk woman in *Das Eskimo-baby* played by non-Inuk Asta Nielsen in 1918, the first Sámi character was played by Non-Sámi, Norwegian Robert Sperati in the feature film *Unge hjerter* (*Young Hearts*, 1917). Similarly, the same foreign filmmakers have had an interest in both Greenland and Sápmi. George Schneevoigt preceded *Eskimo* (1930) with Sápmi-set *Laila* (1929) both with exterior shots that make extensive use of the spectacular landscapes.

As argued by Monica Mecsei (2018, 86–87), the first several decades were characterised by this stereotyping, exotifying, and external discourse until two productions marked first a turning point and later a breakthrough. Though the documentary *Same Jakkei* (Per Høst, 1957) marked an early change with increasing Sámi influence, Arvid Skauge’s TV series and feature film *Ante* (NRK 1975; 1975) marked the turning point by using close collaboration with Sámi consultants before and during production as well as Sámi actors and languages to portray Sami culture, ultimately spreading awareness of Sámi culture in Norway. The breakthrough came in 1987 with (first) Sámi director Nils Gaup’s feature film *Ofelas* (*Pathfinder*) emphasising the importance of Sámi culture. The film became a symbol of Sámi nationalism with national and international success, shot on-location in Sápmi. In many ways, this laid the foundation for Sámi filmmaking today, which is very much – both in fiction and documentary – characterised by political awareness, activism, and decolonisation practices (Iversen 2020; Kääpä 2015; Mecsei 2015; 2019; Sand 2022; 2023a). This focus on (de)colonisation, Sami identity, and political strife is also – unlike Greenland – very evident in feature film production, where films such as *Sameblod* (*Sami Blood*, Amanda Kernell, 2016) and *Ellos eatnu* (*Let the River Flow*, Ole Giæver, 2023) showcase the consequences of colonialism and systemic racism as historical films rooted in true-life colonial violations.

In other words, Sápmi is earlier with many productions compared to Greenland, where the early success of *Pathfinder* seems to have laid the groundwork for the ultrasmall, thriving screen industry that exists today. Along with this is a very politically engaged Sámi population, which, rooted in several specific cases, has had a growing political and critical voice since the 1970s, not least through documentary film (Sand 2022). This political agency is also present in film policies, where Sápmi has taken a – arguably the most – prominent position in pan-Indigenous co-operation in the Arctic as a pioneer in several areas, based on the

establishment of the Internašunála Sámi Filbmainstituhtta (International Sámi Film Institute, ISFI) in 2009. As argued by Stine Sand (2024, forthcoming),<sup>43</sup> ISFI is the reason why Sámi film is blooming and forming a ‘Sámi film wave’ with a dramatic increase since 2010. As Sand explains, the development of the Sámi screen industry in this period has been significant with several structural and strategic initiatives such as a Sámi film education together with the Sámi University of Applied Sciences, the first Indigenous streaming service Sapmifilm.com, several film festivals, and collaborations with Netflix and Disney in terms of both education and production. In addition, ISFI is the main actor in AIFF with offices in Kautokeino, Norway, and ISFI has also supported several Greenlandic productions, film development programmes and screens Greenlandic films on Samifilm.com.

In doing so, Sápmi has achieved what appears to be a sustainable screen industry with increasing local production, large international collaborations, growing budgets, and continued funding from various ‘host’ nations. Not least, ISFI maintains a collective focus on other ultrasmall and less developed screen industries such as Greenland and Nunavut. This seems to be a result of ISFI's core values of being proactive, collaborating, and networking locally and globally and what they term *borderless thinking*: “As Sámi people living in four countries borderless thinking is in our backbones” (ISFI n.d.). As mentioned in Chapter 5, this borderless thinking has also become frequent in Greenlandic screen industries, e.g. when producer Emile Hertling Péronard speaks of decolonial funding:

It's simply about dissolving the boundaries that colonisation has created. [...]. Decolonisation also lies in that mindset, that you have to think that it's possible, that it makes sense to break those colonial mindsets or structures. To recognise that there is a community that goes beyond these boundaries. And that it actually makes more sense than the borders themselves do. And the Sámi are a fantastic example of this, because they are a population that is spread across four different nations, and every time I talk to Liisa Holmberg from ISFI, she always talks about "so-called Sweden" and "so-called Norway", and that's really true. Because we were there before those borders were there.

(Péronard 2021, PI, MT)

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<sup>43</sup> This is based on Sand's draft “The Sámi Film Wave: Sápmi and Sámi Film Culture”, shared at the conference Nordmedia 2023, written as a chapter for the aforementioned anthology *Handbook of Nordic Cinema* edited by Gunnar Iversen and Mariah Larsson.

There is a clear inspiration from the Greenlandic side, which also collaborates with ISFI on festival participation, for example with AIFF at Cannes, where ISFI and the Indigenous Screen Office hosted meetings and events that included Péronard (AIFF 2023). As previously mentioned, it is also using the slogan 'nothing about us without us', which is used in the *Pathfinder* guidelines. In this lies an ethical argument in favour of collaboration that does not – as in the Faroe Islands – rely on tax rebates, but on what can be referred to as a 'soft argument'.<sup>44</sup> This argument instead relies on ethics and emotions – not least in the form of postcolonial emotions that bring to mind the concept of scanguilt. In the Greenlandic adaptation of this slogan, the same soft argument is used in a similar way, which is favourable for Greenland, as they cannot (yet) offer tax benefits, trained film professionals in all functions, or cheap labour. Instead, the argument in their favour lies in ethics and spectacular locations.

In other words, with hard work, targeted strategy, collaborations and funding, Sámi film has created a favourable situation for not only itself, but across the ultrasmall, Indigenous Arctic communities, reinforced by a growing global interest in the local, diversity, and new narratives. As Sand (2024, forthcoming) notes, Sámi filmmakers are aware of this and refer to the director of ISFI, Anna Lajla Utsi, who states in an article that: “It's our time now. All doors are open” (Utsi in Pedersen 2023, MT). Without undermining the hard work that Greenlandic filmmakers have put into creating a Greenlandic film culture long before the 'meeting' with the Sámi screen industry, the Greenlandic screen industry has already benefited greatly from the doors the Sámi have opened. In this way, Greenlandic filmmakers are catching the wave that the Sami filmmakers and the global focus have created. To paraphrase Utsi, 'more doors are open' for Greenlandic filmmakers who can position themselves (strategically) across different regional conditions, whether it be Indigenous, Arctic, Nordic, North Atlantic, or North American. Whereas in the Faroe Islands, as in Iceland, it is very much about production services, in Sápmi it is more about indigenous production, where they benefit from the interest and activity of major actors and the growing importance of involvement and diversity creating the increased focus on Indigenous peoples and diversity among companies such as Netflix and Disney. Sápmi shows that (cultural) indigenous production and (commercial) co-operation can be united and mutually beneficial at a time

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<sup>44</sup> For instance, Kim Toft Hansen and Jørgen Riber Christensen (2017) refer to 'soft' and 'hard' effects of regional screen production as either cultural (promoting cultural identity and language) or economic (creating jobs and new markets).

when ultrasmall, peripheral, and vulnerable screen industries seem to have historic opportunities to make an impact.

## **Ultrasmall cinemas: How they thrive and why they matter**

Shortly after the influential books that Mette Hjort wrote and (co)edited on small nation cinema (Hjort and MacKenzie 2003; Hjort 2005; 2007; Hjort and Petrie 2007), she published the short article "Small Cinemas: How They Thrive and Why They Matter" (Hjort 2011). Here, she summarised almost a decade of research on small-nation cinemas based on size and argued to have the ability to "say something fairly precise about the conditions that allow small cinemas to thrive" (Hjort 2011). According to Hjort, it is essential to navigate several key principles and conditions in order to do so:

a rejection of a winner-take-all ethos; a commitment to 'gift culture'; artistic leadership; widespread support for a philosophy of filmmaking that sees constraints as the basis for creativity; a commitment to partnering with likeminded practitioners in other national contexts for the purposes of making films and, just as importantly, if not more so, for the purposes of building capacity in various film-related areas.

Before doing so, Hjort (2011) raised a question that goes unanswered: "An interesting question to consider in relation to film is whether there is a minimal threshold with regard to population, for example, that must be met for small-nation cinema even to make sense as a project". This dissertation is, among other things, an attempt to answer this question based on what was originally termed the ultrasmall with the five aforementioned characteristics associated with the ultrasmall size (and the suggestion of the sixth).

Considering the Greenlandic screen industry and the comparison with neighbouring industries, I argue that Hjort's conditions for thriving are in many ways in line with the developments that have taken place in all mentioned ultrasmall communities, but also differs in several ways. Due to size, in addition to challenges with capacity, funding, and dependency, there is a distinct significance of indigeneity and location. Indigeneity in this regard is not necessarily to be recognised as an Indigenous peoples, as in Nunavut, Sápmi, or Greenland. As the Faroe Islands exemplify, ultrasmall societies and nations are often characterised by factors such as historical vulnerability and oppression linked to e.g. vulnerable languages or dialects as well as cultural distinctiveness. As previously described



in point six, the vulnerability also reflects the need for a 'unique selling point' where the spectacular or cultural landscapes can be commercialised or controlled according to foreign interest. As exemplified here, the balance between indigenous production and production service, nation-building and commercialisation varies greatly between ultrasmall nations, reflecting a multitude of factors, opportunities, and conditions between them. In this regard, it is crucial how the ultrasmall nations are linked to small or large nations, which in many ways resemble the opportunities and challenges that can be experienced in regional screen production within nations. This also applies to place as destination, where place branding plays a significant role and is a way to gain both economic opportunities and (cultural) representation that can ultimately lead to more influence globally.

In short, Hjort's points can be applied to ultrasmall screen industries that seem similarly dependent on collaboration (locally and globally), gift culture, strong leadership, opportunities within constraints, and extensive capacity building. Sápmi and Nunavut in particular seem to have come a long way within their respective challenges, since a high level of global interest – in Sápmi in general and Kunuk specifically – has given rise to screen industries that are thriving against many odds and challenging conditions demographically, politically, and historically. In Greenland, there seem to be issues around coming together as one industry, with internal conflict being a particular challenge, along with a low level of political support, pointing back to the repatriation of the cultural sector with Home Rule in 1979. In addition, Greenland lacks a historical breakthrough production or filmmaker to pave the way internationally. Within national frameworks, Greenland is relatively secluded, and the reliance on (productive) partnerships and foreign interest therefore seems particularly important.

At the same time, it is evident that the ultrasmall contexts require a special focus on historical and cultural factors; It is not just about promoting local screen industries, but about protecting and preserving their distinctive cultural voices from being overshadowed or distorted by small and large ones. The ultrasmall contexts are often threatened by globalisation, whether it is cultural identity more generally or purely linguistic, where entire languages or dialects are under threat and can be revitalised through the medium of film. As many ultrasmall nations also have one-sided economies (in Greenland, for example, heavily tied to fishing), the creative industries are increasingly gaining status as an opportunity for new income opportunities, in line with the global focus on the local.

Returning to 'gift culture' in this context becomes an essential movement where successful filmmakers from these areas actively choose to contribute back to their communities, thus strengthening the distinctiveness and sustainability of local filmmaking.

In addition, most ultrasmall nations and communities have a history of oppression, whether colonisation or control, that characterises them economically and administratively, but also emotionally. As with the Danish-Greenlandic relationship, this creates affective collaborations with strong emotions on both sides. Ultrasmall screen strategies are often bound by these transnational connections, where the industries need to seek support from different small or large nations or partner with other ultrasmall or Indigenous screen industries as the 'filmmaker fatigue' seems a general condition making collaboration, preferably productive partnerships, a necessity. Overall, screen production in ultrasmall contexts quickly becomes not only a question of art, but also of politics, identity, and power that characterises all levels of collaboration and underpins the soft argument of ethical filmmaking. Ultimately, it is important for the ultrasmall to remember that while their voice may be small, the power, and authenticity of the ultrasmall nations is something that cannot be replicated by larger, more dominant film industries. In this context, the ultrasmall finds its strength in (imagined) communities, region building, and genuine, productive collaborations to counteract exploitation, manipulation, and tokenism and promote community control.

# Chapter 10:

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have explored screen production in and about Greenland from a historical and contemporary perspective. The historical analysis described the major patterns of Greenlandic screen history focusing on both domestic and foreign productions as well as industry developments. These patterns and developments – both around Greenlandic agency, dominant discourses of representation, policymaking, institution-building, and collaborations – have provided the context and point of departure for the subsequent case studies.

During the earliest years of screen production in and about Greenland, some of the most dominant discourses were founded, particularly around expedition and ethnographic film, which continue to influence filmmaking today. This is also evident in the productions themselves and the branding of Greenland as a location; foreign on-location production is historically described as film *expeditions*, where the great hardships and ‘battles against the Arctic’ have been used as part of the marketing of the films and in various sources. Contrary to Emiel Marten’s (2018, 200) descriptions of Jamaica as luring business tourism based on what Susan Ward and Tom O’Regan (2009, 218) describe as “destination branding as a production location [...] closely tied to its pre-existing identity as a premier tourist destination”, Greenland is described and branded as an *expedition* destination. This is especially evident in contemporary descriptions from foreign filmmakers and in Film.gl’s location branding strategies, e.g., by promoting the ‘be a pioneer-spirit’ (Film.gl, n.d.), pointing back to a ‘pre-existing status as an expedition destination’.

This location branding is linked to Ravinder Kaur’s (2020, 13) brand new nation terminology, where a postcolonial nation “is imagined as a vast enclosure of production, its territory a reserve of untapped natural resources, its population potential producers/consumers of goods and services, and its cultural essence a unique nation brand that distinguishes it from other investment destinations”. Here, Greenlandic locations are presented as income-generating capacities as part of a larger Greenlandic desire for new business opportunities towards independence from the Danish state. Considering the recent discourse of pan-Indigenous collaboration and decolonial funding and production strategies, these discourses seem to counteract each other and emphasise inherent dilemmas between nation-building (indigenous filmmaking) and production service (attracting foreign production). It is also underpinned by a growing ‘Arctic location race’, where several Arctic nations and communities are trying to attract foreign runaway productions, with Greenland

emerging as one of the weakest in terms of supportive policies, (film) infrastructure, and industry experience.

The historical review also shows Greenland as an inherently transnational production site, where previously unexamined productions and collaborations have been uncovered through a wide range of sources. By virtue of this, the Greenlandic screen history should be revised and focus more on the major developments and cases that exist around an early first wave in the 1980s and 1990s instead of the general focus around the turn of the millennium with *Sinilluarit* (1999) or in 2009 with *Nuummioq*. This applies, among other things, to *Takorluukkat Sisamat* (1985), Nanoq Film/TV, *Nissebanden i Grønland* (DR, 1989) becoming a business venture, the Home Rule's support of *Heart of Light* (1998), and the historical use of Greenlandic locations, which has increasingly included Greenlandic personnel and stakeholders. The analysis has shown the historical use of Greenlandic locations by foreign film companies and the parallel development of an actual Greenlandic screen industry, which, however, has only seen a significant push with the second wave in the 2010s. With increasing Greenlandic agency, these two discourses are merging, bringing the new dilemmas of culture and commercialisation into focus for future filmmakers.

Similarly, the review has shown a growing political awareness since the 1980s with more discussion of the possibilities linked to screen production – including KNR, *Nissebanden i Grønland*, and *Heart of Light* – but only implemented as film-specific policies around 2006. As my review of Finance Bills and policy discussions showed, this support has been steadily increasing until the implementation of the Arts Fund in January 2022, where there will now be competition for funding between different art forms. The consequences of this remain unknown but are unlikely to make working as a Greenlandic filmmaker within a national framework any less vulnerable. Together with the exemption from the Danish Film Act – and thus the position in the ‘economic no-man's land’ – this documents a screen industry that currently has poor conditions and development opportunities within the national framework.

Greenlandic filmmakers are already looking beyond Greenlandic borders and towards productive collaborations, both within the historical Nordic sphere and the more recent – in production terms – in pan-Arctic and -Indigenous collaborations. With initiatives like AIFF and increasing co-funding from e.g. ISFI, there are opportunities in these collective production cultures across colonial borders, where several ultras-small production cultures merge. What impact this may have on the development of a distinct Greenlandic film culture

and language remains to be seen, but as long as the national framework is quite weak or uncertain, it seems – along with other Nordic or European collaborations – to be the way forward for more production and international attention, as *Ivalu*, *Kalak*, and *Borgen: Power & Glory* (BPG) demonstrate.

## The contested locations

As the case studies illustrate, the Greenlandic locations are approached and used in different ways and based not only on geographical conditions, but influenced by cultural, political, and historical conditions – not least in relation to misrepresentation. Moreover, the case studies illustrate quite different approaches to Greenland-set content, ranging from the local, Indigenous film production to the largescale TV series production showing the current interest from SVoD stakeholders in Arctic narratives.

*Alanngut Killinganni* (AK) exemplifies contemporary Indigenous filmmaking in Greenland, highlighting the challenges stemming from its production context. Its unique financing, reliant on government and local grants, indicates the financial strains and dependency on limited funds. Though a historical Danish distribution by TulluT, there has yet to be a truly internationally distributed Greenlandic success story. Instead, AK underscores the local demand for Greenlandic content, with Kleist's 'ultrasmall blockbusters' surpassing foreign films. This dependence on local showings, coupled with piracy and unofficial screenings, underscores an industry grappling with challenges, hinting at the need for regional collaborations. AK's production speaks to other issues like multifunctional roles due to small markets, and the industry's limited workforce leading to roles being filled by novices or foreign professionals. Yet, AK remains an example of narrative sovereignty and community filmmaking, allowing Greenlandic creators to tell their own tales, in control of the transnational crews. The film, partly funded by the municipality, was shot in and close to Nuuk, leveraging natural settings and existing infrastructure. This production framework aligns with the predominant trend in Greenlandic films that emphasise entertainment and genre films over colonial narratives. This strategy signifies empowerment, with a clear focus on the contemporary national audience rather than past oppressors or potential international audiences.

Instead, these critiques are formulated by predominantly Danish production such as *Kalak*. This case study provides a perspective on contemporary co-production in Greenland, highlighting the importance of location for aspects such as authenticity and legitimisation.

The narrative and the involvement of Greenlandic contributors underscore the legitimacy of the project, drawing attention to the intricacies of ultrasmall production settings. In such contexts, the extensive use of crossover roles is apparent, with the project often resorting to non-Greenlandic staff due to filmmaker fatigue, presenting dilemmas for foreign film crews with initial ambitions for community engagement and milieu-building.

On a practical note, producing *Kalak* posed logistical challenges, from weather unpredictability to infrastructure limitations, and the comprehensive co-production setup underlined the financial consequences of location. The on-location shooting furthermore emphasised the need for local knowledge and linguistic proficiency and the production showcased community concerns linked to a hypermediatisation of the Greenlandic places from a century of misrepresentation. This also happens visually, as the film approaches a socially critical and raw portrayal of Greenland, where abuse and addiction are linked to the main character Jan, and the Greenlandic landscapes support an escape towards the collective and Greenlandic culture.

Lastly, BPG demonstrates the growing allure of Greenlandic landscapes for SVoD platforms, as seen with *Thin Ice* and *Against the Ice*. Unlike these previous productions, BPG filmed exterior scenes on-location in Greenland, primarily in Ilulissat, presenting the challenges of managing a large international crew in a small local setting. The show underwent an intricate process of 'writing Greenland,' involving numerous Greenlandic experts, emphasising a mix of consultation and partnership in the CEL model. However, given the challenges of local production and ultrasmall conditions, the precise level of community engagement is difficult to pinpoint.

Similar to *Kalak*, BPG highlights the emotional intricacies of Danish-led productions in Greenland. On-location shooting required cultural insight, emphasising the importance of local collaborators. Again, argumentation and legitimisation are evident in every level of production, from the narrative itself to the use of Greenlandic personnel and locations. Thematically, BPG implements Greenland's changing landscapes, touching on expedition narratives, neocolonialism, decolonialism, and geopolitical implications rooted in an oil discovery. It positions Greenland at the forefront of global climate and geopolitical discussions. Concurrently, the Greenland-set narrative aligns with Netflix's push for diversity as well as new, universally relevant landscapes and narratives, further spotlighting the commercial appeal of Greenland for both streaming platforms and tourism.

As discussed in Chapter 9, the case studies thus reflect the characteristics of an ultrasmall screen industry. Though arguably in an early growth phase, challenges for the Greenlandic film and TV industry persist due to limited political attention, insufficient funding, slow processes, no film-specific education possibilities, and a lack of specialised personnel, heavily dependent and influenced by external factors, decisions, and competing interests. *Kalak* and BPG highlight the limitations of the small domestic market and the allure of Greenland's landscapes and culture for transnational filmmaking. Multifunctionalism is a major challenge, with few individuals occupying multiple roles due to economic constraints and a lack of experienced personnel. This filmmaker fatigue leads to heavy reliance on those few industry professionals. Despite these challenges, Greenland's unique landscapes and cultural history make the locations important and appealing for screen production which is by no means attractive in terms of naturally occurring or artificially created incentives such as cheap labour or tax rebates. Given this importance, a sixth characteristic is suggested: dependence on a 'unique selling point', which, for Greenland, is its unique locations, much in line with Kaur's arguments on investment branding.

Thus, a characteristic of ultrasmall screen industries is their reliance on a standout feature to make up for other shortcomings. For Greenland, the challenge is showcasing its location as irreplaceably unique and promoting 'soft' arguments about ethical filmmaking and the need for involvement. However, promoting such uniqueness is not without its challenges, often leading to tensions between commercial appeal and cultural preservation, especially given Greenland's postcolonial ties with Denmark. Sara Ahmed's (2004) concept of 'emotional economies' underscores the emotions intertwining individuals, suggesting locations are not just physical spaces but are emotionally charged, shaped by history and politics.

In Chapter 9, these complexities of Greenlandic screen production are discussed, emphasising the juxtaposition of scanguilt, gatekeeping, and hypermediatisation. Danish productions, such as BPG and *Kalak*, grapple with postcolonial (scan)guilt and emotions, reflecting Denmark's past and current relations with Greenland. This guilt manifests as a compulsion for Danish filmmakers to be inclusive and avoid perpetuating historical misrepresentations. From a Greenlandic perspective, filmmakers often find themselves playing the role of cultural gatekeepers; They are tasked with balancing the responsibility to their communities against the pressures of global filmmaking, often with a perceived role as validators. Greenlandic filmmakers are caught in a bind: correct misrepresentations, address



stereotypes and showcase Greenlandic narratives while navigating a history of foreign dominance. Lastly, hypermediatisation affects how Greenland is perceived and portrayed; Historical misrepresentations have affected the communities and filmmakers greatly, leading new projects to be approached with caution. Consequently, foreign filmmakers face challenges in trust and access.

Overall, Greenland's screen production mirrors a broader struggle between cultural preservation and commercial success. This balance between commercial appeal and cultural integrity shapes the industry's future. The challenge for Greenlandic filmmakers is to navigate these complex terrains, supporting indigenous production while achieving financial sustainability and international awareness through collaboration.

## **Navigating the possibilities of ultrasmallness**

One of the contributions of the dissertation is the conceptualisation of the ultrasmall framework, which I expanded on in Chapter 9. Globally, the world is full of ultrasmall nations and communities, and Greenland's closest neighbours are no exception. The Faroe Islands, Nunavut, and Sápmi face similar challenges and opportunities due to their geographical locations and ultrasmall populations and by comparing them, one can understand how each manages their ultrasmall size and the inherent opportunities and limitations.

Firstly, the Faroe Islands has advanced their screen industry by positioning themselves favourably within the global screen ecology between the local and the global, e.g. by attracting significant international film productions and establishing a film institute. Secondly, Nunavut has seen a growing industry based on successful and influential filmmakers like Zacharias Kunuk and possibilities from Canada's broader support system, which Greenland lacks due to the culture clause. Thirdly, Sápmi's strategy, collaborations, and funding have opened doors not only for its own screen industry but for other ultrasmall, Indigenous Arctic communities, also partly based on broader regional funding opportunities. Greenland can leverage these opportunities opened by the Sámi, positioning itself across various regional spheres – from the Indigenous to the Nordic. Sápmi serves as an example of how indigenous production and collaboration can unite for mutual benefits between ultrasmall contexts. In other words, while the sheer number of disadvantages of ultrasmallness is overwhelming, the opportunities depend on basic structures formed by the relationship with larger nations

(often former colonisers or occupying states) and key events that, precisely because of the vulnerability of the industry, can have huge implications.

Overall, ultrasmall screen industries resonate with Mette Hjort's (2010) principles, emphasising collaboration, gift culture, leadership, and capacity-building. However, the ultrasmall lens is required for ultrasmall contexts, focusing on the particularities and significance of e.g. indigeneity and location tied to history and culture. Also, given their often monolithic economies, diversifying into creative industries becomes crucial, just as the often colonial histories and continued dependencies create affective entanglements and emotionally charged relationships. The need for collaboration is then often laden with politics, identity, and power play, and the pan-ultrasmall collaboration therefore appears more appealing. Here, the strength lies in community building, regional collaboration, and resisting exploitative forces, ensuring their distinct voices do not drown in the global screen production cacophony.

## **Moving forward**

Studying Greenlandic screen production through contemporary case studies, this dissertation does not reflect an ending. On the contrary, this investigation ends at a point in time where the Greenlandic industry is in the midst of new developments, both in relation to the specific cases and the industry as a whole. Whether it is *Kalak*'s redent premiere at San Sebastián Film Festival, AK's nomination for the 2023 Nordic Council Film Prize, the last-year implementation of the Arts Fund, or several ongoing productions, indigenous as well as foreign, the future of screen production in and about Greenland remains exceedingly interesting to follow. Although I have shown that Greenland's screen history is more extensive and complex than previously described, it was less than twenty years ago that the Greenlandic film industry was at a low point before the premiere of *Nuummioq* in 2009 triggered the second wave and a growth phase with institution building and the founding of Film.gl. Last year Greenland received its first Academy Award nomination with *Ivalu*, this year its first Nordic Council Film Prize nomination, and new collaborations are emerging, especially around funding. In other words, there should be a continued focus on Greenland as a production site and industry – and this dissertation offers a solid basis for this work.

Theoretically, my conceptualisation of the CEL model and not least the ultrasmall framework can hopefully form the basis for future research through a set of basic

understandings that can be applied to other ultrasmall screen industries and provide a better understanding of these contexts, as the small nation cinema framework has done for small production contexts.

Furthermore, the dissertation has demonstrated additional aspects and issues around on-location filmmaking, which, among other things, points to the necessity of community engagement and the importance of emotions and place histories that should be considered when planning for production companies in the future, just as climate, weather, lack of infrastructure, and general uncertainty require a flexible approach. Similarly, the emotional and mediatised place points to a possible expansion of the location studies framework that considers the inherent history of places as a factor influencing all stages of production.

As an explorative process engaging in a field with limited existing knowledge, there have been several aspects along the way that I have not had the opportunity to investigate within the time and resource framework offered by a three-year PhD project. Based on this, it would be fruitful to explore the many additional aspects, for example to focus on Greenlandic policymaking and tourism operators, or to investigate Indigenous Greenlandic filmmaking in more depth, both contemporary and historical. In addition, it would be interesting to focus on contexts other than the primarily Greenlandic and Danish ones to see the production networks that are not characterised by the same affective entanglements. With the latest developments regarding climate impact requirements for film productions, it also seems pertinent to follow how this will affect future screen production in Greenland.

In other words, this dissertation leaves screen production in and about Greenland in a time of transition, where discourses around diversity and marginalised voices are part of increasing competition, but also increasing collaboration. The future is uncertain with continued vulnerability, and the ultrasmall conditions create more challenges than opportunities. But as other ultrasmall contexts show, it is about positioning oneself strategically and staying together as a film community within and beyond Greenlandic frames.

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# Appendix 1: Introducing Greenland – Facts and history

In the following, I present an overview of Greenlandic facts and history that are central to understanding the development of screen production in and about Greenland. In this way, this appendix is aimed at those less familiar with Greenlandic conditions. The overview is based on several sources, not least Statistics Greenland (2023) and overviews by Nordic Co-operation (n.d.). The historical overview is based on various overview sources (Gulløv 2017; Sørensen 2020), while additional sources are referenced throughout.

## Facts (contemporary Greenland)

### Geography

**Total Area:** 2,166,086 km<sup>2</sup>

**Ice-covered Area:** 1,755,637 km<sup>2</sup> (comprising about 80% of the total area)

**Coastline:** 44,087 km

**Land border:** None

### Population and demographics

**Population (2023):** 56,609 (a density of 0.0261 inhabitants per square kilometre). In addition, 16,801 Greenland-born live in Denmark (2022).

**Capital City Population (Nuuk) (2023):** 19,604

**Largest cities:** Nuuk, Sisimiut, Ilulissat, Qaqortoq, Aasiaat.

**Ethnic groups:** The vast majority is Greenlandic Inuit (recognised Indigenous people), with ethnic Danes as the second largest population group. In recent years, Greenland has become increasingly diverse with the largest immigrant groups being Philippians, Thais, and Icelanders. Today, 3.5% of the population are foreign nationals (from outside the Kingdom of Denmark).

**Language:** Greenland's sole official language is *Kalaallisut* (West-Greenland), though Danish remains widely used with most news media and public material available in both languages. Greenlandic is the most used language and most Greenlanders are bilingual, with a small number speaking only Danish. **Dialects:** Greenlandic has three main dialects; Kalaallisut

(West-Greenlandic), Tunumiisut (East-Greenlandic), and Inuktun (Polar Inuit) (Kristensen 2019, 110).

## **Politics**

**Self-Government:** Attained a high degree of self-governing authority with Home Rule in 1979, most recently expanded in 2009 with Self-Government, though it does not include areas such as defence.

**Kingdom of Denmark:** Greenland is part of the Kingdom of Denmark along with the Faroe Islands. This is often referred to as *Rigsfællesskabet* ('the community of the realm'), although there is a strong desire for independence from Denmark.

**EU Membership:** Member (through Denmark) from 1973 to 1985, when Greenland left the EU. However, maintains special relations through a unique fisheries agreement and its status as one of the overseas countries and territories associated with the EU.

**Government:** Parliament (Inatsisartut) with 31 seats. Government (Nallakkersuisut) as a representative democracy through a multi-party system. Currently, 10 ministers (Naalakkersuisoq) are covering 11 departments (Naalakkersuisoqarfiit). Greenland holds two seats in the Danish parliament.

**Head of Government (as of April 2021):** Múte Bourup Egede (Inuit Ataqatigiit)

**Municipalities:** Greenland is divided into the five municipalities; Avannaata, Kujalleq, Qeqertalik, and Sermersooq, the latter being the largest in terms of population. In addition, the Northeast Greenland National Park is currently unincorporated, while the Pituffik Space Base (formerly Thule Air Base) is administered by the US.

**NATO Membership:** Since 1949, through Danish membership.

**ICC membership:** Inuit Circumpolar Council was established in Nuuk in 1980. ICC has the status as a permanent participant in the Arctic Council.

## **Economy**

Greenland's economy is led by a few major industries. About a third of company revenue comes from fisheries and related trades. Most of Greenland's top companies are public enterprises, including Royal Greenland A/S (fishing), KNI A/S (retail and oil), Royal Arctic Line A/S (shipping), Air Greenland (aviation), and Tusass (telecom), all owned by the Self-Government. The biggest economic activity is fishing, while an increasing income from tourism and mining activities. Around 40% of Greenland's revenue comes from the block

grant from Denmark of around DKK 3.8 billion (€510,000,000) and tasks carried out by the Danish state of around DKK 1.2 billion (€161,000,000).

**Currency:** Danish kroner (DKK)

**Tourism and infrastructure:** Tourists arrive in Greenland via international flights to cities like Ilulissat, Kangerlussuaq, and Nuuk, or by cruise ships. Domestic travel involves flights and sailing, as no settlements or cities are connected by road. Accommodations vary from hotels to B&Bs. The Disko Bay (including Ilulissat) is the primary cruise and hotel hub. Kangerlussuaq and Narsarsuaq, originally American WWII military airports, are now key hubs for stopovers and outdoor tourism due to stable weather. Kulusuk in East-Greenland has day-visits from Iceland. Few tourists cross the Ice Cap, which needs a government permit. Outdoor tourism is most active in summer, while cruises are popular from spring to fall.

## History

Before the present-day Greenlandic Inuit (the Thule people) immigrated in app. 1000, Greenland had several waves of immigration since around 2500 CE.

### **The Norse and the Inuit (982-circa 1400)**

**982:** Norse emigrants, led by Erik the Red, establish settlements in Greenland.

**1000:** The current Inuit migration begins, spreading along the coastlines.

**1261:** Greenland becomes a tributary land under the Norwegian king.

**1400:** The Norse settlements cease to exist; the connection between Greenland and the Danish-Norwegian crown is lost for a time.

### **Mission and Trade (1721-1848)**

**1721:** Connection is re-established by the Norwegian missionary Hans Egede with the support of the Danish king, Frederick IV.

**1776:** The Royal Greenland Trading Department (Den Kongelige Grølandske Handel) takes over the trade monopoly, a role they retained until 1950.

**1814:** The Treaty of Kiel leaves Greenland as a part of Denmark.

### **Greenland and Denmark (1849-1945)**

**1849:** Greenlanders are not granted the right to vote in the Danish Rigsdag.

**1901-1912:** A reform period in Greenland, with new legislative initiatives and the establishment of a deanery in 1905.

**1908:** The establishment of two provincial councils to assist with local administration. These were merged in 1951.

**1917:** The USA recognises Danish sovereignty over all of Greenland in connection with the sale of the Danish West Indies.

**1931-1933:** Conflict and litigation with Norway over territories in East Greenland, where Denmark has its sovereignty confirmed.

**1939-1945:** During WWII, Greenland lost contact with Denmark and established contact with the US, who supported Greenland with supplies. The 1941 Greenland Treaty allowed the U.S. to establish military bases. The war underscored Greenland's need to open to global relations.

### **“Modernisation”**

**1945:** Greenland sought greater political autonomy following the war, though not all their proposals were implemented.

**1948:** Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft gained support to end monopoly and isolation in Greenland, introducing private Danish initiatives under state control.

**1950's:** The Greenland Commission (Grønlandskommissionen) set key guidelines for Greenland's development. The primary objective was modernizing Greenlandic fisheries and expanding infrastructure.

**G50:** The G50 policy of 1950 sought to elevate Greenland's society to Danish standards. Main strategies included introducing private trading companies, promoting Danish business involvement, and centralising Greenland's population. While there were efforts to engage Greenlanders in the economic transformation, they largely became spectators in their own land's development. The rapid transition envisioned in the policy had severe societal impacts: a surge in population, accompanied by increased alcohol consumption, and a rise in crime rates. The aim for modernisation left many Greenlanders feeling sidelined and facing the negative societal repercussions of rapid, externally driven change.

**1953:** Under Denmark's Constitution, Greenland became an integral part of Denmark as an *amt* (county). This allowed for the election of two members from Greenland to the Danish Parliament.

**1960's:** In response to Greenland's push for a larger developmental role, a 1960 Greenland committee (Grønlandsudvalget) was established.

**G60:** The G60 policy continued the line of G50 focusing on centralisation and urbanisation. The result was the (forced) closure of several settlements and the (forced) relocation of its residents, often to newly built apartment complexes. Again, the consequences were significant.

**Mid-1960s:** While infrastructure and public services expanded, business development lagged. Rapid population growth challenged urban centres.

**Late 1960s:** Danish guest workers in Greenland increased, making up about 10% of the population. Greenland's Provincial Council aimed for a more significant role in local development.

### **Towards Home Rule**

**1958-1964:** The 'homeplace criterion' (hjemstavnskriterie), which reduced wages for employees identified as Greenlanders, was replaced by a 'birthplace criterion' (fødestedskriterie), sparking significant criticism among educated Greenlanders. This shifted the narrative towards a more independent status for Greenland.

**1972:** The referendum on the Common Market resulted in Greenland following Denmark into the UN, despite 70% voting against. This led the Provincial Council to aim for a self-governing arrangement like the Faroe Islands.

**1971:** A small group elected to the Provincial Council and the Danish Parliament became the political party Siumut ('Forward') in 1977, leading the push for more autonomy.

**1971-1975:** Autonomy was first discussed exclusively by Greenlanders, and then between Greenlandic and Danish representatives in the Home Rule Commission (Hjemmestyrekommission) from 1975-1979. This period saw the formation of the socialist party Inuit Ataqatigiit ('United Inuit/People') and the conservative liberal Atassut ('Solidarity') party.

**Late 1970s:** Ownership of Greenland's underground resources became a contentious issue. Greenland wanted national ownership, while Denmark, considering oil supply security, preferred state ownership. A solution of shared governance with veto rights for both parties was agreed upon.

**1979:** “The Act on Greenland's Home Rule” (Lov om Grønlands Hjemmestyre) was enacted, and Greenland obtained Home Rule. The self-governing body consists of the elected National Council and the first National Government.

**1985:** Greenland introduces its own flag, Erfalasorput, crafted by the artist Thue Christiansen.

**1989:** The place of birth criterion [fødselsstedskriteriet] of 1964 is abolished.

**1999:** A Danish-Greenlandic commission is established to prepare a draft framework for a future Greenlandic self-government.

### **Self-government**

**2009:** The Act on Greenland Self-Government was enacted on June 21, replacing the Home Rule Act of 1979. This was a significant step towards increased autonomy for Greenland. Under this act, Greenlanders were recognized as a separate people under international law.

**Language and Culture:** Kalaallisut was established as the sole official language, emphasising the importance of the Indigenous culture and identity. However, Danish continues to be widely spoken and is taught in schools.

**Economic Development:** While Greenland aimed for greater economic self-sufficiency, it remained economically dependent on the block grant from Denmark. Greenland has since sought to diversify its economy, notably by looking into potential mineral and oil exploitation.

**Natural Resources:** A significant aspect of the Self-Government Act was that Greenland achieved control over its natural resources. However, this came with the caveat that if Greenland's income from these resources reached a certain level, the annual grant from Denmark would decrease correspondingly.

**Foreign Relations:** Greenland was given a more explicit role in foreign policy issues, especially those that directly affect it. For instance, after the Self-Government Act was passed, Greenland began to take a more active role in Arctic affairs and international bodies dealing with Arctic issues.

**Debate on independence:** The topic of full independence from Denmark gained more traction. While many Greenlanders are in favour of eventual independence, concerns about economic dependence on Denmark, among other challenges, have made the transition complex.

**Education and Workforce:** Efforts have been made to improve the educational system and better prepare the Greenlandic workforce for a wide array of professions. This is part of a broader strategy to reduce dependence on Denmark in terms of skilled labour and expertise.

**2020s:** The conversation about Greenland's future continues, especially considering global interest in the Arctic region due to climate change and geopolitical concerns. The potential

for mining, especially rare earth minerals, became a focal point for Greenland's economic future and its relations with other countries, including China and the U.S.

**In recent years**, there have been several confrontations with Danish colonial history and new cases concerning Danish colonial history and its role as a former colonial power. In 2020, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen apologised to the 22 Greenlandic children who were sent to Denmark in 1951 based on a historical account of the fatal consequences (Statsministeriet 2020). In 2022, it was decided to conduct an independent investigation of the so-called 'IUD case' (Spiralsagen) – where Greenland women had IUDs inserted without consent – and the other contraceptive practices that were implemented for Greenlandic women in Greenland and for Greenlandic students in Denmark from 1960 to 1991 (SUM 2022). Furthermore, in June 2022, it was agreed that the historical relationship from 1945 and onward between Denmark and Greenland is to be uncovered (UFM 2023).

## Appendix 2: Registrant

This registrant based on my own data collection and existing registrants. Specifically, these are the comprehensive registrant on films about Greenland from earliest cinema until 1982 by Carl Nørrested with the help of a wide range of international archives, institutions, filmmakers, historians, and individuals (Nørrested 1982).<sup>45</sup> In addition, Werner Sperschneider's (1998) dissertation contains an registrant of more than 470 international productions from 1887 to 1997.<sup>46</sup> Since Erik Gant's dissertation from 2004 is based on other registrants and various databases, there is no in-depth academic registration of the subject of Greenlandic film since 1997. However, in parallel with this project, the database *The Greenland Registry*<sup>47</sup> is being developed as "one joint, online database with information about archival material and ethnographic objects pertaining to Greenland, all within the Danish Realm" (Arktisk Institut 2022, 1). However, I have assisted Kenneth Wehr in making a similar registrant on the German Wikipedia.<sup>48</sup> Wehr caught media attention in Greenland, when he had voluntarily created 800 German Wikipedia entries about Greenland (Turnowsky 2019b).

There are thus thematic and temporal gaps in the existing registrants, which among other things lack several productions that are about, but not filmed in, Greenland, and formats such as TV series. Therefore, I have supplemented the existing registrants with data from various online databases such as IMDb, Film Index International, DFI, and the AFI Catalog to cross-check existing knowledge while searching and supplementing with new productions. Given the place-centred approach of this dissertation, sites such as IMDb and the AFI Catalog's location- and plot-search functions have been very helpful in finding productions which have previously not been put in relation to Greenland such as feature films shot exclusively in studios in the US (e.g. *The Viking* (Roy William Neill, 1928) and *Man of Two Worlds* (J. Walter Ruben, 1934), or the British/New Zealand TV miniseries *Ice 2020* (2020). When possible, I have watched the productions and behind-the-scenes material.

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<sup>45</sup> The registrant has never been publicly published but is available on loan through the library of Aarhus University. It is therefore a rough edition with handwritten notes and comments never intended for publishing.

<sup>46</sup> While Nørrested has registered *every* Greenland-related inch of or mentioned film, Sperschneider has excluded a range of known films such as the large amount of military films and amateur footage with the exception of amateur footage made for public lectures that potentially influenced discourses more broadly (Sperschneider 1998, 69).

<sup>47</sup> Since the registry is constantly growing, I have regularly received film lists from the Danish Arctic Institute with an overview of the film collection. It is therefore momentary, and I received the latest list on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2022.

<sup>48</sup> [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste\\_gr%C3%B6nl%C3%A4ndischer\\_Filme](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_gr%C3%B6nl%C3%A4ndischer_Filme)



While I acknowledge the complex nature of fiction and non-fiction, their blurred boundaries, and not least the importance of the audience in the indexing process, my selection has been rooted in the intended and formal categorisation of productions. While *Palos Bruddefærd* (*Wedding of Palo*, Friedrich Dalsheim 1934) being regarded as fiction and *Hvor bjergene sejler* (*Where Mountains Float*, Bjarne Henning-Jensen, 1955) as documentary may seem arbitrary (and arguably is), I have followed the formal categorisations.

For these reasons, the registrant is based on the intention from the filmmakers; that is, the categorisation as evidenced by marketing, registrants, and circuits on, for example, festivals. Though there remains to be an intertwining of production modes in contemporary Greenland – for instance in the DR’s documentary series *Historien om Grønland og Danmark* (DR, 2022) that uses Greenlandic fiction directors and actors for dramatised historical events – the formal categorization has determined my registrant.

In the registrant, I have used a number of abbreviations:

- NA (nation)
- L in GL (Location in Greenland, e.g. cities).
- LT (Location Type)
  - Fo: Format. Either Feature film (F), TV series (S), Animation (A), or Episode (E)
  - Full: Fully doubled (e.g. shot in Iceland, but set in Greenland)
  - Part: Partly doubled, e.g. mixing Greenlandic and Icelandic shots. Here, *Borgen: Power & Glory* is counted as partly doubled due to interior scenes being shot in Denmark doubling the window views)
  - R: Reverse. Greenland doubles another setting, e.g. Antarctica (Ant) or the North Pole (NP)
- Set.: Setting – where the story takes place/what is doubled
- Arc.: Arctic. The Greenlandic locations are used to create an unspecified Arctic location or an Arctic fantasy landscape as in *The Last Airbender*.
- Air: Aerial shots only.

The registrant then gives an overview of long fiction formats shot in and about Greenland with additional insights in popular and shifting locations, national interests, and types of formats.

For an overview of early documentary and non-fiction formats, I refer to the mentioned registrants made by Nørrested, Sperschneider, and Wehr.

	Title	Year	NA	F o	L in GL	LT	Set.	Dir./Comp.
1	Das Eskimobaby	1918	DE	F	No	No	No	Walter Schmidthässler
2	Ramper, der Tiermensch	1927	DE	F	?	Full	GL	Mex Reichmann
3	Milak, der Grönlandjäger	1928	DE	F	?	Part	GL	Georg Asagaroff / Berhard Villingner
4	The Viking	1928	US	F	No	Full	GL	Roy William Neill
5	Eskimo	1930	DK/ NO	F	East	Part	GL	George Schnéevoigt
6	S.O.S. Eisberg	1933	DE/ US	F	Uummannaq	Part	GL	Arnold Fanck
7	S.O.S. Iceberg	1933	DE/ US	F	Uummannaq	Part	GL	Tay Garnetts
8	Palos Brudefærd	1934	DK	F	Tasiilaq	On	GL	Friedrich Dalsheim
9	Nordpol, Ahoi!	1934	DE	F	Uummannaq	Part	GL	Andrew Marton
10	Nordhavets Mænd	1939	DK	F	East	Part	GL	Lau Lauritzen Jr.
11	Heróis do Mar	1949	PT	F	Greenland Sea	Part	GL	Fernando Garcia
12	The Colgate Comedy Hour (S5E13)	1955	US	E	Thule Air Base	On	GL	NBC
13	Qivitoq	1956	DK	F	Saqqaq	Part	GL	Erik Balling
14	The Spirit of St. Louis	1957	US	F	?	Air	Arc	Billy Wilder
15	The Savage Innocents	1960	IT/F R/US	F	?	R	CA	Nicholas Ray
16	The Outer Limit (S1E8): The Human Factor	1963	US	E	No	Full	GL	ABC
17	Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb	1964	UK/ US	F	Thule Air Base	Air	GL	Stanley Kubrick
18	The Island at the Top of the World	1974	US	F	?	On	GL	Robert Stevenson
19	Servus Bayern	1977	DE	F	?	On	GL	Herbert Achternbusch
20	Firefox	1982	US	F	Thule Air Base	Air	Arc	Clint Eastwood
21	Cook & Peary: The Race to the Pole	1983	CA/ US	F	?	On	GL	Robert Day
22	Tukuma	1984	DK	F	Uummannaq	On	GL	Palle Kjørulff-Schmidt
23	Nissikut	1985	GL	S	Nuuk	On	GL	KNR
24	Takorluukkat Sisamat	1985	GL	F	Nuuk	On	GL	Albert Nuka (Hans A. Hansen)
25	The Last Place on Earth	1985	UK	S	Uummannaq	On	GL	Central Television
26	Santa Claus	1985	UK/ US	F	?	R	NP	
27	Ducktales (S1E61): Maid of the Myth	1987	US	E A	No	No	GL	Alan Zaslove

28	Nissebanden i Grønland	1989	DK	S	Uummann aq / Ikerasak	Part	GL	DR
29	Ævintýri á Norðurlóðum	1992	IS	F	?	On	GL	Marius Olsen / Katrín Ottarsdóttir / Kristín Pálsdóttir
30	Map of the Human Heart	1992	AU/ UK/ CA/F R	F	No	R	Arc	Vincent Ward
31	Atsa Rosap Jullimut piareersarnera	1994	GL	S	Nuuk	On	GL	KNR
32	Trolderikkip ullorsutai	1995	DK/ GL	S	Nuuk	On	GL	DR/KNR
33	Kjærlighetens kjøtere	1995	NO	F	No	Full	GL	Hans Petter Moland
34	Smilla's Sense of Snow	1997	DK/ DE/ SE/ GL	F	Ilulissat	On	GL	Bille August
35	Sub Down	1997	US	F	?	On	Arc	Gregg Champion
36	Lysets Hjerter	1998	DK	F	Ilulissat	On	GL	Jacob Grønlykke
37	Avannaarsuani Nissit	2000	GL	S	Nuuk	On	GL	KNR
38	Ikíngut	2000	IS/D K/N O	F	No	No	No	Gísli Snær Erlingsson
39	Drengen som ville gøre det umulige	2002	DK/ FR	F A	No	No	GL	Jannik Hastrup
40	Shackleton	2002	UK/ AU	S	Tasiilaq	R	Ant	Channel 4
41	Meqqat 24-rmiut	2005	GL	S	Nuuk	On	GL	KNR
42	Quando i Bambini Giocano in Cielo	2006	IT/IS /UK /DK	F	Tasiilaq	On	GL	Lorenzo Hendel
43	Eight Below	2006	US	F	?	R	Ant	Frank Marshall
44	Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer	2007	US	F	Ilulissat / Russel Glacier	On	GL	Tim Story
45	Tikeq, Qiterleq, Mikileraq, Eqeqqoq	2008	GL	F	Sisimiut	On	GL	Ujarneq Fleischer
46	Nuummioq	2009	GL	F	Nuuk	On	GL	Otto Rosing / Torben Bech
47	Hinnerik Sinnattunilu	2009	GL	F	Nuuk	On	GL	Angajo Lennert- Sandgreen
48	Beyond the Pole	2009	UK	F	?	R	NP	David L. Williams
49	Eksperimentet	2010	DK	F	Nuuk	On	GL	Louise Friedberg
50	Akiniaaneq Killeqaleraangat	2010	GL	F	Sisimiut	On	GL	Ujarneq Fleischer
51	Inuk	2010	FR	F	Uummann aq	On	GL	Mike Magidson
52	Borgen (S1E4)	2010	DK	E	Nuuk	Part	GL	DR
53	Qaqqat Alanngui	2011	GL	F	Nuuk	On	GL	Malik Kleist

54	Ice 2020	2011	UK/ NZ	F	No	Full	GL	Power/Screenti me
55	The Last Airbender	2010	US	F	Ilulissat	On	Arc	M. Night Shyamalan
56	Aqqalu	2011	DK/ GL	F	Nuuk	On	GL	Kristian Nygaard
57	Nissit Angakkuaatillu	2012	GL	S	Nuuk+	On	GL	KNR
58	Halley	2012	ME	F	?	On	GL	Sebastián Hoffman
59	Skytten	2013	DK	F	No	No	No	Anette K. Olesen
60	The Secret Life of Walter Mitty	2013	US/ UK	F	No	Full	GL	Ben Stiller
61	Unnuap Taarnerpaaffiani	2013	GL	F	Nuuk	On	GL	Malik Kleist
62	Idealisten	2015	DK	F	Thule Air Base	On	GL	Christina Rosendahl
63	Ikuala Zeeb	2015	GL	F	Sisimiut	On	GL	Ujarneq Fleischer
64	Le Voyage au Groenland	2016	FR	F	Kullorsuaq	On	GL	Sebastián Betbeder
65	Arvingerne (S3E2)	2017	DK	S	Nuuk	On	GL	Heidi Maria Faisst
66	Akornatsinniittut - Tarrata Nunaani	2017	GL	F	Ilulissat	On	GL	Marc Fussing Rosbach
67	Une Année Polaire	2018	FR	F	Tiilerilaaq	On	GL	Samuel Collardey
68	Anori	2018	GL	F	Nuuk	On	GL	Pipaluk Kreutzmann Jørgensen
69	Ukiutoqqami Pilluaritsi	2019	GL/ DK	F	Nuuk	On	GL	Otto Rosing
70	Where'd You Go, Bernadette	2019	US	F	?	R	Ant	Richard Linklater
71	MacGyver (S3E17): Seeds + Permafrost + Feather	2019	US	E	No	Full	GL	Alexandra La Roche
72	Nuuk	2019	PH	F	Nuuk	On	GL	Veronica Velasco
73	Checker Tobi und das Geheimnis unseres Planeten	2019	DE	F	?	On	Arc	Martin Tischner
74	Vikings (S6E14-15): Lost Souls & All at Sea	2020	CA	E	No	Full	GL	History
75	Greenland	2020	US	F	No	Full	GL	Ric Roman Waugh
76	Tunn is	2020	SE/I S	S	Tasiilaq	Part	GL	Cmore/TV4
77	Akornatsinniittut - Kiinappalik	2021	GL	F	Ilulissat	Full	GL	Marc Fussing Rosbach
78	Against the Ice	2022	IS/D K	F	Ilulissat	Part	GL	Peter Flinth
79	Borgen: Power & Glory	2022	DK	S	Ilulissat/N uuk	Part	GL	DR/Netflix
80	Alanngut Killinganni	2022	GL	F	Nuuk	On	GL	Malik Kleist
81	Kalak	2023	DK/ GL/ NO/ SE/ NE/ FI	F	Nuuk/Kul usuk	On	GL	Isabella Eklöf

## Appendix 3: Overview of data from Film.gl

The following is a list of documents received by the current chairman of Film.gl, Klaus Georg Hansen received during my fieldwork in Nuuk in September-October 2022. This is only a small selection of the documents which originally consisted of more than 700 pages part of which contains sensitive personal data that is not relevant or appropriate to refer to. These appendices are therefore only directly used in the dissertation even though all documents have been reviewed by the author.

I am in possession of all referenced documents, which may be sent (in a censored version, if necessary) upon request.

The documents are listed in the order they were used in the dissertation. They are referred to first by the number of the parent appendix and then the number of the document (e.g. (A3.1) is the first document). The full date is referred to when stated in the document, otherwise year. If the year is not stated in the document, a year is established based on the context of the mentioned events.

Nr	Document title	Date	Description
1	Referat af bestyrelsesmøde, d. 4. januar, 2018	4 Jan. 2018	Minutes of board meeting.
2	Referat 31.05.2017	31 May 2017	Minutes of board meeting.
3	Bestyrelsesmøde FILM.GL 11. august	11 Aug. 2015	Minutes of board meeting.
4	Referat af bestyrelses møde den 11 juni 2018 / film.gl referat den 13 august 2018	11 June 2018 / 13 Aug. 2018	Minutes of board meeting.
5	Bestyrelsesmøde FILM.GL 11. august	11 Aug. 2018	Minutes of board meeting.
6	Referat af bestyrelses møde film.gl 18 Januar 2019	18 Jan. 2019	Minutes of board meeting.
7	Formandens beretning: FILM.GL generalforsamling 31. maj 2015	31 May 2015	Chairman's report 2014-2015 in connection with the general assembly.
8	Formandens beretning Ordinær general forsamling 29 Juni 2018	29 June 2018	Chairman's report 2018 in connection with the general assembly.
9	Formands beretning film.gl 2018/2019	2019	Official chairman's report 2018-2019.
10	Formandsberetning for perioden fra april 2019 til maj 2020	24 May 2020	Official chairman's report April 2019 to May 2020.

11	Formandsberetning for perioden fra maj 2020 til maj 2021	18 May 2021	Official chairman's report May 2020 to May 2021.
12	Formandsberetning for perioden fra maj 2021 til maj 2022	1 May 2022	Official chairman's report May 2021 to May 2022.
13	FILM.GL – Aktiviteter 2017/18	2017	Activity plan for Film.gl 2017-2018
14	Aktivitetsplan for Film.gl for 2019	12 May 2019	Activity plan for Film.gl 2019
15	Aktivitetsplan for Film.gl for 2020 og 2021	30 May 2020	Activity plan for Film.gl 2020-2021
16	Forslag til aktivitetsplan for Film.gl for 2020 og 2021	24 May 2020	Activity plan for Film.gl 2020-2021
17	Aktivitetsplan for Film.gl for 2021 og 2022	25 May 2021	Activity plan for Film.gl 2021-2022
18	Aktivitetsplan for Film.gl for 2022 og 2023	7 May 2022	Activity plan for Film.gl 2022-2023
19	Nyhedsbrev film.gl	2018	Newsletter covering the period 2017-2018
20	Hermed NYHEDSBREV/Samt indkaldelse til Kaffemøde i Filmværkstedet	2019	Invitation to meeting and newsletter covering the period 2018-2019
21	Film.gl's vedtægter: Vedtægter for foreningen for filmbranchen i Grønland	2014	Film.gl statutes for 2014
22	FILM.GL's vedtægter 2016: Vedtægter for foreningen for filmbranchen i Grønland	2016	Film.gl statutes for 2016
23	FILM.GL's vedtægter 2018: Vedtægter for foreningen for filmbranchen i Grønland	2018	Film.gl statutes for 2018
24	Film companies in Greenland / Film professionals in Greenland	Feb 2020	Lists of film companies and film professionals in Greenland (Film.gl members).
25	<i>No title</i>	2015	List of 2015 members who have paid their membership fees.
26	<i>No title</i>	2017	list of 2017 members who have paid their membership fees.
27	Visioner for den grønlandske filmbranche	28 Sep 2015	Film.gl's visions for the Greenlandic film industry aimed for Greenlandic politicians.
28	Udkast til filmværksted	2016	Draft of the film workshop that became Filmiliortarfik, written by the working group.
29	Filmiliortarfik – Filmværkstedet	Nov 2017	A description of the business process of Filmiliortarfik. The description is the basis for the budget.

30	Nuuk International Film Festival 2017: Film program	2017	Film programme from the first NIFF.
31	Resultater fra 'Location Greenland': Nordisk konference om filmproduktion i Arktis	2015	Report with results from the first Location Greenland conference held 29-31 May 2015.
32	Location Greenland – Kangerlussuaq 23/09/2016	2016	Notes from Location Greenland 2.0.
33	Kalaallit filmilíaat filmilíortarmullu instituttissaq / Grønlandsk film og et kommende filminstitut	2018	Report written to argue for the establishment of a Greenland film institute. Along with the report itself, several documents are attached such as reports from Location Greenland and Location Greenland 2.0, a "Location Greenland 2.0 Attending Members Manifesto", newspaper articles about the conferences, a report of NIFF 2017, and the <i>North Atlantic Screen Talent</i> report. The foreword is written by then-chairman of Film.gl Pipaluk Kreutzmann Jørgensen.

## Appendix 4: Overview of data from and summery of *Alanngut Killinganni*

The following is the data used and references in connection with the case study of *Alanngut Killinganni*. The Facebook posts were last accessed on June 6<sup>th</sup> 2023, where they were saved as screenshots. I am in possession of all referenced documents, which may be sent (in a censored version, if necessary) upon request.

Nr	Title and [document type]	Date	Description
1	QAQQAT ALANNGUI 2: ALANNGUT KILLINGANI [script]	No date	The 8 <sup>th</sup> and final draft of the script to <i>Alanngut Killinganni</i> . The script is 119 pages and is written primarily in Greenlandic by Malik Kleist.
2	No title [Storyboard]	No date	The storyboard to <i>Alanngut Killinganni</i> made by graphic designer Malik Chemnitz. The storyboard is a 231-page visualisation of the entire film from credits to end used during shooting.
3	Alanngut Killinganni [Press material]	2023	Press material made by Bill Bering and his company TulluT aimed for Danish distribution. Written in Danish and Greenlandic.
4	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	2 Oct. 2018	Reshare from personal profile announcing preparation of “ <i>Qaqqat Alanngui 2</i> ” ( <i>Alanngut Killinganni</i> ) with Malik Kleist and Jørgen Chemnitz.
5	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	18 Apr. 2019	Reshare from personal profile on casting session with Malik Kleist: “We are getting ready for the production of his next feature”
6	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	19 Apr. 2019	Job posting for a cook during on-location shooting in weeks 27-32.
7	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	20 June 2019	Reshare from Kleist’s personal profile. A post about casting a Danish-speaking Danish man aged 28-45.
8	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	29 June 2019	Reshare from personal profile announcing the production of <i>Alanngut Killinganni</i> “in just a few days”.



9	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	21 June 2019	Reshare from personal profile with picture showing “just some of the amazing crew I’m gonna work with during the weeks to come!” announcing start of production June 1 <sup>st</sup> and a scheduled filming completion on August 11 <sup>th</sup>
10	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	26 June 2019	Reshare from personal profile with picture showing the preparation of the shooting days.
11	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	1 July 2019	Reshare from Benny Kokholm’s personal profile showing pictures from the first day of shooting at the café Pascucci in Nuuk Centre. An image shows a previous demand for extras for the café scene between 6-7:30 am.
12	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	1 July 2019	Reshare from Naleraq Eugenius’s personal profile looking for someone to sail a boat and participate in the filming stating "Do you want to make a difference in the Greenlandic film industry?! Then help us with that :-)"
13	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	2 July 2019	Reshare from Anders Berthelsen’s personal profile sharing pictures from shooting day two early in the morning in front of Katuaq and Nuuk Centre.
14	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	4 July 2019	Reshare from Freyr Línal Sævarsson’s personal profile showing pictures of Berthelsen, Kleist and other crew members working with drone shooting: “Drone shots in one of Nuuk’s fjords.”
15	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	4 July 2019	Reshare from Freyr Línal Sævarsson’s personal profile showing a picture of the clapboard announcing his “4 <sup>th</sup> film as DoP in the making”. Date on the clapboard is June 1 <sup>st</sup> 2019.

16	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	5 July 2019	Reshare from Freyr Líndal Sævarsson's personal profile with a video showing noise during recordings at the apartment blocks in the centre of Nuuk, challenging the sound crew.
17	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	14 July 2019	Reshare from Anders Berthelsen's personal profile showing pictures from one week of shooting in the fjords.
18	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	15 July 2019	Reshare from Freyr Líndal Sævarsson's personal profile showing behind the scenes photographs from on-location shooting in the fjords.
19	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	23 July 2019	Rshare from Malik Kleist's personal profile looking for Greenlandic extras.
20	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	24 July 2019	Reshare from personal profile announcing "week 4 out of 6. Here we go!". Image of rain-soaked glass with fjord and mountains in the background.
21	Facebook post at PaniNoir page [link]	8 Aug 2019	Reshare from personal profile announcing "Day 40 out of 42! Xploration Services made this camp for the cast and crew of "Alanngut Killinganni" and is also making sure everyone is getting food 3 times a day"
22	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	10 Aug 2019	Reshare from personal profile announcing "No more filming in the fjords. Crazy" with a picture of the clapboard dating 9/8 2019 and selfie of herself and Kleist.
23	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	1 July 2020	Reshare from personal profile stating "post-production DREAMTEAM! 🧯❤️ One year after production we are FINALLY ready to start up the last part of this film. It's been a long journey but we are so thankfull of all the support! I will keep you posted! In the meantime please reach out for me if you know of a place (in Nuuk) where we can do our

			<p>magic! We need an post-production office for 6 months! 🔥❤️</p> <p>Get ready for a new greenlandic THRRORROR (Thriller/horror 😬) SPRING 2021 🗓️” showing picture of her, Kleist, Marc Fussing Rosbach and Qillannguaq Berthelsen at a café in Nuuk.</p>
24	Ukioq 2022-mi Katuami filmit isiginnaarneqarini top 10 / Top 10 Film i Katuaq 2022 [Document]	2023	The official top 10 list of most watched film in Katuaq Bio in 2022. Here, <i>Alanngut Killinganni</i> is the most viewed with 6130 viewers.
25	SV: Oversigt over film og besøgstal [E-mail]	8 June 2023	Mail from manager of Katuaq Bio Ruth Heilmann confirming and explaining the special arrangement for Greenlandic film professionals in relation to film rental.
26	<b>THE EDGE OF THE SHADOW / ALANNGUT KILLINGANNI [recording]</b>	3 Mar 2022	Recording from a talk with Malik Kleist and Danish actor Thorbjørn Friis following the Danish premiere of <i>Alanngut Killinganni</i> at Nordatlantens Brygge chaired by Birgir Thor Møller.
27	<b>Facebook post at Kleist’s personal profile</b>	15 June 2023	Post at Kleist’s personal profile written in Greenlandic, Danish, and English: “People are starting to ask again, but I can’t answer everybody. ALANNGUT KILLINGANNI is not going to be on streaming for a while, yet. We are trying to get the film on several film festivals thats why we have to delay the release on video on demand. It might come out at the earliest in december. The film vil also be shown in some cinemas, like in Katuaq from the july 9th to the july of 22”

## Summary

*Alanngut Killiganni* (AK) takes place eight years after the events of the previous film. AK follows two main characters: Tuuma (Angunnguaq Larsen), a local guide, and Malina (Arnârak Patricia Bloch), a police officer from Nuuk. Tuuma, still haunted by the fate of the young people in the rural hut in *Qaqqat Alanngui*, where no one believed his story about the qivittoq attack, now works for a local guide company. Despite his own worries, Tuuma is convinced by some Danish tourists to take them to the same cabin. This leads to Tuuma's worst fears as the tourists are once again attacked by a qivittoq; one is killed, and one is abducted. Overwhelmed by panic and worry, Tuuma rushes back to Nuuk to seek help from the police, where Malina and other officers are sceptical at first, but later decide to assist Tuuma. The police and Tuuma gets caught up in a bloody battle against several qivittoqs, including a reappearance of Inuuteq (Mike Thomsen), a central character from the first film who exists between the spirit world and the human world. The battle involves intense splatter horror elements with explosions, gunfights, and knife fights. Eventually, the survivors sail back to Nuuk, but the final scene reveals that the battle against the qivittoq is by no means over. AK thus explores a narrative that connects the past and the present, while delivering an effective splatter thriller and continuing the overall narrative of the confrontation between humans and qivittoqs –with a great deal of comedy added.

## Appendix 5: Overview of data from and summary of *Kalak*

The following is the data used and references in connection with the case study of *Kalak*. The Facebook posts were last accessed on June 6<sup>th</sup> 2023, where they were saved as screenshots. I am in possession of all referenced documents, which may be sent (in a censored version, if necessary) upon request.

Nr	Title and [document type]	Date	Description
1	KALAK [script]	15 Sep. 2022	Shooting draft. Written by Kim Leine, Isabella Eklöf, and Sissel Dalsgaard Thomsen.
2	KALAK [script]	March 2021	3 <sup>rd</sup> draft. Written by Kim Leine, Isabella Eklöf, and Sissel Dalsgaard Thomsen.
3	Produktionskoncept [production concept]	No date	Production concept describing the envisioned and planned project in terms of production, locations, equipment, cast, accommodation, catering, transport, crew, shooting, and salaries.
4	KALAK: A FILM BY ISABELLA EKLÖF [project dossier]	No date	Project dossier explaining – in text and visually – the project in terms of cast, visual concept, setting, and locations including producer’s and director’s statements.
5	KALAK: Production plan – Final Draft Yellow Revisions [production plan]	7 Sep. 2022	Production plan of the full shoot.
6	Weekly schedule 2	No date	Weekly schedule of Monday October 10 to Friday October 14 – the week I was part of the production in Nuuk.
7	[Finance plan]	18 Oct. 2022	The final finance plan with the full budget and funding from the respective production companies confirming a final budget of DKK 22.833.247 / €3.056.660
8	KALAK [Global budget]	18 Oct. 2022	Overview of budget with all items related to production, salaries, post-production, music rights, car hire, travel, etc.
9	KALAK CREW LIST	16 Sep 2022	Crew list.

10	CREW [crew list]	01 April 22	Early version of crew list
11	TIMELINE / CREW [production timeline and crew list]	No date	Early version of timeline overview and crew list. This timeline had shooting days in March-May 2022, which was later postponed to September-October due to Covid11.
12	Facebook post on Skydsbjerg's personal profile	8 Oct. 2018	Post with picture of Skydsbjerg, Eklöf, and Kjeldgaard from an earlier visit in Nuuk.
13	Facebook post at PaniNoir page	6 Nov. 2019	First of several casting calls to <i>Kalak</i> from PaniNoir posted on November 6 <sup>th</sup> 2019.
14	Facebook post on Kimmernaq Kjeldsen's personal profile	3 May 2022	Official post from location scout Kimmernaq Kjeldsen searching for locations to <i>Kalak</i> with the text: “🌸 WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE YOUR APARTMENT FEATURED IN A FILM? 🏠 🌸 We are looking for some apartments in Nuuk or Nuussuaq for a few days of filming this autumn. A fee is included.” (MT)
15	Facebook post at Polarama Greenland page	1 May 2022	First of several casting calls to <i>Kalak</i> posted on Polarama Greenland's page on May 1 <sup>st</sup> 2022.
16	Facebook post by project manager Nathan Kreutzmann at the public group “Kulusumi paasissutissüvik - Kulusuk Info”	27 June 2022	Facebook post by Kreutzmann on the local group of Kulusuk searching for help, actors, extras, locations: “we would love to do a large part of the filming in Kulusuk, and if you are interested in film and would like to be involved in one way or another, you are more than welcome! We are initially looking for different homes to film in. In addition, we are also looking for people who want to try their hand at acting and be in front of the camera. We are a small crew coming to Kulusuk from 6 August - 10 August, and we

			would love to both meet you and see your homes if we can borrow or rent them during the filming in November.” (MT)
17	Facebook post by production assistant Arnánguak Skifte Lynge at the public group “Kulusumi paasissutissiivik - Kulusuk Info”	7 Nov. 2022	On behalf of the film crew, Lynge articulates challenges in Kulusuk with dissatisfaction with Kalak's content and representation. They invite a discussion in Kulusuk's community centre on November 8 2022.
18	Facebook post by project manager Nathan Kreutzmann at the public group “Kulusumi paasissutissiivik - Kulusuk Info”	3 Nov 2022	On behalf of the film crew, Kreutzmann searches for paint in Kulusuk: "We are short of paint, so if anyone has any leftover paint in stock we are very interested in buying it! We are looking for the following colours: light yellow/yellow indoor wall paint Light blue indoor wall paint Turquoise indoor wood paint Alternatives could be green or blue." (MT)

## Summary<sup>49</sup>

“Late 90’s. Jan and his little family lives in Nuuk, Greenland, where Jan works as a nurse. They have recently moved in from Denmark and Jan works hard to assimilate, learning Greenlandic, embracing the local specialities – blubber, dried fish, seal soup – and getting plastered with the locals at gritty dive bars. He looks down on the other Danes who don’t try to understand the culture and is drawn to the Greenlandic collectivism and laissez-faire attitude to life, to the point that when someone calls him a Kalak, a Greenlandic slur that means ”dirty Greenlander”, he wears the epithet as a badge of honour. But embracing the careless and open-minded lifestyle soon starts to boil down to sleeping around and drinking hard, and Jan’s little family starts falling apart. His laconic wife, his troubled son and his energetic, tomboy little girl, who have begun to love Greenland as their true home, all start to suffer in their different ways. Jan’s father back in Copenhagen keeps writing Jan long, flourished, self-absorbed letters. This opens up old wounds – when Jan was a teenager, his father seduced him and the trauma has never been addressed. Jan’s father is flamboyant, egomaniacal and charming and Jan finds it impossible to balance his feelings of hurt and confusion with his need for redemption and even acceptance from this larger-than-life father figure. After a spurned lover has humiliated Jan’s wife Lærke and attacked Jan physically, the little family tries to find a fresh start in a small fishing community on the east coast of Greenland. While idyllic and peaceful at first, Jan’s trauma and destructive behaviour soon returns with a vengeance, erupting within the small community and setting fire to everything that Jan touches. When one of Jan’s and Lærke’s children gets seriously hurt, his family leaves for Denmark, leaving Jan behind to battle the consequences of the pain and destruction that he’s brought about. Jan hits rock bottom, slipping into dependency on opiates from the nursing station he oversees, until he is fired and sent back to Denmark. There he is forced to face his father, finally necessitating him to reach for the strength inside that can break his father’s psychological iron grip on him.”

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<sup>49</sup> The summary is cited from the production concept (A5.3).



## Appendix 6: Overview of data from and summary of *Borgen: Power & Glory*

The following is the data used and references in connection with the case study of *Borgen: Power & Glory*. The Instagram post was last accessed on June 6<sup>th</sup> 2023, where it was saved as a screenshot. I am in possession of all referenced documents, which may be sent (in a censored version, if necessary) upon request.

Nr	Title and [document type]	Date	Description
1	BORGEN 2022 [script, episode 1]	23 Dec. 2020	Shooting draft of episode 1. Main writer: Adam Price, episode writers: Adam Price and Emilie Lebech Kaae, storyline: Adam Price, Emilie Lebech Kaae, and Maja Jul Larsen.
2	BORGEN 2022 [script, episode 2]	23 Dec. 2020	Shooting draft of episode 2. Main writer: Adam Price, episode writer: Maja Jul Larsen, storyline: Adam Price, Emilie Lebech Kaae, and Maja Jul Larsen.
3	HOLDLISTE – BORGEN 2022 [crew list]	13 Jan. 2021	Crew list, not final.
4	BORGEN 2022: KØLESKABSKALENDER / VERS. P 210223 [production plan]	23 Feb. 2021	Work-in-progress production plan. Jan.-Sep. 2021
5	BORGEN 2022: KØLESKABSKALENDER / VERS. S 210617 [production plan]	17 July 2021	Work-in-progress production plan. Jan.-Nov. 2021
6	BORGEN 2022: KØLESKABSKALENDER / VERS. T 211004	4 Oct 2021	Work-in-progress production plan. Jan.-Nov. 2021
7	BORGEN 2022 - PRIMÆRE RESEARCHPERSONER	30 Sep. 2021	List of Greenlandic and Danish ‘research persons’ covering areas such as politics, journalism, culture, mining, and defence.
8	BORGEN 2022: RESEARCHPAMFLET 1: STORMAGTERNES SPIL OM ARKTIS [research pamphlet]	No date	Research pamphlet giving a short overview of the geopolitical situation in the Arctic.
9	BORGEN 2022: RESEARCHPAMFLET 2: GRØNLAND OG DANMARKS	No date	Research pamphlet giving a short overview of Greenland, the Greenlandic and Danish

	FORHOLD OG GRØNLANDSK SELVSTÆNDIGHED [research pamphlet]		relationship and a focus on Greenlandic independence.
10	BORGEN 2022: RESEARCHPAMFLET 3: KORT OM RÅSTOFFER [research pamphlet]	No date	Research pamphlet giving a short overview of Greenlandic economy and mining.
11	BORGEN 2022: RESEARCHPAMFLET 4: MERE OM KINA I ARKTIS [research pamphlet]	No date	Research pamphlet giving a short overview of the situation between China and the Arctic.
12	STUDIE 2: CHRISTIANSBORG. Swing set – INT. STATS MINISTERIET	17 Nov. 2020	Production design of studio recordings: Drawing/planning of the Prime Ministry's offices (swing set)
13	Int. Arktisk Kommando	7 June 2021	Production design of studio recordings: Drawing/planning of Arktisk Kommando's premises.
14	Eliassens Hjem Plan	28 Jan. 2021	Production design of studio recordings: Drawing/planning of Hans Eliassen's home.
15	STUDIE 1 - UM, ELIASSEN, HOTEL, LED SETUP	17 Nov. 2020	Production design of studio recordings: Drawing/planning of several buildings including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hans Eliassen's home and the LED setup.
16	STUDIE 1 - UDENRIGS MINISTERIET	17 Nov. 2020	Production design of studio recordings: Drawing/planning of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
17	STUDIE 2: CHRISTIANSBORG. Swing set – INT. NÆVNSLOKALE	17 Nov. 2020	Production design of studio recordings: Drawing/planning of Chistiansborg, Council Chamber (swing set)
18	STUDIE 2: CHRISTIANSBORG. Swing set – INT. NYE DEMOKRATERS GRUPPEVÆRELSE	17 Nov. 2020	Production design of studio recordings: Drawing/planning of Chistiansborg, New Democrat's group room (swing set)
19	Udenrigsministeriet studiebyg Loftplan	11 Nov. 2020	Production design of studio recordings: Drawing/planning of Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
20	STUDIE 2: CHRISTIANSBORG. Swing set – GRUNDPLAN	17 Nov. 2020	Production design of studio recordings: Drawing/planning of Chistiansborg (swing set)

21	STUDIE 2: CHRISTIANSBORG. Swing set – Int. Mødelokale	17 Nov 2020	Production design of studio recordings: Drawing/planning of Chistiansborg, meeting room (swing set)
22	[Photos]	No date	34 behind the scenes photos from shooting in Greenland.
23	[Photos]	No date	24 behind the scenes photos from shooting in Denmark.
24	“Rethinking public service TV drama - the remarkable case of Borgen” [Q&A with Adam Price, recording]	21 Oct 2022	Recording of Q&A with Adam Price during the 9 <sup>th</sup> European Communication Conference (ECREA) 2022 in Aarhus, Denmark. Lead by associate professor Jakob Isak Nielsen (Aarhus University). Recorded by the author.
25	Instagram post	21 Feb 2022	Instagram post by Emile Hertling Péronard in connection with a clip from the series: “Happy to have contributed to this. #borgen airs on Danish @dr1tv every Sunday and will be available on @netflix in 190 countries from April. Hopefully we’ll destroy a few stereotypes along the way 🍷 @polaramagreenland @samproductionsdk #greenland #series #streaming #inuit #stereotypes #decolonize”

## Summary:

In *Borgen: Power & Glory*, Birgitte Nyborg (Sidse Babett Knudsen) is now Danish Foreign Minister, who quickly becomes involved in a case about an oil discovery by a Canadian drilling company in Greenland fueling discussions of Greenlandic independence and new commercial and economic opportunities for Greenland (and Denmark). Similarly, it creates dilemmas between economic gain (and for Greenland, secession) and climate impact, which goes against Nyborg's own climate policy. In the newly established government, Nyborg has an uncertain relationship with the sitting Prime Minister Signe Kragh (Johanne Louise Schmidt), as well as ongoing challenges with her climate activist son Lucas (Magnus Nyborg Christensen), and her own body, as she is challenged with menopause. The season is also divided between several main characters, where, as in previous seasons, the focus is on journalist Katrine Fønsmark (Birgitte Hjort Sørensen) and Torben Friis (Søren Malling) where both are struggling with work-life-balance and Fønsmark in particular with pursuing the role as Head of News on TV1 that pushes her over the edge.

In Greenland, Birgitte struggles to negotiate with the Greenlandic politicians and she appoints an Arctic Ambassador in the form of Asger Holm Kirkegaard (Mikkel Boe Følsgaard) and sends him to Greenland to negotiate and influence the process, especially with Greenland's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Raw Materials, Hans Eliassen (Svend Hardenberg) and Greenlandic government official Emmy Rasmussen (Nivi Pedersen); the latter Kirkegaard becomes romantically involved with. In addition, the situation is further affected by the questionable death (suicide or murder?) of the former Greenlandic naval officer Malik Johansen (Ujarneq Fleischer) who has started working for the Canadian oil company. Later, Kirkegaard discovers a connection between the Canadian drilling company and Russian ownership, and the geopolitical tensions further develops when a foreign object crashes in the Greenland mountains causing Nyborg and Kirkegaard to that pushes Nyborg and Kirkegaard into a series of crises.

## Appendix 7: Overview of interviews and letter of consent

Nr.	Date	Name	Title <sup>50</sup>	Place
1	16/3 2021	Otto Rosing	Director	Copenhagen (Nordatlantens Brygge)
2	23/3 2021	Emile Hertling Péronard	Producer	Copenhagen
3	14/4 2021	Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg	Producer	Online (Zoom)
4	14/4 2021	Søren Stærmose	Producer	Online (Zoom)
5	2/6 2021	Nivi Pedersen	Actor, Director's Assistant (director)	Online (Zoom)
6	15/3 2022	Nina Quist	Associate Producer (producer)	Copenhagen (SAM Productions)
7	22/3 2022	Michel Ryddeskov	Associate Producer (producer)	Copenhagen (SAM Productions)
8	25/4 2022	Emilie Lebech Kaae	Scriptwriter, Creative producer	Copenhagen (SAM Productions)
9	28/4 2022	Alberte Parnuuna Lings Skifte	Reader (filmmaker, artist)	Copenhagen (café)
10	9/5 2022	Karen Buus	Location assistant	Online (Zoom)
11	16/5 2022	Henrik Fleischer	Scriptwriter (editor)	Copenhagen (University of Copenhagen)
12	25/5 2022	Kenneth Berg	Location Manager	Online (Zoom)
13	20/9 2022	Klaus Georg Hansen	Chairman of Film.gl (researcher, consultant, administration)	Nuuk (private)
14	5/10 2022	Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg	Producer	Nuuk (Katuaq, NAPA)
15	11/10 2022	Malik Kleist	Director, scriptwriter, producer, leader of Filmiliortarfik	Nuuk, Filmiliortarfik
16	13/10 2022	Pipaluk K. Jørgensen	Production service producer, assistant director (producer and director)	Nuuk (Polarama Greenland)
17	8/3 2023	Arnánguaq Skifte Lynge	Project assistant (travel operator)	Online (Zoom)
18	8/3 2023	Nathan Kreutzmann	Project manager (TV host and actor)	Online (Zoom)
19	21/3 2023	Bill Bering	Distributor, cinema operator	Copenhagen (University of Copenhagen)
20	27/3 2023	Maria Møller Kjeldgaard	Producer	Copenhagen (University of Copenhagen)

<sup>50</sup> Titles related to this project and cases that are not necessarily their primary jobs. These are in brackets if relevant. For several of the interviewees, filmmaking is not their primary occupation, whilst the brackets indicate this.



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### Declaration of consent

*Greenlandic Frames* is a PhD project investigating film and TV production in and about Greenland with emphasis on the use and significance of location. It examines both local and external production with focus on how location affects production processes. The project studies the Greenlandic film industry, conditions, and other factors characterizing film and TV production in and about Greenland.

The project is located at and fully funded by University of Copenhagen and it runs from 2020-2023.

### Your contribution

Your participation in the project includes that you are interviewed by PhD Fellow Anders Grønlund. With your consent, you allow that:

- Your contribution will be recorded digitally. There will also be taken notes.
- Your contribution will be included in the PhD dissertation of Anders Grønlund.
- Your contribution can be published in academic journals, industry journals, and discussed at conferences and seminars. Please note that it may take several years from the obtainment of your contribution to a prospective publication.

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## Appendix 8: Transcriptions

This appendix consists of the 20 interviews presented as an overview in Appendix 7. **These transcriptions are confidential and will appear blank in this public version.** Therefore, it will only provide bios and background information.

The physical interviews were recorded on a Zoom H1n recorder, while the interviews on Zoom were recorded through the existing software and with the respondent's own microphone, which was most often the built-in computer microphone. All interviews were transcribed by myself using an approach that focussed on clarity of meaning rather than including all pauses, emphases and emotional expressions (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015, 238–43). I have retained the informants' choice of words and sentences but excluded words such as 'uh' and other markings, as the goal of the interviews is primarily information rather than analysing, for example, language or emotions. I have therefore based my transcription on a partial transcription (King and Horrocks 2010, 143), focusing on details about the processes and thoughts behind them. The transcripts are therefore presented as reader-friendly versions, where e.g. laughter or pauses are only included if it is important for understanding.

As these interviews were all made in Danish, I have made extensive use of translations, particularly from Danish to English. This includes both the translation of the parts of my interviews that are quoted directly, but also political speeches, newspaper articles, policy documents, and other written data. This involves several challenges: “Elements of grammar vary across languages, while preserving meaning in metaphors and capturing the semantic and sociolinguistic nuances of individual languages may lead to poor equivalence in translations, and hence, incorrect translated meanings and incorrect findings” (McKenna 2022, 2). To remain as objective as possible in the translations, I have used the translation tool DeepL Pro. Based on these initial translations, I have adjusted obvious mistranslations or metaphors that do not exist or exist in a different way in English. Here, I have translated into official standard English metaphors through dictionaries. Similarly, I have used the most closely related concepts where there has not been a direct translation, e.g. Greenlandic ministerial titles. All of this is, of course, based on my own choices and corrections, reflecting an unequal power relationship between my sources and myself. In this context, informed consent and ongoing dialogue with informants have been key.

In the following, the introductions are sorted by time of interview.



## A8.1: Otto Rosing

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Otto Rosing (OR)

Date: 16/3 2021

Place: Copenhagen (Nordatlantens Brygge)

### Bio:<sup>51</sup>

Otto Rosing (1967) is a Greenlandic director and production manager educated from the KaosPilot education as project manager. Since then, Rosing has been part of the Danish and Greenlandic television and film industry, where he has worked on documentaries, music videos, short films, TV, and feature films since the 1990s. In 1993 he made his first short film with support from Filmværkstedet [Filmworkshop Copenhagen], and in 2004 he directed the documentary portrait *Den evige flyver* ('*The Eternal Flyer*') about the Greenlandic artist and writer Jens Rosing. In parallel, Rosing has worked as a production and recording manager on commercials, TV drama and fiction, while he has also taught film production in both Denmark and Greenland. Most recently, he has been associated with DR's programme series on Danish-Greenlandic history. He is also a board member of the Greenlandic film industry association, Film.gl, and works concurrently on a number of projects including a documentary supported by NORDDOK II. Rosing made his breakthrough as a director with the feature film *Nuummioq* (2009), which he directed together with screenwriter Torben Bech. 10 years later, Rosing's second feature film, the New Year comedy *Ukiutoqqami Pilluaritsi*, premiered.

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<sup>51</sup> The bio is based on the presentation of Rosing, I wrote in Danish for DFI and the *Kosmorama* articles (DFI n.d.). This version is translated and edited in terms of length, facts, and updates.

## A8.2: Emile Hertling Péronard

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Emile Hertling Péronard (EP)

Date: 23/3 2021

Place: Copenhagen (Wildersgade Filmhus)

### **Bio:**<sup>52</sup>

Emile Hertling Péronard (1979) is a Greenlandic producer based in Copenhagen. Péronard was raised in Nuuk and moved to Copenhagen in 2000 to study Film Studies at the University of Copenhagen, from which he has a BA. Péronard has a longer career in the Danish and Greenlandic film industry and made his debut as a documentary film producer in 2014 with *Sumé – Mumisitsinerup Nipaa* (*Sumé – the Sound of a Revolution*), while simultaneously establishing the production company Ánorâk Film in Nuuk with the film's director Inuk Silis Høegh producing documentaries such as *Polaris* (Ainara Vera, 2022) and *Twice Colonized* (Lin Alluna, 2023). In 2020, Péronard established the company Polarama Greenland with Pipaluk Kreutzmann Jørgensen, which works with international co-production, especially fiction, and production services. The company is active in a wide range of local and international productions in Greenland such as *Against the Ice* (2022, Peter Flinth) and Oscar-nominated short film *Ivalu* (Pipaluk K. Jørgensen and Anders Walter, 2023). In addition, Péronard has been very active in international media promoting Greenlandic film, was in the board of Film.gl, industry director at NIFF, and part of various international programmes such as Producer's on the Move 2023 in Cannes. Péronard is production service producer on BPG and co-producer on *Kalak*.

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<sup>52</sup> The bio is based on the presentation of Péronard, I wrote in Danish for DFI and the *Kosmorama* articles (DFI n.d.). This version is translated and edited in terms of length, facts, and updates.

## A8.3: Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg (NS)

Date: 14/4 2021

Place: Online (Zoom)

### **Bio:**<sup>53</sup>

Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg is a Greenlandic self-taught producer and owner and founder of the production company PaniNoir in Nuuk. Skydsbjerg started as a runner on *Nordkraft* (Ole Christian Madsen) in 2004, but since 2010 she has been part of the Greenlandic film industry, working as a fixer, line producer and producer. Skydsbjerg has produced everything from music videos and commercials to documentaries and feature films, both local and international projects. Skydsbjerg was producer and first assistant director on AK and co-producer on *Ukintoqqami Pilluaritsi*.

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<sup>53</sup> The bio is based on the presentation of Skydsbjerg, I wrote in Danish for DFI and the *Kosmorama* articles (DFI n.d.). This version is translated and edited in terms of length, facts, and updates. Skydsbjerg has changed names (Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg Jacobsen to Nina Paninnguaq Skysbjerg Kristiansen to Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg) two times during the project and I refer to her present name although she appears with various of the aforementioned in interviews and on productions.

## A8.4: Søren Stærmosé

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Søren Stærmosé (SS)

Date: 14/4 2021

Place: Online (Zoom)

### **Bio:**

Søren Stærmosé is a Danish television and film producer. He has a MA in Literature and Film Studies from the University of Copenhagen. He started producing documentary and short films in 198 and made his feature film debut as a film producer at Victoria-film in 1989 with Gabriel Axel's film *Christian*. In 1993, he produced the Swedish film *Morfars resa* (*Grandpa's Journey*, Staffan Lamm). In 2005, he made his television debut as Associate Producer on the Swedish TV series *Wallander* (2005-2013). Stærmosé is best known for producing the feature films *Män som batar kvinnor* (*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Niels Arden Oplev, 2009) *Flickan som lekte med elden* (*The Girl Who Played with Fire*, Daniel Alfredson, 2009), and *Luftslottet som sprängdes* (*The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*, Daniel Alfredson, 2009). Stærmosé is Executive Producer at Yellow Bird. Stærmosé was producer on *Tunn is* (*Thin Ice*, CMore/TV4, 2020).

## A8.5: Nivi Pedersen

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Nivi Pedersen (NP)

Date: 2/6 2021

Place: Online (Zoom)

### Bio:<sup>54</sup>

Nivi Pedersen is a Greenlandic actor and director. Pedersen has worked a wide range of tasks and functions in the Greenlandic film industry since her first acting assignment in 2014. Pedersen holds a BA in Language, Literature and Media from Ilisimatusarfik, University of Greenland, and the European Film College in Ebeltoft. She made her acting debut in Malik Kleist's second horror film 'Unnuap Taarnerpaafiani' (*When the Darkness Come*, Malik Kleist) and has since appeared in several productions such as short film *The Last Walk* (2016), *Ukiutoqqami Pilluaritsi* (Otto Rosing, 2019), and Swedish/Icelandic serial *Tunn is* (CMORE/TV4, *Thin Ice*, 2020). After his first short film project at the European Film College, 'Snow' (2017), Pedersen has directed various projects such as the science-fiction short film 'Updated' (2020) and the documentary *Pilluarneq Ersigiunnaarpara* (*Happiness no longer scares me*, 2019), which follows two victims of sexual abuse in their childhood. The film is part of the National Board of Health and Welfare's strategy against sexual abuse. In his relatively short career, Pedersen has received a Moon Jury Award from the largest Indigenous film festival, imagineNATIVE, in 2020 for *Pilluarneq Ersigiunnaarpara* and the Innersuaq Award at the Nuuk International Film Festival the same year for her overall work as a director and actor. Pedersen is actor and director's assistant (post-production) on BPG

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<sup>54</sup> The bio is based on the presentation of Pedersen, I wrote in Danish for DFI and the *Kosmorama* articles (DFI n.d.). This version is translated and edited in terms of length, facts, and updates.

## A8.6: Nina Quist

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (I)

Interviewee: Nina Quist (NQ)

Dato: 22/3 2022

Place: Copenhagen (SAM Productions)

### **Bio:**<sup>55</sup>

Nina Quist is a Danish Associate Producer based in Copenhagen at SAM Productions. Quist has a MA in Dramaturgy and Media Studies from Aarhus University and has been working at SAM since 2017 and has worked in various producer roles in productions such as *Ragnarok* (Netflix, 2020-2023), *Kastanjemanden (The Chestnut Man)* (Netflix, 2021), and *Orkestret (The Orchestra)* (DR, 2022). Through this, Quist has managed a wide range of projects in different stages of development securing both the creative progress and the production-related course of the projects from idea to greenlight. Quist was Associate Producer on BPG.

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<sup>55</sup> This bio is an extension of the presentation from the SAM Productions website (SAM Productions n.d.).

## A8.7: Michel Ryddeskov

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Michel Ryddeskov (MI)

Date: 22/3 2022

Place: Copenhagen (SAM Productions)

### **Bio:**

Michel Ryddeskov is a Danish producer based in Copenhagen and holds a BA in Multiplatform Storytelling and Production from VIA University College, Denmark, and has previously attended the European Film College, Denmark. Throughout his career, Ryddeskov has worked in various producer roles, contributing to a range of Danish and international productions such as *Mercur (Something's Rockin')*, TV2, 2017), *Ragnarok* (Netflix, 2020-2023), and *A Beautiful Life* (Mehdi Awaz, 2023). Having been employed at SAM Productions from 2017 to 2022, he now works as a producer at Cosmo Film. Ryddeskov was Associate Producer on BPG.

## A8.8: Emilie Lebech Kaae

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (I)

Interviewee: Emilie Lebech Kaae (KA)

Date: 25/4 2022

Place: Copenhagen (SAM Productions)

### **Bio:**<sup>56</sup>

Emilie Lebech Kaae is a Danish Scriptwriter, Creator, and Creative Executive based in Copenhagen at SAM Productions. Kaae has a MA in Nordic Language & Literature and History from Aarhus University. Kaae has worked in various roles on several Danish and international productions as Producer on *Swinger* (Mikkel Munch-Fals, 2016) and *St. Bernard Syndicate* (Mads Brügger, 2018), Head of Development on *Mercur (Something's Rockin')*, TV 2, 2017) and *Gidseltagningen (Below the Surface)*, Kanal 5, 2017-2019), script executive on *Kastanjemanden (The Chestnut Man)*, Netflix, 2021), and writer on *Ragnarok I-III* (2020-2023). Kaae was Writer and Creative Producer on BPG.

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<sup>56</sup> This bio is an extension of the presentation from the SAM Productions website (SAM Productions n.d.).



## A8.9: Alberte Parnuuna Lings Skifte

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Alberte Parnuuna Lings Skifte (LI)

Date: 28/4 2022

Place: Copenhagen (café)

### **Bio:**

Alberte Parnuuna Lings Skifte (1995) is a Greenlandic filmmaker and artist based in Copenhagen and holds a BA in Film and Media Studies and a MA in Visual Culture from the University of Copenhagen. She has worked primarily on a freelance basis in film production, graphic design, and film education and has been involved in several projects and institutions such as Nuuk SNOW Festival 2023, WIFT (Women in Film and Television, Denmark), Filmiliortarfik, Visit Greenland, DFI, and Avalak (the national organisation of Greenlandic students in Denmark). Skifte was Reader on BPG.

## **A8.10: Karen Buus**

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Karen Buus (KB)

Date: 16/5 2022

Place: Online (Zoom)

### **Bio:**

Karen Buus is a Danish-Greenlandic tourism operator based in Ilulissat at the company AirZafari; a Greenlandic owned company that primary operates flightseeing out of Kangerlussuaq and Ilulissat. Buus has worked sporadically in the Greenlandic film industry, first on *Against the Ice* as local runner and later on BPG as Location Assistant.

## A8.11: Henrik Fleischer

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Henrik Fleischer (F)

Date: 16/5 2022

Place: Copenhagen (University of Copenhagen)

### **Bio:**

Henrik Fleischer (1961) is a Greenlandic film editor and scriptwriter based in Copenhagen. Fleischer is educated as editor from the National Film School of Denmark in 1989. For more than 40 years, Fleischer has worked in the Danish and Greenlandic screen industries in various roles, but primarily as editor on productions such as *Rejseholdet (Mobile Unit)*, DR, 2000-2004), *Forbrydelsen (The Killing)*, DR, 2007), and *Nuummioq* (Otto Rosing and Torben Bech, 2009) after which he became more involved in the Greenlandic industry through Film.gl. Since 2021, Fleischer has been working independently with his company FILM42. Fleischer was co-writer on *Ukintoqqami Pilluaritsi*.

## A8.12: Kenneth Berg

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Kenneth Berg (KE)

Date: 25/5 2022

Place: Online (Zoom)

### **Bio:**

Kenneth Berg is a Danish location manager and location scout. Berg has been a part of the Danish screen industry since the 1980s and has been a location manager and scout on a wide range of productions such as *Flammen og Citronen* (*Flame and Citron*, Ole Christian Madsen, 2008), *Borgen* (DR, 2010-2013) *Kvinden i buret* (*The Keeper of Lost Causes*, Mikkel Nørgaard, 2013), *1864* (DR, 2014), *Nørskov* (TV 2, 2015-2017), and *Før Frosten* (*Before the Frost*, Michael Noer, 2019). Berg was Location Manager on BPG.

## A8.13: Klaus Georg Hansen

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Klaus Georg Hansen (KG)

Date: 20/9 2022

Place: Nuuk (private)

### **Bio:**

Klaus Georg Hansen is a Danish researcher, government official, and film professional. Hansen holds a PhD from Aalborg University in colonial history and contemporary Greenland. Hansen has held a wide range of positions such as Director of Sisimiut Museum, Assistant professor at the Language Center in Sisimit, Head of Department in the Government of Greenland, project manager at the Ministry of Finance in Greenland, Head of National Spatial Planning in Greenland, Deputy Director, Senior Research Fellow at Nordregio, and Head of Faculty at University of Greenland. In parallel, Hansen has been part of the Greenlandic film industry, including as line producer on Malik Kleist's *Qaqqat Alanngui* (2011) and since January 2023 through his company KGH Productions with social science consultancy, film administration, and film production management. Since 2020, Hansen has been the chairman of Film.gl through which he has held a wide range of positions on boards, foundations, and committees related to the Greenlandic film industry.

## A8.14: Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg (NS)

Date: 5/10 2022

Place: Nuuk (Katuaq, NAPA)

### **Bio:**<sup>57</sup>

Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg is a Greenlandic self-taught producer and owner and founder of the production company PaniNoir in Nuuk. Skydsbjerg started as a runner on *Nordkraft* (Ole Christian Madsen) in 2004, but since 2010 she has been part of the Greenlandic film industry, working as a fixer, line producer and producer. Skydsbjerg has produced everything from music videos and commercials to documentaries and feature films, both local and international projects. Skydsbjerg was producer and first assistant director on AK and co-producer on *Ukintoqqami Pilluaritsi*.

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<sup>57</sup> The bio is based on the presentation of Skydsbjerg, I wrote in Danish for DFI and the *Kosmorama* articles (DFI n.d.). This version is translated and edited in terms of length, facts, and updates. Skydsbjerg has changed names (Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg Jacobsen to Nina Paninnguaq Skysbjerg Kristiansen to Nina Paninnguaq Skydsbjerg) two times during the project and I refer to her present name although she appears with various of the aforementioned in interviews and on productions.

## A8.15: Malik Kleist

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Malik Kleist (MK)

Date: 11/10 2022

Place: Nuuk (Filmiliortarfik)

### **Bio:**

“Malik has always been interested in films since he was a little kid. At the age of 14 he bought his first camera and started making short films starring his friends and later on always kept his interest in the camera. In 1998 at the age of 21 Malik tried to work with a real film crew as a assistant for the light guy and also as an assistant for the sound guy in the short film ‘Sinilluari’ directed by Inuk Silis Høegh. 2 years after he started at the tv and film education in Viborg, Denmark in Medieskolen. in 2001 during the education Malik was offered a leading role as an actor for the film ‘Eskimo Weekend’. Malik finished his school in 2004 and worked at the Greenlandic national TV station in 5 years where he worked as an cameraman, light guy, sound guy, editor and later on became technical adviser and co-producer for the youth tv show “Sofa aappalaartoq” and later on advisor and editor on “inuusuttut silarsuaat”. Malik quit from the national tv station in 2009 and started his own firm Tunit Production together with Aka Hansen. In 2009 Malik helped co-writing the film ‘Hinnarik Sinnattunilu’ while also being the D.O.P. and editor. In 2011 Malik wrote the script for the thriller “Qaqqat Alanngui” which he also directed” (NIFF 2022, 53). Kleist is currently Head of Filmiliortarfik. Kleist was Director, Writer, and Executive Producer on AK.

## A8.16: Pipaluk Kreutzmann Jørgensen

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Pipaluk K. Jørgensen (PI) [Emile Hertling Péronard was present in the room and they had sporadic contact]

Date: 13/10 2022

Place: Nuuk (Polarama Greenland)

### **Bio:**

Pipaluk K. Jørgensen (1981) is a Greenlandic director, scriptwriter, and producer based in Nuuk. Prior to film production, Jørgensen worked with theatre, where she created the dance performance *Tulugaq* (2009) and the theatre performance *Oqarit inuullutillu* (2010), which toured Greenland and Canada that established her close professional relationships with other Indigenous peoples in the Arctic. She has later been chairperson of Film.gl and then executive producer of NIFF, just as she has been part of the Greenlandic film industry through her former one-person company Karitas Productions and current UnoFilm. She directed and produced e.g. the documentary on her Canada travels *The Ravens Storm* (2013) and the feature film *Anori* (2018) and is also increasingly active in international production through the production service company Polarama Greenland, which she co-owns with Emile Hertling Péronard. She has co-directed the Oscar-nominated Danish short film *Ivalu* with Anders Walter (2023). She has also been a production service producer on productions such as *Against the Ice* (Peter Flinth, 2022) and *Historien om Grønland og Danmark* (DR, 2022). It has also been announced that Jørgensen is co-writer on the forthcoming international series *Smilla's Sense of Snow*. Jørgensen is co-producer of *Kalak* and production service producer of BPG.



## A8.17: Arnánguak Skifte Lyngé

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Arnánguak Skifte Lyngé (AL)

Date: 8/3 2023

Place: Online (Zoom)

### **Bio:**

Arnánguak Skifte Lyngé is a Greenlandic consultant and freelancer. Skifte has worked in the travel industry in several roles such as travel consultant at Visit Greenland and Travel by Heart and Flight Operations Assistant at Air Greenland, and with several different tasks as a guide, translator, podcaster, and interpreter often through her company MA LU MI. In recent years, she has also been involved in the Greenlandic film industry as Festival Manager at NIFF 2022. Skifte was Production Assistant on *Kalak*.

## A8.18: Nathan Kreutzmann

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Malik Kleist (MK)

Date: 8/3 2023

Place: Online (Zoom)

### **Bio:**

Nathan Kreutzmann is a Greenlandic journalist, TV host, and actor. Kreutzmann has worked as a flight attendant at Air Greenland and later as a journalist at KNR for several years and has become a familiar face in the Greenlandic public as a news anchor and in other hosting roles on various KNR programmes, and as actor in the Christmas calendar TV series *Nissit angakkuuatillu* (KNR, 2012). Kreutzmann now works as a freelance journalist which has led him into the film industry. Kreutzmann was a project manager and actor on *Kalak*.

## **A8.19: Bill Bering**

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Bill Bering (BB)

Date: 21/3 2023

Place: Copenhagen (University of Copenhagen)

### **Bio:**

Bill Bering is a Greenlandic distributor and cinema operator based in Copenhagen. Bering has worked in cinemas in Greenland and Denmark as self-taught projectionist and cinema manager at Greenland's only cinema in Nuuk, Katuaq (Greenland Cultural Centre) from 1997 to 2020. In addition, Bering has worked as Artistic Director and as technical advisor for NIFF since 2017. Today, Bering mainly work with Indigenous filmmakers in the Arctic through his distribution company TulluT founded in 2020. Through this and a wide range of duties for Film.gl, Bering has participated in several festivals to promote and distribute Greenlandic film. Bering is distributor on AK through TulluT.

## A8.20: Maria Møller Kjeldgaard

Interviewer: Anders Grønlund (AG)

Interviewee: Maria Møller Kjeldgaard (MM)

Date: 27/3 2023

Place: Copenhagen (University of Copenhagen)

### Bio:<sup>58</sup>

Maria graduated as a producer from the independent film school Super16 in 2016, and additionally she holds a Master in Film Studies from Copenhagen University. During her studies, she did an exchange in London and additionally, she worked as a producer's assistant at Nimbus Film. Maria established her own production company Manna Film in 2013, where she has produced nine short documentaries and fiction as well as a web series in collaboration with TV2, and her first feature fiction film, *Songs in the Sun* premiered at Slamdance FF. Maria has also worked freelance as a line producer on features such as *Holiday* (Sundance 2018) and *Psykosia* (Venice 2019). At the moment Maria is producing fiction features, documentaries and series, among others Malene Choi's *The Quiet Migration*, world premiere at Panorama at Berlin International Film Festival, Zara Zerny's feature documentary *Echo of Love*, in post-production, Annika Berg's feature *1VM*, in development, and Vibeke Bryld's fiction feature, *The Age of Silence*, in development. Manna Film is an independent film production company founded in 2013 by producer Maria Møller Kjeldgaard. Manna Film develops, produces, and co-produces projects that experiment with film language and storytelling, focusing on projects intended for an international audience. Manna Film has and continues to establish long term relationships with screenwriters and directors with a strong personal voice and artistic vision. Besides having participated in NISI MASA's ESP and MIDPOINT Short, she has been a part of Young Nordic Producers Club in Cannes, ACE Producers Training Days Nordic Focus, MAIA Workshop, Twelve for the Future, IDFAcademy, Eurodoc and New Horizon Studio+ (A5.4). Kjeldgaard is producer on *Kalak*.

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<sup>58</sup> This bio is cited from A5.4 and then edited by Kjeldgaard herself as part of the approval process.