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Furs and fabrics : transformations, clothing and identity in East Greenland

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Transformation and integration,

East Greenlandic clothing in the second half of the twentieth century

New Danish political structures, better medical services, and new schools were established in East Greenland in the second half of the twentieth century. The process of modernization penetrated the widely scattered villages within the district of East Greenland, and changed daily life. Today, young people receive a western education, and seek new means of earning a living. Some of them find employment in the industrial fishery on Greenland's West Coast. Young East Greenlandic women are successful as teachers, or they find jobs in the social services. The changes imply a cultural break with the hunting and gathering traditions. During the nation-building process, in the years when self-government was being established, East Greenland came under the influence of politicians and intellectual leaders in Nuuk. Gradually the East Greenlanders became part of the partly independent nation Kalaallit Nunaat.

Demographic developments and health services

The total number of inhabitants of East Greenland was 2966 in 1996.¹ The population of the Tasiilaq district in East Greenland increased rapidly in the years after World War II, and even doubled between 1945 and 1970.² In 1968 a birth-control programme was launched in Greenland to halt the population explosion. The programme proved to be effective in East Greenland, and the population stabilized after 1970.³

The increase in population was not evenly divided over the district's capital and villages. The number of inhabitants in the cities was growing faster than in the villages. For example, Tasiilaq town numbered 736 people in 1970, and this figure increased to 1518 in 1996, whereas Tiniteqilaaq numbered 199 people in 1970 and 162 in 1996.⁴ The tendency towards bigger settlements began from the very beginning of contact with the Danes at the newly established trading posts in Ammassalik in the nineteenth century. It affected the smaller settlements of the district in the first half of the twentieth century. Yet a planned and structured 'urbanization' did not take place in East Greenland before the 1950s. It was a result of the G-60 (Greenland 1960) policy (Jenness 1967; Robert-Lamblin 1986; Lanting 1995). In that period a relatively large-scale house-building programme was started. New settlements, such as Tiniteqilaaq, emerged at occasionally inhabited places along the coasts, as well as in previously uninhabited places chosen by Danes. The East Greenlandic population was stimulated to move from small, scattered settlements to larger settlements. The centralization of the population was planned in order to create social services, such as a school/church, small stores and local medical stations, and resulted in the abandonment of the smallest settlements in East Greenland.⁵

The concentration of the population in bigger settlements implied a break with Mikkelsen's decentralization policy of three decades earlier. (See page 82.) The new policy was inspired by new approaches to the economic and political development of Greenland. Administrators and politicians were not only developing modern European-

based social services and building western-style houses, but were also seeking new economic sources of income such as commercial fishery. Concentration of the population was a prerequisite for the introduction of large-scale fishing techniques, fishing vessels and fisheries. These population developments had a great impact on the traditional life, culture and economy of the East Greenlanders.

Economic developments and trade

During the twentieth century the East Greenlandic economy changed from a subsistence hunting, fishing and gathering economy to a cash economy. The hunter's families combined hunting yields with other sources of income. Many East Greenlanders have paid jobs nowadays. Although rapid change occurred within the East Greenland society, there was a strong cultural continuity until the beginning of the twenty-first century. Hunters still set out in their motorboats to hunt seals, birds, reindeer, foxes and polar bears. They combine hunting with fishing for cod, salmon and trout, and with gathering mussels, seaweed and eggs. Often women also join in fishing activities, but they seldom hunt or join hunting trips. Until the beginning of the 1980s, the summer migration pattern persisted, and even today families camp on the land during the summer months. The summer migration in connection with subsistence activities retained its importance for the economy and social life of the East Greenlanders. (See also Robert-Lamblin 1986:83).

“Between the end of May and September most of the villages are deserted by part of their population: they can be found up in the fjords, close to the streams visited by Arctic char, or spread out among the numerous islets near the coast, on the outlook for large seals (hooded seal and bearded seal) which drift out on the fragmented ice pack at that time of the year.”
(Robert-Lamblin 1986:84.)

Yet the material culture connected with the summer migration and subsistence activities changed drastically. In the middle of the twentieth century, the numbers of skin boats (umiaks) and skin tents decreased⁶, owing to the need to gain a cash income by selling skins to the KGH, and the scarcity of large skins resulting from the overhunting of large seals by Norwegian hunters at the beginning of the twentieth century. Cloth tents and wooden boats began to replace skin tents and umiaks. Both provide summer transportation and camping equipment.

Kayaks have been the most important means of transportation for hunters in the summer from ancient times to the twentieth century. Every hunter used to have his own kayak. At the beginning of the twentieth century 84% of the male population had kayaks. This percentage dropped to c. 50% in about 1950 (See Robert-Lamblin 1986:96). According to Robert-Lamblin, kayaks first began to disappear from the East Greenlanders' daily life in Tasiilaq town. As far back as 1967 there was only one kayak left in the place, whereas at that time in a small settlement, such as Tiniteqilaaq, there were still twenty-nine kayaks in use.⁷ Hunters began to use small outboard motors on their rowing boats. Expensive plastic or fibreglass boats gradually replaced wooden boats.⁸ Eventually, these motorized boats completely replaced kayaks.

The rule established by the Greenland government prescribing the priority of kayak hunters over those in motorboats during a narwhal hunt, did not prevent the disappearance of kayaks in East Greenland. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, there were almost no kayaks left in this area. However, in the district capital in summer 2001 a few plastic kayaks were used by hunters for the narwhal hunt. Sometimes hunters take plastic kayaks with them in their motorboats to hunting grounds further away. Tobias Ignatiussen, hunter and tourist agent, made a traditional East Greenland kayak out of wood and the skins of bearded seals, which were scraped many times to make them white. Traditional techniques of kayak building, including watertight stitching, were applied. Tobias said that the reason for making a new sealskin-covered kayak was the great interest shown by tourists in traditional as well as modern plastic kayaks. Some tourists visit Greenland especially for kayak vacations.

Although the material culture of the summer migration changed considerably, migration patterns and hunting and subsistence activities still persisted. Traditional means of transportation in winter continued to be used during the twentieth century. Dog sledges are still common in East Greenland, since it is legally forbidden to hunt with a snowmobile (see also Hovelsrud-Broda 1997:56). Snowmobiles were introduced in East Greenland at the end of the twentieth century, first in Tasiilaq. They will soon penetrate daily life in the settlements everywhere, but as long as the regulation preference for dog sledges during the hunt remains on the political agenda, this may preserve their existence.

Hunting and fishing

Hunting and fishing activities demonstrate a strong continuity in East Greenland. With the introduction of Western technology, the costs of hunting and fishing escalated. Cash income became a strategic resource, required to meet these needs.⁹ Cash income derives from hunting, fishing, and paid jobs. Nowadays, the hunters' families sell the majority of their sealskins to the trading company Pilersuisoq A/S (KNI), but a proportion of the sealskins is still used for domestic purposes such as making garments.¹⁰ Ringed seals constitute approximately two-thirds of the seals captured in Greenland, whereas harp seal is the second most important. In East Greenland the majority of seals hunted are also ringed seals.¹¹ In summer, hooded seals are hunted in far fewer numbers, whereas harp seals are rare in East Greenland.¹²

The meat of captured seals is consumed at home, and is exchanged between households. Part of it is used as dog food.¹³ The skins of about half of the seals caught are prepared for sale to the KNI, whereas the other half are used for making mittens, handbags, slippers and other (festive) garments. A small number of skins of bad quality is fed to the dogs. The skins used for domestic purposes, such as the sewing of clothes, are particularly those the owner expects the KNI agent to refuse, and they cannot be sold because of their species, size or quality (B. Robbe 1975 and 1976; Buijs and Nooter 1986; Hovelsrud-Broda 1997). The seal hunt is still of economic and cultural importance, especially to families living in small settlements. Here almost every household has at least one hunter, and

each household is connected by family ties to other households that still depend partly on hunting. Part of the household income continues to derive from hunting and fishing. The prices of sealskins vary according to their size and quality. The skins are measured and judged by the local KNI officials in Tasiilaq, as well as in the settlements where the hunters deliver them to the small KNI offices. The difficult position of the sealskin trade in the world market stimulated the Greenland trading company to establish strict requirements with respect to the quality of the sealskins, such as thorough washing of the skins with soap, and intensified scraping to render the skins more greaseproof. Skins of poor quality, such as those of moulting seals, are no longer accepted, and skins with many scratches or repaired bullet-holes are assessed in lower-quality categories, and thus fetch a lower price (see B. Robbe 1975 and 1976; A. Nooter 1986; Buijs 1986; Hovelsrud-Broda 1997).¹⁴

The KNI does not sell these skins on the open market, but delivers them to a private company, Great Greenland in Qaqortoq, South Greenland. Great Greenland sells part of the sealskins at the auction in Denmark, but the greater number is processed in the Great Greenland Tannery where sealskins are also painted. Great Greenland has a sewing workshop in Qaqortoq. An independent private company, Eskimo Pels, where seal-fur clothing is designed, is situated at Narsaq, South Greenland. Great Greenland sells tanned and painted sealskins to sewing workshops all over Greenland.

Price fluctuations in sealskins depend on world-market prices. Actions against seal hunting and boycotts of the sealskin trade by animal welfare organizations such as WWF (World Wildlife Fund) and Greenpeace have affected the value of commodities produced by the Inuit (Nooter 1984; Wenzel 1985:3; Buijs and Nooter 1987; F. Lynge 1992; Grønland Kalaallit Nunaat 1996; Hovelsrud-Broda 1997). After intensive anti-fur campaigns in 1967, 1977-1978, and again in 1982, there was a dramatic drop in sealskin prices (Nooter 1984:133; Buijs and Nooter 1987). The *Hjemmestyre* decided to maintain the prices artificially at acceptable levels, and set higher prices for sealskins in 1994. In this way, hunting was and still is subsidized (Grønland Kalaallit Nunaat 1996:462, table 5.3 and 5.4; see also A. Nooter 1986:24-25). Although hunters' families received less for the skins they sold to the trading company, their decrease in income was limited by the intervention of the *Hjemmestyre*. In 1995 the hunters received an average price of DKr 354 for sealskin.

In addition to seal hunting, polar-bear hunting has always formed an important part of the economy of the East Greenlanders. Once hunters proudly dressed in polar-bear trousers. The quotas for hunting polar bears were set by international regulations with the aim of protecting the polar-bear population. The numbers of polar bears hunted in East Greenland are quite low (about ten to fifteen polar-bear skins are sold annually to the KNI). The value of the polar-bear pelts has always been considerable.¹⁵

Hunting is not the only source of income in Greenland. Today, commercial fishing is of much greater importance for the economy of Greenland than the cash income from hunting.¹⁶ However, fishing yields in East Greenland are low compared to the yields from

hunting; in 1985, 91% of the total sales of products derived from hunting, and only 9% out of fishing (Lanting 1995:106-107). The ratio of proceeds from fishing/hunting fluctuates strongly because of the differences in water temperature, causing very diverse cod-fishing yields from year to year.

According to the research that Grete Hovelsrud-Broda (1997:57-58) conducted in the 1990s in a small settlement in East Greenland, about 23% of the household's income derived from hunting in 1994. Whereas 35% came from institutional transfers, and 42% was earned out of wages. She argues that there are three things needed in a household: "a man who can hunt; a woman who can process the catch; and cash to facilitate the production."¹⁷

All those wanting to participate in hunting activities must obtain hunting licenses from the municipality. In cooperation with the fishers' and hunters' association (KNAPK)¹⁸, the municipality takes decisions on the applications for hunting licenses. There are two types of hunting license: one for professional hunters (*piniartoq*), usually full-time hunters, and one for spare-time or leisure hunters (*sunngiffimmi aallaaniartoq*), usually part-time (weekend) hunters, who combine hunting with a paid job. The licenses have to be renewed each year (Grønland Kalaallit Nunaat Statistisk Årbog 1996:92-93). There were about 3100 full-time hunters and 3900 part-time hunters in 1995, most of them living in the small settlements on the North-west and East coast.¹⁹ East Greenland counts about four hundred registered hunters (141 full-time hunters and 254 part-time hunters) in the year 2000.²⁰

A strong continuity can be seen in economic activities. Today, hunters sell their surplus of cod and salmon, as well as a surplus of seal meat. Hunting has gradually developed from a subsistence activity into a partly commercial activity.

In the East Greenlandic village of Kuummiit, fishing has developed the most, thanks to good halibut and cod fishing conditions. A salt factory was established here in 1963 (Robert-Lamblin 1986:112-114). This created new wage-earning employment for six to twenty-three people in the factory, and a cash income for the fishermen who sell their catch to the factory. In the village of Tiniteqilaaq, small-scale commercial fishing also developed, but the yields were less than those in Kuummiit.²¹

In addition to commercial fishing, which is still underdeveloped in East Greenland²² mainly because of local climatic conditions, fishing for domestic provisions is important. The families fish for *ammassa* (capelin; *Mallotus villosus*), *qivaarit* (sculpin; *Acanthocottus scorpius*), Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), trout (*Salmotrutta*), Arctic char (*Salvelinus alpinus*), cod (*Boreogadus saida* and *Gadus morrhua*), halibut (*Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*) and red fish (*Sebastes marinus*). They eat the fish cooked, and they also dry and freeze it for winter supplies. Fish is still a welcome supplement to the varying yields from hunting.

New employment and additional sources of income

At the beginning of the twenty-first century there are hardly any full-time hunters left who still depend on hunting as their only source of income. The costs of hunting equipment

and the costs of living are rising, but hunting yields are not increasing at the same rate. This discrepancy results in a need for a supplementary cash income provided by a paid job.

The first skilled East Greenlanders to have paid jobs were catechists, appointed during the 1930s. For a long time, East Greenlanders only had access to unskilled jobs as handymen, labourers or servants (*kippat*) in the homes of the Danes and West Greenlandic civil servants.

After World War II, Danes or West Greenlanders still occupied most of the skilled jobs. New social problems emerged, such as unemployment, alcoholism, suicide among the youngsters, poverty among the hunters' families, and an emerging generation gap (Gessain 1970; Robert-Lamblin 1986:116-117).

During the second half of the twentieth century, East Greenlanders worked permanently in the trading posts, shops and post offices, and they were employed as harbour labourers, loading and unloading the ships. Since East Greenlanders began to receive western education, they started to work in the medical and social services, in the hospital, the local medical posts as *jordmor*, in the schools and day-care installations and children's homes, and at the municipality (see also Robert-Lamblin 1986:116).

At the end of the twentieth century, an increasing number of East Greenlanders began to occupy modern wage-earning positions. Most jobs were available in the commercial trading sector in the shops, warehouses and harbours, medical sector, and private enterprises (Robert-Lamblin 1986:117). Some parts of these sectors are subsidized by the municipality or by the Greenlandic government. About a third of the people working for the Greenlandic government or municipality in the Tasiilaq district are "individuals born in Greenland" (two-thirds of the employees are born outside Greenland).²³ The dominance of foreigners, individuals born outside Greenland, still continues (Grønland Kalaallit Nunaat 1996:496, table 12.3a).

Workshop for handicraft

"Outside their own area East Greenlanders have required a reputation as sculptors, more particularly as "tupilak" carvers. Most of the small wood and ivory carvings owned by private collectors are acquired by the KGH for sale in West Greenland, in airport shops, or in Denmark, are actually made by Ammassalik craftsmen." (Robert-Lamblin 1986:115.)

The production of art began at the beginning of colonization, developing further during inter-ethnic contacts between Tunumiit and European and American whalers, traders, colonizers and researchers at the end of the nineteenth century, and increasing in the 1930s. Stimulated by demands from an outside market, a small-scale handicraft industry developed in the Tasiilaq district in the 1960s, when the KGH (now Pilersuisoq A/S) began to buy carvings for export. According to Robert-Lamblin (1986:115), the rise of a small art-producing sector to meet foreign demands stimulated a certain specialization in handicraft. East Greenlandic men carved sculptures and masks, whereas women made fur, leather and bead products.²⁴

At the beginning of the commercialization of handicrafts, carvers used raw materials from their own environment. Materials such as driftwood, narwhal or walrus ivory, mammal bones and soapstone were traditionally used for making hunting implements and household tools. The carvers had great skill in processing these materials. During the 1960s, the KGH began to import sperm-whale teeth from Norway, Iceland, Japan and Africa in order to develop the carving trade. The carvers sell the products of their domestic work to the trade company or to private buyers, but the latter pay a much higher price than the trading company (Robert-Lamblin 1986:115-116).

The restrictions on the hunting of sperm whale, and the ban on the trade in animal products of endangered species in the 1980s, put an end to the import of teeth into Greenland, and redirected the export of the carver's products to foreign markets. Nowadays, craftsmen make use of indigenous materials that also derive from other parts of Greenland, such as reindeer antlers, mammal bones, musk ox horns, polar-bear teeth and claws, soapstone, and imported materials such as cow horns and wood.

Since the Pilersuisoq A/S stopped selling handicrafts in the middle of the 1990s, the carvers (of which some work at the crafts workshops 'Stunk') sold their products directly to the customers, to the hotels, or to the sewing workshop Skæven, all of which sell local art products nowadays.²⁵

Some of the women of East Greenland are experts in the preparation of sealskins and in sewing garments out of fur and cloth, decorated with beads. This work, based on ancient Inuit traditions, is often done at home. During the 1990s, service buildings were constructed in the settlements. These contain facilities such as hot and cold running water, centrally heated workplaces for women and men, as well as washing machines and showers. Nowadays, the women of Tiniteqilaaq can do the scraping, washing, stretching of the hides in a framework, and the drying of the sealskins in these rooms. Since small expenses are passed on to the women, the majority of them still prepare the skins at home.

Sealskins are used for making boots (*kammiit*), slippers, handbags, sewing kits, children's clothing, belts, and mittens. Today, the domestic products are often made out of black-painted sealskins, whereas skin mosaic is still frequently applied, and beadwork is still popular in modern designs.

The sewing workshop 'Skæven'

In the middle of the 1980s the sewing workshop (*messertapik*) 'Skæven' was established in Tasiilaq. The municipality here took the initiative of establishing Skæven as a project for creating new jobs. The municipality still subsidizes Skæven, and in 1999 provided storage rooms in a new building near the heliport. Skæven's shop remained in the old centre of Tasiilaq. Two permanent jobs for a leader and a substitute have been provided, while four employees work on an hourly basis.²⁶ The first female leader of the sewing workshop was of West Greenlandic origin. Her successor is Danish. Skæven's leader is accountable for its finances and policy to an official from Tasiilaq's municipality. In consultation with the municipality, the sewing workshop is developing fur products, which are not too time-consuming and are priced according to modern western-oriented price/quality standards, in order to be profitable (Ammassallip Kommunia Budget 1998:6 Normativer, Budgetforslag 2001, interviews).²⁷

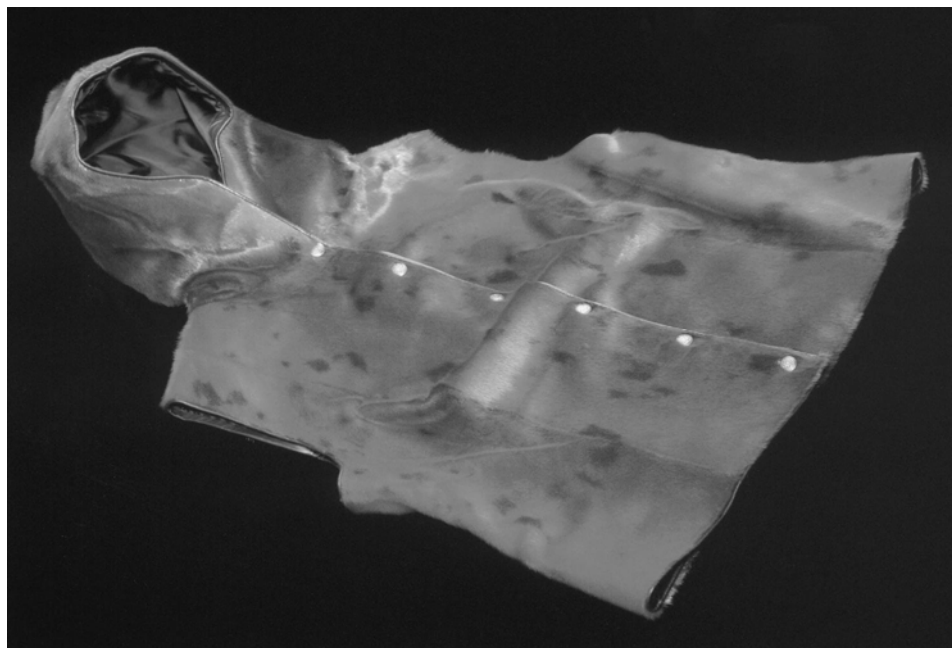


Figure 87. A modern woman's vest made of harp-seal fur (nalanginnaq; *Phoca groenlandicus*) painted orange, one of Skaeven's new products. (RMV 2001.) Some of the modern young women in Tasiilaq wore new products from Skæven at special occasions, such as a culture festival in Tasiilaq, 21 June 2001.

New materials as well as traditional Greenlandic materials are used in the sewing workshop. Different types of sealskins, dog furs, black-painted seal furs, or sealskins painted in shiny gray or bright red are used. Foreign materials such as painted cow leather, various types of cloth used for linings and edgings, plastic buttons and zippers, and metal fasteners, are used in coats, handbags and belts. These materials are used for modern garments designed in the sewing workshop. The supervisor there decides on the development of new designs in cooperation with the seamstresses. According to the supervisor's information, there is no standardization of the price and range of garments between the sewing workshops all over Greenland, but some current products such as fur mittens are available throughout the country at comparable prices. Skæven focuses on the production of seal-fur garments made out of tanned, and sometimes painted, sealskins bought from the tanneries of Great Greenland in Qaqortoq.²⁸ Skæven does not use sealskins prepared locally by the hunters' families, since the skins and garments made out of them smell bad, deteriorate rapidly in countries with a warmer climate, and are not as comfortable to wear as the commercially tanned clothes.

The majority of Skæven's designs are made out of the tanned skins of ringed seals or *miiġattak* (*Phoca hispida*) but skins of harp seals or *nalanginnaq* (*Phoca groenlandica*) are

also used. Dog furs, and the furs of rabbits, white and grey Arctic foxes (*Alopex lagopus*) and Arctic hares (*Lepus arcticus*) are used for edging. Solvej, the leader of Skæven in 2001, states: "I prefer to make women's garments out of the tanned skins of ringed seal because these skins are relatively thin, and garments made out of them can be used indoors, and they look graceful, since they fit beautifully around the body." Because of the flexible qualities of the tanned and sometimes painted skins of ringed seals, these skins are also used for small garments, such as mittens and children's clothing, garments for indoor use, and women's garments.

The tanned and painted seal-fur garments are of a modern design and are often very beautiful, appealing and attractive. Obviously, Skæven is focussing on a group of potential modern customers. The sewing workshop no longer produces festive bead-collar costumes, traditional sealskin boots, or sealskin kayak anoraks, and it is not possible to order these special products. The supervisor can, however, refer customers to local seamstresses able to produce these traditional garments. At Skæven, a customer can order garments to be made specially, but these garments can only be made out of tanned skins purchased at Great Greenland's tannery. Occasionally, Skæven obtains homemade garments from local seamstresses in Tasiilaq. These local products are not ordered, but women make them on their own initiative and drop by at Skæven to sell their products. A negligible number of these homemade products, such as slippers, arm bands, bead hair clips, bead Christmas decorations (Christmas bells), is bought by Skæven and sold to Skæven's customers.

New fur products include seal-fur tea cosies and fancy fur caps called 'Zivago caps'. Slippers and mittens, made out of painted seal fur and long-haired dog fur in various colours, are popular, among East Greenlandic customers as well. Fur caps, mittens and slippers are available in many different sizes during summer and winter. Baby clothing such as fur boots and slippers, fur anoraks and fur combination suits are also sold. Examples of women's fancy blouses, waistcoats, skirts and scarves made out of seal fur or of felt, are available only in a few sizes to try on and they can be ordered to size. Customers can order white cotton anoraks and *amaatit*, but the proper white cotton cloth is sometimes unavailable. Men's fur coats, boots and trousers, especially, are not stocked, but are sewn to order. The majority of Skæven's products are for women and children, whereas only a few men's products are stocked, or produced after ordering.²⁹

The new fur products developed by Skæven are aesthetically attractive, and are very popular, not only with Europeans working in East Greenland and their visiting family and guests, or with tourists, but also with the younger Greenlandic women. In particular, women who earn their own money, or who have husbands with well-paid jobs, and who can afford Skæven's products are the customers of Skæven. Skæven plays a leading role in the innovation and development of new clothing traditions within East Greenland. (See also page 178 ff. this volume.)

Tourism in East Greenland

There has been tourism in Greenland since the 1960s, but it acquired no great significance within Greenland's society. Now that the Arctic is becoming increasingly popular among

Europeans and Americans as a holiday destination, tourism in Greenland has potential for development.³⁰ The Greenlandic Government is stimulating tourism in order to create new sources of income, and to decrease dependence on fishing in West Greenland. Politicians stress the advantages of tourism as a type of industry that is friendly to culture and environment alike. The income out of tourism aimed at is half a milliard DKr, and the number of tourism-related jobs should reach two to three thousand in number. "It is not clear how many tourists and which type of tourists will visit Greenland to make these visions come true" (Grønland Kalaallit Nunaat 1996:120). There are between 35.000 and 61.000 tourists visiting Greenland every year, attracted especially by its unspoilt nature providing a glimpse of an unknown animal life, drifting icebergs, and fascinating landscapes. There are attractive and promising outdoor activities such as skiing, hiking, snowboarding, whale-viewing, and dog sledging, summer and winter camping, and tours across the inland ice. Possibilities for city and culture tourist activities, such as visiting the Greenlandic museums, shopping in the Greenlandic art workshops, or visiting native drum-dance performances, are still limited.³¹

Although tourism is developing, there are still problems to be solved in this branch of the future economy. There are problems in the hotel and transport branch, such as the high prices of transport and accommodation in Greenland; transport problems connected with Arctic weather conditions; the limited tourist accommodation in the small settlements; and problems related to the small number of skilled tourist agents and tourist guides (Grønland Kalaallit Nunaat 1996:120; Ten Cate 2003).

The organization Greenland Tourism A/S, a Home Rule organization, was established in 1992, and this coordinates, organizes and develops tourism in Greenland. In 1991 a privately owned 'Santa Claus of Greenland Foundation', which promotes the Greenlandic Santa Claus and Greenlandic Christmas products, was established. Since 1994 several Tourism A/S organizations were initiated in South and West Greenland (Grønland Kalaallit Nunaat 1996:121-122).

Tourism in East Greenland is still in its infancy. The tourist agent of Tasiilaq's municipality estimated the number of tourists visiting East Greenland at six thousand each year in the Tasiilaq district, and c. four thousand in Kulusuk.³² About two or three cruise ships visit Tasiilaq's harbour. The tourists arriving with cruise ships all wear jackets of the same type and colour (orange or red), and it is very clear that they come from the vessel when they roam around the village or do their shopping. The main existing facilities are the private enterprise Arctic Wonderland Hotel Angmagssalik with accommodation (eighty beds) for over night stay, and the small-scale tourist organization Tuning Incoming Agency, a European-East Greenlandic partnership, which has accommodation in 'the Red House Hotel' (with c. twenty beds). In 2001 a third set of accommodation opened: the Nansen Hotel (c. thirty beds), a joint initiative on the part of the municipality and private investors. Tourism in East Greenland is also increasing. Not only is the number of tourists visiting East Greenland growing; the extent of accommodation has been increased. Ammassalik's Hotel and the Red House Hotel have been enlarged during the last few years, and in 1996 a hotel was built in Kulusuk. There are also plans for building cheap accommodation for hiking tourists in the near future in Ammassalik.

The hotels organize dog-sledge and boat tours in cooperation with East Greenlandic tourist guides.³³ The municipality of Tasiilaq is stimulating the development of tourism in East Greenland in order to generate new income and employment within the municipality.³⁴ Employment, both direct and indirect, is developed in direct tourist-related jobs.

“We have prioritized the initiation of a handicraft and skin production. The local inhabitants’ income derives primarily from the production of souvenirs, dog-sledge driving and navigation, and seasonal work for the hotel.”

(Turismen i Ammassalik 1997:3; translation from Danish by C. Buijs.)

In the long run, the development of tourism will probably have a strong influence on the art and handicraft-producing sector, the sewing workshop, and clothing production.

Social welfare

Social security in East Greenland consists of old-age pensions, sickness benefits, unemployment benefits, disability benefits, pregnancy and maternity leave and payments, child and family allowances, and adoptions benefits.

At the end of the twentieth century the number of people aged sixty or more is rapidly increasing in Greenland. According to the Greenland statistics their number will rise by one third in the period 1995 to 2005. In the near future the claims laid on pensions, the costs of home care for the elderly, and the number of places in old peoples’ homes will increase rapidly.

Nowadays, people aged between eighteen and fifty-nine years can make a claim to *førtidspension* (early pensions), and those aged sixty or more will have *alderspension* (old-age pension). Early pensions can be allowed when paid jobs have physical, psychological or social causes affecting early retirements (Grønland Kalaallit Nunaat 1996:385).³⁵

At the beginning of colonization, the distribution of food provisions in times of scarcity provided social security. The distribution of food was still part of this social security system during the 1960s.³⁶

“In a community like Tiniteqilâq it is not at all difficult to identify such cases [families who run out of food and fuel], because everyone knows when anyone else has taken a seal and when they have not. Sigrid Jonathansen [the wife of a prominent East Greenlandic hunter] visited the families she thought must be out of food, and the head of the family could then go to the K.G.H. store for a free food package containing the most important staples, such as margarine, flour, rice, tea, oatmeal, and sugar and fuel in the form of coal. If necessary, a package of this kind can be obtained every week. Hunters find it very difficult to accept this relief, and are extremely reluctant to resort to it.” (Nooter 1976:82-83.)

Unemployment benefits in money gradually replaced the food distributions. Nowadays there is economic aid for paid employees who are members of the SIK (*Grønlands Arbejder Sammenslutning*), and is based on fixed taxes in cases of unemployment or absence owing to illness (Grønland Kalaallit Nunaat 1996:384). To support low-income families with children, the government pays child allowances for children under the age of 16.³⁷

Nowadays, special payments are possible for baptisms and confirmations. Parents of adoptive children receive compensation for special costs, such as travelling expenses and accommodation, for collecting a child, to a maximum of three times the normal amount of the annual child allowances (Grønland Kalaallit Nunaat 1996:388).

The costs of day-care (*vuggestue*) for children between birth and two years old, is based on the parents' income.³⁸ Children aged three to six can have a place in the *børnehave*, the costs of which also vary according to the parents' income.³⁹ Between the ages of six and c.fourteen the children attend the primary school.⁴⁰

East Greenland has the highest numbers of out-placed children registered in the children's home (*børnehjem*): about fifteen percent of the total number of children under seventeen years of age in 1992. Care for registered children can be provided by families or by the children's home, both organized on a twenty-four-hour base. The majority of the registrations are voluntary, with the parents' consent. There are various reasons for out-placement of children. A child's handicap, need for special care, the parents' alcoholism, difficulties in family relationships, familial violence, housing and care problems play a role (Grønland Kalaallit Nunaat 1996:378-380).

According to Nooter, social welfare was of essential significance for the people of East Greenland during the 1960s and 1970s:

"The greater part of the total annual income of the inhabitants of Tiniteqilâq comes, however, from social welfare, old-age pensions, and government allowances for children. The large sums involved are shown by the KGH figures. During 1967, for instance, hunters are paid 91.149,40 crowns for skins and 33.010,60 for cod, but the total turnover of the store was 353.759,70 crowns. This disproportion is actually even greater, because purchases were also made in Angmagssalik or orders sent directly to Denmark. But although these figures suggest that Tiniteqilâq is a social-welfare community, hunting is still of fundamental importance to these people; mentally, they are still hunters." (Nooter 1972/73:166.)

At the end of the twentieth century, almost one third of the municipality's expenditure is spent on the social sector.⁴¹ The largest sums are spent on education and culture and the municipality administration sector. The social allowances are of especially great importance for the smaller settlements, since they compensate for the usually low incomes of the hunters families. Consequently, child allowances, pensions and unemployment payments are still essential to the East Greenland economy, and in fact they make it possible to earn a living out of hunting (Ammassallip Kommunia Budget 1998:1; Hovelsrud-Broda 1997:83,100).

The Lutheran church

During the second half of the twentieth century many school buildings and churches were built.⁴² On 1 January 1993 the Lutheran Church in Greenland received the status of an independent Bishopric with its own Bishop.⁴³ Since October 1993, the Episcopacy and Bishop's office in Nuuk has been responsible for the religious functions. The Central Church Administration is integrated into the Directorate of

Culture, Education and Church at the Administration Center of the Greenlandic government in Nuuk.

In 1994, twenty-nine clergymen were appointed. The ministers are assisted by catechists educated at the seminary in Nuuk, or by unskilled catechists.⁴⁴ Since 1985 the Church has aimed to have at least one skilled catechist in each of the villages to perform the Church service.

At the end of the twentieth century the church was dominated by Greenlandic ministers and catechists, whereas at the very beginning of baptism the ministers were Danish, assisted by West Greenlandic catechists.⁴⁵ In 2001 the first East Greenlandic minister was appointed in Tasiilaq. The Lutheran Church is also popular in the small settlements. Important points of transition in life such as birth, confirmations, weddings, and death, are celebrated in church.

New education

The first western education in East Greenland was provided by missionaries and catechists in the first half of the twentieth century. "Candidates for baptism (of all ages) were the first to learn to read West Greenlandic (the official language of the country, used in church, and in books and newspapers)." (Robert-Lamblin 1986:131.) Church and school were closely connected. Nowadays, the school and church (or school chapel) in each village are still situated in one building. Until recently the church catechist was also one of the schoolteachers, or even the school director.⁴⁶ Next to the catechist, there were hunter-teachers (or *læser*, 'readers') active in the small settlement, who had received no education as teachers.

The West Greenlandic minister Otto Rosing trained the first six East Greenlandic teachers (apart from Karale, Karl Andreassen, see previous chapter this volume). Only half of them remained schoolteachers.⁴⁷ The first Danish schoolteacher was appointed in Ammassalik in 1953. The number of Danish teachers rapidly increased in the 1960s. Also at the schools in the settlements, first in Kuummiit and Kulusuk in 1963 and 1964, Danish teachers were appointed. At the beginning of the school system only skilled and successful East Greenlandic hunters could afford to spare the time to teach children and perform services in church. Later on, there was a considerable change in this situation. The Danish teachers appointed in the 1960s earned much more money than their Greenlandic colleagues (Nooter 1976:62).

In the 1960s, the young East Greenlanders aged between seven and fourteen followed the seven-year curriculum, whereas fifteen-year-olds furthered their education in Tasiilaq with one year of schooling. Two special classes were established for Danish children in Tasiilaq (Robert-Lamblin 1986:132).

In the 1970s, school was extended with a nursery school for six-years-olds, and a further one to three years of schooling (totalling eight to ten years of education) was pursued in West Greenland or Denmark. The Danish and Greenlandic authorities laid great emphasis on education with the aim of gradually integrating the Greenlandic population into modern life. Education was necessary to create a small professional labour force in East Greenland.

Language education presented great difficulties for the East Greenlandic children, since education was often provided in Danish by teachers unable to speak either East Greenlandic or West Greenlandic. Schoolchildren also had to learn foreign languages such as English and German. During the 1970s, there was an increasing preference in small settlements for teaching young children exclusively in Greenlandic for the first years of school.⁴⁸ East Greenlandic children first had to learn the West Greenlandic language so that they could be instructed in their school subjects. This language deficiency caused a relatively low educational standard in the East Greenlandic schools (Robert-Lamblin 1986:132-133).

During the 1980s and 1990s, efforts were made to improve the education in East Greenland. Today, the youngest children begin school with a pre-school (*forskole*) year, followed by an eight-year primary school education (*grundskole*). Pupils can choose to go to school (*forsættelsesskole*) for another two years (Grønland Kalaallit Nunaat 1996:299-301).⁴⁹ West Greenlandic is the country's official language and the schoolbooks are written in this language, but there are increasing numbers of East Greenlandic teachers who teach in their mother tongue. Danish is the second language and is taught in school. In Tasiilaq the students can choose between a class with (West) Greenlandic as the first language, or a class with Danish as the language of instruction. The majority of the Greenlandic-speaking families opted for the Greenlandic education. Sometimes parents preferred the Danish classes, in order to give their children better chances of a higher position in society.⁵⁰ There are about forty teachers in 1997, of which twenty-seven are Danish and thirteen Greenlandic.⁵¹ Schools in the small villages, such as Tiniteqilaq, may have no Danish teacher. Here an East Greenlandic teacher provides instruction in the Danish language,⁵² and in 2001 two Danish teachers were appointed.

The teaching of traditional Greenlandic professions such as hunting and the sewing of skins was introduced in the 1960s. For centuries Inuit children had learned the ancestral hunting techniques, skin preparation and sewing skills from their parents. During school hours, boys had no opportunity to learn the hunting techniques necessary to provide for their families in the future, and girls stopped learning how to prepare animal skins. These skills were therefore introduced into the curriculum. Today, the sewing of skins and beadwork form part of the lessons given by Greenlandic women instructors, whereas local hunters teach their skills. However, in 1997 hunting and sewing/beadwork lessons were cancelled in Tiniteqilaq.⁵³

It is no longer necessary for Greenlandic students who embark on secondary higher education to travel to Denmark. Higher education and technical and vocational training have been established in the larger cities in Greenland, such as Asiaat and Qaqortoq or Sisimiut (Grønland Kalaallit Nunaat 1996:302). Nuuk is the town with the most advanced educational institutions, for example the academy of art, the seminary, and Greenland's university (see Grønland Kalaallit Nunaat 1996:302-31).

The interface between politics and economy

Nowadays, economists and politicians in Nuuk plan the economy of Greenland in consultation with their colleagues in Denmark. Political decisions often direct local

economies, and vice versa, economy influences political decisions. At the end of the twentieth century, Greenlandic and Danish politicians reached agreement on the three main targets for Greenland's development:

- 1) Greenland will develop into an 'ordinary land', i.e., a country that no longer requires a large-scale subsidy from Denmark.
- 2) Greenland will have a standard of living equal to that of Denmark.
- 3) Denmark will provide Greenland with annual financial aid sufficient to enable Greenland to maintain a standard of living comparable to that of Denmark, until economic production in Greenland reaches a level more or less comparable with that of Danish production (Paldam 1994:13-14).

The goals of the Greenlandic politicians for the future of Greenland, including East Greenland, are based on three basic assumptions. 1) Greenland's economy will be based on its remarkable natural environment (fishery, mining and tourism). 2) Greenlanders do not initiate private businesses, and therefore the state and the municipalities will be, and must be, the initiators of all economic activities in Greenland. 3) Greenland is an isolated land, far away from the rest of the world. These assumptions are based on the idea that it is more complicated for Greenland to generate industries than it is for cities of the same size in southern regions.

According to Paldam (1994:18-19), the domination and exclusive initiative of the state and municipality is a tradition in Greenland, and is an obstacle to the development of the country. Private initiative is necessary for the development of a private sector.

Greenland has a large public sector, a small secondary sector, and a large traditional primary sector. The wealthy public sector spends almost the same amount of money as Greenland's National Product. There is a high wage rate and a high level of concealed unemployment, especially in the small settlements. Greenland's economy was booming in the 1970s, when industrial fishery was very successful and the shrimp fishing was expanding at a vast rate. In the 1990s the mine at Maarmorilik closed, and mining activities in Greenland came to an end. There are, however, possibilities for developing mining again in the future. Since the 1980s, Greenland's economy has been stagnating (Paldam 1994:19-22). The annual subsidies from Denmark reach up to fifty percent of Greenland's National Product. Financial support from Denmark creates an acceptable standard of living in Greenland, and the municipalities also profit from Danish subsidies. It permits what is called the *bygdepolitik* (settlement policy), and allows approximately nine thousand inhabitants to live a relatively traditional life in small settlements and it keeps the remote areas inhabited (Paldam 1994:23).

The long-term development of Greenland, led by Greenland's politicians of the Home Rule, aims to increase Greenland's own production and to reduce the Danish subsidy, yet how will Greenland close the gap between expenditure and income? The Greenlandic *Hjemmestyre* explores the ins and out of new activities such as tourism. Political issues such as investment in industry, the hunter-families' low income, and the policy on hunting, the inequality between Greenlanders and Danes working in Greenland, and future independence, occupy a high position on the political agenda.

Change in political and social organization

During the war, Greenland was separated from Denmark, the Americans taking over the organization and administration of the country. Protection and isolation could no longer been maintained during this war period, and there was increased international interest in East Greenland and in the air routes over the North Pole area. Meteorological information from East Greenland became important to the international air traffic.⁵⁴ “An American radio-meteorological station was set up in Tasiilaq in 1941. In 1942 a military base was built in the heart of the Ammassalik district [at Ikkatteq, between Sermiligaaq and Kuummiit], so that planes circulating between Europe and America could refuel in emergencies: up to 800 Americans were based there.” (Robert-Lamblin 1986:12.)⁵⁵

After World War II there were major changes in the political, economic and social structure of East Greenland, and development programmes from Denmark were begun. “Great changes had taken place in Greenland and bold measures were needed to meet the new situation.” (Jenness 1967:94). Better housing, schools, hospitals, infrastructure, fisheries etc, were needed, and developments were organized in five-year plans.

In 1953, Greenland achieved the status of a Province of Denmark and was no longer a colony. In 1957, the former local council of East Greenland (*Østgrønlandernes Råd*) was transformed into a district council (*Distriktsråd*) of East Greenland with thirteen members, elected by the local population of the district. They succeeded the Danes and West Greenlanders, who held political positions. The *Distriktsråd* was chaired by an *Inspektør*, who sent the district’s demands to the *Landsråd*, the Provincial Council in Nuuk. In addition, the *Fangersråd*, the council of hunters, became active (Robert-Lamblin 1986:14; see also Jenness 1967).

In 1963, a municipal council (*Kommunalbestyrelse*) within the Ammassalik district was elected for four years; this comprised a *Kommunalbestyrer* and ten representatives of the villages in the district, following the West Greenlandic model. This council managed the local affairs for the population of the Tasiilaq district. One representative of the municipal council was elected as representative for the Provincial Council or *Landsråd* of Greenland, seated in Nuuk, and East Greenland was thus directly represented in Nuuk (Nooter 1976:64-65; Robert-Lamblin 1986:14)⁵⁶.

“After 1964 the functions of the *inspektør* were divided among various offices: a head of trade (i.e. of Den Kongelige Grønlandske Handel or KGH, the Royal Greenland Trade Department); a *kæmner* (local administrative representative of the state, treasurer, paymaster-general and secretary of the municipal council); the magistrate and police representative. All of these have their own offices and staff. A local court of justice for Ammassalik, identical to those on the West Coast, was also established in 1964.” (Robert-Lamblin 1986:14.)

Several political and economic positions were created in the second half of the twentieth century. In the settlements the position of storekeeper was combined with the function of *udstedbestyrer*. Official announcements from Tasiilaq were passed on to the village inhabitants by the *udstedbestyrer* (Nooter 1976:63).

“After World War II, the Danes appointed one hunter in each settlement as *Kommunefoged*. This function brought only a small salary (in 1967, 45 crowns a month), and was far from a full-time job. The *Kommunefoged* is expected to intervene when difficulties arise between people in the settlement and to arbitrate differences of opinion to a satisfactory compromise. In serious cases he is to notify the police in the district seat (for East Greenland this is Angmagssalik) (..)” (Nooter 1976:61.)

In 1975 an East Greenlander was elected as the first mayor, the chief official of the Tasiilaq municipality. He was re-elected in 1979, the year in which greater autonomy in the administration of the budgets was granted to the local Greenland councils. The power of the *kæmner* (municipal treasurer) decreased (Robert-Lamblin 1986:14-15). In the 1970s the political parties of Greenland also became active in East Greenland. In 1979 self government for Greenland (*Hjemmestyre*) was established, initiating a period of Greenlandization, directed by the politicians and intellectuals in Nuuk.

Change in political structure

These new political and economic organizations were supplemented by the creation of new posts, including the position of *jordmor* or nurse-midwife and that of the teacher-minister (these latter functions later being separated). New associations and clubs were also created, such as the hunters' and fishermen's association, the social club, the temperance society, the club of elders, the choral society, the sports association, and the boy scouts organization (see Nooter 76:61, 95-109). These organizations to some extent changed the social relationships and political structure of the settlements in East Greenland. The skilled hunters *piniartorsuat*, were no longer the leaders within their communities. Now, the organizations and their chairmen introduced by the Danes were in charge. West Greenlanders and Danes occupied some of these functions, especially within the district capital. At the end of the twentieth century, an increasing number of East Greenlanders were playing a leading role in the socio-political life of East Greenland. Nowadays, officials with new functions and paid jobs, such as the official leaders of the service buildings, the electricians responsible for the water supply systems in the settlements, are gaining in influence and prestige. Often these officials are also the local leaders of the political parties, and are often successful hunters, descended from a few leading families.

Greenlanders and Danes

According to Robert Petersen (1995:121), in the second half of the twentieth century, the 'Danization period', the inequality of payments between Danes and Greenlanders became a political issue. In the 1950s, the period in which large areas of Greenland became built up, the salaries of Danish construction workers, administrators, teachers, medical doctors, etc., were higher than those of their Greenlandic colleagues in order to attract well-educated employees from Denmark to Greenland.

“In the midst of the 1960s, this kind of discrimination was legalized by passing the “birthplace criterion” in the Greenland Civil Servants Act,

according to which civil servants born in Greenland would receive only 85% of the Danish basic salary. With further advantages for the imported civil servants, the differences grew, and of course affected wage earners at all levels.” (R. Petersen 1995:23.)

It was assumed that Danes would not come to work in Greenland if they received the same salaries as Greenlandic employees, which were much lower than those paid in Denmark. The inequality in salaries was created and maintained in order to develop the country. After self-government was established, this inequality became increasingly unacceptable, but as early as the 1960s relationships between Greenlanders and Danes had become polarized. Consequently the decision was taken to place all salaries on the same level, based on the Danish standard of income. This situation was maintained by large subsidies from Denmark (Paldam 1994: 36 ff, 52; see also H. Kleivan 1969: 141 ff and R. Petersen 1995:123-124).

Inequality between Greenlanders and Danes also derives from the differences in education between Danes and Greenlanders. Robert Petersen argues that the attitude of Danish civil servants working in Greenland was that they were helping the Greenlanders, who were believed to be incapable of performing the job themselves.

“In Greenland, it were often the educated Greenlanders who accepted these ideas. But it is not only in Greenland that the people adopted the thoughts of the colonizers (...). Some groups were even thankful for having been colonized, for being Christianized, educated, and for having a subordinate job, etc”. (R. Petersen 1995:123.)

Many Greenlanders are successful as house painters, carpenters, and plumbers, and are employed in house building and road-construction works, but almost no Greenlanders in these branches have their own private business, or are in charge of a business.⁵⁷ Greenlanders are even less well represented among professional occupations, for instance as mathematicians, economists, lawyers or medical doctors. Today, the education gap between Danes and Greenlanders is decreasing, and a growing number of Greenlanders are finding good jobs (Paldam 1994:117-118; R. Petersen 1995). Gradually, the relationships between Greenlanders and Danes are shifting towards greater equality, reflecting the changing relationships between Greenland and Denmark. Jonathan Motzfeldt, Greenland’s premier, stated at the twentieth anniversary of the introduction of the Home Rule:

“We have a positive relationship with Denmark, a relationship that is a source of joy to us. This process will not be brought to a halt. The *annoraaq* – or cloak if you like – of foreign policy is still too tight-fitting, but I have the promise from the Danish Prime Minister, that also that can be managed on the basis of mutual respect and recognition.” (Motzfeldt 1999:3.)

West Greenlanders and East Greenlanders

According to Robert Petersen, the introduction of Home Rule in Greenland was considered the end of the colonial period. “But many practices of the colonial period were maintained”, such as a uniform price system within Greenland. The prices of commodities

were the same in Greenland, regardless of the place or settlement in which one lived. It became a cause of debate, influenced by the economic problems resulting from the campaigns against seal hunting in Europe and America.

"The public began to participate in a debate, in which some parties of the Home Rule parliament proposed a price differentiation according to transportation costs that would affect the small communities in the fringe areas." (R. Petersen 1995:125.) A change in the price-policy and in the attitude towards the small isolated settlements may cause the abandonment of a number of small villages. There was already 'an intellectual flow' of younger Greenlanders heading towards the bigger towns. On the local level, these developments caused a feeling of internal colonialism. Politicians in Nuuk are imposing their influence in the settlements, the "periphery". There are differences in education, in economic level and political level and information, typified by R. Petersen as "internal colonialism", and this is probably also caused by colonial practices in the past (R. Petersen 1995:126; see also H. Kleivan 1969 and Dahl 1988). Since East Greenlanders are gradually becoming better educated, the differences that generate inequality will probably decrease in the future.

Towards a new identity

During the process of realizing Home Rule in Greenland, starting in the 1950s and intensifying during the 1970s, national politics became increasingly important.

"In the years leading to Home Rule, Greenlandic politicians took an explicit anti-European stance and focused their attention on the working out and defining of a Greenlandic national identity. As a reaction to external control, and in order to emphasize that Greenland was not a part of Europe, geographically, culturally or ethnically (...), a distinctive Inuit ethnic identity was nurtured. For the first time, politicians talked of the idea of a unified Greenlandic community working together for the development of the country." (Nuttall 1994:10.)

The unity of the country was expressed in the national symbols invented, for instance Greenland's flag, an unofficial national anthem, and an official National Day. Most of these national symbols were discussed in West Greenland as far back as the 1920s. A poem by Hendrik Lund was already being considered as the national anthem during the 1930s, when the International Court in The Hague recognized Denmark's right to the whole of Greenland. National symbols were discussed again in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1970s, and some of them were established in the 1980s. "The national day was celebrated the first time on June 21, 1985, and on this occasion Greenland's new flag was raised for the first time." (I. Kleivan 1991:10)

The idea of Greenland's national costume, based on traditional garments – for women consisting of a bead collar blouse, decorated seal fur trousers and long sealskin boots; for men a white anorak, black trousers and black sealskin boots – incorporating foreign materials, also developed in the period of nation building, as Inge Kleivan claimed in her article 'Greenland's National Symbols' (1991). On King Frederik IX first visit to Greenland he and Queen Ingrid received Greenlandic costumes for their three daughters.

“On returning to Denmark, a series of color photographs of the whole family in Greenlandic costumes was taken, and their pictures were reproduced in great numbers (F. Nielsen 1954). They hang on the walls of numerous Greenlandic homes, so people have grown accustomed to seeing the Queen in national costume from the time she was a child. (...) Later she has been given long red kamiks as a sign that she has married. Margrethe’s mother, Queen Ingrid, appeared in 1960 in national costume with long, red kamiks; later the Greenlandic women’s club presented her with a pair of long, dark blue kamiks, which are considered more suitable for an older grandmother. Frederik IX wore an admiral’s uniform then, but has also appeared in the Greenlandic national costume for men, a white cotton anorak.” (I. Kleivan 1991:4-5.)

By wearing the national costume of Greenland, or saying a few words in the Greenlandic language during the Annual New Year’s speech on the Danish radio and television, Queen Margrethe showed her respect for the Greenlandic culture and language and expressed “its importance as a mark of identity” (I. Kleivan 1991:5).⁵⁸

During the nation-building process Greenlandic politicians looked beyond the localized identities and sense of place, expressed in the *-miut* suffix indicating a bond with a specific region, but its importance must not be overestimated, since social bounds based on kinship were probably more significant (Petersen 1991,1995; Nuttall 1994; Dybbroe 1991). “In this way, political rhetoric often emphasizes a homogeneous Greenlandic culture and points to Inuit as a people with a common origin, culture, history and future, rather than as diverse groups in space and time.” (Nuttall 1994:10.)

The social reality in Greenland and the social developments of the 1990s point in a direction of greater social diversity and differentiation, leading to an increasing social stratification (R. Petersen 1995:125). In contrast to the three major social or ethnic groups - East Greenlanders, West Greenlanders and Danes - prevailing since the beginning of the twentieth century, there are also subgroups. Nowadays, there is a mixture of social or ethnic groups in East Greenland: East Greenlanders who speak only East Greenlandic; West Greenlanders who often speak West Greenlandic, Danish and English; Danes who are usually unable to speak Kalaallisut; and occasionally Greenlanders unable to speak their mother tongue but who speak Danish.⁵⁹ Differentiation and new identities are not only expressed in the language, but also in professions, food practices, and differences in wealth. The increasing differentiation in the population of East Greenland is also expressed in clothing. These aspects often correspond with social and ethnic designation. Two contrasting processes dominate. There is an emphasis on the unity of Greenland as a nation, as expressed in Greenland’s national symbols, dominated by the West Greenlandic culture, leading to greater uniformity in language and culture. Simultaneously there is a process of mild revitalization and reinvention of regional and local culture, an increasing interest in local cultural trades, local language and material culture, emphasizing the regional diversity within Greenland. These processes occur within Greenland’s rapidly changing society, and, to quote Finn Lynge:



Figure 88. Tobias Ignatiussen, helped by a group of kin, builds a kayak. They are wearing casual dress. (Photo: Cunera Buijs, RMV, Tasiilaq 2001.)

“Greenlanders have changed their food habits, their traditional dress and manners. Education and continuing education possibilities, residence, communication and daily labor have unrecognizably changed. Religion and belief, perceptions, reading and interests, contacts with the outside world, all this have been revolutionized. And yet, Greenlanders are in no doubt that they are and remain the same people (...).” (Lynge 1981:58, translation from Danish by C. Buijs.)

Transformations in clothing

Nowadays, East Greenlanders usually wear western garments, almost identical to the garments worn by Europeans living in northern areas. But there are small differences in the dress worn by Europeans and Inuit. For example, East Greenlanders today still undress, and can be seen with the upper part of the body naked when on their own as a family at home. (See also Gessain 1970:114.)

Casual wear such as jeans, sweatshirts, T-shirts, Nike sports shoes, Adidas sports trousers and jackets, are popular. Yet in teenagers’ clothing no differences can be found between that worn by Europeans and East Greenlanders from the same age group; they follow the latest Euro-American fashion.

Working clothes have been introduced and reflect professional identities, deriving from firms employing Greenlanders. Formal western clothing is not often worn, and even at the office East Greenlanders wear leisure garments. Suits and jackets can only be seen on special occasions. Then East Greenlanders often choose to wear Greenland festive clothing in addition to formal western clothing such as suits and skirts.

Inside and outside, indoors and outdoors

In winter, warm outdoors down jackets and waterproof Gore-Tex clothing are functional and popular. Synthetic trousers with zippers at both sides, insulating or wind-excluding, which can easily be pulled on over indoor clothing, are also used in skiing for sport. When the wearer comes home, the snow on the boots melts and causes wet, dirty spots. Consequently the visitor’s or family member’s first action is to remove footwear and coats. The shoes and coats of the entire family and guests are dried and stored in the halls of the wooden houses. Inside the houses temperatures are often very high, up to twenty-eight degrees or occasionally thirty degrees Centigrade. Thin cotton clothing is very functional here.⁶⁰

Shopping

Modern clothing is available in the local shops in Tasiilaq and in Tiniteqilaq. The assortment in the settlement shops is considerably more limited than in the district capital, and offers less choice. Baby clothes, tights in different sizes, rubber and warm synthetic gauntlets, which are very popular amongst the hunters, socks and underwear, fancy women blouses, and small quantities of black trousers for boys, are usually available everywhere. In Tasiilaq a greater variety of clothes lay on the shop shelves, in different price ranges. By summer, shortly before the first supply vessel sails from Denmark to Tasiilaq,

the stock of clothing is running out. By that time only a small selection of clothing is still available, and people complain about the quality of the shop.

The Pilersuisoq A/S, runs the shops in the districts and in the towns in Greenland, with its purchasing department in Sisimiut.⁶¹ This department plays a key role in the supply of clothing stocks. Twice a year the *butikcheffer* (the store managers) of all the districts gather at a *messe* (a fair) in Denmark. Nowadays, the *butikchef* of Tasiilaq is accompanied by a *niiverteq*, one of the managers of the local stores in the small settlements. There is a rotating choice of the town to accompany the *butikchef* of Tasiilaq in any one year. At the twice-yearly *messe* in Denmark the winter and summer clothing for the next year is selected for the shops in East Greenland. The basic clothing stock of underwear, socks, leggings and tights, does not change much over the years. It is ordered in large quantities (*stable tøj*) through the EDB-computer systems, and is available in all the shops throughout Greenland. The purchasing department of Sisimiut decides at the *messe* what clothing will be centrally purchased in large quantities as special offers at low prices. Other types of clothing, such as fancy blouses, jackets, and trousers, are ordered in smaller quantities. The summer collection of shoes and boots always runs out quickly, since different types of shoes and boots are purchased only a few pairs at a time, to prevent too many people from wearing the same types of boots in town. Although shoes, boots and *ungdomstøj*, clothes for the young, are bought in large quantities, these types of clothing sell out rapidly. Young people are fond of black clothing, and the latest fashion available in Denmark is bought in at the *messe*, and is therefore available at least to a limited extent in Tasiilaq's shop. In summer 2001, clothing in pastel colours such as purple and lilac was also popular, since it was the latest fashion.

There is also great demand for underwear, tights and socks, which are often cheap because of the system of *stable tøj*. Shoes and clothing with a trade mark are especially preferred by the younger customers, and there seemed to be a preference for Adidas and Rucanor. Items with these trade marks, and Vagabond shoes, are available in the Pilersuisoq A/S shops. The shops are not allowed to sell Nike shoes and clothing and Levis trousers, as the Levis and Nikes firms set too high standards for sales, advertisement and presentation of their products.

The shops do not sell sealskin clothing, although black painted sealskins are available. T-shirts and sweat shirts with Greenland logos are not available in shops, but can be bought at the hotel and at Kulusuk's airport. The local shops, especially the main branch in Tasiilaq, frequently sells cloth, which is bought not only for sewing parts of the national dress, but also for making other clothing. Duffels and synthetic linings are also available. The managers of the settlements visit the main office of Pilersuisoq A/S several times a year, to attend meetings and to order new clothing for the local stores. They also can order clothing by fax, telephone or e-mail in Tasiilaq when the stocks run out in their shops. According to the Pilersuisoq A/S chef of Tasiilaq, everybody - whether poor or rich - buys in the local shop. The buyers are, however, often the mothers purchasing clothing for their children, for themselves and for their husbands. Youngsters who have money of their own, often invite their mothers to join them in buying clothing. Later on they begin to shop on their own.

FILA

"Fila" T-shirt
100% kraftig vævet bomuld.
Str.: S,M,L,XL,XXL. Vægt 250 gr.
398-1056 - Grå
398-1057 - Hvid
398-1058 - Sort

"Fila" top
100% bomuld, med print. Str.:
M,L,XL,XXL. Vægt 250 gr.
398-1054 - Sort
398-1055 - Hvid

"Fila" shorts
100% nylon, med snøre i
linning og Fila logo. Str.:
S,M,L,XL,XXL. Vægt 250 gr.
398-1059 - Sort
398-1060 - Navy

"Fila" aftræksbukser
100% polyester med trykknapper
og "F" logo i siden. Elastiklinning
og 2 forlommer. Str.: S,M,L,XL,XXL.
Vægt 1 kg.
398-1061 - Sort/grå

Træningsbukser
100% polyester med elastiklinning
og løs kant foruden, 2 forlommer
og Fila logo. Str.: S,M,L,XL,XXL.
Vægt 1 kg.
398-1062 - Sort
398-1063 - Navy

FÅS I STR. XXL

Kr. 107,-

Kr. 107,-

Kr. 119,-

Kr. 302,-

Kr. 239,-

FÅS I STR. XXL

FÅS I STR. XXL

FÅS I STR. XXL

8

Figure 89. Advertisements for sports clothing in a Danish catalogue available in Tasiilaq and Tiniteqilaaq in 1998.



Figure 90. Asta Jonathansen sewing *kamiit* at her home in Tiniteqilaaq, 1985. (Photo: Cunera Buijs.)

*Asta stopped making clothing at the beginning of the 1990s, since she was "too old". Her twin sister is still producing *kamiit* etc and is an honoured seamstress.*

It is possible to order special clothing (from abroad) at the shop in Tasiilaq. However, wage costs have to be paid, so ordering clothing is expensive, and consequently there is no demand for ordering clothing at Tasiilaq's shop. A better way of obtaining clothing that is unavailable in Tasiilaq is to order through mail-order firms in Denmark, and nowadays also in Greenland. Firms such as Brugsen advertise on the television and in newspapers, and the *messertapit* (sewing workshops) also advertise in the media.

East Greenlanders often order clothing from larger towns in Greenland, which has to be sent, and freight costs are passed on to the customer. During visits to other towns, East Greenlanders also go shopping for clothing.

"I buy the clothes for my children in the shops in Tasiilaq. But there is not much choice and it is expensive. I also buy clothing through mail-order catalogues, and I buy in Illulisat where I attend school. That is a much bigger town with many more shops. There is more choice and it is cheaper."

(Female informant, Tasiilaq 1998)

Ordering clothes is nowadays also possible through the Internet. The Tasiilaq municipality established an 'internet café' in a special room next to the library in the Tasiilaq school

building, where every citizen of Tasiilaq, tourists and visitors, can e-mail and use Internet freely. A growing number of Tasilamiit have a computer with e-mail and Internet facilities at home.⁶² Younger East Greenlanders, especially, use Internet for ordering garments, and clothing from Denmark finds its way to Greenland through mail-order firms and Internet. One can see the latest fashions being worn by the youngsters in Tasiilaq.

Home-made clothing

Some of the clothing worn in East Greenland is still made at home, usually by older women of fifty years or more.⁶³ Parts of the national costumes, such as white cotton anoraks and *amaatit*, seal-fur trousers for females, long seal-leather boots and short seal-leather boots, are made at home. Home-made seal-fur and seal-leather *kamiit* are still occasionally used by hunters.

East Greenlandic women also make fur clothing for small children. Some of the seamstresses in the villages are highly skilled, and they may obtain orders from Tasiilaq and Nuuk for parts of the national costume or for garments specially ordered. The products are sent by mail to the customers and are paid for by banker's order. These earnings constitute a welcome additional income. West Greenlanders and East Greenlanders living on the West Coast usually order West Greenlandic garments, but East Greenlandic garments such as cotton *amaatit* are occasionally ordered by East Greenlanders living in Nuuk. Garments are ordered on the occasion of a confirmation or a wedding, events when newly made national costumes are needed.

The sewing workshop Skæven

In the sewing workshop Skæven, painted sealskin clothing of a modern design can be pur-

Figure 91. Fancy blouse made from the skin of the harp seal (Phoca groenlandicus), edged with polar-fox fur (Alopex lagopus). It was made by Erna Christensen at Skæven sewing workshop in 2001. (RMV no. 5961-16.)



chased. Only a very small proportion of the clothing worn in East Greenland derives from this sewing workshop, but the products are modern and appealing, though expensive. Families who do not earn much money can more easily afford the cheaper small garments, such as sealskin mittens, than the more expensive larger garments, such as fur coats.

The influence of the sewing workshop Skæven on modern clothing developments in East Greenland has already been mentioned. Younger women are fond of the fancy designs and new materials, such as red and gray-painted seal fur, used in the clothing and bags made at Skæven, and they buy Skæven's garments when they can afford them. Some women copy the designs in their traditional materials, or in modern painted and machine-tanned furs.

Raw materials can be bought at Skæven, for example cheap remnants, and expensive tanned and painted hides by the piece. Obviously, Skæven and the other Greenlandic sewing workshops have some influence on the clothing traditions in the region. They introduce and stimulate the use of new materials and new designs within the existing clothing traditions. Younger and more modern women introduce modern Greenlandic designs into the current fashions in East Greenland, and their clothing represents a special category of women within East Greenland society.

Maintenance

Garments made of cloth, national costumes, and fur garments are usually stored in closets or are piled up in plastic bags in bedroom corners or under the beds. Inuit appreciate clean clothing. A young grandmother provided her granddaughter with clean trousers, telling her that dressing in clean garments was important, and that if children walked around in dirty clothes:

"The others will have bad ideas about our family. They may think that we are a dirty family wearing dirty clothes."

Nowadays, most of the houses in the district capital have washing machines. In Tiniteqilaq, there is a lack of running water in the houses. Families rely on five washing machines and one dryer, available in the service building.⁶⁴ You can choose a washing programme for 21 DKr (1998). Young male family members often take heavy bundles of laundry in plastic bags to the service building, sometimes using a hand sledge for the transport of the laundry in winter. Women do the washing, and only Greenlandic men with no wife or sister in their households do the washing themselves. Money is scarce in the small settlements, and not all households can afford washing machines of the service building, or will pay for them. These families still do their washing by hand at home, a family wash for about eight people taking about two working days. It is a tiring and time-consuming job, requiring many gallons of water to be fetched by the boys in jerrycans. It is hardly surprising that most women in Tiniteqilaq appreciate the facilities of the service building.

In the service building, a separate room with a smaller side room is available for women who want to clean, scrape, wash and dry sealskins there.⁶⁵ There is a basin with running water, and the room also has drying frames. Some women prefer to do this work at home, as women have done for centuries. Nowadays, young women able to process the sealskins

are hard to find in the small settlements. The women mentioned two reasons; young women move over to Tasiilaq to attend courses or to obtain a paid job, while the younger women have not learned to prepare sealskins, or have not fully acquired this skill.⁶⁶ In Tasiilaq younger women often have a paid job, and have to clean their own houses and prepare sealskins after their work. Teenagers often help in the household. The municipality has set up a student/teacher project, and women skilful in the preparation of sealskins can have a young woman as student. During one year, the student visits the teacher at the latter's home for a 'practical' course, and assists her while learning to scrape, clean and dry the sealskins. Student and teacher each receive a small payment from the municipality, and so both benefit of the situation. The hunters' families sell the majority of the sealskins to the KNI office. A small proportion of the sealskins are still used for making parts of the national costume, *kamiit* for hunters and fur clothing for the youngest children. *Kamiit* are rendered supple by means of a *kammiut*, a wooden stick with a metal top. A sealskin boot is placed over this metal top and rubbed several times, the treatment being repeated until the boot soles are supple. In former days women also chewed the boot soles, but this habit disappeared because it damaged the women's teeth.⁶⁷

The majority of East Greenlanders wear western types of textile clothing. Torn cloth garments are usually mended by hand: holes in socks are darned, and bead collars are repaired with needle and thread, new beads replacing those missing.

Sharing clothes

Although family members all have their own clothing, and others know the usual owner of each garment, such ownership is not always strictly defined. The differences between sharing, borrowing, using or stealing clothes within a household context are not entirely clear, and are not considered to be particularly important. Sharing is a central characteristic of Inuit culture. The ownership of clothing still has a collective nature. Goods (garments included), meat and services are mostly shared between family members, household members and close kin. Sometimes a network of good friends is involved. Festive garments are often given, or lent to relatives and friends, as birthday gifts or on the occasion of a confirmation. They are shared as part of a much larger general exchange system (see P. Robbe 1994; Nooter 1984: 143; Remie 1984; Buijs 1993). This type of sharing of clothing has a general or collective character, and often functions within kinship contexts. A more specific type of sharing of garments is the passing on of clothes after the previous owner has died, a situation in which there is a preference for a namesake.⁶⁸ A relative or friend who has been named after the deceased may inherit part of the clothing, especially parts of the national costume or other expensive or beautiful clothes. There is no special habit of passing ordinary garments on to specific relatives. Informants mentioned cases in which small children and adults inherited children's garments from deceased children, or in which adults inherited clothing, especially parts of the national costume, from deceased adult namesakes. There were fewer mentions of adult garments being inherited by children.

A young East Greenlander wore a red check-patterned shirt inherited from his deceased father-in-law. He was wearing it for the first time. The widow gave me her deceased hus-

band's fur cap for my husband, who she knows very well. This cap had great emotional significance to her. I asked if it would not be better to give the fur cap to one of her sons, but she answered: "It is better to give it to your husband than to my sons. Both drink, and one of them doesn't do anything at all." On the question: "Why not give the cap to one of your grandsons?", she replied: "They do not want to wear a garment like this. They prefer modern caps."

Infants and pre-school children

At the very beginning of their lives, East Greenlandic babies are dressed in western clothing.⁶⁹ The first baby garments are white cotton baby undershirts, cotton nappies, T-shirts, small tights, and cotton baby jumpsuits. These baby garments are available at the local shops (see figure 92).

In winter, when outside, infants are dressed in insulating synthetic baby ski suits and snow boots with duffel lining. Sealskin boots for babies are popular, these *kamiit* being home-made by the children's mothers or grandmothers. Young women also buy fancy *kamiit* made of (black painted) seal fur at the *messertapik* (sewing workshop) Skæven in Tasiilaq. Generally speaking, these baby boots mark the child's gender; baby boys wear black boots, whereas baby girls wear white sealskin boots. Unpainted seal-fur boots can be used for boys as well as for girls. The traditional children's *kamiit* were still occasionally used during the 1960s in hunters' families, but they had almost completely disappeared by the end of the twentieth century.

Fur jackets, trousers, and seal-fur *kamiit* are still occasionally made for children aged between two and four years. These fur garments for boys and girls are identical and are not gender-related.⁷⁰

For boys and girls aged about six years, new national costumes are made. The timing for the sewing of new and very expensive dresses for girls, is connected to the children's first schoolday at the beginning of September. At the age of six years children are introduced into the school system, and begin their primary-school education. The first school day in September is celebrated as an important festive occasion, for which schoolchildren and their parents go to school dressed up in their best clothes. Some of them wear the national costume, but western clothing seems to be preferred. Some of the boys may dress up in western (three-piece) suits. Girls wear colourful dresses with a great many pleats, sometimes with a brightly coloured lace outer layer and a white collar. The mothers often wear party dresses, and the fathers wear white anoraks or suits. Sometimes grandparents, aunts and uncles, in their very best clothes, are also invited. Afterwards, the families keep open house with coffee and cakes, and the guests bring small presents such as pencils, rubber and paper. If the child who has begun school is named after one of the guests, then this constitutes a good opportunity for throwing low-value coins on the floor amongst the guests, who try as fast as possible to pick up as much money as they can.⁷¹ The start of a child's school career is valued as a rite of passage, and the first school day is referred to as a first event.



Figure 92. Mathilde Jonathansen dresses her nephew Aron in white cotton baby clothes, which were shop-bought. (Photo: Cunera Buijs, Tiniteqilaaq 1985.) Plastic coverings were used over the cotton nappies in 1985. Disposable nappies are increasingly used nowadays.



Figure 93. Asta Jonathansen is trying a homemade fur costume on her grand daughter Eliza in 1985. (Photo: Cunera Buijs, Tiniteqilaq.)

Buuti Petersen, the West Greenland wife of the director of the Tasiilaq Museum, living and working as an artist in Tasiilaq, showed me two new white anoraks for her husband and five-year-old son. She had kept them for her son's first school day in September in 1997. To my question about why these anoraks were not worn on 21 June, Greenland's National Day, she replied:

"The anoraks are for my son's first school day, because this is a very unusual day, it happens only once in his lifetime. The National Day of Greenland is repeated every year and has nothing to do with my son."⁷²

The celebration of the children's first school day was probably introduced by West Greenlanders, and was adopted in East Greenland. The first school day as a rite of passage occurs in a child's life in the same period as the much older custom of making a girl's first *amaat* when she reaches the age of five to seven years (see chapter 1 this volume).

"We celebrate everything that happens for the first time: the first baby tooth, the first seal caught, the first trip with a new motorboat. The first school day of children is a national festive day in Greenland. Then we dress in beautiful clothing and the parents join the children at school. We are a 'first-time people'." (Anna Kuitse, personal communication 2001.)

Honigmann and Honigmann (1965), as well as Jean Briggs (1992) mention examples in which Canadian Inuit emphasise first-time events:

"(...) parents praised and glorified in the little cynosure's small accomplishments, like a tooth, a new parka worn for the first time, the first game killed.

Such achievements marked his [a child] becoming better then he was... The notion of becoming better undoubtedly constitutes a crucial element underlying the capacity to change." (Honigman 1965:235.)⁷³

This also holds true for East Greenland nowadays; continuity seems to be the case.

Schoolchildren and youths

Nooter writes about the schoolchildren in Tiniteqilaaq during the 1960s that only the children of great hunters could afford to dress in seal-fur *kamiit*. Only they possessed enough pelts to use them as clothing. In winter, these children dressed in seal-fur trousers combined with woollen jerseys. Indoors they wore sweatshirts and T-shirts, and cloth trousers and skirts. At that time *kamiit* and trousers were the only seal-fur garments still in use, garments that were the normal dress for children in East Greenland in the past. Seal-fur trousers for children disappeared in the 1970s and *kamiit* disappeared during the 1980s.

According to Gessain, during the 1960s and 1970s young inhabitants of Kulusuk were trendsetters in fashion, owing to the presence of American soldiers at the Kulusuk airbase. "When girls from Kulusuk marry in other villages, they bring with them the latest fashion: curling pins at all times of the day, transparent lace blouses of black nylon, and glasses on the model of cat eyes." (Gessain 1970:98.) The airport of Kulusuk, a connection to the rest of the world, still has great influence on the economy, commerce and fashion of Kulusuk. Art products and fur garments sold at the airport are an additional source of income for some of the Kulusuk craftsmen and seamstresses.

Nowadays, the schoolchildren and youth of East Greenland dress in jeans, sweatshirts, T-shirts, fleeces. Both boys and girls usually wear trousers, although some girls dress up in skirts on festive occasions such as Friday-night or Saturday-night dances, birthdays, marriages, and on Greenland's National Day. Both Nooter and Gessain mentioned the development of the custom of dressing up for Saturday-night dancing in the community house during the 1960s.

"Boys, whose jeans fit so tightly around their thighs that you could almost believe they put them on wet after they have washed them, and let them dry on their body, otherwise how would they have been able to put them on!" (Gessain, 1970:143-144, translation from Danish by C. Buijs.)

At the end of the twentieth century there is an obvious influence from music CDs, illustrated information pamphlets, and video clips such as those made for the Spice Girls. At the dances you can see teenage girls wearing black shirts that leave their abdomens uncovered, black trousers, black boots, and metal glitter decorations on their belts and boots. They imitate the Spice Girls' dances, and favourite numbers such as "Margarita" blare through the bare dance hall.

"The girls of today want to dress just like the Spice Girls, or as they think that the Spice Girls dress; Spice Girls-like. Music on the television has great influence, just as the tourists do. The girls badger their parents to phone a shop in Nuuk which has this type of clothing, and to order something through a mail-order catalogue. Later, these girls can be seen wearing shoes

with very thick soles, in black or white, black tights, short dresses and tight blouses, in the summer even so short that their bare belly can be seen.” (East Greenland informant 1998.)

The boys are dressed in jeans or wide, dark trousers with low-slung waistlines, in a roller-skating style, wide-cut dark or white shirts, sometimes with tiger and panther prints, and some of them wear caps. They are influenced by the dress of pop groups such as the Back Street Boys. This clothing is especially seen during dances, for which teenagers reserve the latest fashions. Exceptionally, a teenage girl had dyed her hair green in 2001. “This is one-day paint”, she said, “it can be washed out easily”. She wanted to look different, boyish. Simultaneously, she is criticized by the elder generation. Fashionable hair dyes in red and reddish brown, as well as other colouring effects, are used nowadays, and formed part of the fashion in Tasiilaq in summer 2001.

In school or at home, the young people of both sexes dress in jeans and sweatshirts. Sports shoes are the favourite footwear. A general preference can be seen for cloth garments with a trademark, although this clothing is usually much more expensive. Some youngsters were clear in their preference for Adidas above Nike. The price of the clothing did not seem to be of overriding importance. One youth stressed the technical qualities of Adidas synthetic T-shirts. “This cloth was very beautiful,” he said, “for it is glimmering and shining.” It dries quickly and it is comfortable to wear. We objected that these qualities can be found in Nike T-shirts as well, but he insisted on his preference for Adidas. Probably the availability at the local shops, and familiarity, also play an important role in the choices made.⁷⁴

Adults and elders

During the 1960s and 1970s the adult wardrobe in East Greenland changed gradually. In the 1960s Nooter photographed the last elderly women wearing homemade dresses made in flowered and checked cotton. He collected these dresses for the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden and the Museon in The Hague.

In this period, women began to design a mixture of traditional and new patterns and materials. Gessain mentioned a woman who sewed a dog-fur collar on to an anorak made of American nylon (Gessain 1970:167).

“On the wall hangs a necklace in a traditional shape with long three-coloured bead strings, waiting for a buyer. Price: 45 Kr. Ediwersa opens a cupboard and proudly shows a sparkling flower pattern, and it is a present to her daughter Louisa. Price” 50 Kr. Sealskin, the traditional beads and the techniques of bygone days, are the means to achieve modern wealth.” (Gessain 1970:172; translation from Danish by C. Buijs.)

During the 1960s and 1970s, East Greenlandic women were fond of the current European fashion. The towns of Kulusuk and Tasiilaq were the leaders of fashion, while dress in the settlements was somewhat old-fashioned. Nooter as well as Gessain were aware of this trend in fashion:

“We have visited Susane, where her daughter Paula has arrived [from Tasiilaq]. She is a short-skirted girl with curling pins. (...) One of her sis-

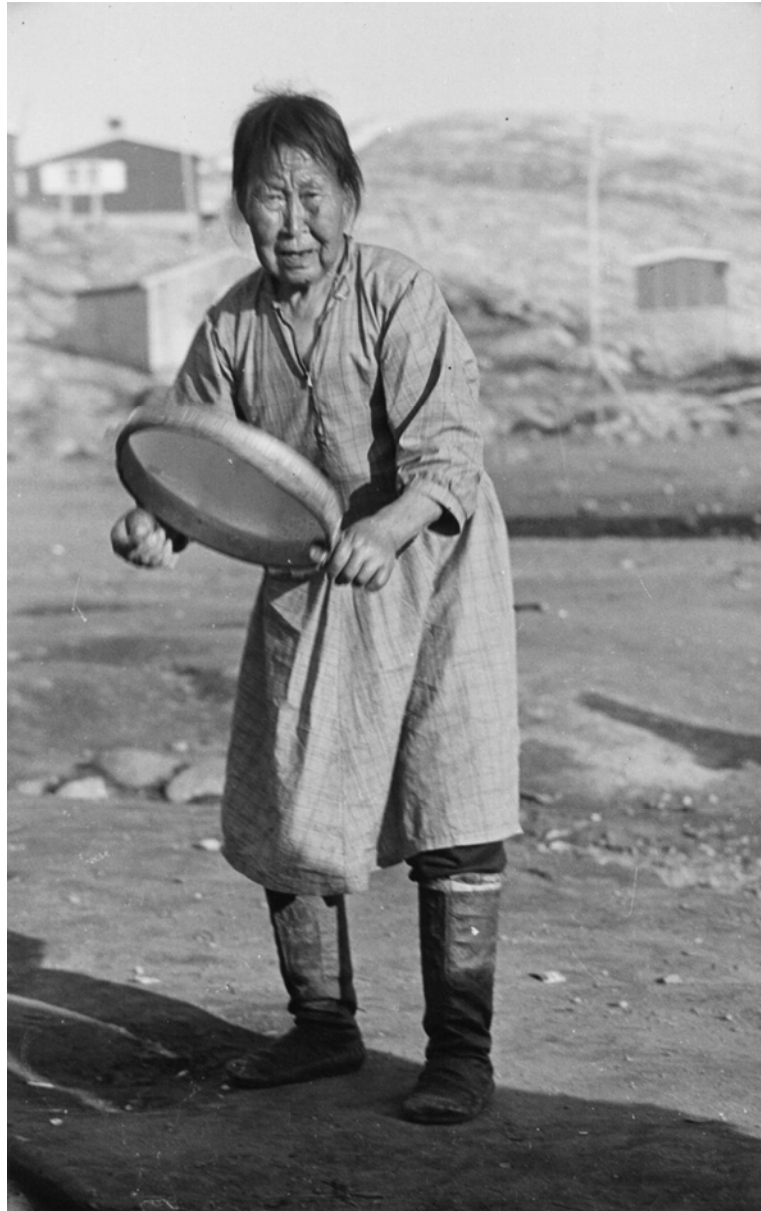


Figure 94. Erika Jonathansen during a spontaneous drum dance performance for the Tiniteqilaamiit. Erika is said to be one of the last shamans in Tiniteqilaq. She is wearing a cotton homemade dress. (Photo: G. Nooter 1968 RMV/MUS. NR. 68-3-51-8.)
The older people continued to wear the clothing of their mid-life.

ters has arrived from Tasiilaq. She is dressed in a beautiful twill suit. She is given wolf-whistles even by small boys. She is a fashionable, short-skirted outsider in Tiniteqilaq.” (Nooter, Diaries 2.4 / 21.4.1968.)

Yet as early as the 1960s and 1970, European clothing began to dominate in East Greenland, and seal-fur garments were worn less. Women’s skirts, introduced in the 1930s, gradually disappeared from daily life in East Greenland. Women began to wear trousers, again imitating women from America and Europe, and the wearing of long trousers is one of the most striking changes in women’s clothing in East Greenland.

At the time when skirts were popular as normal dress, older women wore home-knitted tights, but the younger women were fond of nylon stockings and, later on, panty hose. According to an East Greenland woman informant, the younger women were very eager to look like Danish, European women, wearing nylon stockings and short skirts to attract the Danish craftsmen and pilots working in East Greenland. These were, however, not at all suited to the Arctic climate of East Greenland.⁷⁵

Broadly speaking, adult clothing resembles that worn by young people, but there are some differences. Adults more frequently wear smart trousers, shirts, blouses and thin jumpers, while young men and East Greenlandic adult males aged up to about fifty are fond of T-shirts with tiger or panther prints. Women wear white T-shirts with prints of their loved ones, children or grandchildren. These T-shirts are fairly expensive (about Dkr. 200) and are ordered in Nuuk or Copenhagen. Women wear trousers today, occasionally dressing in skirts, usually on festive occasions such as birthdays, Sundays in church, or on Greenland’s National Day. The older women still wear home-knitted woollen tights, and can be seen inside their houses wearing home-made tights as an outer layer. They still wear white scraped or red-painted seal-leather boots during festivals. Obviously, the elders maintain the traditional fashion the longest - the fashion of their youth, dating from the 1960s and 1970s.

Among the East Greenlandic men newly introduced rubber boots are very popular. These boots are made of an insulating hollow, air-filled fibre, and they are thus both warm and watertight. The synthetic inner boots can be taken out for drying, thereby permitting the feet to be kept dry and warm, an extremely important factor in the Arctic. These boots are replacing the older green Wellingtons, which were watertight but neither warm nor insulating. The new types of rubber boots can be used just as effectively in winter and summer.

Among the adults in East Greenland, wealth is expressed in dress. Wealthier families have greater access to modern European clothing newly bought in shops. The households in which one or more members have a part-time or full-time paid job earn more money, and can afford more expensive clothing. The younger East Greenlanders with modern education, West Greenlanders and Danes, hold the paid jobs. Not surprisingly, one can see by

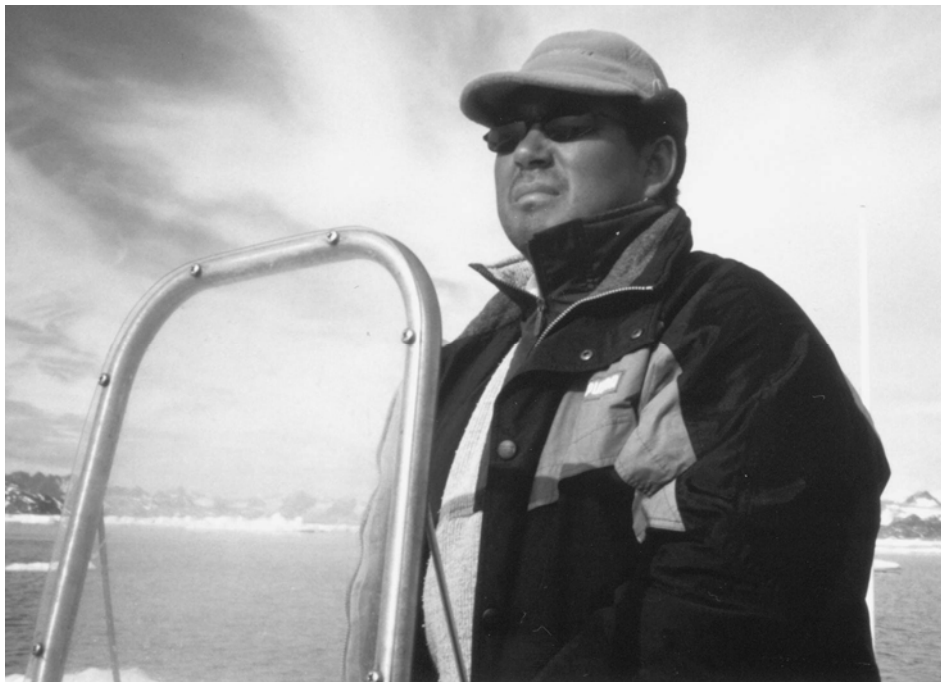
people's coats and jackets if they belong to these categories of East Greenland inhabitants. A greater number of seal-fur coats, made by the sewing workshop Skaeven or the firm Great Greenland, can be seen among the West Greenlanders and Danes holding important positions in Tasiilaq. These seal-fur coats are beautifully made and are very expensive, and only well-paid employees can afford to buy them.⁷⁶ The growing social stratification within the East Greenland society is therefore partly expressed by the clothing worn.

The hunters' clothing

Hunters are almost the only people who still wear fur clothing as part of their hunting outfit. Trousers made of polar-bear fur, however, have not been worn since the 1970s, when they became too expensive.

“[An East Greenlander from Tiniteqilaq] shot five polar bears. The skins brought him DKr 7500. He is one of the most successful hunters in the village, and he is proud of it. He tells us how he can roll over in his kayak. There are only a few people who can do this. (...) He takes his chances as a hunter, he owns a motorboat, but he is also mad about dancing and grabs the opportunity with both hands to spend his money on luxuries. His radio and tape recorder provide him with status, but so do his polar-bear fur

Figure 95. Tobias Ignatiussen, tourist outfitter and hunter, driving his motorboat. (Photo: Cunera Buijs RMV, Ammassalik Fjord, summer 1998.)



trousers as well. He puts them on proudly. He is probably the only one within the community with such trousers. (Nooter, Diaries 29.9.1967, translation from Dutch by C. Buijs.)

A minority among the hunters still wears *kamiit meqqilit* (seal-fur boots) and *kamiit maat-tamiilit* (seal-leather boots) and some of them have still trousers, mittens and caps made of seal fur. These hunters use seal-fur clothing exclusively during the coldest winter months outside the village. Nowadays, hunters (and small children) are the only ones to wear seal-fur garments occasionally.

Not only in the past, but also today, sunglasses have always been an indispensable part of the hunter's outfit to prevent him from developing snow blindness. "Paulus' eyes still hurt and he has put on two sunglasses, one on top of each other." (Nooter, Diaries 19.4.1968.) Polaroid sunglasses in modern designs, developed for the outdoor use, are available through mail-order firms. In a television special in summer 2001, sunglasses with UV filters were recommended. The light intensity and reflection are both very high in the Arctic during summer and winter. Some East Greenlanders, and not only hunters, use sunglasses almost daily ("it is very tiring to narrow your eyes all the time), while others normally do not use them at all ("I am not used to it").⁷⁷

Some hunters still use kayaks, although nowadays they are made out of fibreglass or plastic. Seal-skin kayak anoraks are no longer used. Neoprene clothing, which is black synthetic clothing with hollow fiber to retain air as an insulating layer, made for water sports such as water-skiing, is worn by only a very few young males in Tasiilaq. I only observed this neoprene clothing being used by East Greenlandic water-skiers in Tasiilaq, but it will be very practical for future use while kayaking, owing to its insulating and water-repelling qualities, which to some extent are comparable to those inherent in traditional kayak clothing, although neoprene is much warmer.⁷⁸

Nowadays, the clothing worn by the hunters of East Greenland in daily life does not differ from that worn by other East Greenlanders. However, when hunters go out in search of prey, they dress in synthetic European outdoor clothing bearing trademarks as Helly Hansen, Berghaus and others. Some hunters possess modern insulating outdoor clothing, such as black dungarees and fleece windcheaters. In small settlements the hunters also normally look well dressed, although their clothing is sometimes dirtier than that worn by town-dwellers, because of their hunting and fishing activities.

Working clothes

Since the East Greenlandic economy has been incorporated into the global cash economy, and foreign political, social and economic institutions have obtained a firm footing in the East Greenlandic society, professional clothing linked with these institutions has been introduced. The very first professional dress was seen with the introduction of a medical staff in the 1930s. During the following decades, the white medical uniform became the normal dress in Ammassalik's hospital, and is also used in the children's home. Nowadays, employees wearing professional dress or uniforms of different types can be



Figure 96. East Greenlandic children are bathing in the children's home in Ammassalik in 1961, while two employees, one Greenlandic and the other Danish, each wearing a white dress and white apron, are assisting them. (Photo: Jette Bang, Arctic Institute Copenhagen no. 9143.)

seen in different sectors of the society.⁷⁹ Dark blue uniforms, including machine-knitted pullovers with the Pilersuisoq A/S logos, can be seen at the post office. Members of the police force are dressed in dark blue uniforms. Greenlandic employees in thin white cloth coats can be seen in the shops and at the bakery, while in the warehouse the male employees wear beige dustcoats, and craftsmen in the building sector wear blue overalls. Some of the few East Greenlandic tourist guides and agencies wear an outfit resembling that of the tourists. They wear their usual outfits to travel out of doors as hunters, but some of them are recognizable by their bright red fleece caps with the two-winged emblem of *Grønlandsfly*, the Greenlandic airline company.



Figure 97. Lodewika Akipe, Jordmor in Tinitelaaq, wearing official medical dress. (Photo: Cunera Buijs 2001.)

The professionals at the municipality do not wear uniforms or standardized clothing, but all of them look modern, in (newly) bought and well-kept European clothing. These employees with paid jobs can afford fashionable clothing of good quality.

The minister, the head catechists, and the assistant catechists also wear a type of professional dress (see the previous chapter for a detailed description of the clerical dress). The minister wears a black Episcopal dress when on duty, whereas the head catechist and his assistant each wears a black anorak with white split bands around their necks during the service. Nowadays, dark blue anoraks can be added, which are used by the head catechists and the assistant catechists when they are in church, but they may also wear dark blue anoraks during the church services, when they assist their colleague in performance of the service.

The functions of professional dress vary: it serves as protection (dustcoats); promotes hygiene (medical dress); it permits recognition, and advertises the firm's professional status and image building. Emblems related to Greenland in the logos of firms operating there are popular, for instance the white polar bear in the KNI emblem, and the harpoon head in that of the *Grønlandsfly*. Greenlandic emblems can also be seen in the clothing: T-shirts printed with the image of a Greenlandic woman accompanied by a child in national dress. This print can also be seen on Greenlandic writing paper, which is very popular among tourists. The emblems of the municipalities can be added to the professional emblems, and can be used simultaneously as an advertisement, but these are not seen on the professional clothing.⁸⁰

Clothing at political meetings

In the second half of the twentieth century rapid changes took place in Greenland's political structure. Nowadays, Greenland has a Greenlandic government or *Hjemmestyre*

(Home Rule) and a Greenland Parliament in Nuuk. Local district councils have been elected, and representatives of the districts have seats in the Greenlandic Parliament, which meets two to four times a year. Greenland has representatives of three political parties and a coalition of independent members in the parliament. At the municipality meetings politicians may wear informal dress, but at official meetings of the *Inatsisartut* (the Greenlandic Parliament) the officials dress in Greenland's national costume. On such occasions, white anoraks and blouses with bead collars can be seen.

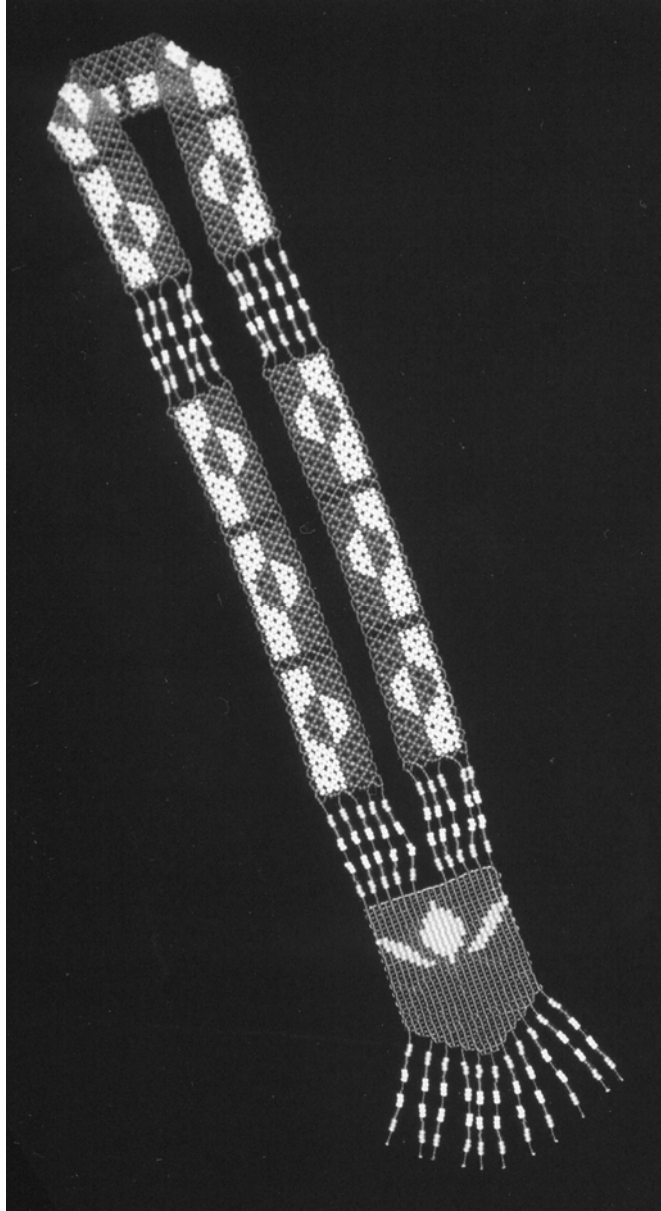
At local meetings in the district's villages the atmosphere is informal, and the officials dress in casual wear. Within the egalitarian Greenland society it is important not to look too ostentatious. Leadership is informal and based on consensus, a feature expressed in informal dress. The semantics of clothing are therefore subtle.

During the elections in East Greenland in 1997, when polarization of the political par-

Figure 98. T-shirt showing some of Greenland's national symbols, the national dress, and a mother and child rubbing noses in the Inuit manner. (RMV 2001.)



Figure 99. Necklace made of beads depicting the logo of Siumut, Greenland's social democratic party (RMV NO. 5905-17). Male party leaders wore these types of necklaces during the election campaign in 1997. (See also RMV Nos 5905-18 and 19.)



ties was increasing and the votes of the East Greenlanders were at stake, the clothing of the East Greenlandic politicians expressed this competition. They wore T-shirts, bead necklaces, socks and caps with the logo of their political parties. It was obvious at first glance which political party they represented.

Suits and jackets as well as official Greenlandic national costumes can be seen at the national level in Nuuk, and during official speeches at the opening ceremony on Greenland's national day in East Greenland.

In Europe, Greenlandic politicians can be seen wearing white anoraks, western suits or seal-fur waistcoats. The latter are especially suited for wearing on occasions when

Figure 100. Seal-fur waistcoat. A type of garment that Greenlandic politicians may wear during seal-fur debates abroad. Made at Skæven sewing workshop. (RMV Nos 5882-36.)



Greenlandic politicians are protesting against the European sealskin boycotts, and promoting the trade in sealskin products.

Greenland's national costume gradually became an overall symbol of Greenlandic identity. It is a product of the new religion and of the nation-building process that has taken place within Greenland, overcoming regional variations and eventual contradictions within the country. White anoraks and national costumes are visual and clear symbols expressing what it is to be a Greenlander, expressing Greenland's identity.

Festive costumes

The custom of dressing newborn babies in christening dresses for their baptism in church developed in the 1930s, and is still popular. On their way to the church the parents carry their child covered by a (white) cloth. Today, the baptism of an infant is a domestic festivity in which the parents are congratulated, while family, neighbours and friends give them presents for the baby.

In the second half of the twentieth century the Greenland national costume became part of East Greenland's material culture. At first, the festive costumes could be seen in church, during Sunday services and on Christian holidays. From the very first introduc-

Figure 101. Children of Tiniteqilaaq gathered around the Christmas tree in the Church/School during the Christmas celebrations in 1995. (Photo: Pili Tarkisimat.)



tion of the festive costume in East Greenland, there was considerable freedom of choice, and not all church parishioners dressed in festive costumes. Not every East Greenlander owned garments of this kind, and those who owned such festive costumes did not wear them in church on all occasions. East Greenlanders often preferred to wear European skirts and dresses, European suits and other types of festive cloth-garments in church. Nowadays, many East Greenlanders regard Greenlandic dress as the proper clothing to wear on Greenland's National Day, celebrated on 21 June. However, at the celebration of the National Day, only a small minority of the East Greenlanders can be seen wearing the national costume. How highly do the East Greenlanders value this dress, and on which occasions do they wear it?

Nowadays few people wear Greenlandic national costumes in church in Tiniteqilaaq and Tasiilaq. During Easter, Pentecost, and on other Christian holidays, almost no national costumes were to be seen. Christmas seems to be the only holiday on which a minority of those attending Church still wears their national costumes.

An ever-increasing number of European fine clothes, suits and dresses can be seen, even in church.⁸¹ On Maundy Thursday in Tiniteqilaaq nobody, except for Lars and Thomasine Tarkisimat, dressed in Greenland's national costume in church. After the service they told me that it was their wedding anniversary, and Lars' birthday. In Tasiilaq the same situation can be seen in church. At Easter only a few churchgoers dress in Greenlandic festive costumes, one of them a woman who was celebrating her birthday. Aviaja Egede (later Philbert) proudly showed her two Greenlandic costumes, one stemming from Thule, and the other being of the West Greenland type with bead collar. She mentioned that she was wearing the Thule dress in church at Easter because it was her birthday. She said that the Thule costume was highly appreciated among the East Greenlanders visiting the church, because of its beauty and because it was unknown in this region.

"My adoptive father's family comes from Thule. My grandfather died last February and had to be buried there. I came over for the funeral. All family members would dress in their national costumes. One of my relatives wanted to sell the Thule costume since it was no longer used. It won the top prize at the Miss Costume Election in Thule. I decided to buy this well-made, beautiful costume. I also have my bead-collar costume from my home town in South Greenland. I am 'allowed' to wear a Thule costume as well because I have relatives there." (Aviaja Egede (Philbert after marriage), personal communication 1997.)

Aviaja was typified as a West Greenlander by East Greenlanders. She comes from South Greenland, she worked for several years in Nuuk, and has lived in Tasiilaq since 1995. She speaks a mixture of West and East Greenlandic, and later on married a Dane. She possesses several identities, which she can use on different occasions, as we will see at her wedding (see page 198 and 199).

An East Greenlandic woman explained why many Greenlanders nowadays prefer European festive clothing:

“We are sometimes tired of the *Kalaallisuut*. Sometimes, we do want something different to wear. Every time we wear our *Kalaallisuut* it is the same identical costume.”

A national costume does not change after it has been completed. Only slight changes are made: the bead collar is repaired, small bands of extra beads are added when a new colour or new type of gleam bead has come into the market. A new type of lace, embroidery or *paarilit* (knitted wristbands) can be added, but it still is the same costume. European festive dresses are easy to change or to combine with other garments and different types of footwear. European dresses and fancy shoes are less expensive than the highly expensive national costume for women, especially when parts of it have to be bought. If it is ordered from a sewing workshop without the bead-collar blouse, prices of DKr 20.000 were mentioned.

Festive clothing and rites of passage

For the baptism of a newborn child, the first school day for six-year-old children, confirmations and marriages in church, national costumes are often chosen as the proper wear, especially by the next of kin in church. After the church service, during the celebrations at home, East Greenlanders usually dress in fine European clothing, but boys and men more than women, can dress in the national costume. The white cotton anorak and black cloth trousers are very comfortable to wear indoors, and are therefore suitable festive gar-

Figure 102. Confirmation in Tasiilaq, summer 2001. (Photo: Cunera Buijs, RMV.) White dresses of a European type can be seen next to Greenland's national costumes. The boys all dress in white festive anoraks. Some of them have black bow ties.



Figure 103. Aviaja and Mads Philbert, wearing a wedding dress and wedding suit during their marriage at Dragholmsslot in Denmark, 16 July 2000.



ments for wearing at home as well as in church. The custom of dressing children according to the social position of their deceased namesakes (positional succession) still continues. A skilful seamstress living in Tasiilaq explains why she made long black boots for her granddaughter:

“I sewed long black festive boots [normally worn by old women or widows] for my eight-year-old granddaughter. I chose the black ones because she is named after my mother. Therefore she has black boots just as the old woman would have had.” (Thomasine Kristiansen.)

These rites of passages, marking stages in the life cycle and first events, continue to be celebrated as emphatic ‘occasions’. Nowadays these events, at which festive clothing of European or Greenlandic design plays a special role, are the baptisms of newborn infants, the first school day for young children, birthdays, confirmations, the presentation of diplomas, weddings, twenty-fifth or fiftieth wedding anniversaries, and funerals.

Marriage

Tobias and Silba Ignatiussen, both East Greenlanders, married in 2000. The groom wore a white cotton anorak, black trousers, and black sealskin festive boots, the normal festive dress for men. The bride dressed in the national costume with bead collar, short seal-fur trousers, and long white festive boots. Like almost all couples, they began to wear wedding rings at the wedding event. Silba’s friend Aviaja Philbert also married the same year, but she celebrated her wedding twice, first in Denmark with her Danish husband’s family, and later in Qaqortoq where her own family lives. She chose a different dress for each of these occasions, whereas the groom dressed both times in a black, three-piece wedding suit. In Denmark she wore a beautiful white European wedding dress with a white gauze veil (see figure 103). During the celebration of their marriage in South Greenland, however, Aviaja wore a light blue blouse and matching cardigan, a short black skirt, nylon tights, and European shoes with high heels. In both Denmark and South Greenland she chose to wear European-style festive clothing, fitting in with her Danish husband’s European dress style.

The invention of East Greenlandic festive dress

In 1999 and 2001, Greenland’s National Day began with gunfire from the old canons near Tasiilaq’s former church, now a museum. In addition, the Mayor gave a speech, and the choir of Tasiilaq sang Christian songs while Greenland’s flag was being raised. In 1999, the choir’s male singers were all dressed in white cotton anoraks and black trousers, and most of them wore black festive *kamiit*. The majority of the women singers wore the West Greenlandic type of national costume, few of them wearing the East Greenlandic variant: a white cotton festive *amaat*. One of the women singers was dressed in seal-fur *tattulaq* (*amaat*), trousers and long seal-fur boots, all in traditional East Greenlandic shape. She borrowed this costume the evening before from the Tasiilaq Museum. In 1984, two of these costumes were made for the museum on the occasion of the centenary celebration of the founding of Tasiilaq city. The costumes, including two male dresses, are the property of the Tasiilaq museum. According to informants, the East



Figure 104. The *umiak* from the Tasiilaq Museum, being rowed from Tasiilaq's centre to Ittimiini. (Photo: Cunera Buijs, RMV, 21 June 2001.)

Greenlandic woman who borrowed her costume was an actress: "She is used to dressing up and being beautiful, and she probably has no national costume to wear during the choir's performance".

A new context of festivities developed that did not exist in the past. In this new, modern context East and West Greenlanders, and even Danes living in East Greenland, select elements out of East Greenland's past culture and transform them, making them suitable for use in modern ritual or festival contexts.

On 21 June 2001, a cultural festival was held all over Greenland. In Tasiilaq the museum *umiak* was repaired in advance of the festival, using new skins. Six female rowers, women who had participated in the sewing of the *umiak* and were able to sew according to the traditional techniques used in *umiak* building, together with a steersman, rowed the *umiak* from Tasiilaq's old centre to Itimine, the place where many East Greenlanders used to put up their tents when visiting Tasiilaq in earlier days. In 1984 there had been a similar *umiak* performance in Tasiilaq during the centennial celebrations, and it commemorated the *umiak* expedition of lieutenant Holm, who discovered East Greenland in 1884. In 2001 at Ittimiini, the guests ate traditional food that they brought with them. There was also a stand selling food and drinks. There were drum-dance performances, singing, and folk-dances performed by the Kulusuk folk-dance group.

On this occasion the performing women dressed in national costume, and one of them borrowed a semi-traditional *amaat* from the Tasiilaq Museum. She dressed in sealskin.



Figure 105. Anna Kuitse, a drum-dance leader and teacher from Kulusuk, and some school-children, performing drum dances in 'traditional East Greenland dress' in Tasiilaq. (Photo: Cunera Buijs, RMV, 21 June 2001.)

During the drum-dance performances this new type of semi-traditional sealskin costume for women and men was worn both by a few women and by a few young boys, performing drum dances.

The cultural festival ended in Tasiilaq's sports centre, where traditional Greenlandic sports and a buffet were on the programme, followed by a fashion show announced as 'A Fashion Show of East Greenland Garments'. Four young women were wearing traditional East Greenland sealskin costumes, two of them borrowed from the museum. They consisted of *tattulat* and short trousers, made of tanned sealskins, and brown seal-leather boots in a supposedly traditional shape, made out of traditionally prepared sealskins. A man dressed in a seal-fur anorak, trousers and boots. A boy wore a blue cotton anorak, a fur cap, trousers made of dog fur, and brown seal-leather boots.

Several boys and girls wore white cotton anoraks and *amaatit*, and one girl combined this garment with a red skirt and short festive boots made of sealskin. The participants in the dress parade displayed the clothes on a platform, and then filed slowly past the audience sitting at long tables. Obviously, different types of East Greenland dress were on display and in the context of this East Greenland cultural festival, these costumes communicated a sense of East Greenlandic tradition and identity.



Figure 106. Fashion show in Tasiilaq's sports centre on Greenland's National Day. (Photo: Cunera Buijs, RMV, 21 June 2001.)

Gradually a fixed image develops, defining what we mean by 'tradition', 'traditional culture' or 'traditional knowledge'. 'Traditional East Greenland culture' signifies the time when East Greenlanders rowed *umiaks*, and dressed completely in animal furs. Cloth garments designed according to presumably traditional patterns are also included. These elements are given validity and are reinterpreted, acquiring new contents and new values. The shape of the objects used and their (ritual) context develops into a fixed frame, and can no longer be changed. These fixed objects can be kept in a museum, and are the cultural property of the region and its inhabitants. They can be borrowed from the museum and used again, in ever-changing contexts, without the objects themselves being changed.⁸²

Thomasine Umeerineq, the wife of a recently retired East Greenlandic schoolteacher and former catechist, made a sealskin *tattulaq* (*amaat*) for herself (see figure 107). She sewed the garments out of machine-tanned skins from the *miigattak* (young ringed seal, *Phoca hispida*) bought at Skæven. She wanted to wear the *tattulaq* while drum-dancing at a family meeting. The leader of the Ammassalik Hotel asked her to perform drum dances in this costume for tourists, but she refused, and in fact never actually used the garment, owing to her husband's recent illness. The sealskin *tattulaq* reappeared in East Greenland after a period of about forty years. It is said to be typically East Greenlandic, and therefore very special and very beautiful. It appeared primarily during events of a quasi-national character such as the centenary of the discovery of East Greenland, and during the East Greenland cultural festival and celebration, on Greenland's National Day, of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Home Rule for Greenland.

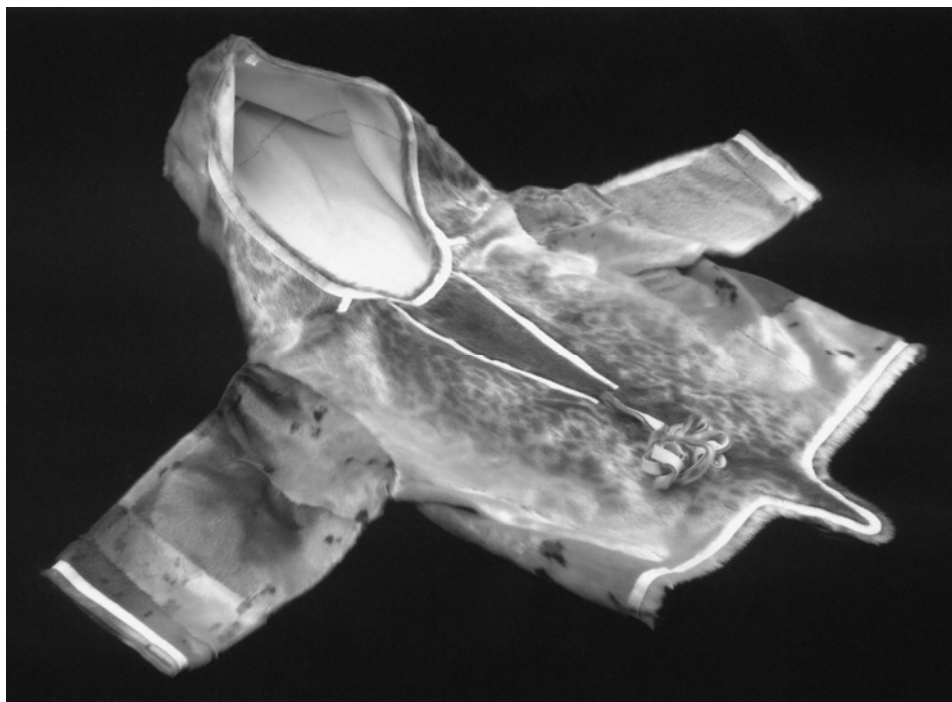


Figure 107. Tattulaq made recently from machine-tanned sealskins by Thomasine Umeerineq, Tasiilaq 2001. (RMV no. 5961-1). Thomasine had never made a sealskin tattulaq before, so she used a photograph from the monograph on the culture of East Greenland, published by Thalbitzer in 1914. She argued that the newly made tattulaq, although made of modern (machine) tanned skins, was a typical part of East Greenlandic culture.

Nowadays an increasing number of women can be seen wearing decorated white cotton festive *amaatit* during festivities. Before the 1980s the *amaat* was not yet part of the festive dress, although it was still worn in everyday life by a very small minority of the women in East Greenland. During the 1970s cotton *amaatit* were only worn by a few women who carried their children or grandchildren on their backs. In these families small girls sometimes had little white cotton *amaatit*, not decorated with beads, in which they carried their dolls.

The decorated white cotton *amaatit* in typical East Greenlandic style gradually changed into a festive garment. The reinvention of East Greenlandic variants of the festive *amaatit* for women goes back to the 1980s. In this Eliza Kunak and her husband Morton Kunak played a leading role. In 1987 the Tasiilaq choir was going on tour to Europe, and during the choir meeting the members decided that it was important to have a costume that



Figure 108. Sabine Jonathansen carries a doll inside her white cotton amaat. (Photo: Gerti Nooter, Museon, 1967, no. 67-4-10-02.)

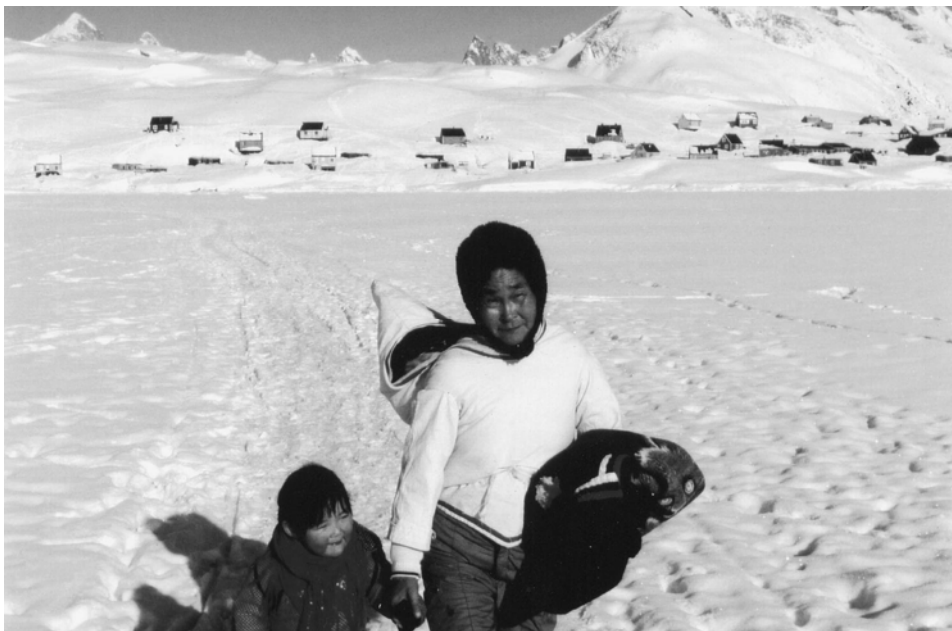


Figure 109. Asta Jonathansen carries her small grandson on her back, inside her cotton amaat. Sermilikfjord, near Tiniteqilaaq 1985. (Photo: Cunera Buijs, private collection.)

was characteristic of East Greenland. This East Greenlandic costume should be suitable for wearing during choir competitions and meetings in West Greenland and Denmark. The Tasiilaq choir chose to have the white cotton festive *amaat* for women, and a white cotton anorak with East Greenlandic stitch decoration for men. However, there is a free choice: both man and women could choose to wear the West Greenlandic type of festive costume for men and women, or the East Greenlandic variants, because “the West Greenlandic type festive costume is for all of us Greenlanders”. (Interview Eliza Kunak 2001.)

In the late 1990s the festive *amaat* was popular among teenage girls, who wore them at their confirmations. The costumes with bead collars dominate, but increasing numbers of *amaatit* can be seen, combined with decorated seal-fur trousers and with long white seal-leather boots, or long black or red painted seal-leather boots.

For boys and men, the first few anoraks in a “typical East Greenland style” were made out of white cotton with vertical decorative stitching “resembling the white gutskin anoraks of East Greenland’s past”. Eliza Kunak sewed an anorak of this kind for her husband in 1996, as part of a further training course within the framework of her job at the municipal office. The work was supervised by the Tasiilaq Museum. Eliza Kunak wrote in her paper:

“There is also another type of anorak, which is more East Greenlandic and I have asked why it is different from the regular white anorak, as it appears today. This East Greenlandic anorak was made out of gutskin taken from the bearded seal in the past. (...) The pattern is very beautifully designed. I want to point out that the anorak today cannot be sewn as in the past. You can easily sew it out of cloth, regular anorak cloth. They had no cloth in that period, so they sewed it out of bearded seal.” (Kunak 1996:15, translation from Danish by C. Buijs.)

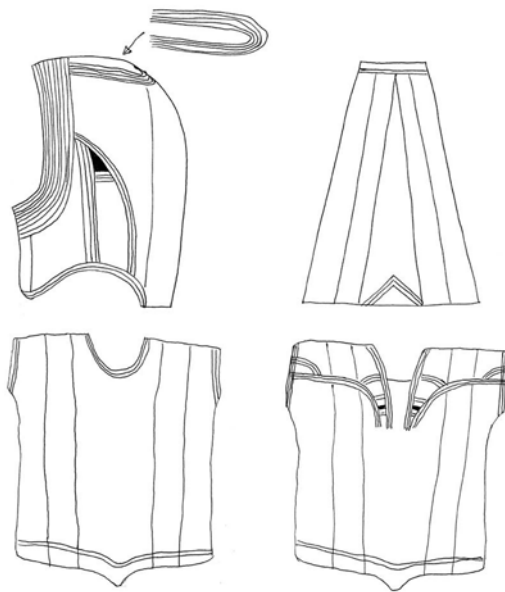
The decorative stitches, with eight to ten cm between them, resemble the vertical lines of the traditional gutskin anoraks. The hood inset of the cotton anoraks resembles the traditional *alatsit* (fur anorak), but it is not made in one piece; it has a hood, which is sewn onto the back and front. The stitching is most conspicuous; decorative stitches are sewn on top of the hood, on both sides of the hood (at the ears), around the face, along the neck, on the shoulders and shoulder blades, at the wrists, and along the middle. Many joints (except for the elbows) are marked, as well as the edges of the garments, and the garment is almost an extension of the body. (See also RMV No. 5905-58, see fig. 110 and 111.)

East Greenlandic types of clothing have been deliberately introduced, especially by a few East Greenlanders. Eliza Kunak formulated her motivation for an East Greenlandic shape as follows:

“I have chosen to engage myself in East Greenlandic culture, because I think that it is vanishing. I can see myself, as a fellow citizen of Tasiilaq, that our culture is disappearing. I think this is caused by the fact that too few people still have any interest in this culture. Personally, I believe it is very impor-



Figure 110. White cotton anorak in East Greenlandic style. The newly introduced anoraks are made out of white cotton, decorated with line stitching, hand-made on a sewing machine.



. Pattern of a man's fesi-
made by Eliza Kunak in
landic style, based on the
century gutskin anoraks.
96.)

tant to preserve our culture, and it is meaningful to children and young people to understand their past. I therefore believe that we citizens can cooperate in preserving that culture and transferring it to the young, so that we can be sure that we still have it in the next generation.” (Kunak 1996:3, translation from Danish by C. Buijs).

Most of the East Greenlanders are middle-aged, who play a leading role in this growing awareness of the importance of East Greenland’s unique culture. A type of mission has developed, aimed at preserving the ‘traditional’ culture and heritage of East Greenland, and this process is closely connected to that of defining and creating a new East Greenland identity. Almost all the adherents of this mildly elite movement derive from a mixed group of cultivated East and West Greenlanders, while the Tasiilaq Museum also takes an active part in this development. The museum director’s wife, Buuti Petersen, an artist herself, ordered two new white anoraks for her husband and son, for the state visit of Queen Margarethe to Tasiilaq on the occasion of her twenty-fifth anniversary as queen in 1997. The anorak for Mrs. Petersen’s son was meant especially for his first schoolday (see also page 118 ff). She opted for the newly introduced East Greenlandic type of anorak because she felt that, as the wife of the Tasiilaq museum’s director, she should promote the culture of East Greenland.

When members of the choirs from different regions in Greenland meet today, they can easily be recognized by the colour or design of their costumes. For example, Sisimiut in West Greenland opted for deep-blue men’s anoraks with a white line decoration in the form of an *ulu* (women’s knife). Greenlandic choirs can be seen on Greenlandic and Danish television on special occasions such as the North Atlantic Christmas concert in Copenhagen, given on 2 December 2000. On that occasion there were two Greenlandic choirs, one from The Faroe Islands and two from Iceland (source Helene Risager, written information November 2000). Obviously, this process of cooperation and competition stimulates the articulation of regional culture, but there were also other occasions for wearing the East Greenlandic variants of festive costumes. Boas Jonathansen, the head catechist of Tiniteqilaaq, showed a photograph of his granddaughter being presented with her diploma in Nuuk. In the photograph the girl’s schoolfellows are wearing bead collars over the West Greenlandic type of festive costume, while Jonathansen’s granddaughter wears a festive white cotton *amaat* of East Greenlandic design, combined with a *nuiarn-qaq* (bead necklace). Her hair is arranged in a *pikkivat* (topknot) with red cloth and beads hanging loose on her forehead.

East Greenlandic festive *amaatit* can also be seen at dancing competitions, for example that held in August 1997 in Qaqortoq, where young men and women in national costume danced in pairs in a national Greenland competition. Two of the six women were wearing white cotton festive *amaatit*, and one of them combined her *amaat* with long brown seal-leather boots in typical East Greenlandic shape. These two couples obviously came from Greenland’s East Coast.

Regional clothing variants can also be seen in a tourist setting. Festive white cotton *amaatit* are sometimes part of the dress worn by drum dancers performing in Tasiilaq’s hotel, and this costume can also be seen on postcards and leaflets obtainable from

Greenland Tourism. They will probably also appear on the tourist web sites in the near future.

These region-related festive costumes can be seen in contexts that did not exist in past, these new contexts often being situated in a semi-European setting. Choir and dance competitions, the first schoolday, or *umiak* rowing on Greenland's National Day, are modern activities based on Greenland's cultural traditions.⁸³ These activities and contexts have been introduced by the Danish colonizers, adopted by East and West Greenlanders and have become part of Greenland's culture and identity.

The aesthetics of the national costume

What kind of aesthetics, colours, patterns and combinations are preferred? Why do East Greenlanders consider a national costume beautiful nowadays? There seems to be a preference in East Greenland for the colours white and red, these colours being present in almost every part of the national costume. Often these light and bright colours are contrasted with black: boots or (male) trousers in black contrasting with white anoraks. The darker brown of the short seal-fur trousers, the dark fur edgings of the white *kamiit* and the bead collar blouses, also provide contrasting effects in the aesthetics of clothing. There is a wide range of additional colours matched with the three dominant ones, and this colour preference can be seen in all types of materials, varying from painted seal leather to beads and textiles.

The colour, composition, motifs and materials used, are more or less standardized, especially in the design of the national costume for men and women. Although there is great freedom of choice, variation seems to play a minor role in the design and composition of the national costume.

Many women stated that they preferred to make the lower edgings for the bead-collar blouse out of the traditional check-patterned cloth, - even today - instead of the flower-patterned textiles introduced in a later period. This silk, check-patterned cloth was available until 1970, but after that date it was no longer supplied, and it disappeared out of the local shops. Women often made great efforts to obtain the preferred type of cloth, and sometimes ordered it through relatives working or studying abroad. It was even ordered in other European countries besides Denmark, but in the end the seamstresses were obliged to turn to flower-patterned cloth as a substitute. In the 1970s, flower-patterned decorative edging became available in the shops, and women began to use it for decorating edges of garments. This decorative banding was only about two to three centimetres wide, and was far too narrow to cover the entire edging of the festive blouses. The seamstresses had to use the decorative ribbon in two layers, one above each other. This repetition is considered to be less beautiful than the use of a single piece of cloth for the edgings, but it is dictated by the limitations on the materials available. This preference is not age-related; informants of all ages preferred check-patterned silk cloth, although some women preferred floral fabrics. Therefore, the use of checked cloth does not indicate the wearer's age, but it may indicate the age of the garment itself, made between 1940 and 1970.

The same holds good for embroidery. When women's long, white festive boots (to which lace and cotton or silk-thread embroidery were added) were first introduced, the embroidery was done in cross-stitch. Later, floral embroidery was introduced, and nowadays this flower-patterned embroidery is considered to be more beautiful than the older type of embroidery. The type of embroidery is thus an indication of the age of the garment, rather than the age of the wearer.

Some East Greenland national costumes are unique, while others have been copied from existing garments. The copying occurs especially in the bead colours, skin embroidery (*avittarneq*), and the thread embroidery on the seal-leather boots. Different reasons for copying parts of the festive costumes were given. Some skilful older women, as grandmothers or mothers, repeated the patterns used in their own costumes for their daughters and granddaughters. Some women reduced the patterns used by the older relatives, and incorporated reduced patterns into the children's dress. These women often systematically copied every part of the costume, even the knitted red *paarilit* (wristbands), including a larger and smaller white-bead pattern as decoration sewn to the top. Other women stated that they preferred unique costumes, and considered them more skilfully made because of their uniqueness. They mentioned that young, still inexperienced seamstresses used to copy parts of already existing clothing as a model. Copying was considered to be less skilful.

Is a unique national costume preferable to, or more beautiful than a costume which is made twice or more? This question is not easy to answer, since there are different opinions; some people emphasise continuity, others uniqueness. Although a skilful seamstress may opt for continuity in the costumes made for mother and daughter, there seems to be greater admiration for unique garments made without a previous model.

Some materials are considered more beautiful than others. Silk cloth, already mentioned, has a gleaming texture that seems to be preferred, and silk is regarded as very beautiful among the women in East Greenland.

In south Greenland, where cow skin is available, women prefer to make the black edgings of their costume out of black cow skin. The white fur lines on the short women's trousers are preferably made out of white calfskin, but in East Greenland women prefer to use black painted sealskin and white clipped dog fur. If dog fur is not available, seamstresses sometimes buy white fox fur at the sewing workshop; this is clipped in the same manner as dog fur. Generally, the women prefer handmade lace to the machine-made kind. If the proper materials are used, a costume is considered to be more beautiful, but when I asked why a national costume is beautiful, all the women answered: "It is beautiful because it is well made; that is, the sewing is of high quality and the stitches are regular and small." This aspect of the techniques used shows a strong continuity, but it is not the only consideration. The choice and quality of the materials, design and colours play an important role, and the quality and techniques of the sewing are very important.

Playing with clothes

In the past, humour and joking were appreciated, and unusual clothing was, and still is, important in East Greenland society. This practice is preserved in celebrations and festivities such as *Mitaarneq*. Feasts accompanied by disguises were named *Kunngit pingasit* (Three Kings), when they were performed in the period between New Year's Eve and Twelfth Night (6th January), and integrated into a Christian context. The 'Three Kings', or two Kings since "one of them got lost on the way", gradually replaced the traditional characters (Nooter 1970). Their disguises incorporated newly introduced European materials and garments (Kielsen 1996).⁸⁴

Today, people mostly dress up during *Kunngit pingasit* and at official meetings and village gatherings during the year (then called *Mitaarneq* or *Uaajeerneq*), although to a lesser extent for informal gatherings at home. Cross-dressing and other forms of disguise are popular, men dressing as women, depicting characters of the past, and inventing new characters. Since societies change continuously it is not surprising that modern materi-

Figure 112. At a meeting in the school of Tiniteqilaaq on the 6th of January 1998, a disguised hunter performs with a face made blackish brown with soot. He wears sunglasses and he has a stick in his mouth. His hair is probably covered with bird feathers. The hunter carries a rifle on his shoulder. His jacket is filled out, and he is dressed in white under-trousers with a stuffed penis. He wears one mitten and different types of footwear. (Photo: Pili Tarkisimat, private collection.)



Figure 113. The East Greenlander Simion Tarkisimat is dressed up as a woman carrying a child on his back. He is dressed in a type of plastic woman's raincoat and a white skirt. The child on his back is tied in a jacket. The actor's legs are naked, and he is wearing watertight European outdoor boots with loose laces, at a meeting in the school of Tiniteqilaaq on the 6th of January 1998. (Photo: Pili Tarkisimat, private collection.)



als and objects are included in the disguise, and the contexts are often modern, such as a performance on International Women's Day.

During the winter months, and on the 6th of January, disguised men may roam around the village visiting the houses, scaring the people by pretending to beat them, or using sexual gestures. They beg for sweets and presents. During the 1990s, they were seen amongst the Tiniteqilaamiit on the 6th of January; during the Easter festival; in April during the women's gathering in the school on International Women's Day; and during the festivities on 21 June, Greenland's National Day.

Once, one of the actors was dressed as a hunter, wearing a fur coat possibly made out of reindeer fur (resembling the traditional *alatsik* in shape). He had blackened his face with soot from a coal stove. A girl's hair decoration in the shape of a butterfly could be seen on his forehead. He had painted his hair, and his face was painted white. He wore a black women's skirt, white nylon tights, and woman's short white, decorated *kamiit* (without socks or inner boots). He carried a rifle and a weekend bag.

On International Women's Day in March 1997, a man disguised as a woman joined the women's meeting in the school. He dressed himself up in a white blouse with a collar, a red woman's jacket, and a white skirt with many pleats and folds. He was wearing an orange hat and one earring made of purple paper in the shape of a large heart. He had left out his false teeth. Around his middle he wore two black leather belts with metal decorations, rather like those worn by Hell's Angels. The man's bare legs and modern insulating rubber boots completed this comic dress.

A little army of pensioned soldiers, disguised members of the old people's club, entered the school/church building where Easter celebrations were being performed in Tiniteqilaq, in March 1997. The old men and women were dressed in long overcoats and heavy boots, caps and glasses, and they carried rifles. Commanded by 'commander' Boas Jonathansen, the local catechist, they were performing realistic military gestures such as marching in, pointing their rifles at the word of command, and imitating shooting, but they were hindered by their clumsiness and old age. Their performance caused great amusement among the local audience.

In 1997 on Greenland's National Day in Tiniteqilaq, a punk football player dressed up in a sports shirt and matching sport shorts, suspenders, his naked arms and legs were hardly covered by black mittens, black socks and mountaineering boots. His hair was shaved off, leaving black hair in the middle on his head and at the edges, and he wore heavy sunglasses. He roamed around the village square, acting as an old clumsy football player, plagued by a back injury, walking with a stick.

One of these players imitated a traditional female character, carrying a child on her back (see figure 113). The 'hunter' reminds one of the traditional caricatures of a hunter,⁸⁵ with the difference that the present player narrates a (comic) hunt, providing the audience with a great deal of enjoyment. The other actors, probably all the same man, are dressed completely or partly as women, except for the ridiculous punk football player. Comic speech, partly in Danish, making fun of Kaallunat (Danes) and other Europeans, was a repetitive

aspect of the performances. In contrast to what emerges from recordings made of disguised players in the past, the audience was never beaten with a stick nor frightened. Sexual gestures were hidden but present. In modern East Greenland society and in the modern context, contemporary materials are integrated into an old tradition, resulting in ridiculous combinations.

Tattoos and adornments

In September 1997 a tattooing art project was organized by the Art Association TUNU and the Ammassalik Museum, with a travelling exhibition on tattooing. Erik Reime, tattoo artist from Copenhagen, was invited to lead a workshop. The project was entitled *Timimi eqqumiitsuliaq* (art on the body). Approximately twenty-five people were tattooed by Erik Reime, who employed both hand and machine tattooing. The subjects chose their own designs, some of which were based on designs from East Greenland with motifs such as spotted seals and polar bears. Alternatively, they chose one of Reime's ethnic or historic designs from different parts of the world, most of them based on Viking motifs (Jensen 1997:9-10). Nowadays European ornaments are purchased in shops or received as presents. Earrings, finger rings, and necklaces are available in the local shops. The ornaments worn by East Greenlanders include bought necklaces, inspired by Greenland's culture, with silver pendants depicting a small *tupilak* or a *Thule mand* (an Inuk from the Thule area in Northwest Greenland). This *Thule mand* is said to be characteristic of East Greenland because it is "a real Eskimo, as we are". (Interview Anna Kuku-Kuitse 2001.) Generally the people know that the *Thule mand* is an image from North-west Greenland, whereas the *tupilak* is an East Greenland image. These necklaces are popular all over Greenland, and are worn as emblems of Greenland's culture and identity (see figure 114).

Clothing for special purposes

Within the framework of competitions, different types of clothing are invented or reinvented to express group membership. Within local communities, football is very popular amongst youngsters, who play the game in the village square in the summer, while in winter they may play on the fjord ice in front of the village. In the district capital the municipality has provided a football ground for training and competitions. Here the district competitions are held each summer. Each village team has its own sports clothing, and its own colours. In 2001, the Tasiilaq team dressed in yellow/blue, while Kulusuk had red sports clothing. Kulusuk won the match, and in a state of euphoria after the match the entire football team painted their hair orange. A small minority of the fans dress in football caps and scarves, or in their team's colours.

Danes, West and East Greenlanders, clothing and ethnic groups

Tunumiit, living in the smaller settlements often dress in a simpler way than townsmen, the elders especially wearing home-knitted tights and socks. In the district capital Tasiilaq, only a very small minority of the elders still wear sealskin *kamiit*. A group of modern citizens has evolved, consisting of Danes and West Greenlanders, and a few modern-minded East Greenlanders with paid jobs. In winter they wear beautiful and expensive seal-fur

coats of a modern design, made in the sewing workshops, or bought from the fur houses Eskimo Pels or Great Greenland. Usually, however, both Danes and Greenlanders living in East Greenland wear casual clothing.

“In earlier times the way of dressing was also used [to describe identity] , but the symbolic meaning of clothing has been weakened, partly for reasons of practicality and costs, partly because there is [in the 1980s] a general identification with the Greenlandic society among the Danes as well: unlike in Denmark, the Greenland-Danish contrast is being ignored.” (R. Petersen 1985:295.)

East and West Greenlanders dress in casual wear, and no significant difference can be seen in their dress. Greenlanders with paid jobs can afford modern clothing bought in shops, whether or not they are East or West Greenlanders.

Thus, increasing social differentiation can be seen in the clothing worn in East Greenland. The prosperous groups, although small in number, are recognizable in winter by their members' expensive fur coats, while older Greenlanders can also be distinguished by their old-fashioned dress, and teenagers dress according to the latest fashion. This social differentiation in clothing is both limited and subtle and clothing does only slightly reveal



Figure 114. Football scarf used by fans during football competitions in East Greenland in 1998. (RMV No. 5905-39.)

ethnic differences.

Clothing, Greenlanders and tourists

At the turn of the millenium tourism to the arctic areas, East Greenland included, is becoming increasingly popular. Nowadays, in summer and winter, tourists arrive at the airport of Kulusuk and find their way in the district by means of modern transport facilities. Sometimes cruise ships arrive in the harbour of Tasiilaq, although the difficulty of navigating the pack ice along the East Coast limits the opportunities for cruises and sailing tourism.

Tourists introduce new types of outdoor fashion. They often wear the latest models made out of expensive water-repellent materials such as Gore-Tex and MPC. They can be seen in small groups of two to seven people wearing down jackets that are too warm for the time of year or for the temperature, since travellers cannot take very much luggage with them. They wear heavy hiking boots, not necessary for walking on the asphalt roads of the district capital or through the villages, but this footwear is very practical for hikes undertaken miles away from civilization.

“Tourists are obviously different from us. They wear different coats and shoes. In the late spring, the coats denote that the tourist season has started! We often make jokes about tourists, since they are so different and their coats are much too warm. They dress out of proportion, or sometimes their clothes do not fit the life here. There was one tourist woman in high heels, who came walking all the way from the hotel to the shop. She could hardly walk back to the hotel. If we wear shoes with high heels at a feast or dancing party, we take these fancy shoes with us in a plastic bag, and we only wear them indoors. Sometimes tourists dress in exaggeratedly warm clothing, just as the previous year in April, when the weather was so warm. The children at school wanted to go outside without coats. In spring everyone is tired of the winter garments, which they have been wearing all the time, and then they want to dress in something new. (...) If I have a different type of coat, the people make fun of me: “*sortut turisti*” [just like a tourist] they laugh.” (Interview Anna Kuku-Kuitse 1998.)

Tourists are attracted to Greenland by stereotypes published in tourist leaflets and brochures. These publications not only employ images of the immense natural surroundings, assumed to be untouched, but also present cultural stereotypes, such as beautiful Eskimo women in Greenland's national costume (the 'girls in pearls') or hunters in furs out on the ice.

Tourism will bring new changes to the region. Tourist-demand may stimulate cultural preservation, such as kayak building, the making and selling of typical (East) Greenland art, implements and clothing, or performances of drum dances for tourists. Nevertheless, taking the small numbers of East Greenland inhabitants into consideration, tourism will present a serious threat to East Greenlandic culture and society if there were to be an exponential increase in the numbers of tourists visiting East Greenland.

Considerations and conclusions

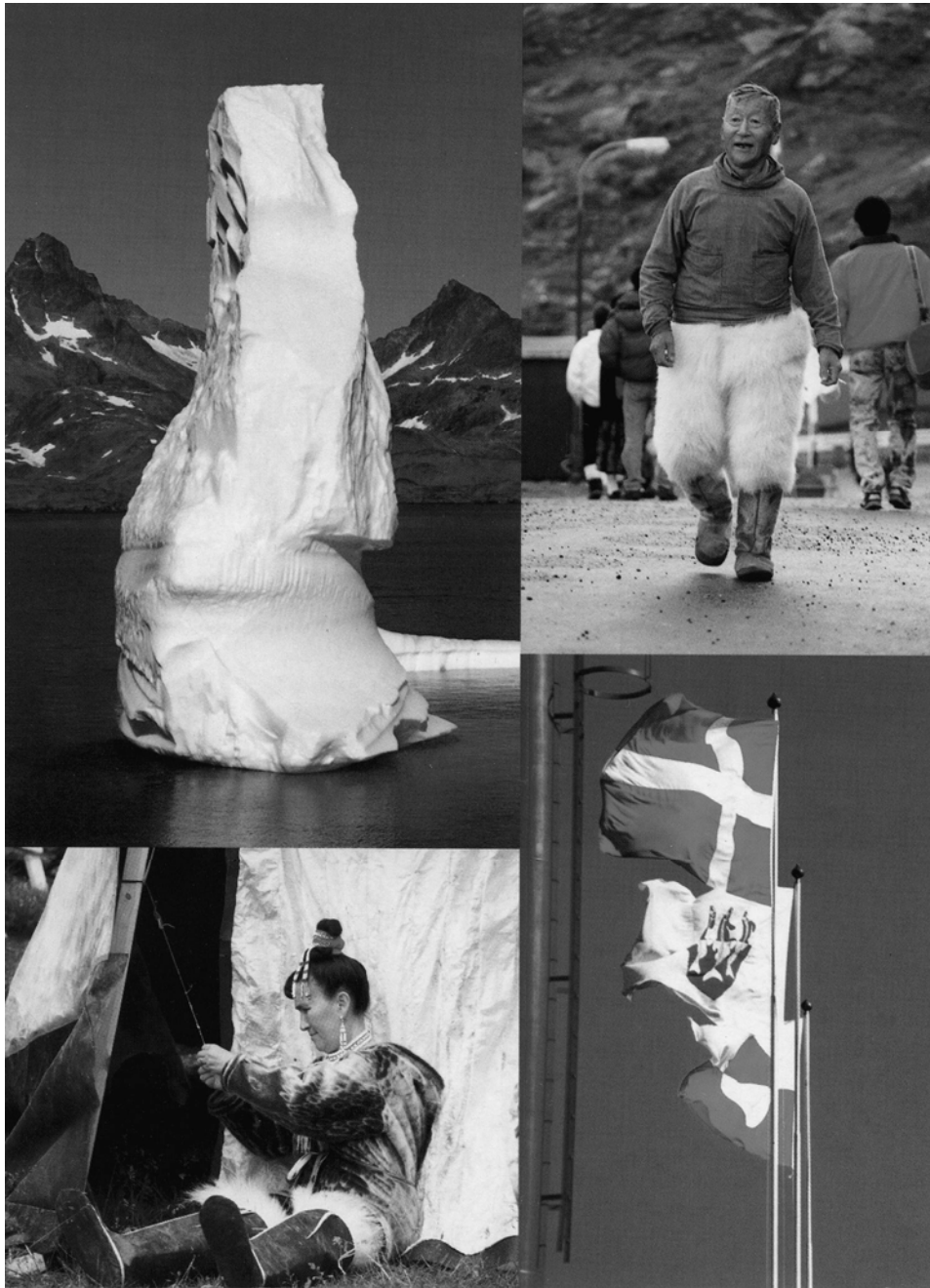


Figure 115. Postcard with cultural stereotypes of Greenland.
(Photo: Mala Kuko, Tasiilaq, Trojaborgs Forlag.)

During the second half of the twentieth century, traditional East Greenlandic fur clothing disappeared almost completely out of the material culture. European clothing was rapidly adopted into the lives of East Greenlandic men, women and children. This development in clothing took place simultaneously with what is known as the 'Danization period'. During the modernization of Greenland (1945-1960), Danish ideas and values prevailed.

The relationships between Greenlanders and Danes changed, broadly speaking from Danish dominance, via antagonism and polarization during the 'Greenlandization period' when Greenlandic intellectuals and politicians were striving for autonomy, towards increasing cooperation and equality between Greenlanders and Danes at the turn of the millenium.

During the second half of the twentieth century clothing in East Greenland changed considerably, following the Euro-American fashion of each decade. An increasing differentiation in population is expressed nowadays in the clothing worn by subgroups in the society.

Many East Greenlanders dress in western casual wear, comparable to that of European inhabitants living in northern areas. Differences in dress between elders and youngsters can be seen. New fur products are designed and produced by the sewing workshop Skæven and are highly appreciated by young women. Sometimes fur mittens, bags and shoes for house wear are copied at home and, to some extent, the clothes designed by Skæven stimulate and change the clothing developments in East Greenland. Since traditionally there were an ideology of non-permanent leadership and an absence of chiefs and headmen, the signals of differentiation and of social stratification connected to wealth and status are subtle ones. East Greenlanders or West Greenlanders and Danes with well-paid jobs, or households with both partners earning an income, can afford expensive fur coats designed by the sewing workshop or the firm Great Greenland, in contrast to households with only limited resources. Today, clothing continues to express differences in wealth within East Greenlandic society, as well as status and social identities.

Working clothing containing the colours or emblems of firms operating in East Greenland were introduced in the second half of the twentieth century. Employees, dressed in these clothes, express an identity derived from the firm where they work. Professional identities, different from the hunters' traditional identity, have been introduced, and these have equivalents in clothing. There is also the clothing worn in the religious calling.

Festive clothing is used within the private context of personal rites of passage, which continues to be important and meaningful to East Greenlandic families. The child's first school day and teenagers' confirmations are celebrated, and on such occasions European festive clothing is worn next to Greenlandic festive costumes. The national Greenlandic costumes express social identities, which function within the boundaries of kinship and family life.

In different contexts however, festive garments, especially the East Greenlandic variants such as the cotton *amaatit* and East Greenlandic type of anoraks can express national as well as regional identities. With the nation-building process and the development of an

overall Greenland identity, national symbols such as the national costume came into being in relationship to the outside world. A fixed image of 'traditional Greenlandic culture' develops, is given validity, and retains a new significance within the modern Greenland society. Elements of traditional material culture, such as the national costume, are kept in Greenland museums. They become static and can no longer be changed.

A few key figures within the East Greenlandic community and the Tasiilaq Museum play an active role in stimulating the process of consciousness raising, through the (re)invention and revitalization of East Greenlandic material culture and clothing. Members of this mild elite movement with their cultured background have a mission to preserve East Greenland's (material) culture, and in doing so, they are constructing an East Greenlandic identity. When the singing choirs held competitions and were broadcast on Danish and Greenlandic television, East Greenlandic variants of Greenland's festive costumes were worn not only because of this festive occasion and their beautiful appearance, but also because they express regional identities. The same garments express Greenlandic national identity when worn on 21 June, during the celebrations for Greenland's National Day. Festive costumes, worn by politicians in the Greenlandic parliament or abroad during political meetings, may also express national identity. Clothing with the logo of the political parties has been developed and is used within the country, especially during elections. This 'political clothing' does not express a Greenlandic national identity, but rather a political affiliation and political preference.

Uajaerneq or *Mitaarneq*, the tradition of disguising oneself, can also have different contexts and can be valued differently in Greenland today. Performances by disguised players within a local East Greenland community take place on several festival occasions, varying from Greenland's National Day to Three Kings on January the 6th and International Women's Day in March. Performances by disguised actors inspired by traditional *Uajaerneq* games are adopted by Greenlandic theatre groups. These performances are occasionally broadcast on Greenland's television, and they can sometimes be seen abroad on special occasions. In this national or international context, *Uajaerneq* or *Mitaarneq* are valued as 'Greenlandic culture' and are important for the development of a Greenlandic identity.

New identities developed and are expressed in newly introduced, developed or re-invented clothing, related to new and ever-changing cultural, economic and political contexts. Often these contexts are connected to semi-European settings, for example Umiak rowing in the context of the celebrations for Greenland's National Day. A traditional Greenlandic activity which has disappeared is (re)invented and performed during a political Greenlandic celebration, which is based on new European political structures. Greater uniformity and increasing diversity, a mixed population and the mixing of cultures, continuity and change, go hand in hand in Greenland. The developments of clothing and identity point in the direction of a vital, creative and living East Greenlandic culture, developing new identities within the framework of ever-changing contexts.