



Colonial Categories of Rule – Mixed Marriages and Families in Greenland around 1800

Late 18th and 19th century colonial Greenland saw a number of ‘mixed’ families becoming a focal point of the colonial administration. In the intersection between religious and secular interests in the Danish-Norwegian arctic colonial space, these marriages and families across the colonial divide were closely observed, registered and regulated. As such, they became significant elements in the shifting social landscapes of the Greenlandic colonial society, partly because of the unruliness of these relations placing a constant pressure on the colonial administration, partly as result of colonial administrative efforts at social engineering that followed.

By Inge Seiding

As argued by Danish historian Søren Rud in his recent, yet unpublished, PhD-dissertation, processes of subjectivation through governmental strategies by state as well as non-state actors developed through the 19th century colonial Greenland as well as its metropole, Copenhagen. One of Rud’s main points is the fact that in the Greenlandic case, the hall mark of this colonial, governmental management was “the utilization of the concept of authenticity.” (Rud 2010: 241). The theoretical approach in my studies of intermarriage in colonial Greenland similarly draws, partially, on the Foucaultian concept of governmentality. Slightly out of tune with Rud’s outline of a chronology of the development of this type of colonial management, I apply the concept to 18th/early 19th century management of the colonial subjects who married and founded the families of *blanding* who in Rud’s dissertation exemplifies the objects of managing the balance of proper civilization – “correct admixtures” – through various educational efforts in the latter half of the 19th century.¹

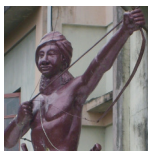
Despite dealing with a period marked by the advent of formalized, management strategies of a more mercantile character, a closer look at the shifting administrative strategies surrounding intermarriage and children of mixed parentage shows an intense focus on the individual on defining *Greenlandicness*, or, rather a desired Greenlandic type of subject. The 1782 Royal

Greenlandic Trading Department (RGTD) Instruction and the implementation of it, founded a colonial society of distinct social categorization that classed, gendered and racialized as a direct response to the social and cultural transgression embodied in the marriages between Inuit women and European men. Just as the civilizing projects of the late 19th century were ambiguous, balancing between European virtues and Greenlandic authenticity, the management of the colonial, intimate encounter was one of ambiguity and increasing anxiety. The concerns, I argue here, related to mercantile interests alongside an increasing focus on the social design of the colonial society.

Intermarriage in Colonial Greenland

Intimate relations between Greenlandic Inuit women and European men most likely predate the colonization initiated by the Lutheran mission in 1721 as encounters between European whalers and Inuit on the Greenlandic coasts. Probably the first, recorded intimate relationship between a Greenlandic woman and a European trade worker resulting in a child birth can be found in missionary Hans Egedes *relations* in an entry from 1735 mentioning a child born out of wedlock by a married Greenlandic woman at the Christianshaab factory (Egede 1741:292-293). The first Christian marriages are mentioned in the sources from around 1740. They seem to have been common in the decades before the establishment of the Royal Greenlandic Trading Department (RGTD), even amongst superior staff members and missionaries. In his description of the Greenlandic factories from 1769, former chief colonial factor Niels Egede mentions that at some factories, all Danish trade employees were married to Greenlandic

¹ *Blanding* was the term used by the colonial management referring to persons of mixed European-Inuit descent. The term was used in daily administrative language as well as in census lists until the early 20th century. Referring to this I use the, with contemporary eyes, rather problematic term *mixed* here to address the actual colonial terminology used about intermarriage and Greenlandic-European families. Note that all translations of original source material from Danish are made by the author.



women.² In pre-RGTD times marriages were loosely regulated but the grooms had to sign the so-called *marriage conditions*, a marriage contract, when entering marriage to a Greenlandic woman. The establishment of the RGTD in 1774 and especially the *Instruction* from 1782 marks an increased regulation of the marriages following a developing debate about mixed families: Superior staff members are not allowed to marry Inuit women, mixed or unmixed, and common staff members are only allowed to marry women of mixed descent, not unmixed or European women. The preceding debate and common opposition within the administration, against intermarriage, focused on the children in mixed families and their lack of skills as Greenlandic hunters or hunters' wives. An illustrative example of the main arguments of the debate can be seen in the 18th century periodical *Minerva* in an issue from 1795. Missionary in the factory of Jakobshavn, Rudolph Lassen, lists the arguments against the marriages but, very much in line with the mission in general, argues that the marriages are crucial when it comes to improving moral conduct by promoting Christian marriage as much as possible. Lassen argues that some mixed marriages have produced children "of use to the Country and the Trade" and that focus should be put on upbringing and education rather than prohibiting intermarriage. Furthermore, Lassen argues for intermarriage as a tool in the mission project: Language skills and cultural insight is furthered, facilitating the education and ministry, the dual core of the Lutheran-Evangelical mission work Greenland (Lassen 1795: 286).

In the years of liquidation of the General Trading Company leading to the establishment of the RGTD, the debate about intermarriage was closed, at least for a short while, through prohibition: In a letter, the Board of Managers in Copenhagen reminds the Chief Colonial Factor (CCF) in Uummannaq, J.C. Hammond, in 1776 that trade employees no longer are allowed to marry in Greenland. Disobedience would release them from their contract but not allow them to leave Greenland, thus having to provide for themselves and their family. The man in question in the letter, trade worker Jacob Dorph, is later allowed to marry despite the prohibition: The Board of Managers later realizes that Jacob is a

² At four factories, Egedesminde, Christianshaab, Jakobshavn and Ritenbenk all trade employees were married to Inuit women. Egede notes that in Jakobshavn, the catechists and the missionary are also married to Inuit women. Factories were referred to as *kolonier* in Danish. The place names used in the present article correspond to those given to the factories in Danish. Today official Greenlandic place are in use, but I have chosen, with attention to historical and geographical detail, to use the Danish place names of the period dealt with here.

mixed blood Greenlander and therefore not subjugated the prohibition against the mixed marriages.³ Permission to marry was given from Copenhagen through either one of the two Governors in Greenland; missionaries performed the wedding ceremony and admonished the couples to live according to the Christian marriage vows.⁴ Formally, the mission and trade activities in Greenland were kept separate: From 1816 the supervising authority for the RGTD was the Royal Exchequer, while the Royal Mission College (RMC), responsible for the mission activities in Greenland, answered to the Danish Chancellery (Sveistrup & Dalggaard 1945: 8). Before the establishment of the RGTD in 1774, the line of command went from the Chief Colonial Factors (CCF) to the Board of Managers of the General Trading Company (GTC) when a trade employee wished to marry. A marriage request was handled by the Governors in Greenland, especially if it conflicted with the Department rules as stipulated in the RGTD Instruction of 1782. Missionaries could recommend or oppose a marriage, mainly based on the local missionary's evaluation of the moral character of the couple. However, these were only recommendations that not necessarily affected the outcome of the requests. The marriage conditions included a paragraph stating that the consent of the bride and her "family or other friends" was necessary, but the contracts were signed only by the groom and witnesses, in most cases fellow trade workers and the local CCF.⁵ This reflected the status of the contracts as formal, binding agreements between employer and employee.

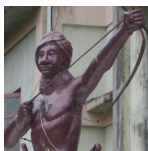
The Masculine Colonization

Until the mid- 19th century, very few of the male Europeans in Greenland were married or married European women during the course of their stay. The few married superior staff members most often travelled to

³ April 25, 1776 and May 13, 1777. Greenland National Archives. Chief Colonial Factor's Archive, Uummannaq, Incoming Letters 1777, NKA 57.15.01/13.22/8.

⁴ Following the establishment of the RGTD there were two Governors in Greenland, one in the northern part of Greenland (Holsteinsborg to Upernavik) and one in the southern (from Nanortalik to Sukkertoppen). They constituted the top of the administrative hierarchy within the trade, answering directly to the Board of Managers in Copenhagen.

⁵ Marriage transcript from June 6, 1754 in Jakobshavn Mission Protocol, Greenland National Archives, Ilulissat Parish Archive. NKA 22.12.01/05.50/1. The peculiar wording 'other' could reflect the administrator's confusion about Inuit family relations. The relations in the social organization of the Greenlandic kin relations, was not always easily understood by clergymen and trade administrators judging by the sometimes rather confused entries in census records.



Greenland alone, leaving their wife behind in Europe.⁶ As opposed to later, under RGTD regulations, marriages between superior staff members (mainly CCFs) and Greenlandic women were common. The period also saw missionaries marrying Greenlandic women, a type of marriage that became very rare in the 19th century where missionaries in many cases brought their families to Greenland. The scattered and scarce information in the archives about marriages before the establishment of the RGTD mainly deal retrospectively with administrative practices in the days of the early colonization. Very few census or church records date as far back as the first mixed marriages, but records from the RGTD archives tell the tale of both descendants of the first marriages/relations and marriages entered after the 1776 prohibition was lifted with new company regulations in 1782.

An estimate based on collections of different types of source material from the Northern Inspectorate in Greenland, shows that more than 200 European men married Inuit women (some more than once) in the years between 1750 and 1870.⁷ In the years between 1800 and 1850, muster rolls show that the number of European trade employees married to Inuit women in North West Greenland fluctuated between approximately 20 per cent in 1804 and 60 percent in 1832. The 1782 Instruction reintroduced mixed marriages but in a new and limited form: No superior staff member could marry a Greenlandic woman. Common staff members were allowed to marry mixed Greenlandic women, but not unmixed *or* European women. Thus, RGTD regulations aimed at securing an all-European superior staff group, keeping the mixed families amongst commoners and eventually the all-Inuit families separate from marriage relations to the two trade employee groups. With an increasing number of European women in Greenland during the course of the 19th century, all-European families and homes slowly came to constitute the upper social stratum of the small, colonial societies emerging on the west coast of Greenland.

⁶ Muster rolls and biographies tell the tale of the many unmarried colonial workers arriving in Greenland. Also, in the many discussions about sexual behavior between clergymen and colonial administrators it is sometimes proposed that only married men should be employed for work in Greenland. Greenland National Archives, Northern Governor's Archive, Lists of Superior/lower officers and Common Staff 1791-1842. NKA 01.02/21.10/1.

⁷ It is difficult to provide an equally precise estimate for the Southern Inspectorate since significant records were lost in a shipwreck in 1959. The estimate is low, since archival lacunas render a precise count impossible.

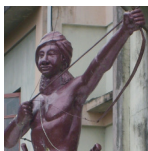
The Intimate Colony – Managing Inter-marriage and Mixed Families

As noted by anthropologist and historian Ann Laura Stoler, colonial studies have tended to focus on “rationality, reason and progress as the dominant fictions legitimating European rule” (1995:207). Such a focus leaves out the perspective from which it can be argued that colonial societies were shaped with and by the bodies that inhabited them. As creatively phrased by Ballantyne and Burton, “the body is in many ways the most intimate colony, as well as the most unruly, to be subject to colonial disciplines” (2005: 406-407). Also in colonial Greenland, this intimacy, its closeness to the ‘other’ as well as its unruly and as such, very human, character was a focal point of colonial administration, consideration and unrest. The paperwork behind the meticulous attempts to regulate sexual behavior and the families that in many cases were the results of it, informed both clerical and secular administrators of age, gender, ethnicity, family relations of all inhabitants in Greenland, facilitating a body of knowledge on which the governing of intimate relations was founded.

These records provide insight into the development of the colonial governing techniques in the first 100 years of colonization: From the hesitant attempts at administering the first mixed families in the late 18th century to the increasingly formalized control with the colonial families, mixed or unmixed during the first half of the 19th century.

With an archival research focus on intermarriage, the words *intimate* and *unruly* fit the impression left by documents in the colonial archives very well: The many letters about marriages, affairs and children show an administration forced to grasp the unruliness of human relations in each individual case. It also shows a colonial administration reaching further into the most intimate details of the lives of the colonial populations – choice of partner, housing, childrearing, education and even diet of family members. I have chosen to focus on the early period around the establishment of RGTD in 1774 to the first part of the 19th century in order to narrow the scope of my analysis to the initial and founding management of this transgression of the colonial divide in Greenland.

The discussions amongst administrators about intermarriage, as referred to above, reveal the many concerns and ideas surrounding this particular object of colonial rule. One of the very early sources to the arguments posed by a groom to his employers in Copenhagen, can be seen in a letter from Missionary Jørgen Sverdrup in Jakobshavn to the Royal Mission College (RMC) in Copenhagen in 1768: Sverdrup married Greenlandic widow Marianna Graetze while still waiting for the letter of accept from the Mission College. In



his reply to their somewhat displeased reaction to his marriage, he argues with the benefits his new relations brings to his work amongst other such as language skills, endurance and mobility he states that [...] *The Marriage between a Missionary and a Greenlandic Woman is an Advantage to his performance of Duties [...] wins the Confidence and Love of the Greenlanders and how Important is not this Bond of Love between Teacher and Listeners?*⁸

When applying for permission to marry, generally, the man argued that the marriage in some way relieved the trade, despite the fact that trade administrators in the metropole were convinced that the marriages would create more mouths to feed – on company food. However, the correspondence between administrators in Greenland and Copenhagen, and especially within Greenland, show that the marriages were instrumental in trade business as well. A man with a large, Inuit family was well-suited to be the first trade employee opening up a new settlement post and the marriage contracts explicitly stated that he could not object to such a position. Furthermore, marriages tied the groom to Greenland for life.⁹ This cut both ways: As well as deterring some men from entering marriage it made permissions to wed questions of selecting the best workers and keeping them in Greenland indefinitely. In many cases, the local missionary wrote the CCF when a man wished to marry and these letters show most missionaries recommending marriage. From missionaries' diaries and letters, it becomes apparent that the main argument supporting colonial marriages, even beyond trade instructions, was that it prevented extramarital sexual relations as well as promoted Christian marriage amongst the Greenlandic Inuit in general.

The Genders of Mixedness

Tracking the development of the debate about intermarriage, it becomes evident that a major concern was the kinds of colonial subjects it produced – in this case focusing both on the marrying men and women as well as their children. The concerns reflect issues of the ongoing categorizations of gender, race and ethnicity

⁸ Letter from Missionary Jørgen Sverdrup to the Mission College in Copenhagen, 19th August 1768. Greenland National Archives, Ilulissat Parish Archives, mission report 1768, microfiche copy. NKA 22.12.01/microfiche no. 96.

⁹ Historian Finn Gad writes that a 'Greenlandic' marriage did not tie a common staff member to the country after the implementation of the RGTD Instructions of 1782 as was the case seen in the marriage contracts from the 1750's (1974:192-193). However, marriage contracts from 1782 until around 1850 state that the groom must stay in Greenland as long as the Governor commands it. The sources show that this was also practiced as only widowers with grown children and divorcees were allowed to leave Greenland.

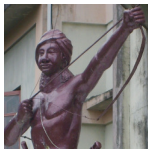
intertwined within the discourse of the colonial administration. The debate, reaching its peak in the years immediately before and in the beginning of the establishment of the RGTD, marks a change in governing strategies dealing with mixed marriages and families. Pre-RGTD marriage contracts as well as correspondence from the same period, states the following about the offspring of mixed couples: [...] *let them learn the trade of Carpenter or Cooper which we would appreciate, for in Time such Natives could work in these Trades and also become good working Men which would Benefit the Natives of the Country as well as the [Trading] Company.*¹⁰

These mixed men were supposed to learn as trainees in Greenland, but there are a few examples of men who were sent to the metropole to receive training as craftsmen. The above mentioned Jacob Dorph, who was mistaken for a European trade employee by the Board of Managers, was one of the few. The passage above clearly does not tell us much about how mixed girls were regarded. However, this silence is overwhelmingly compensated for in the discourse of the debate about future regulations of intermarriage, as the debate in the late 18th century was as much about the European men, as about Inuit women and children in the mixed families.

Stoler's point about European bourgeois identities created and nourished by a backdrop of colonial societies through processes of exclusion and inclusion of subjects European, mixed or unmixed, is worth considering in the case of the Danish colonies in Greenland. That these processes centered on race despite the absence of a racial discourse of race as type as known in the late 19th and 20th century, can be seen as a parallel to her point that: *European identities in the colonies were affirmed by a repertoire of cultural competencies and sexual prescriptions that altered with the strategies for profit and the stability of rule* (1995: 113).

Even in a period of almost total absence of European women in Greenland, the dominant administrative discourse about Inuit/mixed women are formulated around a concern for economic sustainability but also as an insisting definition of an ultimately un-European woman. Examples of this can be seen in the arguments against intermarriage in the late 18th century and their repeated concerns about useless women. The discussion about usefulness informs us about the views on the

¹⁰ Letter from the Board of Managers to Chief Factor Deputy Hind, May 8, 1767. Greenland National Archives, Nuuk. Chief Factor's Archive, Jakobshavn. Incoming Letters, 1758-1770. NKA 57.12.01/13.22/8. The exact same wording can be seen in contemporary letters to other colonies as well as the few existing examples of marriage contracts from the period before the establishment of the RGTD.



colonial subjects and their proper gender and cultural affiliation in the young colonial societies. A collection of passages about intermarriage from letters from governors in Greenland to the Board of Managers in Copenhagen in the years between 1784 and 1793 shows the main concern about mixed women: Governor in North Greenland, Schwabe, writes that intermarriage is only allowed because the mixed women, unfit to marry Greenlandic men, would cause excesses of extramarital sexual activity. The same governor suggests that Inuit men could be paid to marry these women. His successor, Governor Wille, opposes such marriages as the mixed women do not fit his description of a proper wife of a hunter: [...] *the wife of a Greenlander who should be able to prepare Boats, build Houses, sow Tents, flense Seals and other Sea Mammals, prepare Skins, work as slaves and more [...]*.¹¹

Note in the wording, which represents the ‘real’ Greenlandic¹² women as a slave, a description similar to many other contemporary depictions of indigenous, female bodies in some cases directly connected to racial slavery.¹³ Schwabe’s idea was fostered by a disregard of intermarriage shared by his colleague in South Greenland, governor Lund, both insisting that mixed marriages led to unhappiness and financial ruin for European men. Governor Lund’s letter from 1794 focuses less on the mixed woman as an unfit Inuit wife than her shortcomings as a European one: Once she has lured a man to marriage she lives greedily to boast her wealth as a European woman with access to European food and store bought products.¹⁴ This view of a ‘woman in between’ and what was deemed useful on either side of the colonial divide was rooted in earlier arguments against mixed families. Former factor Niels Egede stated about mixed children (of both sexes) that they were “good for neither one thing nor the other” (Egede 1769: 20). Following the establishment of the RGTD, this characteristic is especially dominating in the description of mixed blood women as wives – Inuit or European – they just didn’t fit. In Governor Schultz considerations concerning a marriage application from

a deputy CCF (who according to the company rules was not allowed to marry a Greenlandic woman), his inclination to approve the marriage is based on the missionary’s description of the woman making her a “very rare mixture”.¹⁵ The deputy, Steen, never married Judithe Enghel who was a widow after a CCF, but in the eyes of the Governor she apparently seemed a proper wife for a superior employee, probably because of her previous marriage.

That the homes of the superior officers were desired to be of a certain European standard is expressed through the rule that only they could marry European women.¹⁶ Discussing a deputy CCF’s marriage application in 1824, the board of managers maintains that deputies cannot marry until they are “[...] in the position of a Chief Colonial Factor” and thus in a position to feed a European family.¹⁷ Also, the restriction on marriages between superior staff members and Greenlandic women, mixed or unmixed, was taken very seriously – locally as well as in Copenhagen. Contrary to a local, generally, more random and flexible interpretation of company marriage rules, Governor Schultz states in 1793 that “it is my immovable Principle; that a Chief Colonial Manager may never be married to a Greenlander” without further explaining this principle in his administration.¹⁸ As the abovementioned example shows, the governor’s principle was not absolutely immovable, when the woman was ‘socialized’ as a European wife, as was apparently the case with Judithe Enghel.

In Danish historian and missionary in Greenland Ostermann’s collection of governors’ ‘greatest hits’ about intermarriage in the late 1700’s, only one deals specifically with mixed men and their skills as hunters. The cited governor, Schultz, argues that Greenlanders in general are becoming less skilled as kayak hunters –

¹¹ Governor Wille to the Board of Managers, September 26, 1788. Printed in *Det Grønlandske Selskabs Aarsskrift* 1940. The discussion referred to can be read on the pages 96-99 in the mentioned publication.

¹² The term *Greenlander*, not *Inuk* or *Inuit*, was and is still used about the indigenous population in Greenland. Today the Greenlanders call themselves *Grønlandere* in Danish and *Kalaallit* in Greenlandic – the latter also referring to nationality (Kalaallit Nunaat – Greenland) rather than the connection to other Inuit in northern Canada and the US.

¹³ For an interesting discussion of this see Morgan 2005.

¹⁴ Governor Lund to the Board of Managers, June 20, 1794. See note 11.

¹⁵ The Danish colonial term for a mixed person was *mixture/admixture* rather than *mixed blood* or *Métis*. Governor Schultz to the Board of Managers, September 6, 1790. Greenland National Archives, Northern Governor’s Archive, Letters to the Board of Managers 1782-1796. NKA 01.02/11.22/1.

¹⁶ As mentioned below, the pension system includes a rate to be paid by European superior staff men to their mixed wives widow pension. The rate exists in order to include those married before the Instruction of 1782 as well as to accommodate the dispensations to marry mixed women that were occasionally given after 1782.

¹⁷ Board manager Lemming to Governor West and Missionary Kragh. March 27, 1824. Greenland National Archives, Northern Governor’s Archive, Letters from the Board of Managers, 1824. NKA 01.02/13.22/9.

¹⁸ 9th report, 30th August 1793. Greenland National Archives, Northern Governor’s Archive, Letters to the Board of Managers 1782-1796. NKA 01.02/11.22/1.



mixed men are as capable as other Greenlanders.¹⁹ Schultz's words reflect, ironically as women seem to be an even greater concern, a central topic in the discourse about upbringing and education from the early days of trade company rule: The production of (male) subjects able to perform trade related work, or, with increasing intensity around the turn of the century, productive, 'genuine' Greenlandic men, and skilled kayak hunters. From a European point of view, Greenlandic men could be made to work, one way or the other, as skilled trade workers. The women, however, were less manageable if they were unskilled as wives in Greenlandic households performing the tasks of preparing the produce of the hunters. Furthermore, as wives of Europeans, they had entered a social space that became increasingly European with the ban of superior staff intermarriage and the increasing number of European wives entering Greenland during the 19th century. As male European common staff workers, came to inhabit the social spaces of Greenlandic in-law families, turf houses and Greenlandic speaking children, Greenlandic women, first and foremost those married to superior staff or missionaries, entered the hearts of colonial European homes – the role of mother and wife in charge of the daily, domestic life and upbringing of children. Gendering the colonial idea of a Greenlandic man was fairly easy as both the 'either-or' fitted the colonial trade society and its categories of workers and hunters. The women – both wives and daughters in the sphere of mixedness – were, to a higher degree, 'neither-nor' around the turn of the century. While administrators in the metropole regulated mainly by prohibition, local administrators relied on intimate knowledge of each individual in Greenland to keep the trade activities up. This task, they believed, was dependant on a society of Greenlanders producing at a low cost, feeding themselves in the process, as well as a tight knit small, European society of administrators and workers. What inevitably came between, had to be categorised, regulated and fitted neatly, to be either or. However, 'mixed' was never European, and the developing colonial administration and welfare system was designed to encourage or discourage, clearly aimed at three population groups rather than two.

Knowledge and Control – Managing the Colonial Population

The social divide between the top of the European population, common staff workers and Greenlanders was rather fuzzy and negotiable until the 1782 prohibi-

tion of marriages to unmixed Greenlandic women. RGTD era superior staff intermarriage and welfare regulations created an increasingly controlled distinction between European and Greenlandic subjects – especially those of mixed parentage. This distinction was basically founded on race, but as David Scott points out [...] *that as a classificatory signifier, what constituted race (and therefore what uses it was available for) altered between, say, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and most importantly, within the latter* (1995: 196).

In Greenland from the very beginning of the colonisation, the basic distinction was one between Greenlandic and European. This distinction was blurred by intermarriage and extramarital relations resulting in children of mixed parentage, leading to a practice of distinction equally, and often predominantly, based on social background intrinsically connected to the trade company staff hierarchy.

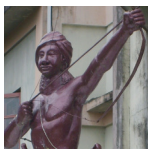
Registration and Categorisation

The increasingly systematic and detailed gathering of information about the colonial population, the non-European in particular reflects the development of a colonial administration seeking control through knowledge of its population. The empirical focus of my research is based on viewing archives-as-process rather than archive-as-thing agreeing with Stoler when describing: [...] *archives as condensed sites of epistemological and political anxiety rather than as skewed and biased sources. These colonial archives were both transparencies on which power relations were inscribed and intricate technologies of rule themselves.* (2009: 20).

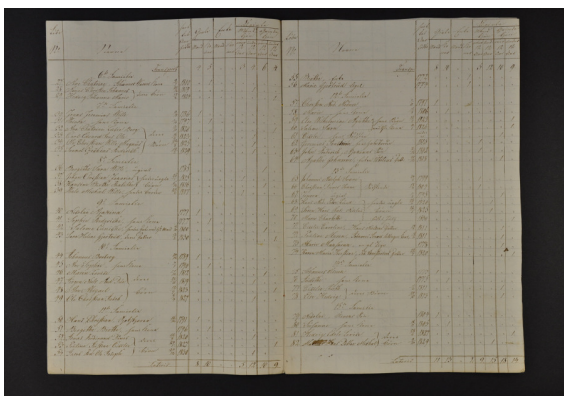
The latter seems an obvious perspective on the various, detailed, to the point of redundancy, census lists kept and reported by trade administrators and missionaries in Greenland. Missionaries made annual census lists in each district, counting all christened Greenlanders. CCF's also made annual census lists of all Greenlanders including those not yet christened as well as lists of employees. From 1835, the population of Greenland was counted in the national census of all populations within the Danish realm. This census recorded all persons in Greenland but registered by the same categories as the 'local' census lists: European, *blanding* or Greenlander, in that order. Until the late 19th century, anyone of European descent, even generations back, was categorized as *blanding*. This categorization was necessary to the administrators due to the differentiation between European and non-European subjects and facilitated by the meticulous registration of individuals and families.

Apart from placing the indigenous population in either of the two ethnic categories, census material provided administrators with details of household members, age,

¹⁹ Governor Schultz to the Board of Managers, June 1, 1793. Greenland National Archives, Northern Governor's Archive, Letters to the Board of Managers 1782-1796. NKA 01.02/11.22/1.



occupation, biological kinship relations, and skills. Furthermore, mission censuses included information about literacy and an assessment of moral behavior. The censuses reflect how administrators, secular as well as clerical, collected knowledge about the state of affairs of the population: How many, who, where and how fit to produce? In the case of the missionary censuses were evaluations of the christening of the Greenlanders and assessments of the behavior, whereabouts and reading/writing skills of each individual. In households of intermarried couples, only the Greenlandic wife and children are listed. Only a note identifies the woman as the wife of a European man mentioned by name and occupation.



Chief Colonial Officer’s census from Godhavn (present day Qeqertarsuaq) 1830²⁰

The body of material in the colonial archives that redundantly repeat the categories of Greenlander and ‘mixed’ tell the tale of an administration governing a society by those categories. Knowing how and with whom ‘mixed’ families lived was important knowledge in this governing: How were the children raised? Would boys become capable hunters and girls functional as wives in a Greenlandic household? The colonial welfare system relied on detailed information on every single person in the colonies. Knowing who were entitled to widow’s pension, child support and extra food rations depended on detailed headcounts including information about marital status and biological relations. Children born out of wedlock received maintenance fees from their fathers, depending on information about both parents and children and their whereabouts to secure retrieval of the fees, penalization of man in question as well as perform the annual pay-

ments to the mother.²¹ For the missionary, information about extramarital sex was used in lecturing individuals on Christian lifestyle. Correspondence between missionaries and governors shows the missionary as the primary source of information about family relations. Securing the 1782 prohibition of marriages between Europeans and ‘unmixed’ Greenlandic women relied on knowing exactly who were of mixed parentage.

Going through muster rolls, listing all trade employees in the Northern Inspectorate, archival researchers with an intimate knowledge of the mixed families, soon learns that sons of superior staff employees, themselves employed as senior staff (most commonly as deputies to the CCF’s), often appear as Europeans in the rolls. Usually all Greenlandic (mixed or unmixed) are listed with prefix *national* before their rank or title – this is most often not the case with ‘superior sons’ employed in a high ranking position despite their mixed parentage. It is very unlikely that the CCF who wrote the list was unaware of the backgrounds of his employees – the mixed superior staffers appear in the census lists written by the very same CCF – they would have been left out if he had counted them as Europeans. However, according to the trade welfare system, administrators did differ between superior staff members based on their ethnic background:

Position	Ethnic Background	Wife’s Ethnic Background	Annual Pension Rate
Superior staff	European	European	60 Rigsdaler
Superior staff	European	Mixed	40 Rigsdaler
Common staff	European	Mixed	25/20 Rigsdaler
Superior staff	Mixed	Mixed/Greenlandic	25 Rigsdaler
Common staff	Mixed	Mixed/Greenlandic	None

Table 1. Annual pension rates, RGTD staff, General Instructions 1782

Obviously they were not allowed to marry European women and their wives received a relatively smaller widow’s pension, reflecting the difference in salary that is also apparent in the muster rolls. Despite a ‘European salary’, a widow of mixed descent after a superior staff

²⁰ Greenland National Archives, NKA 01.02/31.20/18, Photograph by the author.

²¹ The total sum of payment was made by the father and paid in annual rates to the mother until the child’s 12th birthday. The father was exempted from paying if he was the primary caregiver of the child.



member would also receive a smaller pension than a European woman. She was expected to provide for herself through her Greenlandic family and keeping a household less dependent on store bought food. This hints at what was considered appropriate in an all-European home as opposed to one where the wife had a dual cultural background. Furthermore, the regulations aimed at making European marriages less popular as well as promoting a Greenlandic diet and life style in all mixed families.

The census material shows an increasing attention to registration of individuals and their social and cultural background. From the beginning of colonization, heads had been counted by missionaries and traders, serving the purpose of knowing how many needed Christian tutelage or how many capable hunters could be expected to deliver in the blubber trade. Attention to 'head counts' remains but the information gathered becomes increasingly more detailed: In many cases CCFs begin charting each household and its inhabitants. The secular records take on a character more similar to the mission records with an increased attention to family relations and the social circumstances that the families lived under. The administrative focus on the mixed families and the administration of pensions, poor relief, child support and the first attempts at secular education projects depended on this knowledge. One of the significant changes in the trade census registration was, as shown below, the demand for a specific registration of the mixed population.

Shaping the Mixed Man

When missionary in Jakobshavn, Rudolph Lassen, writes about mixed marriages in 1795, he neatly summarizes the pros and cons in the discussion about the outcome of allowing mixed marriages. Lassen states that he will not dare recommend or warn against intermarriage. However, his article shows a tendency to support marriages between Europeans and Greenlanders, its conclusion, as could be expected from a clergyman, pointing at the importance of finding solutions to improve the moral behaviour in the Greenlandic colonies. In the article Lassen promotes ideas about how to create well-functioning mixed families through discipline and financial encouragement. Amongst his viewpoints is the idea of creating useful, educated Greenlandic subjects born and raised in mixed families: In his description of this kind of mixed Greenlandic, lies an opposition to the above mentioned 'neither nor' attitude by arguing that such a useful mix of education and 'culture'; Greenlandic hunting skills, sailing and knowledge of the land and sea, would secure the future of Greenland (Lassen 1795: 281-282). These viewpoints are in many ways representative of what was to be the

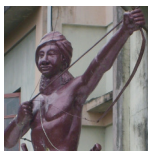
actual governing strategies connected to intermarriage in the following decades. Also, its main ideas are clearly echoed in the 19th century modernisation/civilizing projects and their ambiguous and slightly anxiously expressed ideas of a 'correct admixture' as described by Rud in an article about these projects thus drawing a line from what early, secular ideas about civilizing the Inuit population to the formalization of civilizing modernizations projects in the later 19th century (2009). Around the turn of the 18th century, correspondence between Greenland and Denmark bears witness of an increased attention to boys of mixed parentage. In a circular from the board in the spring of 1800 describing the desired information in the census records, the following request is made:

*We would highly appreciate, along with the abovementioned census list, receiving a special annual record of all mixed persons living in all districts. In our opinion, it is most useful to record each family with information about the age of each person and their skills in the pursuits of the country.*²²

It is followed by yet another circular, dated in June the same year, stressing the importance of encouraging the young, mixed men to becoming skilled kayak hunters by making sure they are given kayaks as well as prizes when bringing home their first catch. Furthermore, the board suggests that the governors perform musters of mixed men on their inspection trips in the colonies. They suggest that the muster procedure include a formal report in order to "add to this kind of Examination some Solemnity as well as inform the next Examination about what Progress has been made".²³ This can be seen as a concrete attempt to carry out what is written in the marriage contracts from the 1750s and onwards: That mixed children should be raised as Greenlanders by living with their Greenlandic family on a diet of Greenlandic food learning the skills needed to be a Greenlander as desired by colonial administrators: Kayak hunters and hunters' wives. In the 1800 circulars this effort shifts from being solely the responsibility of the father of the children to becoming, to a higher degree, a state or administration matter. However, the main focus is still on men. As pointed out by historian and anthropologist Mette Rønsager, it is not until the 1820's when the first educated Greenlandic midwives,

²² Circular from the Board of Managers to the Governor/CCFs in Greenland, April 26th 1800. Greenland National Archives. Letters from the Board of Managers. Northern Governor's Archives, 1800. NKA 01.02/13.22/4.

²³ Circular from the Board to the Governor/CCFs dated June 9th, 1800 and letter from the board to the governors, same date. Greenland National Archives. Letters from the Board of Managers. Northern Governor's Archives, 1800. NKA 01.02/13.22/4.



most often of mixed descent, appear, that any educational strategy is laid out aimed at Greenlandic women (Rønsager 2006).

Missionary Lassen's notes about furthering growth in population as well as his strong focus on the production of well functioning Greenlanders in connection to development – not of the trade but of the *population* – are clearly connected to the shift in colonial management that Rud describes in his dissertation (2010). Extrapolating Lassen's summary of pros and cons of intermarriage as the overall concerns of, first and foremost, the secular administration of Greenland, it can be suggested that the marriages and the families they created were the first strategic 'micro points of application' of a colonial governing.²⁴ In a lecture on his own concept of *governmentality* from 1978, Foucault describes the shifting role of the family as a model of government and its reappearance as "an element within population and as a fundamental relay in its government" (1978/2007: 104). I would argue that both the control with marriages and development of the governing focus on mixed subjects and the specific administrative efforts aimed at mixed families, constitute a vantage point of the development of governmentality in 19th century Greenland. Focusing on the board manager discourse about 'rearing' and education for the mixed boys, it becomes apparent that 'welfare' intertwines with the repeated concern about usefulness for the trade or country: [...] *that the most significant purpose to be served by the Trade to the welfare of the mixed stock is to contribute to, in the most efficient way, turning the growing boys into skilled kayakers and hunters.*²⁵

This predates the first civilising projects of the later 19th century that introduced ideas about improved housing, hygiene and formal education. Already in the 18th century colonial administration, the colonial subjects in between, intermarried wives and the children of mixed parentage become a significant focus area of colonial administration of welfare, education and matters of daily life such as housing and diet.

²⁴ None the less written by a clergyman and also including the recurring theme of controlling sexual behavior amongst both Europeans and Greenlanders in the colonies – a main argument for the marriages expressed by the Lutheran mission in Greenland.

²⁵ Circular from the Board to the Governor/CCFs dated June 9th, 1800. Greenland National Archives. Letters from the Board of Managers. Northern Governor's Archives, 1800. NKA 01.02/13.22/4. Author's highlight.

In Conclusion

Colonial administration of the inevitable, intimate colonial encounter resulting in mixed families shows that administrators recognized its inevitability. The question then remained, how these relations could be regulated to create as little 'damage' as possible. To the mission, damage was immoral, unchristian behavior and as such the marriages were often seen as part of the Christian tutelage necessary in the Christianization of the Greenlanders. To the secular colonizers, damage was, at a glance, rather the strain on the vulnerable trade economy through the creation of an increasingly unsustainable population of welfare dependants – neither European nor Inuit and thus, out of category. However, as seen above, the administration developed a system of social distinction, that intensified concurrently with the blurring of the distinction between European and Inuit that the many mixed families represented. Stoler argues that colonial control was dependant on racial distinction and classification, more precisely "which children could become citizens rather than subjects", a differentiation expressed through the control with the conjugal relations in the colonies (2002:43). I find this a fitting description of the governing of sexual relations and marriage in Greenland. Despite the rather unique example of the many and early formal, Christian marriages between Inuit women and European men, the administrative preoccupation with them and, especially, the children they resulted in, shows the inclination to categorize on the basis of social status, race and gender in the Greenlandic colonies. This categorization and its connected system of rights and obligations, laid the foundation of the social landscape of the 19th century colonial Greenland. Intermarriage was as much a challenge as a facilitator to colonial rule, threatening the social order as well as creating the subjects to maintain it. The late 1700's saw the first, insecure definitions of the outline of the desired *Greenlandic* subjects and the first attempts to map out the administrative strategies to produce them through fine tunings of regulations and development of new techniques to shape them. Those neither nor, were as such, the first 'strategic micro point of application' of administrative strategies and techniques to create a social category of Greenlanders that would secure trade interests as well an increasingly stratified social order in the Greenlandic colonies. **Inge Seiding has an MA in Social and Cultural History.** She is a archivist at the Greenland National and PhD-student at the University of Greenland in Nuuk. She is currently working on a PhD-project about intermarriage and mixed families in 18th and 18th century colonial Greenland.

**Abbreviations:**

GTC = The General Trading Company
RGTD = The Royal Greenlandic Trading Department
RMC = The Royal Mission College
CCF = Chief Colonial Factor
NKA= Nunatta Katersugaasivia Allagaateqarfialu
(Greenland National Museum and Archives)

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