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DENMARK

'Nation branding, nation-building:  
The Arctic Winter Games 2016 as an intricate case of both'

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# The Arctic



# Arctic Winter Games 2016



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# Nation branding at mega (sporting) events



**1) To what extent is the purpose of the Arctic Winter Games compatible with nation-branding of the host community (as carried out by the AWG2016 organisation)?**

# National identity and branding

- *Reiteration* of existing, positive elements of a national identity
- *Recapture* by revisiting past successes
- *Reinterpretation* of formerly negative factors
- *Repudiation*, the deliberate omission of elements deemed undesirable, not representative.

(Bond et al., 2003,)

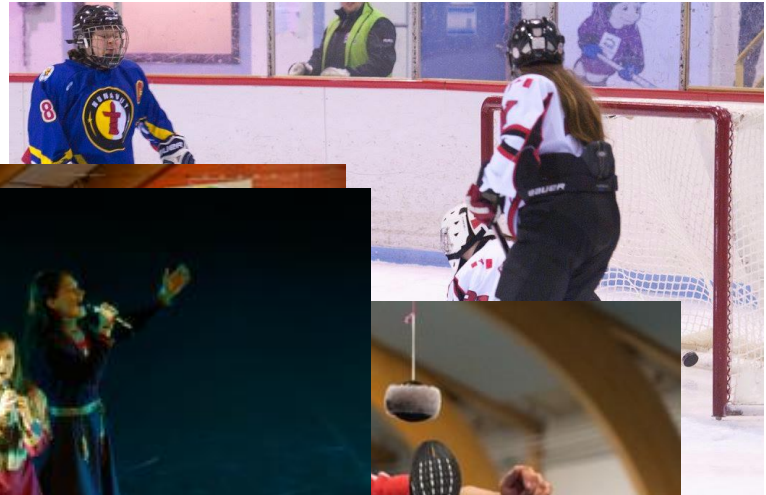
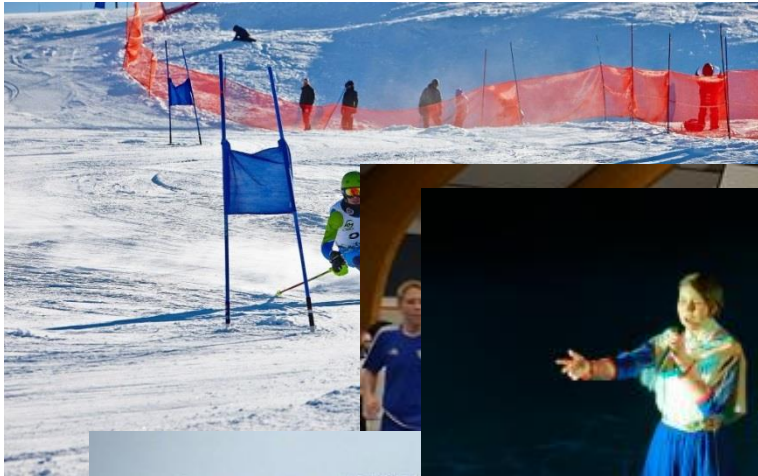
“A deep and authentic nation brand must include the many elements and expressions of a nation’s culture; if it fails to do so, it will rightly be perceived as shallow and superficial and **not truly representative of the nation**. [...] [N]ation brands are rooted in the reality of the **nation’s culture**, which is perhaps **the truest, most authentic differentiator** that any brand could wish to have.” (Dinnie 2016, 113-14)

“... identity-image gap, whereby a nation’s true identity fails to be appreciated.” (Ibid., 114)

**1) To what extent is the purpose of the Arctic Winter Games compatible with nation-branding of the host community (as carried out by the AWG2016 organisation)?**

**2) To what extent can the AWG2016 nation brand be said to be aligned with Greenlanders' self-perception?**

# Arctic Winter Games 2016





# Arctic Winter Games (IC) vision and values

“Arctic Winter Games brings our Circumpolar World closer together [...] [It] promot[es] northern unity and cultural understanding [...], [s]trengthening and showcasing our Communities” (AWG-IC, 2016).

“... cooperation within our circumpolar family” (President Jens Brinch, *Games Guide*, 2016: 4).

**'We are the Arctic'** (Small Time Giants, 2016)

“Breaking down the walls / that are between us / we lift our hands up to the sky [...] It's in the spark inside / it's in our souls tonight / it's in the northern lights / it's in the Arctic.”

The vision: Trans-cultural, poly-ethnic pan-Arcticism

# AWG2016 Strategy

- AWG2016 creates pride, joy and develops voluntariness and competences in society.
- AWG2016 makes Greenland visible in the world and strengthens relations to other Arctic countries
- We'll ensure the success of the largest sports and culture event in the history of Greenland by establishing numerous collaborations across sectors, organisations and corporations.
- We expose and represent Greenland in the best possible manner in close collaboration between the business community, the public sector and the citizens.” [my translation]



# AWG2016 Strategy



AWG2016 will be a project where people will come together as a community and show Greenland's face to the world [...]. AWG2016 is not 'just' a week of celebration and games. It is a project that can inspire to build skills within the community, develop collaborations, and brand Greenland." (GM Maliina Abelsen, *AWG2016 Magazine* 1 p.2)



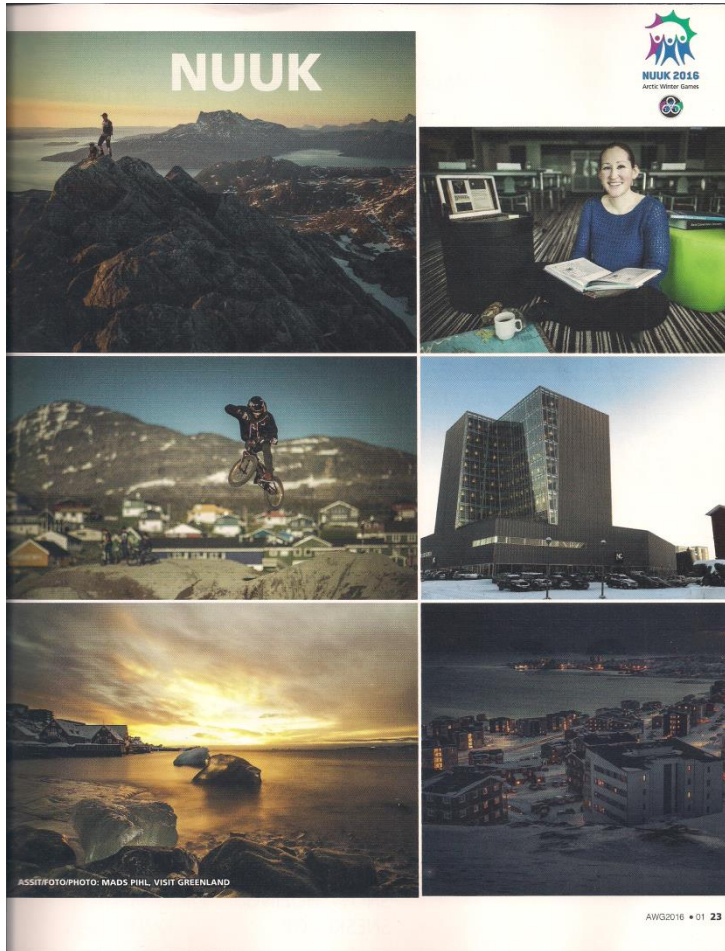




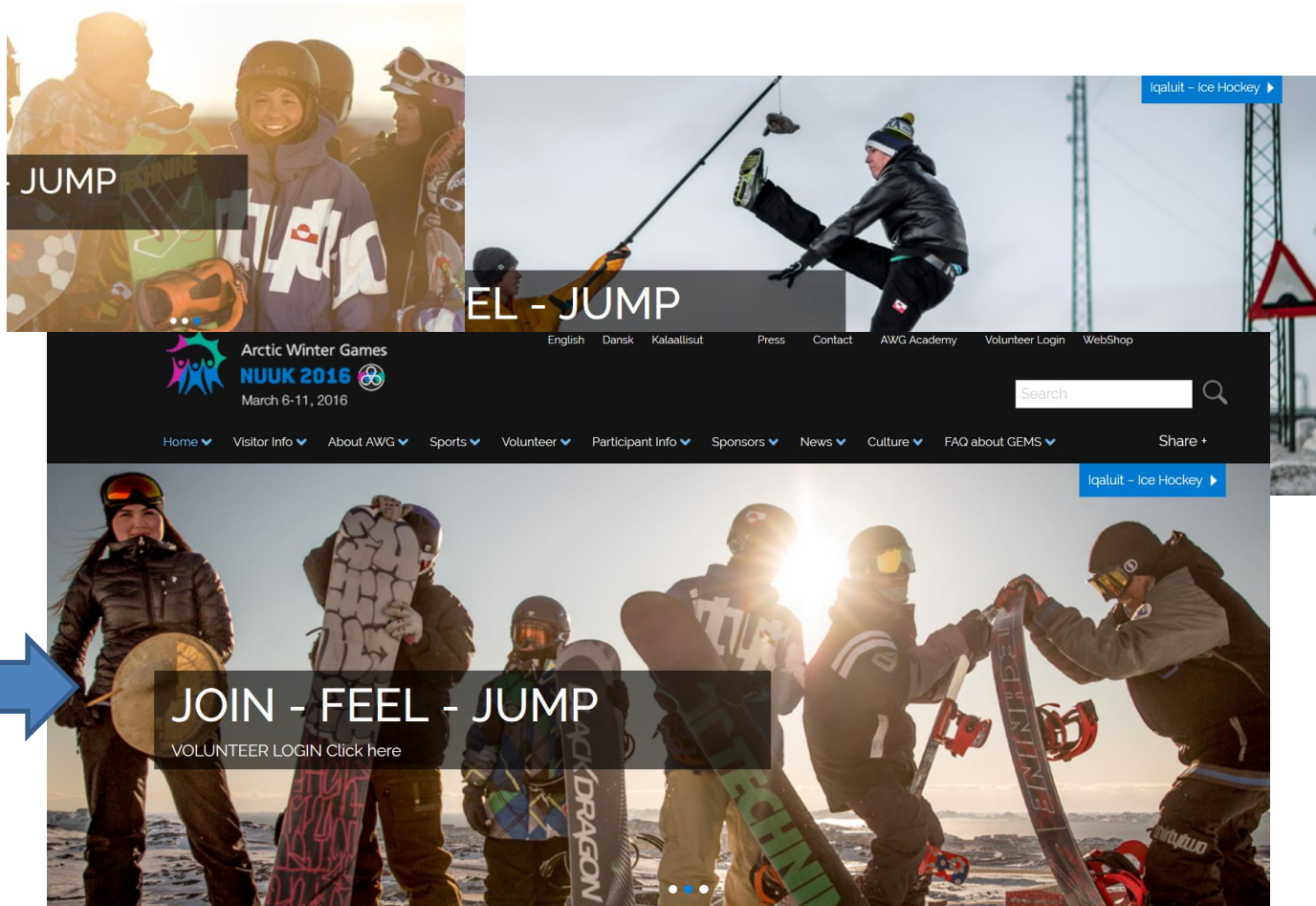
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# Cool Nuuk



# The AWG2016 website



#AWG2016



# Greenland nationalisms

‘Civic’: poly-ethnic, multi-cultural nation-building; non-traditional

‘Ethno-cultural’: Indigenous, traditionalist nation-building





# Another Greenland



# Conclusions

1) AWG lends itself wonderfully as a lever for nation-building and nation branding.

Nation-centric endeavours are at odds with the trans-national visions of the Games – but so is the general practice of ‘banal’ collective identity celebration

2) Dinnie’s argument about the nation as the “the truest, most authentic differentiator” is not reflecting the nature of nation-alism.

National identity-building happens *through* nation branding:

***Nation-branding will always also be national identity-building***

AWG2016 organisers have done much more than building local capacities and branding the Greenland nation.

– They have also heavily influenced the mental construct that *is* the nation.