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Dissertation submitted

CV

Verena Gisela Huppert Karlsson graduated with a Master of Arts in Culture, Communication and Globalization from Aalborg University in 2016. During her studies, she specialized in the fields of Arctic Studies, Ethnic Relations and Migration. She began employment as a PhD fellow at the Department of Culture and Learning at Aalborg University (formerly the Department of Cultural and Global Studies) in 2017. The PhD project has been a collaboration between Aalborg University, the Port of Aalborg, Arctic Consensus, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq and *Sulisitsisut,* the Greenland Business Association, with the goal of contributing with new insights on labour market challenges in Greenland.

During the process of the dissertation, Verena has been associated with the research group CIRCLA (Centre for Innovation and Research in Culture and Living in the Arctic) at Aalborg University. Besides, Verena was associated as a project coordinator at Arctic Consensus as well as with the partners outside of academia in both Denmark and Greenland during the process of the dissertation, although for shorter periods of time.

Verena's research interests include business development, labour market matters and migration issues in Arctic communities and rural regions. Inspired by the means of participatory research, the primary focus of her work has been producing research that is practically applicable to local society.

ENGLISH SUMMARY

With a starting point in Greenlandic employers' presumed need to optimize their measures to attract and retain employees, this dissertation presents the first comprehensive study of employee 'job attribute preferences' in Greenland. The study came about through observing employers in Greenland seeming to lack knowledge about the working-age population's motivations to commit to paid employment and struggle to fully engage with the working-age population. At the same time, a share of the working-age population seems not to apply for available jobs or only keep the jobs they have for short periods of time.

Analyses are provided of employers' current experience of the situation and their existing measures aimed at attracting and retaining employees, as well as the preferences of employees when it comes to paid employment. Based on the analyses, recommendations are provided for the sustained alignment of existing and future employer measures with employee job attribute preferences in Greenland. Unrealized potential for sustained alignment is also explored. Key findings include discrepancies between the employers' approach and the employees' preferences as well as new knowledge on the job attribute preferences of employees in Greenland. Amongst others, the findings concern how the workforce understands job satisfaction, how meaningfulness is created through a job, the role of salary, cultural influences and lifestyle.

The applied research design combines pragmatism, an explorative methodology and an iterative approach to theory-analysis relations, as the interpretation of the collected data constitutes the core of the analyses. Three selected employers in Greenland and two employee groups within each employer built the basis for the problem-based analysis which takes its point of departure in findings from scholarly literature on the matter. The analysis was developed by way of a unique primary data set which consists of employer interviews, an employee survey and employee interviews. In alignment with the iterative approach of the dissertation, the theoretical toolbox was developed based on the primary data set.

The study was a collaboration between Aalborg University, Arctic Consensus, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq and *Sulisitsisut,* the Greenland Business Association.

DANSK RESUME

Med udgangspunkt i en antagelse om grønlandske arbejdsgiveres behov for at optimere rekrutterings- og fastholdelsestiltag præsenterer denne afhandling den første omfattende undersøgelse af ansattes foretrukne jobpræferencer i Grønland. Afhandlingen er baseret på en observation af, at grønlandske arbejdsgivere tilsyneladende mangler viden om befolkningen i den arbejdsdygtige alder og deres motivation til at indgå i lønnet beskæftigelse, samt at arbejdsgivere i Grønland har svært ved at engagere sig fuldt ud i deres ansatte eller potentielle medarbejdere. En del af den grønlandske arbejdskraft virker samtidig ikke interesseret i at søge ledige stillinger, eller også beholder disse personer deres job i kortere perioder.

Afhandlingen analyserer arbejdsgivernes eksisterende rekrutterings- og fastholdelsestiltag og deres oplevelse af den nuværende situation såvel som medarbejdernes præferencer, når det kommer til lønnet beskæftigelse. Baseret på analyserne gives der anbefalinger om, hvordan nuværende og fremtidige tiltag fra arbejdsgivere kan tilpasses på en holdbar måde med udgangspunkt i de ansattes foretrukne jobpræferencer. Desuden undersøges urealiserede muligheder for en tilpasning af arbejdsgivernes tiltag. Nøgleresultater inkluderer afvigelser mellem arbejdsgivernes tilgang og de ansattes præferencer såvel som ny viden om medarbejdernes jobpræferencer. Centrale fund vedrører blandt andet, hvordan arbejdskraften forstår jobtilfredshed, hvordan mening skabes gennem et job, lønnens rolle, kulturelle værdier og livsstil.

Det anvendte forskningsdesign kombinerer pragmatisme, et eksplorativt design og en iterativ tilgang til forholdet mellem teori og analyse. Fortolkningen af den indsamlede data udgør kernen i analysen. Tre udvalgte arbejdsgivere i Grønland og to medarbejdergrupper inden for hver virksomhed er grundlaget for den problembaserede analyse, der tager udgangspunkt i eksisterende litteratur om emnet. Analysen er videreudviklet ved hjælp af et unikt primært datasæt, der inkluderer arbejdsgiverinterviews, en medarbejderundersøgelse samt medarbejderinterviews. I overensstemmelse med den iterative tilgang af afhandlingen, er den teoretiske værktøjskasse baseret på det primære datasæt.

Projektet er et samarbejde mellem Aalborg Universitet, Arctic Consensus, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq og *Sulisitsisut*, Grønlands Erhverv.

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Many thanks to my colleagues at the research group CIRCLA at Aalborg University who inspired and supported me during all phases of this dissertation. I also wish to thank Laust Høgedahl and Prof. emeritus Peter Nielsen from the research group CARMA at Aalborg University for fruitful meetings and talks about labour market issues. Thank you to Anne-Lise Kappel and Prof. emeritus Birger Poppel at *Ilisimatusarfik*, the University of Greenland, for your assistance and contribution to my writing process.

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He was in Thule and there he asked a hunter's wife, who was cutting up a seal, if she liked doing it. "That's my job", she answered, slightly confused about such a foolish question.[1]

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[1] Lidegaard, 2017, p. 92, author's translation.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge about the working-age population[2] is valuable, even crucial, for most employers. According to labour economics theory, an important characteristic of a functioning labour market is the correlation between supply of and demand for labour, i.e., a match between employers' demand for labour and the labour market's supply of labour (Høgedahl, 2021; S. Smith, 2003).

This 'supply and demand' relationship has two sides: the supply side (the supply of labour) and the demand side (the employers' need of labour). If the employers' demand is not satisfied by the supply of a workforce, companies can experience an imbalance which results in bottlenecks, restraints to company growth and negative effects on a region's economy (OECD, 2012). On the supply side, the working-age population's expectations and preferences need to be met by employers in return for the working-age population wanting to be a part of the workforce.

The Greenlandic labour market has undergone major developments over the last decades. In the first half of the 20th century, a production-based economy was introduced and both industrialisation and capitalism reached Greenland. This development came with challenges in terms of matching the supply and demand of labour as prior to this introduction small-scale fisheries, hunting and trading were the main occupations of Greenlanders and engagement in paid employment was not common. The introduction of Home Rule in 1979 and Self-Government in 2009 increased Greenland's detachment from Denmark and had implications for the Greenlandic economy and labour market. Today, "the labour market continuously faces major challenges in terms of employment, skills of the labour force, level of education, external labour and a population that is aging and requires more resources." (Departement for Råstoffer og Arbejdsmarked, 2018, p. 3; author's translation)

Some of these challenges are addressed by local employers who report difficulties in recruiting labour. A 2018-survey conducted amongst the majority of local employers in Greenland[3] found that 62% of responding employers reported problems in connection with hiring skilled labour and 31% experienced difficulties in connection with hiring low skilled labour (HS Analyse, 2018). Both public and private employers expressed experiencing labour shortages and low labour mobility.

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[2] For a general definition of the working-age population and the definition in the context of Greenland, see section 2.2.

[3] Survey amongst the members of the Greenland Business Association which represents 90% of all employers in Greenland. Response rate: 51%. (HS Analyse, 2018).

Companies have furthermore criticised members of the workforce for not staying in jobs for a significant amount of time (Høgedahl, 2021).

The above observations are in contrast with statistical data which indicates high unemployment rates and a large share of Greenland's working-age population being economically inactive, i.e., not a part of the workforce (Høgedahl, 2021; Statbank Greenland, 2018f, 2018d). Employers in Greenland appear to lack knowledge about the working-age population's motivations to commit to paid employment and struggle to fully engage with this population. At the same time, a share of the working-age population seems to not apply for available jobs or only have jobs they keep for short periods of time.

For employers, not being able to attract or keep needed workers is an issue as depending on reliable and stable employees to secure growth and high-quality service in their companies/organisations is vital to these companies'/organisations' success. Consequences of not having reliable and stable employees may harm the Greenlandic economy and ultimately the current political aim of gaining economic (and thus political) independence from Denmark (Naalakkersuisut, 2016, p. 2).

The employment rate in Greenland is low. In 2017, it was at 61% for the working-age population born in Greenland and 77% for the working-age population born outside of Greenland[4] (62% on average for the total working-age population). 60% of the Greenlandic working-age population's highest educational level is primary school (Statbank Greenland, 2017b). The unemployment rate for persons with primary education as the highest level of education was 9.3% in 2018 compared to 1.9% for persons who had obtained a higher education (Statbank Greenland, 2018e; see also figure 4.3).

A 2016 report by the Greenland Economic Council pointed to three main challenges found in the Greenlandic labour market: 1) A gap between needed skills and skills of the workforce as well as a lack of labour market relevant education; 2) A geographic challenge as workers are not necessarily located where there is a need for them and 3) Incentives to be part of the workforce seem to be low for some as there are persons of working age with highly needed skills who are not interested in or at least not actively seeking work (Økonomisk Råd, 2016b, p. 3).

Whilst geographical challenges, labour shortage and a skills gap are part of the Greenlandic labour market characteristics that make attracting and retaining

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[4] This dissertation does not strictly distinguish between local workers and foreign workers. The term 'workers' or 'employees' in this study refers to permanent residents of Greenland. The data base is mixed, yet most respondents were local workers and for all purposes the analysis focusses primarily on them.

employees difficult, the motivation to be part of the workforce and engage with paid employment is equally relevant. The working-age population's lack of motivation to be a member of the workforce has been connected to the need for employees to submit to foreign (Western) values instead of employers trying to match the values of employees (Lau, 2005, p. 77f.). It is important to note that the topic of challenges faced by employers in Greenland is under-researched.

The fact that employers experience difficulties in attracting and keeping needed employees would suggest that there is a lack of knowledge about the expectations and preferences of the Greenlandic working-age population. It must be assumed that when a portion of the working-age population cannot be attracted to currently available jobs and working environments, employers would do well to seek a better understanding of this population's expectations and preferences when it comes to wage-work.

It is worth exploring how employers can meet potential employees' expectations and preferences. Is there a discrepancy between what employers are offering (or are able to offer) and what employees desire?

In conversations with Greenlandic employers, it was observed that they made use of different approaches to attract and retain employees. Often these measures did not seem to have the desired outcome. If there are qualified individuals who choose to not be economically active members of the workforce, there is a need for a deeper understanding of the expectations and preferences of this population.

It is therefore necessary to identify what factors are important for the Greenlandic working-age population when it comes to paid employment. An improved alignment of the expectations and preferences of this population and the working conditions and environment offered by employers could result in stronger incentives to be a member of the workforce and potentially a higher commitment to paid employment.

A desire for more Greenlanders to commit to paid employment and getting the working-age population to commit to paid employment for longer periods of time has also been on the political agenda of all Greenlandic governing coalitions throughout the last decades (Inuit Ataqatigiit, 2021; Naalakkersuisut, 2013, 2016, 2018b).

Based on the conundrum outlined above, the following is the stated aim of this dissertation:

Starting with Greenlandic employers' presumed need for increased knowledge about the preferences of the working-age

> *population when it comes to commitment to paid employment,
> this dissertation aims to explore and provide analysis of
> employees' 'job attribute preferences' in Greenland. Empirical
> data collected from three major employers in Greenland and
> their employees provide the basis for the analysis.
> Consequently, the dissertation will provide recommendations
> for sustained alignment of employers' existing and future
> measures with employees' job attribute preferences and point
> to potential that has remained unrecognized with respect to
> optimising measures to attract and retain employees.*

Before continuing, it is necessary to briefly elaborate on the term 'job attribute preferences. This term has been defined by other scholars as "the extent to which individuals desire a variety of specific qualities and outcomes from their paid work." (Konrad et al., 2000; Sutherland, 2012). The understanding of the term 'job attribute preferences' in this dissertation has been inspired by this definition as well as the 'theoretical lenses' which, based on the overall iterative approach of the study, are empirically derived and introduced in detail in chapter six. The 'theoretical lenses' are made up by a combination of selected elements of *Commitment Theory* (Allen, 2016; Allen & Meyer, 1996; Cohen, 2007; Gellatly & Hedberg, 2016) and *Job Characteristics Theory* (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980). The empirical data showed the need for more knowledge about employees' preferred job characteristics in order to increase their commitment to paid employment. Such knowledge might enable an employer to match the preferences of both existing and potential employees to a higher degree and make the workplace more attractive.

In the following, the term 'job attribute preferences' is thus understood as *employees' preferred job characteristics regarding wage-work if they are given a choice*. The term includes commitment to, and attitude towards, paid employment as elaborated in the above.

The following sets of research questions have been formulated to investigate the stated problem of the dissertation:

- How do employers in Greenland experience their employees' commitment to paid employment, and what kind of measures are currently used by employers to attract and retain employees? What are potential discrepancies between the employers' experience and the measures in place?

- What job attribute preferences of employees would increase individual commitment to paid employment?

- Where is the most significant potential for sustained alignment of employers' current approaches with employees' job attribute preferences? Where are the most prominent gaps? How can these gaps be bridged, and how can employers detect such gaps in the first place?

The data set of this dissertation is based on three local employers and their employees (i.e., members of the working-age population who were engaged in paid employment at the time of the empirical data collection). By only including employed members of the workforce in the data set, its main conclusions must be drawn for this group. The choice of the companies and of two distinct groups of employees within each company is detailed in section 1.1.

The study has, moreover, two subordinate dimensions: differences between employees with and without managerial responsibilities and variations between company types (i.e., public employer, public-private employer and private employer).

The initial research on the topic indicated the relevance of exploring potential differences between employees with and without managerial responsibilities as an additional aspect in the analysis. This distinction will therefore be considered in the data collection and analyses.

The specific composition of the Greenlandic economy made considering variations between three company types relevant. Today, public and public-private companies are the largest employers in Greenland. In recent years, however, a political goal for increased privatisation of the economy has resulted in private sector growth (Økonomisk Råd, 2019). In the analyses, a distinction between the three company types is made in order to investigate indications of if the different company types experience different challenges and use different measures. Whether different employee job attribute preferences apply depending on the company type will be also examined.

The dissertation takes its point of departure in a collaboration between academia and local companies. Although the study was partly funded by non-academic partners, it must be stressed that apart from the initial inspiration for the study, the input received from these partners only occurred when the empirical data made the consideration relevant. The nature of collaboration is further elaborated in section 3.2. The overall interest of this dissertation lies in a detailed investigation of Greenlandic employees' job attribute preferences and the alignment with employers' measures to attract and retain employees. The dissertation does not aim to condemn or judge the current situation or actors. It furthermore does not have a normative or political purpose. Its sole objective, founded on a problem-based approach as outlined above, is to do research that benefits Greenland.

The field of labour market research in Greenland is a small discipline. Previous research discusses the workforce challenges in Greenland from employers' or politicians' points of view. This research focusses on topics such as mobility, skills development, the educational system and challenges associated with both immigration and emigration (Ankersen, 2008; Brincker & Pedersen, 2020; Danielsen et al., 1998; Kahlig, 2000; Lang, 2008; Lennert, 2015; K. Pedersen, 1999; Rasmussen, 2010; Rasmussen et al., 2010; Winther, 2005). Previous academic work has rarely and only superficially addressed the Greenlandic working-age population's preferred forms of employment, commitment to paid work, preferred work conditions and work environment. Additionally, socio-cultural influences on the working-age population's needs, preferences and behaviour have not been considered. Labour fluctuation – a repeated shift between workplaces in the same geographical area – is touched upon briefly in several sources but has not, to this point, been explored in detail (Boserup, 1963, pp. 34, 39; From et al., 1975, p. 167; Greenland Perspective, 2015, p. 14; Kirk, 2003, p. 113; Lau, 2005, p. 113). Potential benefits of introducing part-time employment have recently been stressed in several sources (N. J. M. Pedersen et al., 2018; Wilson, 2015). Even so, the topic has not yet been investigated from the Greenlandic workforce's point of view. The recently concluded first Greenlandic Labour Force Survey (G-AKU) constitutes a relevant resource for future investigations of the Greenlandic workforce (Høgedahl & Krogh, 2019); however, it does not diminish the need for more qualitative knowledge about the working-age population's preferences.

There is little research-based knowledge about the preferred workplace environment for the Greenlandic workforce (Sejersen, 2016). Kirk (2003) found that a significant number of Greenlandic employees stated that the physical and psychological work environment at their workplace was so stressful they had to terminate their employment (Kirk, 2003, p. 120). Neither Sejersen nor Kirk explored the role working conditions had on workers' experience with wage-work. The working-age population's motivation to commit to wage-work has also not been examined which appears to be a major shortcoming in the scholarly literature. Besides potential correlations of socio-cultural factors, the working-age population's preferences are rarely considered in existing research on the Greenlandic labour market.

By placing emphasis on previously unexamined matters, this dissertation contributes to the literature by developing an understanding of potential discrepancies between employers' expectations of employees and preferences of employees. The significant interest that the study has received from local companies, public institutions and organisations suggests its relevance and importance.

The study adds to the literature as it contributes with a large and unique database that allows for the extraction of knowledge on the preferences of the working-age population in Greenland when it comes to paid employment. It follows an explorative methodology and an iterative approach to theory-analysis relations as the

interpretation of the collected data constitutes the core of the analyses. Admittedly unorthodox, the research design and approach to theory means that there will be no substantive discussion of theory until chapter six. This choice was made in recognition of the complexity of modern Greenlandic society: the mixture of elements from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures (cf. section 2.1).

It is a complexity well described by Høgedahl (2021): "In many ways, conventional theories of economics, labour market regulations, and working life fit poorly with the Greenlandic reality. This is due to a mix of structural, institutional, cultural, and political circumstances that have shaped Greenland into a unique case over the course of time, sharing traits with both Nordic countries (especially Denmark) and Inuit communities in North America." (Høgedahl, 2021). The selection of relevant theory must consequently be based on empirically derived categories which call for deep analysis of certain empirical data (cf. chapter five) before theory can be usefully selected, adapted (cf. chapter six) and applied (cf. chapter seven).

Anchored in the discipline of humanities, the dissertation places itself in the interdisciplinary field of labour market research. It connects and contributes to existing research on the labour market in Greenland and may simultaneously be relevant to labour markets in neighbouring Arctic regions where similar challenges are experienced.

The research could have been organised as a traditional human resource management (HRM) study with the overall goal of providing a competitive advantage for employers by telling them how to better attract and retain employees. I argue, however, that an approach based in humanities (which is my background) has the potential to allow for deeper digging by critically analysing the issue. By having the human dimension (i.e., the working-age population and persons engaged in paid employment) in focus, detailed analyses of discourses and narratives are performed, and complex issues and problems are identified. The analyses are inspired by traditional HRM theories when needed but simultaneously investigate and discover causes, linkages and interrelations that are either rarely or not covered by such theories.

1.1. PRESENTATION OF THE SUBJECTS OF THE STUDY

The companies and employee groups

This dissertation focuses on three selected employers and two selected groups of employees associated with each employer. Its conclusions are context-dependent

and cover a large dataset that will allow findings to be extended to similar socio-cultural contexts or research subjects to a certain extent.[5]

The empirical data was collected from a public, private and public-private employer. Within each company/organisation, two employee groups were selected as participants for the study: a manager group (MAN) and an employee group (EMP)[6].

The **manager group** (henceforth abbreviated as 'MAN') is defined as employees in positions with managerial responsibilities who are part of middle or higher management. It excludes the highest management as the focus lies on managers with direct staff responsibility.

The **employee group** (henceforth abbreviated as 'EMP') is defined as employees in positions without managerial responsibilities who either receive a monthly fixed salary or are paid hourly and are working for one of the companies at the time of the data collection. This group includes seasonal workers.

In the following, the companies and the two employee groups within the companies are introduced. As all three companies are challenged by rapid employee turnover, some numbers of employees in each group are approximated.

Company 1 (henceforth C1) is a local government employer with branches both on the west coast of Greenland and in East Greenland. C1 has approximately 2,200 employees of which approximately 375 were part of the selected employee group for the study. The MANs consisted of 24 central company managers who were spread out at three different locations and had direct staff responsibility within their respective division. The EMP group consisted of approximately 350 members who worked at educational institutions in 16 different locations. Most MANs and EMPs received a fixed monthly payment. There was a small group EMPs (approx. 20), however, who were paid hourly. Both the MANs and EMPs who work in this company require higher education which had been obtained by the majority of the survey participants and interviewees.

Company 2 (henceforth C2) is a private employer with operations in Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Denmark. The firm is a part of a family-owned conglomerate that has a head office in Denmark and works primarily with wholesale and retail. The company has a total of approximately 125 positions in Greenland. Of these, 65 positions are within retail which was the area that was included in the focus of this study. Those 65 positions are located in four different towns and six difference

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[5] This section is descriptive only. The methodological choices are elucidated in chapter two.

[6] The abbreviations 'MAN' and 'EMP' were chosen to enhance the readability of the study as well enable differentiation between references to a specific group.

branches. The MAN group consisted of nine managers who all received a monthly wage. The EMP group consisted of approximately 80 employees who worked to cover the 65 positions and were mostly paid by the hour. Both MANs and EMPs included low skilled and skilled workers; however, having obtained a vocational education would have been advantageous in their positions.

Company 3 (henceforth C3) is a public-private employer that works with natural resources and has branches all along the west coast of Greenland. It is run as an independent limited liability company with 100% of the shares owned by the Greenlandic Government *Naalakkersuisut*. C3 has approx. 1,400 employees in Greenland whereof approximately 400 were part of the study. All of those who participated in this study were working in land-based processing facilities at one of five different locations. Approximately 30 MANs participated in this study. The EMP group were mainly manual workers, and their work was characterised by seasonal work. C3 employs approximately 150 workers during the low season and around 360 during the high season. At the time of the study, approximately 290 EMPs and nine MANs employed were employed. Both groups consisted largely of low skilled labour although the positions would ideally require a vocational education.

The decision to include a public, private and public-private company was derived from initial conversations with local employers and the non-academic partners of this study. It was based on the relevance of investigating the presumed differences between the company types. The three companies have different financing and driving purposes as well as different regulations and options regarding measures to attract and retain labour.

Public employers are currently the largest employers in Greenland and can usually offer more stable employment. At the same time, their hiring processes can be regulated by legal barriers and public budgets.

In the public discourse in Greenland, private employers are considered major contributors to the development and diversification of the Greenlandic economy and, ultimately, independence. Compared to public employers, private employers might be able to offer higher salaries and have less formal hiring methods. On the other hand, private employers depend on their revenue to be able to employ and pay workers to a higher degree.

Public-private companies are mostly run like private companies; however, public-private companies are at times subject to political involvement in a similar manner

as public companies.[7] In practice, public-private companies have hiring and employment practices and procedures similar to those in the private sector despite not being fully privately financed.

Shortly on the role of unions

Due to the explorative approach of the study, two interviews with representatives from employee unions have been included in the first data collection (the employers' interviews) to enhance the understanding of labour market processes. This is because of the importance of unions (both employers' unions and employees' unions) to the labour market in Greenland. Despite the small size of the Greenlandic labour market, there are a significant number of labour unions that many employees and employers are associated with. Labour unions have a strong influence on negotiations between employees and employers, and the findings of the study can therefore be relevant for labour unions for future collective bargaining negotiations in Greenland.

1.2. STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation consists of nine chapters.

Chapter One (this chapter) introduces the field and presents the conundrum and stated aim of this research.

Chapter Two is setting the scene for the research design and the theoretical toolbox, by elaborating on the complexity of Greenlandic society today and the use of terms and concepts in the specific context of the study.

Chapter Three qualifies the methodological choices and reflections that have been made to fulfil the objectives of the study.

Chapter Four sketches the context of the study and gives an account of relevant scholarly literature about Greenland as well as about other regions.

Chapter Five contains an analysis based on empirical data from the first two data collections as well as the literature introduced in chapter four.

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[7] A recent example of political involvement in public-private companies in Greenland was when the Minister of Energy asked the national energy company to rescind a number of dismissal notices the company had given to some of its employees as a consequence of the company's digitalisation strategy (Naalakkersuisut, 2020).

Chapter Six introduces the 'theoretical lenses'.

Chapter Seven applies the theoretical lenses in the analysis of the third data collection.

Chapter Eight discusses all findings in the study and points to potential for alignment.

Chapter Nine concludes on the stated aim of the study and presents recommendations for practice.

CHAPTER 2. SETTING THE SCENE

This chapter sets the scene for the research design and theoretical toolbox which will be further detailed in chapter three. Its purpose is to describe the complexity of the Greenlandic society today, and, thereby, justify the methodological and theoretical approach of the dissertation. The chapter will clarify the concepts applied throughout the dissertation by discussing their relevance and suitability in a Greenlandic context.

2.1. THE COMPLEXITY OF GREENLANDIC SOCIETY

Modern Greenlandic society is characterised by both Indigenous and Nordic cultures, traditions and values. The Greenlandic culture is strongly influenced by a political system and welfare state that is based on Danish traditions (B. Poppel, 2017, p. 575). The mixture of Inuit culture and elements of what might be termed 'Western modernity' is reflected to a high degree in society, and "Greenlandic identity discourse cannot be understood with reference to aboriginal Inuit culture alone; elements of modernity, imported by colonialism, have been [sic] included." (Gad, 2009, op. 142). Research regarding Greenland must thus seek to include these different historical and cultural influences as it aims to balance the complexity these elements cause.

The establishment of a colonial structure during the 18th Century had a strong influence on both the development of Greenland and the identity of the local population (Gad 1973, In: Schweitzer et al., 2014, p. 110). Today, Greenlandic society has strong links to the Nordic countries. This is especially true regarding Denmark when it comes to the Greenlandic government, welfare system and educational system.

Colonial structures have had an influence on the Greenlandic labour market. Traditionally, Greenlanders were (small-scale) hunters and many families were highly or entirely self-sufficient (Høgedahl, 2021). During colonialisation, and especially from the 1950s, industrialisation took off which led to increased urbanisation, a cash economy and an increase in mobility which was caused in part by the desire of Greenlanders to obtain education. Wage-work became more common for many members of the population which led to a process where local norms and values became intertwined with foreign 'Western' norms and values brought to Greenland by the introduction of this type of work (T. Andersen & Poppel, 2002; Carlsen, 2005; Glomsrød et al., 2017; Greenland Perspective, 2015; Huskey, 2010; Lennert, 2015; Thorleifsen, 2005; see also sections 4.2 and 4.3.).

The workplaces established in Greenland have often been inspired by Danish norms
and values and were frequently staffed primarily with labour from Denmark and not
from the local labour market (Marquardt, 2005). The introduction of Home Rule in
1979 and Greenland's consequential greater autonomy from Denmark resulted in
focus on increasing the 'Greenlandisation' of workplaces (see also section 4.3).

Today, elements from Inuit culture coexist with elements of contemporary 'Danish'
or 'Western' norms and values. An example of this is the coexistence of a mixed
economy and collective agreements in the labour market. Specifically, during
Greenland's development towards an industrialised country, a mixed economy
developed where subsistence activities became closely connected to a cash economy
(B. Poppel, 2015b, p. 737, 2017, p. 574f.). This is still the case today. Subsistence
activities are a part of the Greenlandic market economy and are vital to many
households (ibid., p. 575), and the Nordic model of industrial relations is reflected in
Greenland's existing labour market regulations and institutions.[8] Examples of this
can be seen in collective agreements and strong labour unions (Høgedahl, 2021).

Due to Greenland's size and unique settlement patterns, development and change
have not been parallel in all regions (T. Andersen & Poppel, 2002, p. 87). The rapid
introduction of foreign norms and values through industrialisation as well as the
introduction of wage-work has caused a major transition in Greenlandic society.
Scholars argue a direct connection between changes in the mode of production as
well as cultural and social changes (Kruse 1999, Andersen 1999b; In: T. Andersen
& Poppel, 2002, p. 90f.) Unlike other Arctic regions where industrialisation was
implemented at a slower pace, the speed of this transition has not allowed for the
natural intertwining of local and foreign norms and values. It has been argued that
this process of transition has not been completed and still significantly impacts
society today (B. Poppel et al., 2005, p. 87f.).

Cultural clashes at workplaces between local and foreign values and norms should
be anticipated in the Greenlandic labour market, as both the economy and labour
market are currently defined by elements from different cultures, values and norms.
While there are rather fixed distinctions between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous
communities in other predominantly Inuit societies, the early colonialisation and
influence of Denmark on the local population makes such a distinction more
difficult in Greenland. Greenlanders are internationally acknowledged as a people
with the right to self-determination: "Recognising that the people of Greenland is
[sic] a people pursuant to international law with the right of self-determination" (Act
on Greenland Self-Government, 2009, p. 1; see also International Labour
Organisation, 1989; United Nations, 2007). The advanced state of self-government
which Greenland has had since 2009 is only mirrored in a few other places in the

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[8] One major difference from the Nordic countries is that Greenland has a national statutory
minimum wage by law.

Arctic where the Indigenous populations usually only have few self-governing rights and/or constitute a minority population (Broderstad & Dahl, 2004).

In Greenland, there is little debate regarding Indigenous rights and interests as separate from the rights and interests of Greenlanders as such. The debate about indigeneity has been an integrated part of the larger debate on nation-building, and although indigeneity is a recurring element in the ongoing nation-building discourses, it is only one of many elements. It can be argued that while Indigenous rights and interests have been, and still are, fought for in other places in the Arctic, the historic development in Greenland has led to a nation building process where the opposition between Inuit culture and 'Western' culture is less categorically drawn.[9] Intercultural exchange and transcultural relations are a reality in Greenlandic society today and the definition of 'who is a Greenlander' is complicated. For many people in Greenland, such a distinction appears to be irrelevant and unnecessary to everyday life (see for example Partii Naleraq, 2020).

While there has been significant research on the meeting of different cultures at workplaces in other regions with Inuit communities (Gad, 2009; Lévesque & Duhaime, 2017; PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2003; Quintal-Marineau, 2017; Stern, 2001; Wihak, 2005), few studies exist regarding Greenland (Kahlig, 2000; Langgård, 2005; Møller, 2011). We know from scholarly literature that the encounter of cultures in Greenland has moved to workplaces and companies and is much more complex than a simple distinction between Inuit and Western values. The combination of local and external labour at a workplace can result in cultural clashes, and thus the meeting between someone who grew up in a Greenlandic town and someone coming from a small settlement might result in an equally significant inter-cultural encounter of different norms and values.

In the above, the complexity of Greenlandic society today has been outlined. It can be concluded that labour market mechanisms in Greenland should not be exclusively analysed through either scholarly work regarding Indigenous peoples or the lenses of theory developed for the study of Western societies (which could be referred to 'conventional theory' in simple terms).

Høgedahl (2021) argues that "In many ways, conventional theories of economics, labour market regulations, and working life fit poorly with the Greenlandic reality. This is due to a mix of structural, institutional, cultural, and political circumstances that have shaped Greenland into a unique case over the course of time, sharing traits with both Nordic countries (especially Denmark) and Inuit communities in North America." (Høgedahl, 2021). While theory and literature regarding Inuit culture

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[9] It is important to mention that, although it is not a majority movement, an 'Inuit nationalism' movement exists in Greenland. This is represented, for example, by the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) which has a strong voice in Greenland.

might be relevant for analysis in some contexts, 'conventional theory' might be relevant in others. Greenland cannot simply be categorised into an Indigenous and non-Indigenous population with either Indigenous or non-Indigenous values and norms.

To avoid overly categorical views on the issue, this dissertation applies an approach where the topic of employee job attribute preferences in Greenland will be looked at through glasses that attempt to apply a nuanced view on Greenlandic society. For the analyses to respect the complexity described above, an iterative method has been applied where the collected empirical data informs the choice of theory. This process is outlined in detail in chapter three. The preliminary analysis of empirical data and the empirically derived categories led to a critical selective choice of elements from two 'conventional theories': *Employment Commitment Theory* (Allen, 2016; Allen & Meyer, 1996; Cohen, 2007; Gellatly & Hedberg, 2016) and *Job Characteristics Theory* (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980). As suggested by the logical structure of the study, the 'theoretical lenses' will be elaborated in detail in chapter six.

The choice of using elements from these theories is solely based on empirical findings which could point towards the relevance of theory and literature developed with an emphasis on the specifics of Indigenous culture. Even so, neither 'conventional theory' nor most indigenous theory is developed for a Greenlandic context.

It would be incorrect to call the Greenlandic society today exclusively 'Indigenous'. The population, and thus the workforce, are shaped by many influences. Although there might be groups that share the same values and norms, there is no prevalent way of living and thinking in Greenland that easily encompasses the way that all members of society live and think. An iterative selection of theory based on the empirical findings has thus been assessed to be the most feasible approach for this dissertation while respecting the complexity of modern Greenlandic society. By way of critical selection and with a constant eye to any bias in the theories that may 'disqualify' important elements of an Indigenous nature, the selected theoretical lenses are equally applicable in both an Indigenous and non-Indigenous context. They are locally applicable in the specific context of Greenland and possibly also applicable to societies that share characteristics with Greenland.

When investigating job attribute preferences in Greenland, it should be anticipated that some findings will encompass Indigenous values and norms and others will encompass 'Western' values and norms. It is likely that the findings will be a mixture of both. The choice of using elements from 'conventional' theory for the main analysis of empirical data should by no means be interpreted as a stance on the irrelevance of theory regarding Indigenous peoples per definition. The complexity and variety of values in Greenlandic society are always taken into consideration in this dissertation. The concept of 'work identity', for example, needs to be regarded

as non-static for the individual and cannot be deduced from 'Indigenous' or 'Western' values as identities are indefinite and continuously open to change (Schweitzer et al., 2014, p. 105f.).

An approach where the complexity and variety of values are always taken into consideration enables the consideration and respect of all the elements that make Greenlandic society today. It further warrants the use of terms such as 'Greenlanders' and 'Greenlandic workforce' which refers to people living in Greenland, whether of Inuit descent or not, who live with a mixture of both Indigenous and western culture in their everyday lives.

2.2. RELEVANT CONCEPTS AND THEIR APPLICABILITY IN A GREENLANDIC CONTEXT

'Labour market(s)'

A standard definition of the concept of 'labour market' is usually a market for workers that has interaction between employers and the workforce. Any industrialised labour market is usually characterised by a demand side and a supply side. On the demand side, employers compete for the best workforce. On the supply side, the available workforce competes for the most satisfying job. A functional labour market has a high level of match between an employer's demand for labour and the workforce supply (Smith, 2003).

Due to the unique structural, institutional and geographical conditions of Greenland, the definition of the Greenlandic labour market deviates somewhat from the concept described above. Based on the previously mentioned non-parallel development of the Greenlandic labour market (T. Andersen & Poppel, 2002, p. 87) and geographical conditions such as wide distances between settlements, the Greenlandic labour market is at times described as consisting of separate island markets instead of being one unit (Høgedahl, 2021). The argument of not having one but several markets which are independent from each other still needs thorough scholarly discussion, and it should be acknowledged that different opportunities and conditions for employment apply for each of Greenland's approximately 75 settlements.

The rapid development of Greenlandic society from a hunting and gathering society to wage-work as the most common type of employment has been argued to have had implications on the nature of the Greenlandic labour market (T. Andersen & Poppel, 2002; Carlsen, 2005; Glomsrød et al., 2017; Huskey, 2010; Thorleifsen, 2005) This has led to a mismatch between supply and demand which can be seen by specific indicators such as low employment rates in some settlements, importation of low

skilled labour while regional unemployment remains high and few qualified workers in places where their qualifications are needed.

Furthermore, the large distances between settlements which do not give the possibility of commuting and an educational system which is not equally accessible to all members of the workforce (Friðfinnsdóttir, 2014; Lennert, 2015; Rasmussen et al., 2010) has implications for supply and demand mechanisms in Greenland. A lack of (educational) mobility can complicate the workforce's ability to be in a place where their labour is needed. It also complicates the workforce's ability to find employment based on their location (Rasmussen, 2010).

When referring to 'the' Greenlandic labour market in this dissertation, the described high segmentation of the labour market as well as its structural challenges must be kept in mind.

'Workforce'

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the workforce "comprises [of] all persons of working age who furnish the supply of labour to produce goods and services during a specified time-reference period. It refers to the sum of all persons of working age who are employed and those who are unemployed." (International Labour Organisation, 2021b). With minor variations from country to country, 'persons of working age' are commonly defined as those aged 15 years and older. Some countries also apply a maximum age limit (ibid.).

In the case of Greenland, there is no official specific minimum age threshold as statistical data shows some inconsistency by referring to both 17 and 18 years as the minimum age threshold. The official retirement age in Greenland was raised from 64 years to 65 years on 1 January 2017, which is the current upper age threshold for a person of working age. Thus, the common definition of a Greenlandic person of working age varies from 17 or 18 years to 65 years.

For the purpose of this study, the Greenlandic workforce was divided in two groups: 1) 'Low skilled labour' which refers to the workforce with either no formal education or high school as the highest level of education, and 2) 'Skilled labour' which refers to all workforce with a vocational education or higher. Traditionally, members of the workforce would be divided into more specific sub-groups based on their achieved formal education such as high-skilled, semi-skilled, low-skilled, etc. More specific categories would have been out of the scope of the focus of this study. Employees in this study have been divided into the two abovementioned groups in order to facilitate consideration and discussion of differences in job attribute preferences based on different educational backgrounds as a preliminary level.

This study divides the workforce into two age groups: 18 to 34 years and 35 to 65 years. Standard ILO definitions of the workforce age use more detailed age groups. The distinction made in this study was based on a report regarding future projections of the education level in Greenland (Økonomisk Råd, 2016a). The report argued that up to the age of 35, the educational level of the members of the Greenlandic workforce's is still evolving/developing while it is more or less steady after this age. As skills development is crucial when discussing workforce development in Greenland, dividing the employees into a group with a high probability of improving their skills level (those under the age of 35) and a group with a lower probability of improving skills (those over the age of 35) seemed applicable and relevant. Being more specific and having more diversified age groups would make the study more extensive than scope and time would have allowed. As age plays a role concerning current practices of attracting and retaining workers, this study focuses on other factors. The chosen age cohorts give a preliminary indicator for differences of applied practices for the two chosen age groups and can be used in future studies.

It must be noted that although considerations about gender are important, this is not the focus of this study; therefore, gender is focussed on to a limited extent. Some findings concerning gender are highlighted with the aim of giving inspiration for future research on the topic from a gender perspective.

'Formal and informal employment'

The international definition of an employed person matches the definition of an employed person in Greenland. According to the ILO, employed persons are defined as all those of working age who were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit during a reference period. The definition comprises of employed persons "at work"(i.e., anyone working a job for at least one hour during the reference period) and employed persons "not at work" due to either temporary absence from a job or working-time arrangements (International Labour Organisation, 2021b). The definition includes both monthly paid and hourly paid employees which is an important distinction when discussing the Greenlandic labour market. Formal employment always implies paid employment, yet the concept also includes self-employment which does not fall under the definition of paid employment.

Informal employment is an important concept to mention in the context of the Greenlandic labour market due to the importance of subsistence activities. According to the ILO definition, "informal employment comprises [of] persons who in their main job are: (a) own-account workers, employers or members of producers' cooperatives employed in their own informal sector enterprises; (b) own account workers engaged in the production of goods exclusively for own final use by their household; (c) contributing family workers, irrespective of whether they work in formal or informal sector enterprises; or (d) employees holding informal jobs,

whether employed by formal sector enterprises, informal sector enterprises, or as paid domestic workers by households" (International Labour Organisation, 2021b).

The distribution and consumption of locally produced food is vital to many Greenlandic households which is why subsistence activities and informal employment defined above as (a) or (b) are important to many persons of working age. This means that some may participate in self-employment while at the same time holding formal employment. As noted earlier, Greenland has a mixed economy, and subsistence activities today might depend on earnings from wage-work as the tools and means to carry out subsistence activities that require cash income (Rasmussen, Hovelsrud, et al., 2014, p. 434f.). The actual role of subsistence activities for the workforce is difficult to map because subsistence activities are not registered in the same manner as employment, unemployment or economic inactivity. Further, its role differs based on educational levels and geography.

'Unemployment' and 'economic inactivity'

According to the ILO, 'unemployed persons' are defined as persons of working age who are unemployed and available to take up employment if given a job opportunity. These people carry out activities to seek employment (International Labour Organisation, 2021b, 2021a). Being unemployed implies that unemployment has not been freely chosen.

There are persons of working age who have decided to not be economically active. An economically inactive person is defined as *one who is not involved with either paid employment or self-employment and one who is not a contributing family worker and is unwilling to take paid employment.* These persons are not part of the category of unemployed (International Labour Organisation, 2021b, 2021a). A person who decides to be economically inactive is per definition not part of the workforce yet and is part of the working-age population.

A person's decision to not be economically active for even a short period of time can say something about their degree of labour market attachment. The decision to be economically inactive stems from a variety of reasons including discouragement from being part of the workforce (International Labour Organisation, 2021b, 2021a).

In Greenland, unemployment and economic inactivity is defined by three so-called match groups (Departement for Råstoffer og Arbejdsmarked, 2018, p. 7f.):

Match group 1 includes unemployed persons corresponding to the ILO definition discussed above. Persons in match group 1 are counted as part of the workforce because they are available for work. In this context the high segmentation of the Greenlandic labour market must be kept in mind; specifically, most persons of working age are geographically bound. An unemployed person in match group 1

living on the East coast in Greenland is probably not able to accept a job offer on the West coast. On top of this, temporary unemployment due to seasonal employment is common in Greenland (see table 4.5 in the next chapter) and needs to be taken into consideration when studying the Greenlandic labour market.

Match group 2 includes persons of working age who have significant limitations in their ability to work and need to participate in employment-oriented efforts before being available for employment.

Match group 3 includes persons with severe problems who can neither work nor participate in employment-oriented efforts. Persons in match group 2 and 3 are not counted as part of the workforce. The people in match group 3 were considered inactive as they were not actively looking for a job and were not ready to take a job within 14 days (Høgedahl 2021).

2.3. SUMMARY: THE COEXISTENCE OF CULTURES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE USE OF THEORY

Greenland's history and development have led to the contemporary coexistence of Inuit and 'Western/Nordic/Danish' culture. This complex interplay is essential to understand when investigating the job attribute preferences of employees. This chapter has explored this complexity and argued how theory, terms and concepts must be used with caution.

The many nuances in the political, cultural and social life of Greenlandic society require a critical and open-minded use of theory to explore the explanatory and interpretational potential of the empirical data. As illustrated throughout this chapter, theory created for another context with another purpose must be critically assessed for relevance and used selectively. This dissertation uses an iterative approach to theory where the creation of 'theoretical lenses' is inspired by analysis of the empirical data and subsequent critical eclectic selection of theories that are most relevant for the context of the study as well as the understanding and analysis of the complexity of the issue.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY[10]

The primary aim for the study is to derive understandings from practice and create knowledge that is valuable for society. As stated in chapter one, the dissertation aims to *"provide recommendations for sustained alignment of employers' existing and future measures with employees' job attribute preferences and point to potential that has remained unrecognized with respect to optimising measures to attract and retain employees."*

By combining pragmatism, a phronetic approach and an explorative design with mixed methods and an iterative approach to theory, the chosen research design reflects the aim to grasp the realities studied, and to create applicable knowledge for the benefit of the involved employers and employees in Greenland.

3.1. RESEARCH EPISTEMOLOGY

The epistemological position of the dissertation is pragmatism. A pragmatist epistemology presupposes the use of a methodological approach that gives the optimal result for the specific problem investigated in the research. Therefore, pragmatism allows a critical eclectic approach to the mixing of methods, such as, for instance, a combination of explorative methods in combination with quantitative methods for data collection. With a point of departure in the nature of the stated problem, pragmatic research can include several strategies and methods in one study depending on which research approaches the problem requires.

Furthermore, a pragmatist epistemology argues that knowledge arises from practice and "knowledge acquisition is subject to the occurrence of an actual problem that demands a concrete response, and thus the active participation of an actor in a problem-solving process." (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). This means that the focus is on the production of practical knowledge that is valuable for society; thus context-dependent knowledge rather than generalised knowledge.

Along these lines, Morgan (2014) argues that pragmatic research both needs to be concerned with the 'how to' and the 'why to' do research:

> When we ask "why to" questions, this points to the importance of our choice of research goals. Yet even the "how to" questions involve more

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[10] Parts of this chapter have been published as chapter 10 in the publication 'Collaborative Research Methods in the Arctic. Experiences from Greenland' (Huppert, 2020, In: Hansen & Ren, 2020, p. 129-145)

> than making technical decisions about research methods because of the
> commitments we make when we choose one way rather than another to
> pursue our goals. (Morgan, 2014, p. 1046)

As the study investigates employee job attribute preferences in Greenland, its 'why to' is mainly concerned with relevance for the Greenlandic society. The 'how to' (that is, in which way data should be gathered and analysed) is connected to the phronetic approach.

The aim of pragmatic research is to achieve practical knowledge and a phronetic approach can assist to achieve such knowledge. "Phronetic social science is designed not to substitute for, but instead to supplement, practice wisdom and to do so in ways that can improve society." (Schram, 2012, p. 16). A phronetic approach applied in practice has also been termed 'applied phronesis' (Flyvbjerg et al., 2012, p. 5).

Applied phronesis argues for the use of examples which are not solely seen as examples but as something larger and more real yet without leading to generalisation (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 60ff.). By this, contextualised knowledge can be achieved and its findings be generalised in the specific context of the study. In the case of the present study this context is constituted by the realities experienced by employers and employees in Greenland.

Along the lines of the phronetic approach, the research goals of this study were, to a certain extent, chosen in accordance with some of the challenges observed by the collaborating partners (as elaborated in chapter one). As Morgan suggests, the 'why to' is strongly connected to the 'how to' do research. By constructing the research around challenges experienced by local companies and organisations and ensuring their continuous engagement in the study, extended access to data was enhanced. The possibility to consult the collaborating partners during the research also enhanced the credibility of data and questions asked, as data and questions could be discussed with actors in the field when deemed relevant by the researcher. These actors contributed with their strong practical knowledge of the field. Finally, involving local partners in decisions on the overall frames of the dissertation ensures the study's relevance and presents an extra dimension to the pragmatic approach, that did not appear to be considered by Flyvbjerg or Morgan. How this was done without making compromises regarding the academic value of the study is detailed in the next section. The research design is elaborated further in sections 3.3 and 3.4.

3.2. COLLABORATION WITH PARTNERS

This PhD project has involved two types of partners: Partners that were involved in the establishment of the study, including the financing of it (financing partners), and partners who allowed access to their employees for the data collection (companies). In one instance, the two categories overlapped as one partner both supported the study financially as well as contributed to the data collection.
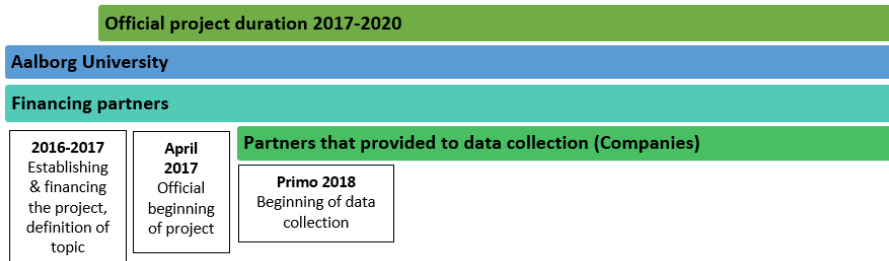
Figure 3.1 – Involvement of partners before and during study duration

The financing partners were involved in the study from the beginning. Based on meetings held during autumn 2016, the initial project idea was presented and discussed with them, and elements of their feedback were included in the initial study outline. The topic and the general approaches of the study were then chosen based on relevance for academia as well as relevance for the Greenlandic society.

The contact to the companies that provided access to participants for the data collection was first established after the study had begun. Specifically, three different companies were chosen based on their relevance as examples for the study. The study's design includes three different types of companies (a public, a private and a public-private company) with different kinds of employees (with and without managerial responsibilities). As clarified in section 1.1, the three companies in the following will be referred to as C1, C2 and C3, and the two employee groups as 'EMP' and 'MAN'. A requirement was for the company management to be willing to participate actively in the study and provide a main contact person as well as an interest to share information and help with organising the data collections. Another requirement for selecting the companies was that they needed to have branches in several towns and/or settlements in Greenland to be representative within a certain geographical range.

When contacted and introduced to the study, the companies were asked if they were willing to allow data collection with their employees. Instead of contacting different leaders in the companies directly, the focus was on anchoring the study in main management, in order to place the study as an internal project, which was expected to, and also proved to, ease the contact with employees.

Potential challenges of anchoring the study with the main management in a sort of top-down approach were overcome by close collaboration with the participants internally in the company. A detailed explanation of the purpose of the study was provided to each company and their participating employees. Yet the top-down approach also proved highly beneficial. It would have been difficult to get in contact with the local employees without assistance from the main management due to practical and geographical reasons.

Even though the financing partners' monetary contribution was of crucial importance for its establishment, the study can be described as a participatory research (PR). PR is usually defined as community-based research where the researcher collaborates with a community and the members of the community being the main beneficiaries of the research. Usually, PR requires the community's full and active participation throughout the research process (Guthrie, 2010; Hall, 1999).

In this study, the level of involvement of partners is slightly different. The study is using PR as it involves local collaboration partners – both financing partners and companies. The "community in focus" are employers and employees in the three different companies. The partners were consulted when deemed relevant by the researcher.

The overall topic of study has been developed in collaboration with the financing partners. It proved to be of relevance for both the financing partners and the companies, which is also the reason for their interest in contributing to the study. While the researcher has steered the study and carried out the data collection, the contact with the financing partners was kept to during all stages. The companies were continuously involved in the interpretation and analysis of the collected data. Neither the financing partners nor the companies were actively involved in the data collection (apart from the employer and employee groups that were the focus of the study), yet they were involved to process the findings when their input was considered relevant and necessary. This echoes one of the main goals of PR which is to actively involve a community during the research process with the aim of its findings being beneficial to the studied community.

The fact that the studied community of the study partly consists of financing partners makes no difference to the value and contribution of this project. Local relations and networks were necessary to investigate the chosen topic. The set-up would most probably have looked similar had the study been financed by academia only, as contact to local actors was necessary to fulfil the objectives of the dissertation. Yet having financing partners in the study at times eased access to different entities and authorities as it emphasised the study's relevance and importance to society.

The chosen approach required the spending of considerable amounts of time meeting and communicating with all involved partners. While it could be argued that by this valuable time for the actual research was misused, it has been assessed that this time was well spent as it eased access to necessary information and useful knowledge during the research process.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN – AN EXPLORATIVE AND PRAGMATIC APPROACH

With the pragmatist epistemology as a premise, the aim and objectives of the study point towards an explorative design. Stebbins (2001) defines exploration as follows:

> Social science exploration is a broad-ranging, purposive, systematic, prearranged undertaking designed to maximize the discovery of generalizations leading to description and understanding (Stebbins, 2001, p. 3)

The research design of this dissertation is based on a pragmatic understanding of realities and of gaining contextualised knowledge (Gibbons, 1999). The design is concerned with outcomes that can be generalised in the specific context of the study. The understanding behind the study is that perceptions of realities, especially when studying human beings, can rarely be generalised. Flyvbjerg (2001) argues that the search for generalisations in social science is overrated as when studying human affairs, generalisations and predictions are not desirable. He suggests that context-dependent knowledge is more valuable as an outcome (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 73).

The pragmatist epistemology presupposes the use of critical analytical elements with the purpose "to find the truth of what works" and to "locate practical and usable solutions to the stated problem" (McCaslin, 2012). In the context of this study, the term 'solution' should be understood as "[…] sustained alignment of employers' existing and future measures with employees' job attribute preferences and point to potential that has remained unrecognized with respect to optimising measures to attract and retain employees" (cf. stated aim of the dissertation, see chapter one). The use of an explorative method maximises the discovery of potential for alignment.

The following statement by Flyvbjerg (2001) matches the research design's approach to collaboration with local partners and participatory research:

> One gets close to the phenomenon or group whom one studies during data collection, and remains close during the phases of data analysis, feedback and publication of results. […] This strategy typically creates

interest by outside parties, and even outside stakeholders, in the research. These parties will test and evaluate the research in various ways. The researchers will consciously expose themselves to reactions from their surroundings – both positive and negative – and may derive benefit from the learning effect, which is built into this strategy. In this way, the phronetic researcher becomes a part of the phenomenon studied, without necessarily "going native" or the project becoming simple action research. (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 210)

As described in section 3.1, the pragmatic epistemology requires such a phronetic and explorative approach. The partially joint formulation of the objectives of the study, as elaborated in section 3.2, can be highlighted as assuring the study's relevance. The methods used did not aim for the researcher to conduct action research[11] or become a subject in the study. Neither was the purpose to conduct paid work for the financing partners. The aim was rather to establish a continuous dialogue and interaction with the community in focus (which includes both the financing partners and the participating companies), and thus a particularly pertinent sort of participatory research (cf. section 3.2).

At the same time, critical distance was maintained by applying a critical hermeneutic 'zigzag': by continuously involving both the financing partners, participating companies and their employees to discuss findings or questions during the research process, and relating proposed interpretations to theoretical and other knowledge, the analyses were constantly sophisticated. The researcher gained new insights that brought into focus what really mattered for the studied subjects. By zigzagging between interaction with the collaborating partners and theory-based analysis to reach a higher level of understanding, it was ensured that the quality of analyses would improve, whilst maintaining the necessary critical distance needed to ensure the integrity of the research.

The pragmatic epistemology and the previously-mentioned 'how to' (cf. Morgan, 2014) can also be related to Kørnøv, Lyhne, Larsen and Hansen's concept of a "change agent" (Kørnøv et al., 2011). In this approach, the authors argue for the relation between the researcher and external partners being characterized by interdependence and joint decisions on frames, but the researcher decides on the direction of the study (ibid., 207). In this way, the researcher keeps his/her independence and critical distance at the same time as the study has a "potential to improve the connection between research and practice and promote sustainable development" (ibid. 203). As mentioned above, critical distance allows the research

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[11] Action research is concerned with both reflection and action, a process where the researcher actively participates in the implementation of solutions to a problem during the research process. See also Reason & Bradbury, 2006.

to obtain knowledge and insight without compromising on the academic objectives of the research.

Being based on the relation between the researcher and local partners, the research required strong commitment from both sides. This was enhanced by investigating a subject that is of considerable importance and interest for the financing partners, the participating companies and local society in general. The partners were interested in providing data and knowledge, as they expect the research to shed new light on and potentially bring about solutions to well-known and not-yet solved challenges.

3.4. MIXED METHODS APPROACH

The study employs a mixed methods approach. The empirical basis consists of three rounds of data collection in total whereof two were of a qualitative character and one of a quantitative character. The collected data consists of interview data, survey data and company documents. Further, observations and informal data played a minor role.

Mixed methods are applied in order to produce knowledge that reflects the multi-dimensionality of the different dimensions of labour market challenges in Greenland. With pragmatism as a premise for the study, the relevant social phenomena are seen as multidimensional, and thus cannot be studied by one method alone (Mason, 2006, p. 9f.).

The usage of mixed methods in social science has become more common in the last years (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Greene, 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). A traditional argument for the use of mixed methods is that it assists in the achievement of deeper insights than a single-method approach. Using both quantitative and qualitative data can complete strengths and dismiss weaknesses of each (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

As shown in figure 3.2 in the next section, the study applies mixed methods with the purpose of analytical progression. The complexity of the chosen topic required a comprehensive method to reach the objectives of the study. One method is used to develop the other (Greene, 2007, p. 102). In this way, qualitative and quantitative data was collected from two different angles of the studied subject: the employers' view, and the employees' view. While qualitative data was collected to investigate the "lived experience" of respondents, quantitative data was collected in between the qualitative data collections to test and refine findings (Greene, 2007, p. 39ff.) and to reveal additional areas important to focus on in the qualitative data collection.

The topic of job attribute preferences of employees in Greenland is a broad and complex research problem with few existing data. Using one method only would not allow for the grasping of all the relevant nuances. Limitations in data can often be overcome by using more than one method. The three data collections are built up in a consecutive way, and each data collection provides valuable knowledge for the following data collections and enhances the explorative approach.

Moreover, mixed methods are beneficial to cope with potential scepticism as the findings can give multiple perspectives that subsequently are critically interpreted (also against each other). The chosen topic of the study is, at times, very politicized, and has previously been perceived as sensitive amongst actors and the society in Greenland. With the chosen methods, it is aimed to meet potential scepticism and pre-assumptions with solid, robust data from a broad range of sources.

Further, a hermeneutical approach is used in order to have a practically-oriented mode of insight and to grasp the multi-dimensionality of the perceived realities investigated in the study (Malpas, 2016). The data collection is based on a pragmatic choice behind each element as part of the process and critical reflections about possible consequences. Through a hermeneutical zigzag (as also described in section 3.3) meaning is found in the context and is continually re-interpreted. The data is used and re-used in order to interpret and achieve an in-depth understanding of the findings. Furthermore, by relating the findings to other knowledge such as secondary literature and theory, the interpretation and understanding of data was strengthened even more.

The hermeneutic approach contributed to the verification of data. In addition, triangulation, for instance with company data, has been used throughout the study to validate the data further and trying to optimize the basis for analysis as much as possible. In this way, hermeneutics and triangulation were adopted to enhance interpretation and the search for both individual and shared perceptions of reality that can be valid at the same time.

3.5. DATA COLLECTION PROCESSES

Three consecutive data collections have been carried out in the process of the dissertation. Three companies and two employee groups in each company (see also section 1.1 and 3.2 for elaboration) were the subjects for the data collections.

Rather than being a traditional case study, the study aims to exemplify employees job attribute preferences with the three selected companies. Flyvbjerg (2001) argues for the power of a good example, even though 'traditional' generalisation cannot be achieved. In the study of human affairs, outcomes are not predictable, and the

creation of concrete context-dependent knowledge is argued to be more valuable than the search for generalisations (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 73ff.). By including three companies as examples, the data in this study presents solid data with a large sample, counting between 750 and 1,000 employees, which at the time is the largest study of this kind carried out with employees in the Greenlandic labour market. Rather than a statistically valid generalisation, this will allow the extension of findings to similar socio-cultural contexts or research subjects.

The following sections describes the process of collecting the data. Data analysis and connection to theory will be elaborated on in section 3.6.

As shown in the figure below, the data collection has not been carried out simultaneously but was built up in a consecutive way, starting with collecting data by way of the employers, moving on to data collection with the employees, in two rounds. In participatory research and in the study at hand, the broad involvement of collaborators is important in order to avoid one-sided-ness, and to obtain a certain representativity.
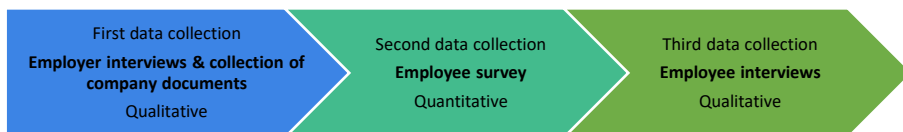
Figure 3.2 – Consecutive structure of data collection

The three data collections are introduced shortly in the following and described in detail later in this chapter.

The first data collection consisted of qualitative, semi-structured interviews with the employers, investigating their experience of the working-age population's motivation to commit to paid employment. It was supplemented by a collection of company documents on the employer's official measures to attract and keep employees. By combining qualitative, semi-structured interviews with an analysis of company documents, it was aimed at investigating how the employers' lived experience (described in the employer interviews) is represented in the companies' measures and strategies.

The second data collection aimed to test and refine the findings from the first data collection and was concerned with employee preferences, and the employees' experience of how their job attribute preferences were met at their workplace. It consisted of a quantitative data collection, collected through an employee survey (n= approximately 750-1,000).

Finally, a qualitative data collection with the employees from all three companies was carried out to give further insight into the results of the quantitative study and investigate the employees' experiences further.

Being based on an explorative approach, the aim was to involve the companies in the decision of which specific data were to be collected, e.g., which branches / departments and thereby groups of employees to focus on. Thus, the final six groups of employees that the study is based on were decided on in close dialogue with the companies. This resulted in data collection that not only is in the interest of research but also in the interest of the company, at the same time as the study being internally anchored. The companies assisted in communicating their involvement in the study internally, which made access to the employees easier. The close collaboration with the companies when choosing the participating branch or department can potentially be problematic but is not seen as such in the sense of the study. The companies' knowledge of the field was used in order to qualify the overarching groups. However, there were still some frames that needed to be matched, for instance accessibility and size of group, which were not influenced by the companies. Neither did the companies have influence on the choice of interviewees within each group.

The main and middle management of the companies was involved both before and after the data collection process and encouraged to give feedback on the interview guides/survey and preliminary findings. Their feedback was considered and, if deemed relevant, implemented in the interview guides/survey or the next step of the data collection. This means that the data was kept in the hands of the researcher. The involved partners were only presented with selected data sets on which the researcher considered their readings and comments particularly relevant.

This dynamic way of seeing the data collection is an integral part of pragmatism as a premise for the study, as well as the explorative design and the locally anchored structure that derive from the pragmatic approach. The continuous interaction and dialogue with the collaborating partners correspond with the 'applied phronesis' approach, as the researcher gets close to the reality studied, however without becoming a subject in one's own study. This continuous involvement of the 'community' echoes the participatory aims of the study.

In addition to the collected data as presented in figure 3.2 above, observations and experiences during the fieldwork and everyday life where made. This data contributed to a high degree to the contextual local knowledge the researcher obtained during the process of the study. Informal sources, observations during daily life as well as local media certainly had an influence on the understanding of the context, at the same time as the researcher, by relocating her home to Nuuk, became a subject in the context herself, see also section 3.7.

3.5.1. FIRST DATA COLLECTION: THE EMPLOYER'S POINT OF VIEW

The first data collection was concerned with the employer's point of view. The focus was on potential discrepancies between how employers describe their experience with the workforce's job attribute preferences in qualitative interviews and their

official measures to attract and retain employees. It consisted of semi-structured interviews and a collection of company documents concerning measures and strategies regarding employees.

In each company, interviews were carried out with the managers to each of the MAN / EMP groups, as well as the HR department. All interviewees were in the position of policy or decision makers. These requirements naturally led to the selection of 26 interviewees. The selection of interviewees resulted in an equal distribution of interviewees across the three companies and the selection aimed towards a representativity of the companies' perception of the challenge.

Further, two interviews were carried out with representatives for employee unions. In general, unions mostly reflect the viewpoint of the employees, however their input has been relevant in this first round of data collection. The labour unions' general knowledge about employee job attribute preferences as well as knowledge about geographical differences and the historical development of the labour market in Greenland has been regarded as crucial when investigating the realities in which employers and employees operate every day (cf. last paragraph in section 1.1).

All interviews in the first round of data collection were based on a semi-structured, investigative and explorative interview guide. The interview guide was created based on knowledge from scholarly literature, topics mentioned by the local partners (cf. section 3.2) as well as informal knowledge and own observations (see Appendix A).

The interviews with employers were carried out between April and June 2018. Initially, 26 interviews were planned yet two could not be carried out due to the unavailability of the interviewees. Further, at the time of the interview, one interviewee both held the position as manager and middle manager, as the former middle manager had just resigned. This interview person thus answered both questions concerning middle management and employees. 23 interviews were carried out in total whereof 10 were carried out face-to-face, 12 via phone and one via e-mail. Interviews were carried out in *Kalaallisut* (the main dialect of the Greenlandic language) or Danish, depending on the preferences of the interviewee. For interviews in *Kalaallisut*, a professional interpreter was used.

Informed consent was obtained from all respondents and anonymity guaranteed. From the 22 spoken interviews, one was documented by notes whilst talking and 21 were recorded. The records were transcribed and anonymized.

Further, company documents, in the following also called 'official measures', were collected from all three companies to draw a picture of their current efforts to attract and retain workers. By 'official measures' is defined a procedure, plan, course of action or strategy concerning attraction or retention of employees that was decided

upon by the main management of the companies and is documented by them. The documents were collected during meetings with the companies during fall 2017 and spring 2018.

The company documents were studied in order to grasp how employers approach the attraction and retention of employees strategically. This was done by ways of investigating how the challenges described by employers are represented in the documents describing the company's official measures (inspired by a policy analysis approach by Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, yet this approach was not fully applied).

Due to their confidential character, neither the interviews nor the documents could be disclosed. [12] An overview of the interviews can be found in appendix B.

3.5.2. SECOND DATA COLLECTION: EMPLOYEE SURVEY

Employees were the focus of the second data collection. To be able to point to potential for alignment between the employer measures, which was the focus of the first data collection, and the employees job attribute preferences, a quantitative survey with the groups of EMPs and MANs in the three respective companies was carried out. For each company, the survey was distributed to the respective EMP and MAN group. In total, it was distributed to approximately 750-1,000 respondents. The number is an estimate due to seasonal workers and a high turnover rate for some of the groups.

The content of the questionnaire was based on secondary literature and existing scholarly knowledge (cf. chapter four), the findings from the first data collection (cf. chapter five) as well as company input and own reflections when relevant. After completing the first draft of the questionnaire, it was discussed with a representative of each company in order to give the companies an opportunity to provide input, but also to make sure that the questions would make sense in the respective company environment. The meetings resulted in minor adjustments in the wording of some questions. Moreover, additional questions were suggested and their relevance and possible addition to the questionnaire were considered afterwards by the researcher. Some were seen as relevant and added to the questionnaire, some not.

The final version of the questionnaire was composed of two parts; first an introduction to inform the participants about the purpose and goal of their participation in the survey, and that their anonymity would be guaranteed; followed by the set of questions. The questionnaire can be found in the original *Kalaallisut* and Danish version in appendices C and D. A translation to English can be found in appendix E.

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[12] The assessment committee had access to the interview transcripts and a list of company documents.

The questionnaire was first created in Danish then translated to *Kalaallisut* and finally checked through back-translation. Both versions were tested thoroughly before they were distributed.

The survey was set up with the help of the program *SurveyXact* which was also used to process and analyse the data. Distributed to the employees in the beginning of February 2019, the survey was open for responses for six weeks. The survey could be answered either online or in print and was set up as an internal survey to increase the participation rate. Depending on the response rate for the participating EMP and MAN group at each company, two to three reminders were distributed with assistance through company representatives. The overall participation rate for the survey was 24%, with 182 responses in total. For the MAN-group, the rate was at 81% (51 respondents), while it was at 18% (117 respondents) for the EMP-group. The overall response rate can be considered satisfactory to good.

Based on the general design of the study, the success of the survey to a high degree depended on the collaboration with the companies. This was secured by keeping in continuous dialogue with each company, as already outlined previously. One challenge was to motivate the respondents to participate. Commonly for quantitative studies, in addition to anchoring the study internally in the participating companies, this was strived for by repeated considerations regarding the length of the questionnaire, its general structure and the order of the questions. Moreover, all three companies agreed on setting a prize among the respondents of the questionnaire to further increase participation. Participants were asked to write their phone number if they wished to participate in the competition. To guarantee anonymity, it was made clear that the phone number would only be used in connection with the competition. The winners were drawn by the researcher by the end of the data collection and a representative from the company contacted the winners to keep their anonymity towards the researcher.

3.5.3 THIRD DATA COLLECTION: EMPLOYEE INTERVIEWS

The aim of the third data collection was an in-depth investigation of the findings arrived at in the first analyses. Based on the findings from the first and second data collection, it was decided to focus on EMPs only in the third data collection. Compared to the MAN group, the knowledge gap about EMPs showed to be more substantial and needed further consideration. While the aim of chapter five was mainly a descriptive analysis, it provided explanatory results for the MAN group. The findings pointed to the challenge for MANs being mainly based on the quantitative and qualitative lack of managers, and less within the managers own job attribute preferences. For EMPs, the results were much less clear at this stage and a further analysis of their particular job attribute preferences therefore was prioritised (see also section 5.10.1).

The interviews with EMPs were based on a semi-structured interview guide. The interview guide was developed with a point of departure in the findings from the first and second data collection (cf. chapter five) and the theoretical lenses (cf. chapter six). It can be found in appendix F.

In total, 12 interviews were carried out in four different locations in both West and East Greenland during February and March 2020. The interviews were carried out with members of the EMP groups who participated in the employee survey, i.e., persons that at the time of the data collection were employed at one of the three participating companies. For each company, two branches were chosen. As much as logistics and other practical limitations allowed, the data collection was spread across several locations, both bigger and smaller towns. The final number of interviews in each location was based on data saturation as an in-depth understanding of findings was the aim of this data collection rather than representativity. The interviews lasted between 25 and 75 minutes.

The content of the third data collection, however, is presumed to be relevant for a bigger sample than the actual number of collected interviews. This should not be understood as if the observations from the third data collection will matter for everyone but based on the data from the first and second data collection, which had a higher degree of representativity, the observations give relevant insight to the puzzles that have arisen from the first and second data collection. Representativity was secondary to this data collection.

Before the beginning of an interview, sources of support for the study, its purpose and goal were made clear to the participants. The interviewees were asked for consent and were guaranteed anonymity. Moreover, all interviewees were asked which language they preferred for the interview. During five out of the 12 interviews, simultaneous interpretation was used. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Due to their confidential content, they are not part of the appendix.[13]

3.6. THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL APPROACH

In the following, the study's theoretical and analytical positioning is qualified. The approach to theory is neither fully inductive nor deductive. Rather, it is best described as iterative as the problem-based and pragmatic methodological approach of the dissertation requires a constant weaving back and forth between theory and data. In a similar manner, the analytical approach requires a constant weaving back and forth between the findings from the three data collections.

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[13] The assessment committee had access to the transcribed interviews.

3.6.1. THEORETICAL POSITIONING

This dissertation is placed between disciplines and several scholarly fields and is rooted in the interplay between humanities and social sciences. For the purpose of the study, theory is regarded as a body of generalised propositions intended to *inspire* the analysis of the data rather than of *steering* it. Theory is distinguished and understood to exist at three different levels:

Tier one (T1):   Highly abstract 'grand theories' (as, for example, Maslow's pyramid of needs (Maslow, 1970)).

Tier two (T2):   Specific theories (as, for example, organisational commitment theory (Cohen, 2007)).

Tier three (T3): Secondary literature on similar or adjacent phenomena when used theoretically. Tier three theory's relevance can, for example, be tested against the empirical findings, just as tier two theory (even though this type of theory has not yet been generalised or extended to a broader field). An example would be Gad (2009) who argues that "Greenlandic identity discourse combines elements of traditional Inuit culture and elements of colonial modernity." (ibid., p. 136).

Whereas T1 theory is not in focus but referred to when relevant, the dissertation will mainly make use of T2 and T3 theories. Specific theories and secondary literature on similar or adjacent phenomena will be applied with the purpose of assisting in the analysis of empirical data.

To ensure openness to new theoretical input and to let the collected data guide the application of theory, theory has been introduced in several stages. T2 and T3 theory has been introduced in chapter two and four and used mainly throughout the analysis in chapter five.

In chapter six, the main 'theoretical lenses' applied in the study are introduced. They consist of two T2 theories, which have been combined and adapted to the context of the study based on the empirical findings from the explorative analysis in chapter five. The theories concern the fields of organisational commitment, attitude towards work and job characteristics (see chapter six for elaboration). They are applied in the main analysis in chapter seven. The term 'lenses' (instead of e.g., 'framework') implies that theory is used in order to see the challenges from different perspectives, rather than to construct a firm, inflexible structure for analysis. Theory is applied to inspire deeper analysis as the 'lenses' assist in the zooming in and out on different aspects in the empirical data. By critically choosing relevant elements from theory, a theory package specifically for the context of the study was thus developed.

Throughout the dissertation, theory is used in an iterative manner in order to engage with the process of continuous meaning-making. This goes along the lines of the pragmatic premises, as the analysis of empirical data guided the selection of required elements from theory.

It must be emphasised that the main theoretical contribution of the study is not considered to be the extension of theoretical knowledge generally but providing knowledge about what works for analysing the empirical data and the given objective for the study. It was looked far when searching for elements that could be adapted and applied as theoretical lenses. A large number of theories from a variety of fields and contexts were considered in the process. The final elements were chosen critically based on their relevance shown by the empirical data. This process is elaborated in section 6.2.

3.6.2. ANALYTICAL POSITIONING

The overall analytical objective of the dissertation is to gain insight into unique patterns, how these are connected to the studied context, and qualify the findings by analysing them with the help of theoretical concepts (inspired by Nielsen, 2007, p. 129). Theoretical concepts refer to the 'theoretical lenses' as described in the previous section.

'Collateral experiences' by the researcher contributed positively to the data analyses. The term can be ascribed to C.S. Peirce who argued that "A Sign may bring before the Mind, a new hypothesis, or a sentiment, a quality, a respect, a degree, a thing, an event, a law, etc. But it never can convey anything to a person who has not had a direct experience or at least original self-experience of the same object, collateral experience" (Bergman & Paavola, n.d.).

The researchers particularly relevant collateral experience in this regard stems from the fact that she has been closely engaged with Greenlandic society since 2015 and has permanently lived in Nuuk since 2017. Being in close contact with individuals from most walks of life usefully led to the collection of experiences and knowledge about customs, values, ways of life and practice, incl. e.g., body language. Interview situations, e.g., have benefitted from this collateral experience. Further, it enabled a detailed analysis that was not only based on what is explicitly manifest in the data but also on what was not explicitly stated by the interviewees.

The collateral experience, in combination with the secondary literature and concepts presented in chapters two and four, as well as the theoretical lenses introduced in chapter six, enhanced the overall understanding and enabled qualified analysis, both of the interviews and other data and situations.

Different types and levels of analysis have been practiced in the individual chapters.

Chapter Four presents a literature review and a descriptive analysis of matters relevant to the objectives of the study and the research questions. The chapter mainly makes use of secondary literature, some of which will subsequently be used as tier three theory.

Chapter Five presents an analysis of the empirical data from data collection 1 and 2. Here, theory is (deliberately) not rigorously applied. Due to the study's hermeneutical approach, the aim is to provide a sort of explorative sub-analysis based on empirical data only. In the chapter, empirical data from the first data collection is used to set up hypotheses, which then are investigated further using the findings from the second data collection. The results are then used to inform the construction of the theoretical lenses that are presented in chapter six.

Chapter Seven provides an analysis of the empirical data from data collection 3. It is deductive in a sense but also questions, challenges and nuances theory.

Chapter Eight discusses the findings from chapters five and seven in order to establish what the analyses tell us about the observed perceptions of realities. Theory is present here, but not prominently.

3.7. REFLECTIONS ON MY ROLE AS A RESEARCHER

Whilst ethical considerations in regard to respondents, the data collection and the treatment of data are presented in previous sections, this section specifically treats reflections about my own role in the field during the research.

My academic and professional background trained me in the tradition of research for the benefit of society, and thus research that involves local communities. As mentioned earlier, this type of research is not for all problems, and not for all researchers, but the specific topic of the research made an active and collaborative research design relevant.

The close collaboration with society required certain considerations before, during and after research. My role within the companies was as an external researcher, while the study was anchored internally in each company. This gave me access to certain areas of the company with the benefit of being positioned outside of the company.

Further, other parties than the financing partners and the participating companies continuously showed interest in the study. I was occasionally contacted with new ideas within the existing research project or outside of the research project. The interest in the study from the outside is, first of all, positive, as it contributed to my

own learning process and understanding of the field. Informal talks and meetings with different informants enriched the data collection and added to my understanding of the context. The metadata thus added upon my own knowledge and reflections on the topic.

Usually, I would meet for a cup of coffee with such informal informants, in order to have a chat about labour market challenges in Greenland and my study. In some cases, it was necessary to make it particularly clear that the study does not have the option of involving further partners and refer the interested party to the future results of the study. To avoid conflicts of interest, I tried to communicate clearly and openly about my expectations and boundaries.

Topic-wise, the continuous input from different interested parties resulted in a flow of new ideas and angles especially in the beginning of the study. This can be seen as an important part of the learning process; however it also required a lot of work on my part in order not to lose focus. Especially in the first months of the study, I spent a lot of time and energy training my objectivity and trying not to get caught up in the subjective perspective of the partners. On the background of this, and the above-mentioned metadata, the objectives of the study were adjusted continuously in the beginning of the study to explore different angles of the topic. At a certain point, the objectives then needed to become relatively fixed to keep the focus and integrity of the research. This also accounts for keeping one's integrity as a researcher. In a way, this process presents a double integrity: On one hand, the integrity of remaining independent and keeping one's research integrity despite of continuous external input, and on the other hand, my own integrity as I became a subject myself in my field of research as I chose to relocate my home to Nuuk.

Kofoed and Staunæs (2015) argue for "hesitancy as an ethical act" and argue that "[…] temporality plays a key part in hesitancy as a responsible ethical strategy. Hesitancy requires time, the opportunity to postpone action and a chance to 'put the situation on hold'. We argue that the pace with which we can create new knowledge and new insights is qualified by such pauses." (Kofoed & Staunæs, 2015, p. 37) In order to settle my thoughts and reflect on the knowledge obtained through close contact with the field, I actively needed to take pauses from the field. As I was a subject in the field myself by living and working in Nuuk, this was not always possible to the extent that I would have wished for. Moreover, during different periods of the study, I had different needs regarding contact to and communication with the field which had to be balanced. Even though the study from the beginning was based on the researcher having different roles at different times, I experienced this shift between different roles as rather demanding at times.

My personal background of being a German (and not a Danish) researcher in Greenland helped to position myself outside of potential ethno-cultural or post-colonial tensions. To me, this was experienced as an advantage whilst working on

the dissertation. In my personal experience, in contemporary Greenland society, colonial history is still having an effect on sentiments towards Danish scholars. Being a German scholar, I could place myself outside of these tensions and it seemed to me as if building trust with participants was easier this way.

Generally, collaboration with local actors during research can often be a trust building approach, which it also has proven to be in the case of this study. However, I sometimes experienced scepticism on the part of local parties who were not involved in the study. This scepticism was either concerned with the fact that I was a foreigner or related to the partial local funding of the study. Often, a scepticism towards me not being a Greenlandic scholar could be minimized by explaining the purpose of the study, my own commitment towards it, and the fact that I moved my permanent residence to Greenland. On occasion, the fact that I was trying to learn *Kalaallisut* made a positive impression on critics. Distrust with respect to funding was partly understandable. The question of how I could remain an independent researcher while the study was partly financed by local organisations emerged on occasion. As discussed earlier, this was approached by describing and explaining the study's anchoring in academia, its critical approach, the use of mixed methods and its approximation to objectivity.

Another focus as an external researcher in Greenland was to return findings to society. As the dissertation is a collaboration with local partners, one appropriate pathway of returning findings is through these partners. This process of disseminating findings was begun already while the research was conducted by being in a regular dialogue with the partners about the newest findings. Further, it is planned to disseminate results of the study on a bigger scale once the dissertation has been published. This will be done both through outreach to media, public presentations and debates as well as workshops with the partners, companies and other interested parties. The results will also be communicated to the various workers' unions in Greenland. Importantly, the findings will be shared with the employee groups that built the data base for the study, in order for them to benefit from the results as well. See also appendix G: Dissemination of results.

CHAPTER 4. OVERVIEW OF THE ECONOMY, THE WORKING-AGE POPULATION AND THE CURRENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

This chapter sets the scene for what is necessary to know about the Greenlandic economy and the working-age population in the context of the study. Importantly, it also accentuates knowledge gaps and other matters of interest.

It provides a general overview of the basic structure of the Greenlandic economy and a short introduction to the working-age population, followed by an account of relevant literature on workforce issues in Greenland. Knowledge from other Northern and Arctic regions (such as Nunavut, Alaska, Iceland and Finland) is incorporated in order to add context to the understanding of the situation in Greenland.

4.1. THE ECONOMY OF GREENLAND

The economy of Greenland is based on both renewable and non-renewable natural resources and is unique on numerous levels. The self-government act in 2009 led to considerable changes and development in the economic structure of the country, as the aim for economic independence and the search for sources of independently generated income increased (*Lov Om Grønlands Selvstyre*, 2009). The goal of increased economic independence led to a focus on employment rates in Greenland as well as the question if the workforce possesses the needed skills for the aimed economic development (Økonomisk Råd, 2010). This might also have had an influence on the job attribute preferences of employees and thus the employers' efforts to attract and retain employees.

With an area of 2.166.000 km^2 and a population of 56,081 as per January 1st, 2020 (Statbank Greenland, 2020b), Greenland is a vast country with a small population that has specific characteristics and challenges related to accessibility, remoteness and isolation.

As of 2018, the Greenlandic GDP was at 15,338.8 million DKK (fixed prices, Statbank Greenland, 2020f). As shown in table 4.1 below, the annual growth during the last decade has been positive and rather stable, with only a minor relapse in 2013

caused by an economic decline in the mining sector (Economic Council, 2014, p. 9f.).

Year	GDP, million DKK, fixed prices	Block grant, percentage of GDP	Value of export, million DKK, fixed prices	Percentage of fish exports (Value of fish exports divided by total export)
2004	12,100.4	25.1%	2,188.4	90.6%
2006	13,059.9	24.1%	2,426.3	84%
2008	13,655.7	24.3%	2,486.3	84.5%
2010	14,078.0	24.9%	2,194.5	90.8%
2012	14,260.4	25.3%	2,782.6	86.4%
2014	14,554.1	25.1%	3,139.7	87.7%
2016	14,825.2	24.9%	3,867.8	88.6%
2018	15,338.8	24.9%	4,057.7	92.4%

Table 4.1 – GDP, block grant and exports (Statbank Greenland, 2020f, 2020e, 2020a, 2020d)

In addition to the size of the GDP, table 4.1 shows the percentage of the annual block grant that Greenland receives from Denmark and the value of export. The block grant makes up almost one quarter of the Greenlandic GDP.

The last column in the table shows that fish and shellfish are the main export products, highlighting the importance of fisheries as both the primary industry of Greenland and its economic lifeline. It also suggests how vulnerable the economy is to international price fluctuations on the world market for fish. Whereas the public sector is the largest sector of value creation (42% of the GDP), a major part of value creation comes directly or indirectly from the fishing industry as the fishing sector, although smaller in percentage (16%), and its associated industry is Greenland's most important sector (Grønlands Statistik, 2019, figures from 2018). In addition, the mining sector, although its contribution to the GDP is small in percentage (0.3%), is central to understanding the Greenland economy (ibid.). With few sectors sustaining the Greenland economy, diversification is sought after to reduce economic instability. In the coming years, major value additions are expected from both the mining sector and the tourism sector (Økonomisk Råd, 2019).

Fluctuating market conditions can affect the availability of jobs and present a unique challenge to the labour market. For employers, uncertainty and risks are connected to these market conditions, as the prospects for the attraction and retention of employees are subject to the variations in the sectors. Moreover, due to the small size of the workforce and the settlement structure in Greenland, different sectors tend to compete for the same pool of labour in the workforce.

4.2. THE WORKING-AGE POPULATION OF GREENLAND

Workforce size

As of January 1, 2018 the workforce[14] in Greenland counted 27,231 members (Statbank Greenland, 2018d), representing 49% of the total population. This corresponds to the OECD average workforce size at 48.9% (OECD, 2019). The average age of the workforce was 41.7 years in 2018, and 46% of its members were female (Statbank Greenland, 2018d).

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total	26,482	26,820	26,994	27,021	26,764	26,844	26,893	27,271	27,231
Men	14,724	14,803	14,917	14,829	14,621	14,745	14,808	14,917	14,817
Women	11,758	12,017	12,077	12,193	12,143	12,099	12,086	12,355	12,413
Average age in years	40.5	40.5	40.7	41	41.3	41.4	41.4	41.7	41.7
% of external labour	14.4	14.6	14.5	14.3	13.7	13.2	12.5	12.4	12.1

Table 4.2 – Workforce among permanent residents by gender, average age, place of birth and time (Statbank Greenland, 2018d)

As shown in table 4.2, the size of the workforce has been quite stable throughout recent years. The working-age population is, however, predicted to decrease in the

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[14] Statistics Greenland's definition of 'workforce' shows inconsistency in terms of a minimum age. Some of Statistic Greenland's data on the workforce uses a minimum age threshold of 17 years, other data uses the age 18 years. In addition, the official retirement age was raised from age 64 to age 65 pr. January 1ˢᵗ, 2017. From 2017, Statistic Greenland's data therefore also includes members of the workforce aged 65.

future due to an aging population and out-migration[15] (Larsen & Fondahl, 2014, p. 21f.; Rasmussen, 2011, p. 9; Rasmussen, Roto, & Hamilton, 2014, p. 160). This will contribute to a rising old age dependency ratio as seen in figure 4.1 below.
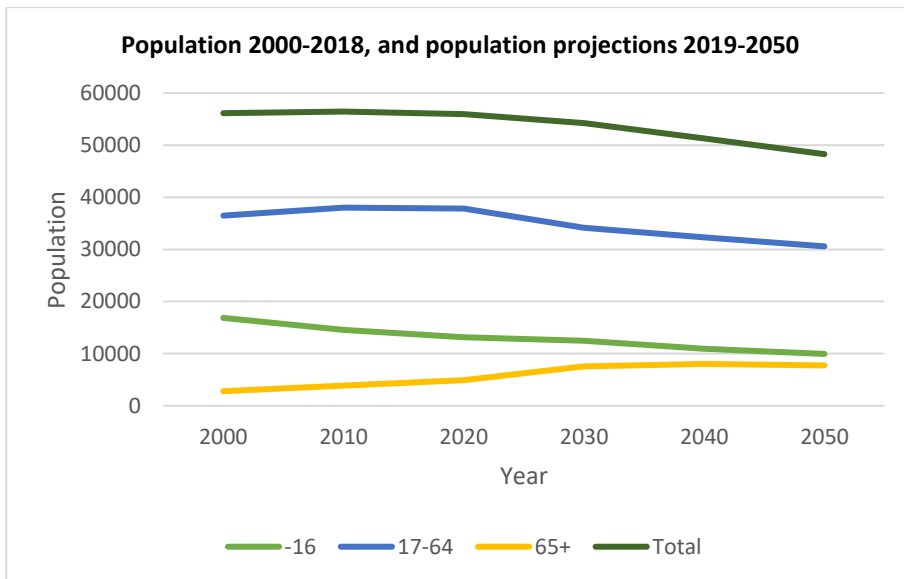
Figure 4.1 – Population 2000-2018, and population projections 2019-2050 (Statbank Greenland, 2020c)

Figure 4.1 shows a general decrease in the overall population numbers and how the working-age population is predicted to decrease from around 38,000 members in 2020 to around 30,000 in 2050. Likely, having a smaller population in working-age will have implications for employers such as increased difficulties in finding the right skills and an increased competition for labour. Further, the old age dependency ratio is predicted to rise as the population share aged 65 or older is predicted to rise from around 5,000 in 2020 to approximately 8,000 in the 2040s. This will result in a higher economic burden (i.e., higher taxation) for the working-age population. At the same time, predictions say there will be fewer young people aged 0-17 years which will have further implications for the size of the working-age population.

In 2018, 12% of the working-age population was external labour[16]. The biggest group was born in Denmark (9%), followed by the Faroe Islands, the Philippines,

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[15] In the last decades, Greenland has experienced negative net-migration caused by the emigration of locals. In 2015, net-migration was at minus 256 individuals (Hamilton & Rasmussen, 2010, p. 45; Statbank Greenland, 2019a).

[16] In the following, the definition of 'external labor' as provided by Statistics Greenland is used, i.e., workforce born outside of Greenland.

Thailand and Iceland, together counting for approximately 3% of the working-age population (Statbank Greenland, 2018b). The proportion of working-age population born outside of Greenland has been declining relative to the total population in the last decades. Since 1989, the size of working-age population born outside of Greenland has almost been reduced by half (Statbank Greenland, 2019b).
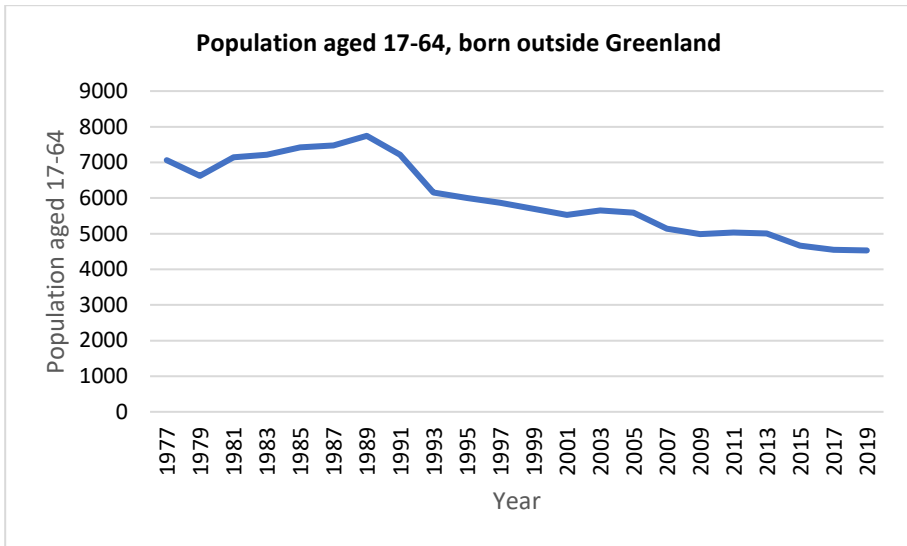
Figure 4.2 – Population aged 17-64, born outside Greenland (Statbank Greenland, 2020b)

A decreasing share of the working-age population born outside of Greenland is also connected to Greenland having achieved self-government in 2009, and a political focus on hiring locally. Regulations for recruitment and employment of foreign labour have been tightened regularly since the 1980s[17]. In addition, there has been an increased focus on language politics at workplaces after the introduction of self-government (Inatsisartutlov Nr. 7 Af 19. Maj 2010 Om Sprogpolitik, 2010) as well as a focus on providing education locally. An example is the establishment of the University of Greenland in Nuuk in 1983 (Ilisimatusarfik, 2020) as well as a steady improvement of access to high schools (*Inatsisartutlov Nr. 13 Af 22. November 2011 Om Den Gymnasiale Uddannelse*, 2011).

Local employers have repeatedly criticized the sharpened rules for hiring external labour and advocated their need of external labour to be able to function. In June

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[17] See e.g., Landstingslov Nr. 1 Af 12. Marts 1980 Om Ansættelse Af Arbejdskraft i Grønland, 1980; Landstingslov Nr. 27 Af 30. Oktober 1992 Om Regulering Af Arbejdskrafttilgangen i Grønland, 1992; Inatsisartutlov Nr. 23 Af 28. November 2016 Om Ændring Af Landstingslov Om Regulering Af Arbejdskrafttilgangen i Grønland, 2016

2019, for the first time in over 30 years, the Greenlandic government *Naalakkersuisut* announced plans to ease the regulations and make the import of foreign labour more flexible. The moderations were announced to take effect by the year 2020, but by the end of 2020, the process had not been finished yet (AG, 2019; Sermitsiaq AG, 2020).

The development of the Greenlandic labour market presents a long process of transition. One way to explain the disparity between the employer's and the employee's expectations that the study has in focus, concerns transition. The local working-age population's meeting with and, partly, adaptation to foreign norms on the local labour market has likely been challenging for many. External labour possibly had advantages of aligning expectations with employers, as their values and expectations might align easier. A reduction in the use of external labour and increased use of local labour in the last decades could consequently have had influences on the described labour market challenges. The announced ease of regulations, and future easier recruitment of external labour, may result in an additional shock effect as by this, the current status quo of employers trying to hire as many local employees as possible might be challenged again.

Main sectors of employment

Table 4.3 below shows the main employment for permanent residents by industry, gender and percentage of external labour in each sector in 2018. The employment structure in Greenland has undergone major changes in the last decades. Prior to the 1950s, two thirds of the workforce were engaged in traditional activities in the fishing and hunting sector (Lennert, 2015, p. 239; M. K. Poppel, 2015, p. 305). In 2018, fishing, hunting and agriculture accounted for 16% of employment and thereby was the second largest sector of employment. The main sector of employment was the public sector (40%), and other important sectors were wholesale (11%), and construction (8%) (Statbank Greenland, 2018c).

Population aged 17-64		Local labour			External labour		
2018	**Number of persons**	**% of workforce**	**Male % of workforce**	**Female % of workforce**	**% of external labour in sector**	**Male**	**Female**
Total	26,848	100%	55%	45%	12% (3,262)	68%	32%
Public administration & service	11,058	41%	32%	68%	10% (1,146)	49%	51%

Fishing, hunting & agriculture	4,410	16%	83%	17%	6% (268)	83%	17%
Wholesale & retail trade	3,038	11%	51%	49%	10% (300)	71%	29%
Construction	2,042	8%	91%	9%	18% (359)	96%	4%
Transportation & storage	2,013	7.5%	77%	23%	13% (259)	84%	16%
Hotels and restaurants	818	3%	47%	53%	28% (225)	58%	42%
Information & communication	631	2.3%	69%	31%	18% (118)	83%	17%
Administrative & support service activities	480	1.8%	56%	44%	18% (86)	64%	36%
Activity not stated	467	1.7%	72%	28%	28% (130)	87%	13%
Energy & water supply	441	1.6%	83%	17%	15% (66)	93%	7%
Other service industries	369	1.4%	51%	49%	11% (41)	50%	50%
Professional, scientific & technical activities	306	1.1%	55%	45%	36% (111)	67%	33%
Real estate activities	269	1%	59%	41%	14% (38)	74%	26%
Manufacturing	227	0.8%	78%	22%	12% (28)	90%	10%
Financial & insurance activities	180	0.7%	33%	67%	30% (54)	63%	37%
Mining and quarrying	95	0.4%	70%	30%	35% (33)	73%	27%

Table 4.3 – Main employment for permanent residents by industry, gender and percentage of external labour in each sector in 2018 (Statbank Greenland, 2018b)

The economy of Greenland has experienced a fast transition from the 1950s to today. New industries and sectors have emerged and likely influenced the job attribute preferences of persons engaged with paid employment, at the same time as the role of traditional activities has decreased. Statistics Greenland only has available data for employment by industry since 2009. Since then, the distribution between sectors has been rather stable. Progress has been documented in the public sector and the fishing, hunting and agriculture sector, while the wholesale and mining and quarrying industry showed some minor regression (Statbank Greenland, 2018b).

Compared to the total amount of labour, the majority of foreign workers are employed in the public sector, followed by the sectors of transportation, construction, business activities, hotels and restaurants. The use of external labour is important in both professions with specific skills as well as lower skilled professions. This points to a broad use of external labour that is not limited to specific positions only.

Moreover, distinct gender characteristics can be seen with respect to sectors of employment: almost three times as many women as men work in the public sector, while there are four times as many men as women employed in the sectors of fishing, hunting and agriculture (Greenland Perspective, 2016, p. 27; Statbank Greenland, 2018c). This points to potential gender differences in job attribute preferences.

Educational attainment of the workforce

Educational attainment in Greenland is low. In 2018, almost 2/3 of the working-age population born in Greenland had primary education as their highest level of education. As shown in table 4.4, external labour is higher skilled, especially in the field of post-secondary education.

		2002	2005	2010	2015	2018
Born in Greenland	Primary education	26,797	26,747	26,448	24,665	23,918
	High school	682	756	1,039	1,644	1,769
	Vocational education	5,351	5,902	6,667	7,597	7,999
	Post-secondary education	1,033	1,225	1,577	2,054	2,289
Born abroad	Primary education	1,984	1,760	1,762	1,755	2,195
	High school	322	315	315	290	228
	Vocational education	1,644	1,547	1,386	1,107	974
	Post-secondary education	1,587	1,688	1,646	1,647	1,314

Table 4.4 – Highest level of education by place of birth (Statbank Greenland, 2017a)

Importantly, table 4.4 also shows the increase in the population's educational attainment during the last twenty years. The last decades' political focus on increased independence resulted in efforts to ease access and increase offers of (relevant) education for the population.

Yet an educational backlog is indicated as 63% of the working-age population has no education higher than primary school (Økonomisk Råd, 2017, p. 39; Statbank Greenland, 2017a). Compared to other Northern and Arctic regions, this number is high. In 2017, around 52% of the population in Nunavut had primary education as their highest achieved education (Statistics Canada, 2016). In Iceland – where the development of educational achievement is sometimes compared to Greenland - the percentage was 29 in 2017 (Statistics Iceland, 2020).

Statistically, female members of the Greenlandic workforce have higher education than males. More women than men obtain secondary or tertiary education. As an example, 12% of the working-age population has obtained secondary education whereof 58% are women (Grønlands Statistik, 2020). While this gender gap is not unique to Greenland it is relevant to mention as it could point to a gender difference in job attribute preferences.

Another challenge concerning education are low completion rates for all types of secondary and tertiary education (T. M. Andersen, 2015; Boolsen, 2009; Departementet for Uddannelse Kultur Forskning og Kirke, 2015; Hirshberg & Petrov, 2014). As an example, in 2018 only 51% of those that were enrolled in either a vocational education or high school completed their education (Departement for Uddannelse Kultur og Kirke, 2019).

A functioning labour market depends on an educated working-age population. Having a group of the working-age population who are not finishing their education presents a challenge to the efforts on closing the current educational backlog. High dropout rates can point to a lack of commitment, physical or mental health issues. They can also point to a lack of alignment of the educational system to local culture. Consequences might be instability and fluctuation of the workforce that already start during education, as for example seen in high dropout rates.

The educational backlog in Greenland is likely to close slowly, but will remain for many years to come (Larsen & Petrov, 2015, p. 140). Projections by Statistics Greenland and the Nordic Council expect that in 2040, 47% of the Greenlandic working-age population will have an education higher than primary school (Økonomisk Råd, 2017, p. 39) – an increase of 9% from 2015. The number of university graduates in Greenland has been rising for the last five years, as well as the numbers of Greenlandic university graduates abroad (Statbank Greenland, 2017b). Yet, late entries to the labour market, and thus longer dependency on others are expected for the Greenlandic youth (Rasmussen, 2011, p. 42). Today, the

Greenlandic population undergoes changes in their educational level until the age of 35, which is high compared to similar countries (Økonomisk Råd, 2016a). Also, even though access to education has improved throughout the last years, it is still challenging for some to obtain education in their region and the purpose of education will continuously require youth to move.

Employment and unemployment rate

In general, unemployment is high in Greenland but with important regional differences. The average unemployment rate was at 5.8% in 2018 (Statbank Greenland, 2018e). In relative terms, this percentage is low. Yet throughout most of Greenland, the rule of 'the bigger the settlement, the lower the unemployment' can be applied. The capital Nuuk shows the lowest percentage at around 5%. In the North and the South unemployment is between 10% and 16%. East Greenland has the highest unemployment rate of 21% (Statbank Greenland, 2018f). This indicates how labour market challenges differ depending on locations (for example based on the availability of jobs and structural unemployment), and how measures need to be adjusted to specific local preconditions and challenges.

In some of the main industries such as fishing, hunting and agriculture, construction, as well as the tourism sector, seasonal unemployment is common (Greenland Perspective, 2015, p. 7). Statistically, unemployment is highest in the first and second quarter, and usually lowest in late summer to early autumn, as shown in table 4.5.

	Annual	1. quarter	2. quarter	3. quarter	4. quarter
2010	7.8%	9.2%	7.3%	6.5%	8%
2012	9.8%	12.1%	9.7%	8.2%	9.4%
2014	10.3%	13.3%	10.4%	8.4%	9.2%
2016	7.3%	9.6%	7.5%	5.8%	6.5%
2018	5.8%	7.9%	6.2%	4.2%	5%

Table 4.5 – Unemployment rate among permanent residents aged 18-65 years by quarter and year (Statbank Greenland, 2018f)

Moreover, the average unemployment rate is greater for individuals with primary education as their highest level of education, as seen in figure 4.3 below.
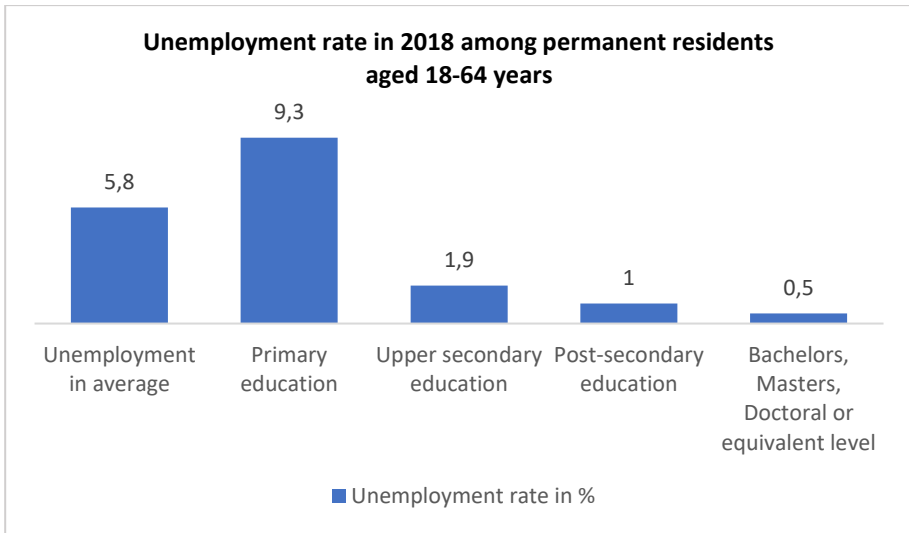
Figure 4.3 – Unemployment rate in 2018 among permanent residents aged 18-64 years by education, in %. (Statbank Greenland, 2018e)

The high percentage of unemployed for low skilled labour stresses the importance of educational opportunities for employment, as it suggests a lower rate of unemployment for higher educated labour. The importance of education for labour market possibilities in Greenland has repeatedly been stressed in government reports (T. M. Andersen, 2015, p. 20). The term education here refers to any education or skills development higher than primary school, and not necessarily vocational training or university education.

Yet, a particular paradox in Greenland is that while there is high unemployment amongst low skilled labour at the same time as low skilled labour is imported from abroad. During recent years, low skilled labour has made up one third of all imported labour to Greenland (Rasmussen, 2011, p. 40; Statbank Greenland, 2017a). Geographical preconditions and skills not being located where they are needed could be one explanation for this. The Greenland Economic Council argues that the need to import labour despite high local unemployment points to challenges beyond unemployment for local labour. This could for example be a lack of motivation to be part of the workforce, personal challenges, mobility challenges or housing shortages (Økonomisk Råd, 2017, p. 28).

As shown in table 4.6 below, the share of people outside the workforce in Greenland is quite large, with around 25% of the working-age population not being members of the workforce – i.e., neither registered as employed nor unemployed. This is not unique to Greenland and can be observed in other Arctic regions, too (Karlsdóttir et al., 2018, pp. 75, 78ff.).

Year	Total population aged 18-65 years	Workforce in average per month	Percentage of persons not in the workforce per month
2015	36,244	26,844	26%
2017	36,584	27,271	25.5%
2019	36,552	27,141	25.8%

Table 4.6 – Persons not in the workforce per month (Statbank Greenland, 2018d)

High levels of unemployment in some regions and relatively low levels of educational attainment, as shown earlier, might make it difficult for people to find a job and result in discouraged workers with no interest of being a member of the workforce. Having lost the confidence or enthusiasm to be employed might have strong influences on a person's job attribute preferences.

Yet, members of the working-age population that choose to provide for their household through subsistence activities can be part of this group. If a person is not registered as being unemployed, official statistics count such persons as outside the workforce. This means that even though a person is officially registered as being economically inactive, this person might be quite active in the traditional/non-market economy. There is no statistical data on this group.

This group of persons who are not part of the workforce is interesting for employers, especially due to its rather large size. If becoming a member of the workforce could be made attractive for persons currently outside the workforce, the shortage of labour experienced by employers could potentially be diminished (Sermitsiaq AG, 2021). A person who has been outside the workforce for a long time, however, might have difficulties engaging with wage-work, especially when it comes to adapting to norms and values at a workplace.

Furthermore, social assistance and unemployment benefits can provide a disincentive to work. This is a well-known basic labour market challenge. In the case of Greenland, some reports suggest that being on public transfers can be more attractive than engaging with wage-work, in particular for low skilled workers (Arctic Cluster of Raw Materials, 2016, p. 22; Økonomisk Råd, 2016b, p. 3, 2017, p. 26). Similarly, a recent report argued that for receivers of social benefits in Greenland it often cannot pay financially to further one's education if an individual's focus is on his/her current income and not potential future income (N. J. M. Pedersen et al., 2018, p. 7).

Another universal challenge in the labour market is youth unemployment. The unemployment rates in Greenland show that the rate of unemployment for youth

aged between 18 and 29 years are above the national average: 20.4% for the age group 18-19 years; 14.4% for the age group 20-24 years; 11.3% for the age group 25-29 years (Statbank Greenland, 2018e). The settlement pattern in Greenland influences these figures. As most of the youth must move away from their hometown to pursue education higher than primary school, youth unemployment needs to be seen in the context of each settlement. Moving from one's home settlement can be emotionally and socially challenging and result in education drop-out. Also, returning to one's home settlement after ended education can result in unemployment, as, depending on the education, jobs are not always available locally. Thus, it can both be a shortage of relevant jobs or a shortage of qualifications that leads to youth unemployment and unemployment in Greenland in general.

Lastly, it can shortly be noted that the average employment rate indicates a clear distinction between local and external labour. In 2018, workforce born in Greenland had an average employment rate of 58% per month compared to 75% for workforce born outside of Greenland (Statbank Greenland, 2018a). These numbers reflect how external labour predominantly comes to Greenland because of job opportunities.

4.3. CURRENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

This section gives an account of relevant scholarly literature when investigating job attribute preferences in Greenland. It covers the state of knowledge on topics such as skills development, language, mobility, commitment to wage-work, socio-cultural values and concludes with a discussion of current shortcomings in scholarly literature.

Examples from other regions are considered when relevant, yet the complexity of Greenland (as described in chapter two) is kept in mind, as well as the question *if* concepts and findings from other regions can be applied in the context of this study.

Skills development and the role of language proficiencies

Recent research presents an extensive discussion of the educational system and development in the Arctic, and highlights the similar challenges present across the Arctic (Evengård et al., 2015; J. N. Larsen & Fondahl, 2014; B. Poppel, 2015c; Rasmussen, 2011).

The educational level in Greenland has increased significantly during the last decades. Yet, compared to its neighbouring regions, Greenland has an educational backlog with almost two thirds of the working-age population having only primary education as their highest level of education (see table 4.4 above; Lennert, 2015, p.

255). The literature refers to formal education being a rather new concept not only in Greenland but across the Arctic. People worked in the primary sector without the need of any formal education (Glomsrød et al., 2017, p. 118f.; Greenland Perspective, 2015; Huskey, 2010, p. 77). Historically and today, social status is not necessarily connected to an individual's educational background (Hirshberg & Petrov, 2014, p. 385; C. V. L. Larsen, 2014, p. 61; Lennert, 2015, p. 238).

The main reason for the educational backlog are shortcomings in the educational system (Boolsen, 2009; Friðfinnsdóttir, 2014; Lennert, 2014). One shortcoming is the lack of qualified teachers. Another is the fact that the educational system is mainly based on a Danish inspired system that only slowly is being matched with the needs of the modern Greenlandic society which is a system made up of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous norms and values (Lennert, 2015, p. 244; see also section 2.1). In several Arctic regions, secondary education is criticized for neither matching the needs of the population or the needs of the employers: "Indigenous groups face severe challenges finding relevant and reliable solutions for their education needs through mainstream infrastructures" (Rasmussen, 2011, p. 81). Similar arguments exist in the case of Greenland suggesting that education to a high degree is based on Western values and fails to include local culture (Greenland Perspective, 2016; Huppert, 2016; Lennert, 2015, p. 244).

The importance of informal skills has been documented by the literature and is relevant for the study. The role of informal skills in Greenland is vital for subsistence activities, as well as emerging sectors such as tourism and the extraction industry (Greenland Perspective, 2015, p. 5ff.; B. Poppel, 2015a, p. 56; Wilson, 2015, p. 66). Generally, informal skills can be a vital tool for employees to tackle potential shortcomings in formal education. Increased awareness and recognition of informal skills also shows that an educational backlog does not equal a share of population that completely lacks skills (Greenland Perspective, 2015; Ozkan & Schott, 2013; Tan et al., 2011; Wihak, 2005; Wilson, 2015).

Along these lines, a Greenland government report argued for the need of generalised knowledge instead of specialized knowledge for labour in Greenland (Departementet for Erhverv Arbejdsmarked og Handel, 2016, p. 4). This trend is observed across the Arctic regions (J. N. Larsen & Ingimundarson, n.d.). Sources on skills development in Arctic regions argue that mainstream, or 'Western' curriculum materials, especially for management education, are unsuitable for workplaces that employ Indigenous peoples (Wihak, 2005, p. 330), as the offered education and training are too specialised and not relevant for neither employers nor employees – potentially resulting in mismatches between existing and needed competences and even underemployment. This might be important knowledge when it comes to the workforce's job attribute preferences, and their preferences for skills development in particular.

To date, no extensive research has been made on under- and overemployment in the context of Greenland. Looking at the statistics, both overemployment, i.e., employment beyond one's skills level, and underemployment, i.e., underutilization of skills, seems plausible since a general lack of the right skills at the right places seems to prevail (see for instance the paragraphs on employment and unemployment in the previous section 4.2). In the case of rural UK, overemployment has been found to exist, in particular for migrant workers (De Hoyos & Green, 2011, p. 179). The same study demonstrates how a high demand for low skilled labour presents a challenge to the potential increasing aspirations for the local population. They can be torn between local employment opportunities and their desires to achieve a higher education (De Hoyos & Green, 2011, p. 179). A similar point can be made in the case of Greenland: Research showed that or workers in low skilled jobs or receivers of social benefits, furthering education could result in financial restrictions for a length of time. If the employees' focus is strictly on their current income it can seem demotivating to achieve training as investment in education and training is rewarded only in the long term (N. J. M. Pedersen et al., 2018, p. 7). In contrast, research has also shown that motivation to further education can be solely economic, in order to achieve a better lifestyle and not necessarily a meaningful job (Lau, 2005, p. 79f.).

The fact that education is not yet fully offered in all the languages used in Greenland presents one of the biggest challenges in the Greenlandic labour market. Because of this, a hierarchy of languages prevails.

Linguistically, the main dialect of Greenlandic, *Kalaallisut*, is the dominant language in most of Greenland. Danish is used as an administrative language, especially in the capital region, as well as an educational language as the current school system requires students to be able to speak Danish for any education after primary school. Other Greenlandic dialects such as East Greenlandic and *Inughuit* (spoken in the North) are a minority to both Danish and *Kalaallisut* (Rasmussen, Roto, et al., 2014, p. 167). Education-wise, members of the population with neither *Kalaallisut* nor Danish as their mother tongue are thus in a situation, where it is difficult for them to obtain formal education. A rough estimate is 70% of the population are not able to speak Danish sufficiently in order to obtain an education offered in Danish (Grønlands Forsoningskommission, 2017, p. 41; Lennert, 2015) – which could be one explanation for the educational backlog mentioned earlier. Government strategies have for years aimed to improve language teaching in primary education, and worked towards making formal education more accessible, also for non-Danish speakers. Yet, especially the lack of teachers with the right language skills has repeatedly challenged this vision (Departement for Uddannelse Kultur og Kirke, 2015).

Just as much as language plays a role in the educational sector, it also has a major influence on the labour market. Gad (2009) argues for a linguistic hierarchy in the Greenlandic labour market, where bilingual persons who both speak *Kalaallisut* and

Danish are on top, followed by monolingual Danish speakers and finally monolingual *Kalaallisut* speakers – which by far make up the biggest group of residents in Greenland (Gad, 2009). Also, Pedersen suggests a privileged status of bilingual workers (K. Pedersen, 1999, p. 20), and Møller (2011) argues, with an example from the health sector, for the importance of workers being 'doubled-cultured' in Greenland as well in the Nunavut, by which she both refers to linguistic and social 'double-culturedness' (Møller, 2011). Langgård (2005) discusses the employers' dilemmas when it comes to weighting professional and linguistic competences when looking for labour (Langgård, 2005, p. 154). She also refers to a 'Greenlandisation' of the labour market, i.e., employing more locals and having a stronger focus on local culture and language at workplaces. Along these lines, a government report discusses the correlation between language proficiency, integration on the labour market and turnover rate (Departementet for Erhverv Arbejdsmarked og Handel, 2016, p. 32) arguing that low or no proficiency of *Kalaallisut* can lead to difficulties with integration of external labour, and a higher turnover rate.

Whereas language politics have been part of the public discourse for years, the discourse about language at workplaces is rather new. There is little statistical data on the use of languages in Greenland, although it is a major factor and influence of everyday life (Langgård, 2005, p. 143). In one of the few scholarly articles on language at workplaces, Langgård argues that cultural differences at the workplace can be intensified by language barriers, and bilingual employees often function as the glue that holds many workplaces together, often without being properly rewarded for that function (Langgård, 2005, p. 146ff.). The latter also has been argued in newer research (Møller, 2011). According to Langgård, a major challenge is that many employers are not addressing the issue at their workplaces, possibly because of the issue's complexity. The discussion about language is a sensitive topic, and there is no quick fix. Especially in skilled jobs, employers constantly need to balance their focus on professional skills with a focus on language skills. Yet for employers both skills are crucial in order to be able to run and grow their business.

Two sources argue for a challenge for those who left Greenland and would like to return, as some reportedly feel unwelcome and are accused of being too Danish (Departementet for Erhverv Arbejdsmarked og Handel, 2016; Gad, 2009). Gad especially discusses the case of members of the working-age population born in Greenland who have a low proficiency of *Kalaallisut*, arguing for the strong economic consequences of their exclusion and calls it "potentially one of the greatest losses on the way to legal, political, economic independence" (Gad, 2009, p. 145). Consequently, for some members of the working-age population, a language conflict on the labour market can result in social exclusion and an identity conflict. Greenland is not the only Arctic region struggling with accommodating multilingual education and employment practices. In Nunavut also, language is argued to be a key issue in regard to obtaining education and job opportunities. A lack of education

in the local language, *Inuktitut*, as well as a hiring culture that is mainly based on the English language pose serious barriers to the Indigenous population in Nunavut (PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2003, pp. 33, 39ff.; Rasmussen, 2011, p. 67).

Moreover, in some of the earlier literature it has been argued that employment and hiring processes in Greenland to some extent are characterized by political interference and are not necessarily based on skills (Ankersen, 2008; Lang, 2008). By this, the literature both refers to nepotism in society as well as political endeavours to make the workforce more Greenlandic. This 'Greenlandisation' increased after the implementation of the Greenland Home Rule in 1979. The introduction of Self-Government in 2009 has further intensified these endeavours (Munk Veirum, 2016; Inatsisartutlov Nr. 7 Af 19. Maj 2010 Om Sprogpolitik, 2010). Recently, the party *Saumur* published their political vision that all public employees should be able to speak *Kalallisut* by the year 2025 (Siumut, 2020, p. 59).

In general, the body of literature on workforce development in Greenland is limited. Few previous studies can be referred to. Using the method of semi-structured interviews with local businesses, one early study found that some of the interviewed businesses would rather employ an applicant with fewer skills but "a strong association to Greenland" (Ankersen, 2008, p. 196), and offer upgrade programs for the applicant's skills. The study argued that this results in local, qualified employees with future potential, and a smaller investment compared to the costs of recruiting from abroad (ibid.). The same study also questions if the criteria for employment of leaders should be their educational background or their association to Greenland (ibid., p. 186) which connects to the matter of 'Greenlandisation' as mentioned above.

Another early work found that for Greenlandic workers having professional pride and skills that have been obtained with or without formal education do not result in the desire for further skills upgrade (Lau, 2005, p. 83). Along these lines, Kirk (2003) argues that the workforce not only desires their skills to be more acknowledged, but also increasingly financially rewarded (Kirk, 2003, p. 119).

While this literature might not be contemporary, it is relevant to mention as these are some of the only publications on Greenlandic employees' job attribute preferences that exist to date. Further, when following public discourse about the matter, it seems like many of the arguments made by the above scholarly works are still valid today (see for example Greenland Perspective, 2016).

Mobility and migration

Next to education and skills development, mobility of local labour as well as the influx of external labour are frequently treated in scholarly literature touching upon

labour market issues in Greenland. Already in 1963, Boserup argued "a low geographic mobility of the workforce" as one of the main factors characterizing the Greenlandic labour market (Boserup, 1963; In: Kalaallit Nunaanni Naatsorsueqqissaartarfik, 2004, p. 19). Relocational patterns within Greenland are important in understanding the employers' current challenge to attract and retain employees, as internal mobility could be a key factor in overcoming current skills mismatches in Greenland.

The first extensive report on the matter, 'Mobility in Greenland' (Rasmussen, 2010) collected a comprehensive amount of empirical data, based on register-based data from the years 1996-2006 as well as a nationwide survey. The report presents what are still the most current quantitative and representative data on the mobility of the workforce. Three groups are identified: (1) An immobile group who stays in one place, estimated to be 80% of population; (2) a semi-mobile group, who will return to the original place of settlement, estimated to be 16% of the population; (3) a very mobile group of individuals who constantly move around, estimated to be 4% of the population (Rasmussen, 2010, p. 13). The report argues that Greenlanders are very mobile in principle – i.e., speaking up about their thoughts and desires to move, however in practice, only few actually act on it stating reasons such as social security at the current place of residence and lack of housing in other settlements (Rasmussen et al., 2010).

The 2017 report on the Economy of Greenland goes as far as stating that with the current influx of low skilled labour from Asia, the mobility between Asia and Greenland is higher than internal mobility in Greenland (Økonomisk Råd, 2017, p. 28). With this, the Greenland Economic Council refers to low mobility of local low skilled labour at the same time as regional unemployment for this group is high. The lack of labour coinciding with high regional unemployment rates is also referred to as the "Greenlandic Paradox" (Greenland Perspective, 2015, p. 11).

Job opportunities, a higher salary, and opportunities for education are stated as being the main incentives to relocate by the Greenlandic workforce (Rasmussen, 2010, p. 14). Also in other places in the Arctic, improving the household economy is the main reason for migration, and migration flows are mainly expected to flow from poorer to richer places (Huskey, 2009, p. 26). In addition, scholarly literature argues for a generational difference as younger generations appear more mobile and more willing to move for a job (Huskey, 2009, p. 26; PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2003, p. 32f.). The reasons for the immobile share of the population are not treated extensively in the literature. Factors such as high social costs of moving and, connected to this, a sense of belonging that influences mobility are highlighted in few publications (Berliner et al., 2012; J. N. Larsen & Huskey, 2015, p. 165). In his work on migration in the Russian North, Heleniak (2009) finds the role of attachment to local places in migration decisions important for locals (Heleniak, 2009). Social relations and networks can be a more important reason to stay in one's

settlement than the prospect of employment or education in other settlements or towns. This can be connected to cultural reasons and/or subsistence activities.

Another early work on the Greenlandic labour market states that for many Greenlanders, "when it comes to residence there are other factors that have higher priority than permanent work" (Danielsen et al., 1998, p. 228). This also means that, at the same time as employment can be a main factor for increased mobility for one share of the population, it can be of lesser importance for another share of the population who define their quality of life based on other factors than employment. For instance, the lack of job opportunities seems not to be a major reason for residents from smaller settlements to move, as long as there are other ways of financing their preferred lifestyle. This could partly be labour wages, social security payments and other members of the household contributing to the household income, as well as participation in informal economy (Rasmussen, Roto, et al., 2014, p. 181). Moreover, structural issues such as housing, high costs of transportation etc. are indicated as hindrances, especially for low skilled labour (Palesch, 2016, p. 7; Rautio et al., 2014).

By scholars, subsistence activities are considered as a major influence on mobility, as good hunting and fishing grounds can make settlements attractive even if they lack wage labour opportunities. Yet, seasonal variation in subsistence activities can result in situations for residents, where it neither pays for them to stay or leave the settlements (Condon et al., 1995; In: Berman, 2009, p. 4; Rasmussen, Roto, et al., 2014, p. 181). Moreover, the lack of proper housing, day care or similar in bigger settlements, may force residents in smaller settlements to stay in their local community even though there would be more favourable job conditions in bigger settlements. This suggests that some members of the working-age population are in a 'limbo' between voluntary low mobility and forced low mobility.

An important aspect of mobility is emigration. As indicated previously, Greenland currently experiences negative net migration with a higher number of the population emigrating than immigrants arriving each year. In Greenland as in most of the Arctic region, migration of semi or high-skilled workers, ('brain drain' - migrants do not return, or 'brain circulation' - migrants return at some point), is taking place both internally, connected to the increasing urbanization, and from the island to other parts of the world (Clausen, 1998; Dep.for Uddannelse og Forskning, 2011; Economic Council, 2013, 2015; Huppert, 2016; *EM2015/49*, 2015; Naalakkersuisut, 2016). The primary reason for emigration is to obtain education, as is also the case for other Arctic regions. (Finansdepartementet, 2015, p. 91; Larsen & Huskey, 2015; OECD, 2011). The biggest share of migrants is under the age of 35 (ibid.). Hence, recruitment-wise, these emigrants present an important group for companies that struggle to find labour locally. For locals that leave Greenland, the return rate is estimated to be approximately 50% (Dep.for Uddannelse og Forskning, 2011, p. 15). Rasmussen (2010) argues the return rate as an indicator of how much education and

local work opportunities are connected – as well as a community's ability to adapt, and the individual interest in community well-being (Rasmussen, 2010, p. 88). In a study of youth migration in Orkney and the Shetland Islands, Alexander (2016) finds that in addition to so called 'rational' decisions concerning education and employment, younger generations also to a high degree consider cultural and social factors with respect to migration (Alexander, 2016).

To cope with the local lack of skills, external labour has been hired to Greenland for decades. Although extensively discussed both in media and politically, the topic still lacks specific research in the case of Greenland. The import of external labour has been a leading, however not always preferred, measure by local employers in need of labour.

As previously shown, the share of external labour has been decreasing from over 30% in 1979 to around 12% today, a similar level as in other Nordic countries (see also figure 4.2). The main part of the external labour comes from Denmark, which for many decades has been seen as an extension of the Greenlandic labour market (Rasmussen, Roto, et al., 2014, p. 167). As the unemployment rate in Denmark is decreasing (Statistics Denmark, 2019), this most probably is about to change. In the future, Greenlandic companies could be forced to recruit from other regions, and some employers already do this as they increasingly recruit workers from other Nordic Countries and Asia (Sermitsiaq AG, 2018a).

Danielsen et al. (1998) argue that external labour is more willing to move (again) as they already left their homes and families (Danielsen et al., 1998, p. 227). Statistically, the constant in- and outmigration points at a high turnover rate of external labour (Statbank Greenland, 2019a). Some sources estimate the average stay of external labour to be between 9 and 13 months (Akademikernes Sammenslutning i Grønland, 2015; K. Pedersen, 1999; Sejersen, 2016), however these figures are mainly based on high-skilled labour in the public sector and thus not generalisable. There is currently no reliable statistical data on the turnover rate of neither local nor external labour in Greenland.

The import of external labour as a solution for the current skills mismatch in Greenland is also discussed by Ankersen (2008), however only as a temporary measure while upgrading local labour (Ankersen, 2008). Looking at statistics and how the population's educational attainment has been rising at the same time as the number of external workers has been declining, points to this approach being used in Greenland, deliberately or not. The current ease of regulations for the influx of external labour, as previously mentioned, could affect this correlation.

The consequences of engaging external labour have not yet been documented in detail in the Arctic. For the case of Nunavut, Finnegan and Jacobs (2015) show and discuss how, in the period from 2004-2009, the influx of external labour increased

annually, whilst unemployment of locals concurrently increased (Finnegan & Jacobs, 2015). The employment of external labour could result in an issue connected to the general level of expectation: If employers are used to employ external labour with relevant skills, a continued mismatch with the local workforce could arise. If the local workforce's average skills level keeps on being lower than the skills level of external labour, it also stays unattractive for employers to hire local labour.

Icelandic research on foreign workers finds that through the increased use of temporary staffing agencies, the labour market has become significantly segmented, as foreign workers are paid less than locals and are offered terms for housing which would not be acceptable for locals. The same paper states that

> These dramatic changes to the Icelandic labour market have undoubtedly had a significant impact on Icelandic society (e.g. school system, housing system, language, and culture) but there is surprisingly little research available into this (Magnússon et al., 2018, p. 153).

Nonetheless, scholarly work on external labour also has argued for benefits: In rural regions with a skills gap it has been shown that foreign workers were valued for their work ethics, positive attitude, as well as a stimulus for locals to enhance productivity (Green et al., 2009). This would be an argument in favour of the current politics of easing the regulations for employing external labour in Greenland, as mentioned earlier in this chapter (see also AG, 2019; Sermitsiaq AG, 2020).

Commitment to wage-work

As discussed briefly in the previous sections, the development of the Greenlandic labour market has been rather comprehensive over time. Nudged by western and especially Danish influence but also own endeavours, there has been widespread changes in society (economy, employment, family and household structures). It has been argued that these changes also demanded a change of mentality in the population, a process that some researchers argue has not been completed yet and which did not proceed without problems: "As a result of globalization, social and cultural settings are changing quickly, generating new ways of making a living but also major social disruptions" (B. Poppel et al., 2005, p. 87f.). As will be elaborated in the following, these changes likely had a major influence on today's job attribute preferences of employees.

The major transition from a traditional hunting society to a modern society begun in the 1950s and 1960s with a political focus on urbanisation and paid employment. When implementing their so-called G50 and G60 policies, the Greenlandic government *Naalakkersuisut* tried to move the population to settlements and towns, where, from the government's point of view, better conditions for employment could be provided. This was assisted by the construction of fishing factories with an aim to encourage the workforce to work in fisheries rather than hunting

(Grønlandskommissionen, 1950; Grønlandsudvalget, 1964). The described development led to a fast transformation from the first to the third economic sector, considerable changes to the employment structure and major effects on the population. While there is a share of the population, for whom the development led to an increase in living standards and educational attainment, the transition was not as smooth for others. Wilson (2015) calls the results of the fast transformation a 'social trauma' or 'burden of change' for some members of society (Wilson, 2015, p. 19). Along these lines, several other scholars argue that this process of changes in living conditions resulted in social and lifestyle problems for some members of society, such as suicide, crime, domestic violence and drug or alcohol abuse. It has been argued that some members of the Greenlandic population experienced a confusion of norms, a feeling of powerlessness, as well as an alienation due to a feeling of not being able to influence the rapid development (Rud, 2017, p. 122f.). According to scholars, resilience is mostly found through family and social network, which could explain the lack of mobility in some groups (Danielsen et al., 1998, p. 210; B. Poppel et al., 2005, p. 95; Wilson, 2015, p. 20).

Already in the 1970s, consequences of this new complexity of socio-cultural norms and values were discussed in literature, suggesting that the process of local norms and values meeting foreign norms and values resulted in higher requirements to the local working-age population (From et al., 1975, p. 147). The same authors tested a hypothesis that the more difficult one finds it to adjust to the foreign norms, the more often one would be inclined to change jobs – this hypothesis however could not be confirmed (From et al., 1975, p. 167). Newer research points at some validity of the hypothesis, as several scholars argue for the restlessness and constant search for satisfaction of some members of the Greenlandic working-age population, based on the intertwining of local and foreign norms and thus, a process of transition of societal norms and values (Kirk, 2003, p. 113; Lau, 2005, p. 82).

Today, the development of society, on one hand, has resulted in an increase in living standards and educational attainment of the working-age population, as described in section 4.2. Yet, the process of local norms and values meeting and intertwining with foreign norms and values is argued to have resulted in challenges for some members of the working-age population, such as high absenteeism, poor professional knowledge and a lack of a sense of responsibility (Danielsen et al., 1998, p. 219ff.; Greenland Perspective, 2015, p. 16; B. Poppel et al., 2005, p. 210). This process of transition of norms and values also led to new understandings of working life.

Ozkan and Schott (2013) find that in the Arctic regions,

> […] collective assets (e.g. food sharing networks, language, traditional knowledge, and other cultural practices) have played key roles in enhancing the collective capabilities of Indigenous communities to adapt

and to develop resilience to such rapid changes over thousands of years.
(Ozkan & Schott, 2013, p. 1280)

In Nunavut, collaborative skills rather than individualistic achievements have been argued to be the preferred values in Inuit communities (Hanson 2003; Tompkins 2006; In: Aylward et al., 2013, p. 163). If similar collective assets still prevail in Greenlandic communities, the introduction of wage-work would have been challenging for some.

These collective values have also been mentioned in the case of Greenland, as for instance Poppel (2015) argues for the important role of community norms, such as being provided by, or provide for, family and friends (M. K. Poppel, 2015, p. 299f.). Individual lifestyle preferences, as outlined in the above, are therefore anticipated to have a strong influence on job attribute preferences of the employees.

In 1963, Boserup noted that the Greenlandic workforce in those days seemed to prefer a lifestyle based on what he called a 'hand to mouth' state of mind, that affected the general attitude to work, and based on this observation he also questioned the effect of initiatives such as higher wages to motivate the workforce (Boserup, 1963, p. 40f.). The by Boserup anticipated 'hand to mouth' lifestyle might not correspond well with the attitude to wage-work expected by employers in order to keep a business running. On the contrary, offering a higher salary might not contribute to the desired retention of workforce, but instead lead to fewer working hours if an employee's monetary needs can be fulfilled faster. Newer literature suggests, that there are still risks for business development in Greenland based on a certain local attitude to wage-work: "[T]he Greenlandic workforce's attitude to wage-work [is] an often highlighted point of criticism in connection with the discussion of perspectives for business development" (Kalaallit Nunaanni Naatsorsueqqissaartarfik, 2004, p. 16).

While the hand-to-mouth lifestyle must be considered an outdated perception today, newer literature refers to elements that in some way remind of Boserup's analysis from 1963. In a more recent study, Wilson (2015) finds that some Greenlandic workers do not like regular jobs or tight schedules, they prefer to live their own lifestyle and go hunting and fishing whenever they want to, which consequently leads to problems at their workplace. She also argues that some Greenlanders do not like to be far away from home for a longer time, which results in failing to complete training courses which often cannot be offered locally; or interferes with expectations towards the workforces mobility (Wilson, 2015, p. 66; see also section on mobility). Hansen and Tejsner (2016) argue that for many locals, the traditional way of living is highly desirable and the preferred way of life, and no change is wanted (Hansen & Tejsner, 2016, p. 28). Another source argues that an imbalance between preferred lifestyle, and expectations from the employers can lead to fluctuating participation in the workforce and economic inactivity (Greenland Perspective, 2015, p. 14). This shows how the change of employment structure

potentially still is influencing the attitude to wage-work in Greenland, and how this attitude might clash with employers' expectations towards the workforce.

The interplay between wage-work and subsistence activities also needs to be mentioned as an important element when looking at the change in employment structure in Greenland. Major changes in household structures have been argued to have an impact on the perception and importance of subsistence activities, and its coexistence with wage-work (B. Poppel et al., 2005, p. 94f.). Some scholars have argued that, especially for women, income from subsistence activities is not an alternative to wage-work anymore (M. K. Poppel, 2015, p. 309f.). Yet, more general research on wage-work as a secondary activity shows that many workers today still to a high degree depend on a reciprocity system with their family and friends (Barr & Serneels, 2009). Literature has shown how wage-work has been and still is a secondary activity to some, even though full time wage-work is more attractive economically (Boserup, 1963, p. 39; C. V. L. Larsen, 2014, p. 56f.). This also refers to some of the social norms, as well as collective values that are argued to be prevailing in parts of the Greenlandic society (M. K. Poppel, 2015, p. 299f.). Settlement patterns and the previously mentioned non-parallel internal development of Greenland (T. Andersen & Poppel, 2002, p. 87) might also have played into the workforces perception of the importance of subsistence activities compared to wage-work.

A similar connection between wage-work and subsistence activities is observed in other Arctic regions. In a paper on the role of subsistence in migration and wellbeing of Inupiat residents in Alaska, Berman (2009) argues that subsistence activities can take different roles in society. It can be the "employer of last resort for people unable to find paying jobs or leave declining communities for a better life elsewhere" (Stabler 1990; In: Berman, 2009, p. 4); it can be a productive activity that contributes to the quality of life and social status; it can attract people to live in rural Arctic communities despite lower cash incomes and possibly inferior public services (Condon et al .1995; In: Berman, 2009, p. 4). When studying rural island youth in Ireland, Newfoundland, the Faroe Islands and Shetland Islands it has been found that social and psychological factors can be as important as, or even more important than economic conditions (Cooke & Petersen, 2019, p. 103). The same study also suggests that rural population in places without sufficient employment opportunities often shows excellent skills in balancing several activities at the same time to create a sufficient annual income and financial stability (ibid., p. 107).

However, there is an important reliance between wage-work and subsistence activities. Income from wage-work often is necessary to enable the purchase of the needed equipment to participate in traditional activities (Kruse et al., 2008; PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2003, p. 31). Based on this, it has also been argued that employed Inuit are more likely to engage in subsistence activities than unemployed Inuit (PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2003, p. 31). By this, wage-work

enables the continued engagement in subsistence activities, and thus, indirectly, engagement in traditional lifestyle.

Moreover, Quintal-Marineau (2017) argues that gender plays a crucial role when explaining wage-work relations in Nunavut, by finding that wage-work is more important for the identity of female Inuit (Quintal-Marineau, 2017). With traditional activities like hunting and fishing mostly being a field dominated by men, this is an important consideration. The role of women in the Greenlandic labour market has been investigated by Poppel (2015), arguing that today, women play an essential role as wage-workers contributing to a stable household income (M. K. Poppel, 2015, pp. 306, 314).

The above suggests that the influence of income from subsistence activities on employees' job attribute preferences needs to be investigated more, especially as wage labour can both complement and substitute income from subsistence activities. If subsistence activities are regarded as more important to some individuals or households than wage labour, they could be a major competitor to local employers, as well as it would decrease mobility incitements for some groups. Also, as mentioned earlier, social status for some segments of population does not come from education, but rather from traditional activities (C. V. L. Larsen, 2014, p. 61). Community benefits of being a hunter can be more rewarding than having a higher income (Chabot, 2003, p. 30).

Public transfers are yet another element to consider with respect to the role of wage-work. Some scholars argue for a relation between commitment to paid employment and social benefits. Lau (2005) refers to a report arguing for social benefits being an alternative to wage income, showing that for some groups, working full time throughout all year is financially less beneficial than receiving social benefits during some months of the year (Lau, 2005, p. 80). A more recent report by the Danish Centre for Social Science Research still argues that for some groups in the Greenlandic labour market, it does not pay to take a job at the minimum wage, compared to receiving social benefits - as for instance couples with children are eligible for child benefits (N. J. M. Pedersen et al., 2018). The Greenlandic government *Naalakkersuisut* shows awareness to this issue as it is planned to both reform the current social benefits system, as well as to introduce an employment allowance, in order to increase the benefits of being employed, even with minimum wage, compared to receiving social benefits (Naalakkersuisut, 2018a, p. 20).

In the case of Nunavut, Stern (2001) finds that wage-work presents the workforce with new stresses and conflicts that result in deselecting commitment to paid employment (Stern, 2001, p. 214). This can result in selecting to be economically inactive, as also discussed by scholars in the case of Greenland, both in early and more recent scholarly literature (Boserup, 1963, pp. 34, 39; Greenland Perspective, 2015, p. 14).

Other scholarly work from Nunavut shows that there are members of the workforce who believe that there are no jobs available, and they are condemned to depend on public transfers or short-term/part-time employment (PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2003, p. 29; Stern, 2001, p. 214). In the case of rural Newfoundland and Ireland, researchers have found that the populations' perception of available work opportunities correlates with the degree of community loyalty (Cooke et al., 2013, p. 522). Both examples point to the strategic importance of communication of available jobs to locals in rural areas.

The so-called 'birthplace criterion' might have been another influence on the Greenlandic working-age population's commitment to paid employment. From 1964 until 1989/90, Danish labour in Greenland were legally guaranteed a higher salary for the same work than their Greenlandic colleagues. This criterion was implemented to attract more Danes to Greenland to fill open positions. The law led to a perception from the Greenlandic working-age population's point of view of their work being worth less than Danish labour. Today, the law is abolished yet the perception that external labour earns more than locals is still met in society at times. In practice, there are situations today where external labour either has a higher salary or other employee benefits that are not offered to locals (Grønlands Forsoningskommission, 2017; Janussen, 1995; Rasmussen, Roto, et al., 2014, p. 168). In some cases, this could be connected to the type of jobs that external labour takes (high skilled, high paid) but not generally.

Lastly, not only the described development of the labour market and a rather sudden change in employment structure, but also the current public discourse about Greenlandic workforce needs to be noted as an influence on the working-age population's motivation to commit to paid employment. Lennert (2015) and Winther (2005) argue that the locals' attitude to wage-work and education are influenced unfavourably by a negative public discourse about current and future members of the workforce, as they repeatedly are portrayed as being demotivated, unstable, unproductive, as well as disempowered and underpaid compared to external labour (Lennert, 2015; Winther, 2005). Also Sejersen describes how the Greenlandic workforce is portrayed as being lazy by media and politicians (Sejersen, 2016). There seems to be a focus on workforce issues in public discourse, often influenced by the employers' point of view as they struggle to find employees. When investigating Greenlandic employee's job attribute preferences, the degree to which the current public discourse influences the motivation to undertake education or engage with wage-work must be considered.

Socio-cultural values and influences

The development of new socio-cultural values as local and foreign norms and values met and became intertwined (cf. section 2.1) also connects to the previously described change in employment structure in Greenland.

Work ethic, or the lack of knowledge of the Greenlandic working-age population's work ethic in particular, has been emphasised as a key factor for understanding the functioning of the labour market (Sejersen, 2016). Few scholars have treated the topic so far. Kirk (2003) investigated the case of unemployed workers in Greenland, and found that work was perceived as a personal and social matter, and that salary is not the most important issue, but instead the feeling of ownership to the work (Kirk, 2003, p. 146). In addition to ownership, scholars also highlight the importance of gaining knowledge about the workplace's processes and results, and not only to be informed but to get involved with the workplace and its development (Kirk, 2003, p. 113; Lau, 2005, p. 84). Kirk also found that some individuals change jobs once they are bored, as work is not just work, but needs to be a positive stimulation (ibid.) Similar results have been found by Winther (2005), describing employee's significant interest in involvement in workplace development, and interest in the success of the company (Winther, 2005). These might be important indicators on the Greenlandic working-age population's work ethic and employees' job attribute preferences.

In contrast to Kirk's and Winther's findings of employees being interested in both their own work and their workplace's future, other literature reports high turnover and absence at workplaces. Low attendance and a lack of skills and responsibility-taking are highlighted as main characteristics of the workforce in a study aiming to give a representative overview on the work ethic of employees in Greenland (Kalaallit Nunaanni Naatsorsueqqissaartarfik, 2004). High turnover and a specific work culture and attitude towards absence is also pointed out by other research in the field (Danielsen et al., 1998, p. 219ff.; Greenland Perspective, 2015, p. 16). Employees themselves have stated their work time as limiting and a deprivation of liberty and utter no desire in engagement in the workplace (Lau, 2005, p. 81). Conflicts at workplaces due to conflicting views on work schedules and leisure time are also treated in literature on labour markets in Alaska and the Canadian Arctic (PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2003, p. 33; Wier, 2018, p. 6f.).

Such conflicting views on work schedules and leisure time could be connected to the previously mentioned process of local norms and values meeting and intertwining with foreign norms and values – an argument also made by Lau (2005). She sees one of the biggest challenges in the need of employees to submit to 'Western' values, instead of the employers trying to match the values of the employees (Lau, 2005, p. 77f.).

Further, spontaneity as part of the lifestyle in the Arctic has been argued to contribute to an attitude to work that not necessarily matches values harboured by employers (Flora, 2019; Stevenson, 2014). From et al. (1975) argue that working time and leisure time in Greenland always have been closely connected, and consequently influence commitment to paid employment and work ethics (From et al., 1975, p. 179). Newer research finds that some members of the working-age

population are still not used to, and not willing to, work under tight schedules and
follow regular working hours which can result in the previously-mentioned absence
and turnover (Wilson, 2015, p. 66). Lau (2005) finds that in general, workers rather
accept their work environment and terms of employment as they are, instead of
questioning them (Lau, 2005, p. 82). The same study finds that conflicts are mostly
solved without a direct confrontation (ibid.), a trait that also has been reported on
other Arctic labour markets (Aylward et al., 2013, p. 173; Kirk, 2003, p. 137). This
indicates that for some employees, discontentment with a workplace, conditions at a
workplace or maybe a daily conflict, could lead to absence or change of workplace,
instead of questioning a current situation or directly solving the conflict.

The above-mentioned elements need to be seen in connection to Indigenous values,
even though existing scholarly work about the Greenlandic working-age population
rarely mentions Indigenous culture explicitly. This might be based on the
complexity of Greenlandic society today consisting of elements from both
Indigenous and non-Indigenous culture, as explored in section 2.1.

For the case of the Canadian Arctic, cultural clashes at workplaces have been
studied by amongst others Wihak (2005) who highlights the need to be aware of the
existing differences and potential mismatches between Indigenous and non-
Indigenous culture (Wihak, 2005, p. 333). Chabot (2003) refers to a behaviour that
is rooted in cultural values, which also could be valid for the labour market (Chabot,
2003, p. 30). Wier (2018) states that workplaces in the Canadian North, who employ
Indigenous workers "need to create a climate that supports the Inuit way of life, the
chosen lifestyle of the workers" (Wier, 2018, p. 6f.). A Canadian government-report
points to how self-promotion is not the "Inuit way", neither in recruitment processes
or at workplaces (PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2003, p. 33).

The case of Greenland differs from Nunavut, due to the complex co-existence and
intertwining of local and foreign norms and values in contemporary Greenlandic
society (cf. section 2.1). Cultural sensitivity is required by employers. Regardless of
whether a member of the workforce considers him-/herself Indigenous or not, the
individual's preferred lifestyle has strong influence on attitude towards paid
employment. Indigenous values get little attention in literature about the
Greenlandic workforce. It is also questionable to which degree local employers
show awareness to cultural values, that might differ from company values with a
focus on business development and economic growth.

Finally, leadership also needs to be regarded as culturally configured. Research with
a geographical focus on the Canadian North has argued that 'Western' leadership
characteristics stand in conflict with local Inuit culture (PricewaterhouseCoopers
LLP, 2003, p. 33), and that norms of appropriate adult behaviour conflict with the
expected roles of managers as they are currently configured (Stern, 2001, p. 215f.).
A newer study by Aylward et al. (2013) points at existing differences between

traditional Inuit leadership and Western styles of leadership, as it is argued that in Inuit leadership, collaborative skills are more important than individual performance, as well as having a single individual assigned as a leader being challenging to local norms and values (Aylward et al., 2013, p. 163f.). The study further finds that younger members of the workforce in Nunavut have special preferences towards their leader, such as communication skills, interpersonal competences, cultural identity, and personal growth, as well as "the importance of enabling others to learn for themselves rather than directing or commanding others" (Aylward et al., 2013, p. 172f.).

This topic has not yet been treated extensively with respect to leadership in Greenland. Kahlig (1999) finds barriers for leader recruitment in Greenland, such as lack of formal skills and a 'tradition' for recruiting from abroad, but most interesting he finds the attitude of employees towards leaders as a main barrier. According to his study, cultural characteristics of the employees stand in contrast to local demands, norms and values for being a leader (Kahlig, 1999, p. 152). According to the questioned employees, leaders should have the following skills: Being social and informal; focus on human values and behaviour; focus on collaboration and communication; approachable for employees; knowledge and understanding for local culture and values; language skills that match their area of work (Kahlig, 1999, p. 193). Other scholars' findings highlight equity and a flat hierarchy at workplaces as important for the employees' relation to their leaders (Kirk, 2003, p. 127; Lau, 2005, p. 82). Both the attitude to managers/leaders as well as managers'/leaders' own job attribute preferences are important to consider when investigating Greenlandic employee's job attribute preferences, and employee retention in particular.

Shortcomings

To fully explore the problem, a few additional themes, that scholarly literature has not focused much on, are presented in the following.

Previous studies have not explored a particular type of mobility connected to high turnover. Employers report high local turnover, as employees repeatedly switch from one employer to another; or switch between paid employment and subsistence activities, often up to several times a year. Seemingly, this mainly occurs for low skilled workers during hunting and fishing season, however not exclusively. Several sources present the issue of labour circulation (movement for jobs between geographical areas) and labour fluctuation (repeated change of jobs in the same geographical area) shortly, but choose not to explore it in depth (Boserup, 1963, pp. 34, 39; From et al., 1975, p. 167; Greenland Perspective, 2015, p. 14; Kirk, 2003, p. 113; Lau, 2005, p. 113). One employer had completed a preliminary statistical study

that pointed at significant labour turnover between local employers.[18] This means
that even though the 2010 mobility study (Rasmussen, 2010) found the majority of
the Greenlandic population to be immobile, the reported job mobility without
changing residences results in questioning how to define mobility in the context of
the Greenlandic labour market. Even if mobility between settlements and the match
between unemployed workers in one region and vacancies matching their skills in
another region is not high, the above highlights the workforce being mobile in an
additional sense. As indicated previously in this section, research has established a
connection between labour fluctuation, the influence of foreign norms and values on
employment structure, as well as today's complex mix of Indigenous and non-
Indigenous norms and values in Greenlandic society.

An important aspect of a prospective labour fluctuation and circulation is that it
leaves the local employers in a constant recruitment mode, and possibly a constant
re-employment of the same workers – a phenomenon that also is reported for other
Arctic regions, as for instance Nunavut[19].

In contrast, research from other rural areas in the North and the Arctic argue that few
local employment opportunities make it easier for employers to retain workers, as
there is not much else to do (De Hoyos & Green, 2011, p. 179). However, there can
be a difference between skilled and low skilled labour in this regard. Skilled labour
could indeed be easier to retain if these persons might be interested in avoiding
underemployment, while low skilled labour more easily and more regularly shifts
between jobs. Further, differences in retention outcomes could also connect to the
working-age population's work ethic, that possibly differs from location to location
and individual to individual, as much as the quality and effect of the employer's
retention strategies, and their awareness to socio-cultural values in particular.

Moreover, part-time work lately has been a major trend in western labour market
research and implemented as a strategy by an increasing number of employers (ILO,
2020a). In the case of Greenland, this issue recently has been brought up by a report
of the Danish Centre for Social Science Research, that recommends to consider
financial incentives for part-time employment (N. J. M. Pedersen et al., 2018, p. 10).
This is supported by Wilson (2015) who argues that some workers struggle to adjust
to regular working hours; they prefer to be able to accommodate the coexistence of
wage-work and subsistence activities in a more favourable way, and part-time
employment could be a way to accommodate these preferences (Wilson, 2015). In
the Greenlandic parliament *Inatsisartut*, it was recently suggested to introduce an
employment allowance, as for some groups, receiving social benefits is more

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[18] Internal pilot study at C3, where assumptions about local employee fluctuation were tested
in a specific town.

[19] Speech by Mrs. Madeleine Redfern, Mayor of Iqaluit, highlighting how many employers in
Nunavut experience a constant recruitment mode; October 19, 2018; Arctic Circle Assembly,
Reykjavík, Iceland.

economically beneficial than engaging in full-time wage-work (Departementet for Finanser, 2019). By introducing an employment allowance, the aim is to make being employed more economically favourable than receiving social benefits, even if employment is not full-time. With the reported high turnover and absence, potential high circulation between workplaces and economic inactivity during periods of time, there probably already are members of the workforce who unofficially work only part-time, as it fits their preferred lifestyle better than fulltime commitment to paid employment.

Opposed to the above outlined anticipated advantages of part-time employment in Greenland, research from Nunavut shows that only 2% of the workforce that works part-time, does this out of personal preference, while 71% do it as they were not able to find full-time employment (PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2003, p. 29). If part-time employment becomes more common in Greenland in the future, it would be important to monitor if part-time employment is chosen voluntarily, or if people are forced into it due to the lack of other options.

Scholarly literature has neither focused much on the role that characteristics of workplaces and work environment play for employees' job attribute preferences. Overall, there is almost no knowledge about the preferred workplace environment for the Greenlandic workforce (Sejersen, 2016). Kirk (2003) found a major group of employees stating that the physical and psychological work environment at their workplace had been so stressful they needed to resign (Kirk, 2003, p. 120). Stern (2001) highlights how wage-work results in new stresses and conflicts for workers in Nunavut, that led to a lack of engagement in wage-work (Stern, 2001, p. 214). None of the above authors explored how work conditions play a role on the workers experience with and commitment to paid employment, which is a severe shortcoming in the literature. This also connects a 'culture of silence' (i.e., not telling about one's problems) that has been argued for as a general cultural trait in Greenland in the literature (Berliner et al., 2012, p. 393). Implications for workplaces of this particular culture have not yet been investigated.

To date, it seems that research has focused more on the employers' expectations with respect to wage-work in Greenland, than on the employees' preferences. In addition to what has been presented in this section, other relevant matters would concern the employees' health and well-being and their mental health and balance, particularly if seen in context of contemporary society's complex cultural values as discussed previously. In late 2019, the pilot study for a Greenlandic labour force survey was published and an annual labour force study is planned for the future (Høgedahl & Krogh, 2019). This would contribute with valuable quantitative data about the employees' point of view, which is not yet available from other sources.

CHAPTER 5. EXPLORATIVE ANALYSIS: THE EMPLOYERS' EXPERIENCE AND APPROACH, AND A FIRST LOOK AT THE ALIGNMENT WITH EMPLOYEE PREFERENCES

This chapter presents an analysis based on empirical data from the first two data collections as well as the literature introduced in chapter three, which is also called tier three theory (cf. section 3.6.1). As elucidated in detail in the methodology chapter, the chosen hermeneutical approach requires this kind of explorative analysis of data before more specific theory is added. The main findings from this chapter will be further qualified by adding the 'theoretical lenses' in chapters seven and eight.

The first data collection focused on the employers' point of view and consisted of 23 semi-structured interviews with employers along with documents on the companies' official measures[20]. In the following, this data will be referred to as 'employer interviews' and 'employer measures', respectively. The first data collection resulted in the construction of hypotheses which were then investigated further based on the findings from the second data collection.

The second data collection was designed as an employee survey within the participating groups in the respective companies. The survey was sent out to 750-1,000 employees and had a response rate of 24%. In the following, this is referred to as the 'employee survey'. The overall structure presented in this chapter has been inspired by the result of a thematic analysis of the data. The chapter was further developed and refined during the writing process as the analysis continuously provided further insights into various themes.

For a detailed review and discussion of the data collection, selection of interviewees, response rate, etc., see section 3.5. For the definition of concepts and groups included in the study see sections 1.1. and 2.2.

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[20] 'Official measure' is defined as procedure, plan, course of action or strategy that was decided by the main management of the companies and was documented by them. Due to their confidential character, the document sources can only be discussed to a certain extent. See section 3.5.1 for elaboration.

5.1. PRELUDE: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN ATTRACTING AND RETAINING LABOUR - A SENSITIVE TOPIC?

To understand the discussion of the empirical material that follows, it is important to address some initial observations made during the first data collection concerning the employers' reaction to being asked about the topic regarding both the attraction and retention of labour and how employers experience the working-age population's motivation to commit to paid employment.

The employer interviews were usually opened by asking respondents about their general experiences with attracting and retaining labour. Employers were subsequently asked about their thoughts on the reasons for their experiences. It appeared at times that respondents had difficulties talking about the topic.

Several respondents started by answering that they do not experience any challenges. When questioned further, most acknowledged that there are some issues and slowly opened up about them.

Presumably due to the current public discourse that portrays the Greenlandic working-age population in a negative light at times, this was a sensitive topic for some respondents. The employers seemed very aware that their answers may be viewed as a reflection of the quality of their leadership or workplace atmosphere in general (I-3, I-9, I-14, I-16, I-18). For example, one respondent stated:

> "I'm glad you asked me because some do not dare to say the things I say. Because then you get pigeonholed as someone who does not like foreigners, and I am not like that." (I-16)

The expression 'not to dare to say things' shows the essence of what consequences employers could possibly meet once they open up freely about the issue. In some cases, respondents probably have described situations and challenges in a more positive light to protect their employees and themselves from 'getting pigeonholed'.

In contrast, some respondents 'dared to say things' very freely which gave the impression that even though there were challenges, they accepted the situation as it is (I-12, I-22). This can be seen in the following statement:

> "It is too easy to throw in the towel and just give up. I cannot do that. I need to look the problem in the eye. That is how it is; it will not get better tomorrow. It will hopefully get better one day, and for now we need to work with the tools that we have right now." (I-12)

Some of the interviewees insisted that they did not experience any challenges attracting and retaining employees at their workplaces or with their employees' commitment. These interviewees did not believe they had a problem with their employees' commitment. Those who stated that they did not experience challenges mentioned that it may be due to a positive work environment and good leadership at their respective workplaces (I-3, I-13, I-14, I-21).

> "Ever since [I] started, [I] made sure to talk to [my] staff, and that there is information and communication between [us]. [I have] meetings with them, [I am] honest with them, and also want them to be honest with [me]. A kind of involvement." (I-3)

Communication appears to be a key issue as some findings pointed to a lack of a tradition for talking about challenges. Specifically, a certain distance between decision makers –within the companies, their main offices and local branches – as well as (to an extent) the government and municipalities was observed. It appears that geographical and linguistic issues combined with a general lack of motivation in some branches have influenced internal communication concerning challenges. This is particularly evident with many newly implemented incentives that focus on attracting and retaining labour in local branches. Incentives concerning efficient internal communication may be instrumental in sharing the experience of local branches for consideration and potential benefit in other branches.

When asked about the contact with their respective head office or other branches, some respondents stated a communicative distance between the respective HR-departments and the local managers and employees (I-1, I-9, I-12, I-15, I-18).

> "It is important to pay attention to the leading structure in the organisation. […] Often there is no good communication between the management and their departments." (I-18)

All participating companies have branches across Greenland, and one of them has their HR department in Denmark which means geography and language contribute to the communication challenges.

Some interviewees directly expressed that they prefer not contacting other branches of their companies or the HR department as they are either used to or want to work challenges out themselves (I-6, I-14, I-22).

> "Generally, we are very independent. But if the need occurs and things that I do not really know about [come up], I of course contact HR." (I-6)

> "No, this [workplace] is my responsibility. It's me who needs to make it work." *(When asked if he is in contact with HR regarding training of the middle management)* (I-1)

For all three companies, similar struggles of managing branches across long distances were reported. While several respondents from C2 and C3 were outspoken about this, only one respondent from C1 mentioned the struggles. C1 might be better at internal communication and thus experiences fewer issues. The company respondents could have also not mentioned any problems because they are a public organisation and could be hesitant to admit challenges in internal communication.

The above suggests some of the respondents believe that having issues with attracting and retaining labour is their personal responsibility. The respondents may also have felt it was a failure if they could not solve problems.

The observations described in this section resulted in increased awareness towards the interviewees while conducting the employer interviews. All respondents were guaranteed full anonymity which enabled and encouraged them to speak freely. To reassure interviewees that they were not in a unique situation, examples of challenges that other unspecified workplaces experienced were given. Furthermore, the experiences made during the employer interviews proved useful when creating the employee survey (e.g., the phrasing and order of questions, the selection and deselection of topics asked about in the survey, etc.). See section 3.5.2 for details on the employee survey.

5.2. MEASURES CONCERNING EARNINGS AND SALARY

Salary appeared to be the go-to measure used by employers regarding the attraction and retention of labour; however, and to the surprise of most of the employers, such measures seemed to work for only specific groups of workers. The findings from the employee survey partly confirmed the employers' experience and highlighted how factors other than earnings and salary can be more important to employees.

5.2.1. EMPLOYER INTERVIEWS AND MEASURES

This section will look at the employer interviews and measures. All three companies considered salary relevant regarding skilled EMPs, and it was reported that skilled EMPs change jobs if they are not satisfied with their salary (I-4, I-7, I-8, I-14, I-23).

> "On occasion, skilled workers have applied for a position; but with respect to payment, it has not been attractive for them." (I-14)

> "There are not many that would take the job if the salary were not satisfactory." (I-9)

In addition, the employers used salary as a recruitment tool to attract skilled labour to remote locations (I-23).

For low skilled EMPs, salary was not mentioned as playing an important role. Respondents from C2 and C3 stated that they do not see salary level as a reason for low retention rates for this group (I-5, I-12, I-15).

> "Not at all because we have tried it [incentives concerning salary]. We have had different incentives […] but we could not see a difference at all." (I-12, *when asked about if salary plays a role in workers showing up every day*)

> "I think so. I cannot complain about it [salary]. I usually never … it might be because we work [either] 6 days a week every day of the week. That might be why I do not usually notice complaints about the salary. I do not think so, because if they [the employees] want to, they can earn a lot of money if they work 6 days a week." (I-4)

> "It is a bit complicated. Salary is not the solution for everything. I think we also need to look at education and all the other conditions which apply. A higher salary does not work as there is a higher salary one week, and nothing the next week." (I-11)

In the last part of the quote, the respondent refers to both hourly-paid staff and the company's experience when paying a higher hourly rate. According to the respondent, higher salary results in workers being absent for a period of time after having received the raise. Hourly-paid workers receive their payment biweekly, while those with a fixed salary receive it monthly.

In some interviews, it was assumed that there is a group of both skilled and low skilled workers who are motivated by factors other than the salary level. Both C2 and C3 reported that they tried to decrease their workers' absenteeism and turnover by offering the hourly paid EMPs a fixed salary. These incentives, however, did not give the desired results (I-11, I-12).

In contrast, respondents from C1 and C3 referred to salary as being one of the most important factors for MANs during the hiring process. These respondents also reported that dissatisfaction with the offered salary could be a reason for applicants to reject a job offer (I-9, I-17, I-18). All respondents were based in towns where job availability for managers is presumed to be high.

Two respondents further mentioned that the public sector in Greenland has a disadvantage in both the private sector and Danish labour market when remuneration levels for managerial positions are taken into consideration (I-17, I-10). Specifically, public employers are required to follow the unions' collective

agreements and do not have much leeway when it comes to remunerating their employees. One respondent mentioned that he is afraid of losing his MANs as they have now reached the top salary level, and the public sector does not allow further financial incentives. Retention would thus need to be achieved through other incentives (I-17).

Increased awareness of how salary measures do not work for all members of the workforce was observed. In an internal study, C1 investigated the actual importance of salary for their employees. The results showed that salary was not as important to employees as anticipated.

All employers utilised the options for higher salary (for instance offering hourly-paid workers a fixed monthly salary) or retention bonuses to retain workforce; even so, all employers mentioned uncertainty regarding if these incentives work. Both C1 and C3 had written measures on salary as tools while C2 had no written measures. The employer interviews accounted for the use of informal measures concerning salary in C2's different branches. These measures, however, could not be documented in writing.

The findings from the employer interviews point to uncertainty about the role of salary for different groups of workers. Scholarly literature neither is very clear about the role of salary in the context of labour markets in the Arctic. The importance of a certain salary level in order to attract and retain low skilled labour is highlighted in some sources (Huskey, 2009; Kalaallit Nunaanni Naatsorsueqqissaartarfik, 2004; Lau, 2005; Rasmussen, 2010), while others sources that factors other than salary are more important for employee attraction and retention (Berman, 2009; Chabot, 2003; Stern, 2001).

5.2.2. EMPLOYEE SURVEY

In the employee survey, respondents were asked to indicate the importance of both the salary level and the opportunity for a salary increase.[21]

Overall, the salary level and the opportunity for a salary increase were shown to have high importance for both EMPs and MANs. This importance was slightly less

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[21] When talking informally to local labour market offices about some of the results of this analysis regarding the importance of salary, it was mentioned that their experience was that many members of the workforce were not able to remember how much they earn. This suggests that salary was not important which was puzzling to the employees at the labour market offices. This is important to consider as, if true, it could have influenced the way the respondents answered the survey.

for MANs in both categories with 76% of MANs and 78% of EMPs indicating that
the salary level was 'important' or 'very important'. When asked about the
opportunity for a salary increase, 74% of MANs and 88% of EMPs indicated this
was 'important' or 'very important'.

Even though the survey results showed a slightly lower percentage for MANs than
EMPs, the important role of salary for MANs is evident as ¾ of all respondents
believed salary level and opportunity for salary increase was important. This is in
line with the employers' experiences of salary being slightly more important to
MANs. As such, a perceived sufficient salary level and the opportunity for salary
increase appear to be requirements and preconditions for most MANs.

Overall, the salary level and the opportunity for salary increase showed high
importance for both EMPs and MANs. This importance was, however, slightly less
for MANs in both categories. 76% of all MANs and 78% of EMPs indicated the
salary level 'important' or 'very important'. When asked about the opportunity for a
salary increase, 74% of MANs and 88% of EMPs indicated this as 'important' or
'very important'.

Even though the survey results described above showed a slightly lower percentage
for MANs than EMPs, the important role of salary for MANs is evident as ¾ of all
respondents perceived salary level and the opportunity for a salary increase as
important. This matches the employers' experience of salary being slightly more
important to MANs. As such it can be anticipated that sufficient salary level and
opportunity for salary increase are requirements and preconditions for most MANs
and therefore not indicated strongly in the survey. At the same time, most EMPs
viewed receiving a raise in particular as attractive and thus more important as their
salary level was generally lower than for MANs.

Salary was shown to be slightly more important for men than for women in this
survey which is in contrast to previous research which indicates that salary is more
important for women (M. K. Poppel, 2015; Quintal-Marineau, 2017). It has also
been argued that wage-work is an important factor to finance subsistence activities
(Kruse et al., 2008; PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2003) which could play a role in
men perceiving salary to be more important in this survey. As this was not
mentioned during the employer interviews and the difference shown in the survey
was small, there is no solid basis for further investigation of this argument.

The salary level seemed most important for those aged 30-49 years (average 89%),
and those aged 20-24 years (average 83%).

When connecting the results for the category of salary with the educational level of
the respondents, the data showed the following: for low skilled respondents, the
chance of a salary increase was more important than the general salary level. For

skilled respondents, both the salary level and chance of salary increase showed a similar importance.
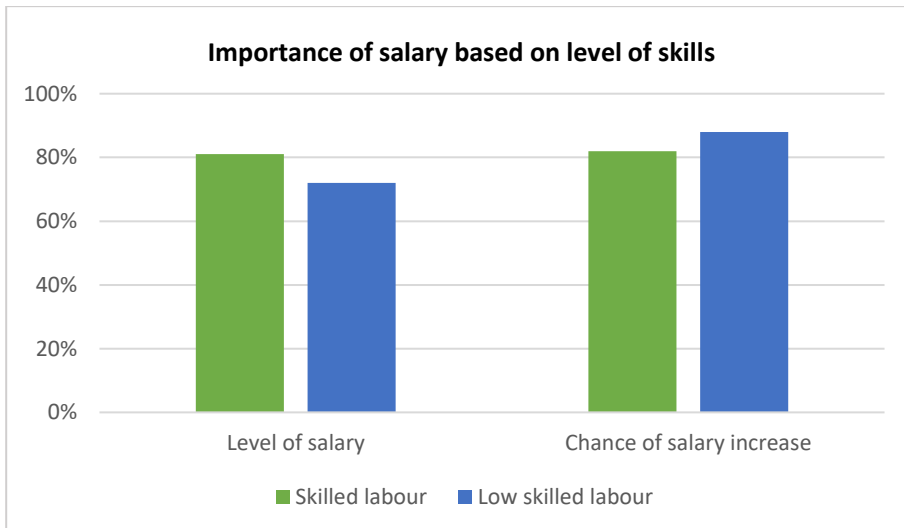
Figure 5.1 - Importance of salary based on level of skills

As shown in figure 5.1, 81% of the skilled respondents indicated salary level was 'important' or 'very important' compared to 72% of low skilled respondents. When asked about the chance of a salary increase, 82% of skilled respondents answered that it was 'important' or 'very important' to them, compared to 88% of the low skilled respondents.

Employers expressed that they experienced salary for low skilled labour playing a minor role when compared to skilled labour. This can partly be confirmed by the above as low skilled respondents seem to show lower interest in the salary level compared to skilled respondents. Although showing lower percentage than skilled respondents, almost ¾ of all low skilled respondents considered the salary level important. Scholarly literature argues that for some members of the working-age population – and those with lower skills in particular – motivation for work can be highly monetarily motivated as these workers do not believe that their work has a higher purpose (Kalaallit Nunaanni Naatsorsueqqissaartarfik, 2004; Lau, 2005). A salary increase could be more important for low skilled workers as their earnings are generally lower. This does not, however, explain the general attitude to the importance of salary level which was surprisingly low for low skilled labour when compared to other groups.

The importance of financial rewards for skilled labour is supported by literature which argues that salary is one of the main incentives for mobility and that skilled

labour expects a financial reward for their skills (Kirk, 2003, p. 119; Rasmussen, 2010, p. 14). In contrast, there is scholarly work suggesting that skilled labour focuses mostly on personal and professional development rather than financial incentives (Kalaallit Nunaanni Naatsorsueqqissaartarfik, 2004). No evidence was found supporting the concept that salary level plays a major role for MANs in Greenland; however, this seems rather logical as MANs usually have a higher workload and more responsibility that should be rewarded.

Findings for each company are presented below in figure 5.2. It was found that in C2, 60% of the MANs and 86% of the EMPs indicated that salary was 'very important'. EMPs at the private employer C2 indicated the highest emphasis of the importance of salary for both groups when compared to the EMP groups at C1 and C3. This is particularly interesting as even though an advantage for private employers was argued in the employer interviews, C2 did not seem to make use of this as a recruitment incentive. The anticipated advantage for private employers regarding salary seems partly confirmed by the data, as employees at C2 reacted strongly to the question of salary importance.
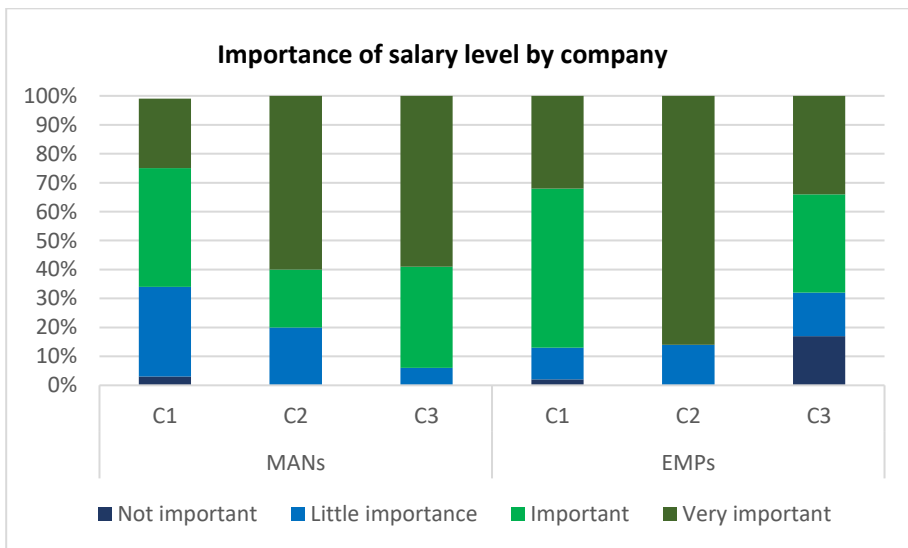
Figure 5.2 – Importance of salary level by company

With 17% of respondents suggesting that salary was 'not important', it is important to note that salary was the least important factor for the EMP C3 group when compared to C1 and C2.

As presented at the beginning of this chapter, C3 had the highest amount of low skilled labour amongst its respondents (70%), which indicates a highly interesting correlation between low skilled labour and low importance of salary. This is

supported by the fact that many low skilled employees did not seem to know how much they earned (cf. footnote 22). On the other hand, 58% of the respondents from C2 indicated that they were low skilled and none of these respondents reported that salary was not important. Only few respondents reported that salary was of little importance which is in contrast to the claim discussed above.

Regarding the topic of salary increase, the difference between the companies was minor with 85% to 90% of EMPs indicating the chance for a salary increase as 'important' or 'very important'. MANs in C2 and C3 indicated that salary increase is 'very important' (around 90%), whereas only two thirds of MANs in C1 indicated salary increase as 'important'. Notably, the MANs at C2 indicated very high importance for the opportunity to receive a salary increase which was in line with what was observed with the EMPs. It is interesting that for most respondents, the option to increase their salary was more important than their actual salary level. This could be connected to recognition and appreciation. Receiving a raise might have a high rewarding effect as it tends to be important to people how high their salary is relative to other people's salary.

Connecting the importance of the salary level with the survey question about unemployment revealed at least one remarkable finding. Namely, amongst those who responded that they had been economically inactive (i.e., being unemployed by own choice) at some point during 2018, 94% said that the salary level was 'important' or 'very important' to them. Said in another way, this group had been without work by choice (economically inactive) and the salary level was rather important for them. By comparison, only 69% of those who were 'forced' into unemployment (i.e. lost their job) indicated that their salary level was 'important' or 'very important'. This is an important finding because there is an expectation that people are economically inactive by choice and that these people do not find salary important. Is being economically inactive chosen over wage-work because salaries are too low in wage-work? Is more earned by subsistence activities than wage-work? Is the salary level of such importance for this group, as income from paid employment is financing their periods of times of being economically inactive?

A government report points to earlier studies that found:

> [...] in the traditional ideal of men in Greenland there may be a contradiction between the free, self-employed man (i.e. the hunter-gatherer) and the wage-labourer, so that monetary income will not necessarily be the decisive parameter for social status and the individual's self-understanding. (Departement for Sociale Anliggender; Familie; Ligestilling og Justitsvæsen, 2018, p. 25; author's translation)

While the above only talks about men, it seems relevant to further investigate the relation of salary and social status for both women and men.

Some reports mention that some people of working-age prefer unemployment benefits rather than wage-work as unemployment benefits give a more secure and sometimes higher income than wage-work (Arctic Cluster of Raw Materials, 2016; Økonomisk Råd, 2016b, 2017). It was not possible to map potential correlations of salary with social benefits in either the employer interviews or employee survey; nonetheless, this is a prevailing topic in scholarly literature and politics. The introduction of an employment allowance was recently discussed in the Greenlandic political arena based on several reports that have argued that the current structure of social benefits is not effective as it can lead to wage-work earnings being lower than receiving social benefits (Departement for Sociale Anliggender; Familie; Ligestilling og Justitsvæsen, 2018, pp. 33, 36; N. J. M. Pedersen et al., 2018).

The ILO argues that "Employment should be a vector to lift people out of poverty, but this is only true if job quality is sufficient, including adequate earnings, job security and safe working environments." (Gammarano, 2019). Relating this to the findings presented, two factors are important to highlight within the context of the Greenlandic labour market: 1) Adequate earnings and job security and 2) salary security[22] (which is a combination of adequate earnings and job security).

In an internal study from C3 (which has a majority of low skilled employees), salary level was rather low on the list of employee's priorities when it came to choosing a workplace. Salary security actually appeared to play a more important role than salary level.

In summary, Greenlandic employees' attitudes to salary can be described in very basic terms: it needs to pay off to have a job. The job as well as the earnings from it need to be secure and steady which could be particularly challenging for employers who depend on natural resources. The lowest income groups seeming to need to decide between the perks of being employed or receiving social benefits as income from social benefits can at times be higher than earnings from wage-work.

On the other hand, the economic rationality in Greenland could be special and contribute to different expectations of the working-age population's attachment to the labour market: "Common economic measures of poverty by Western example cannot capture the importance of subsistence economy for the individual's economy, self-understanding and social status." (Departement for Sociale Anliggender; Familie; Ligestilling og Justitsvæsen, 2018, p. 36)

Existing scholarly work claims that the economic rationality in the North may differ from a Western perspective, and thus argues that it is influenced to a high degree by

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[22] Salary security is defined as the regular availability of a certain number of working hours, and thus regular payment of salary. In some branches, this cannot be guaranteed. This is especially true for hourly-paid staff working with natural resources.

social-cultural factors and not incentives when it comes to salary (Berman, 2009; Chabot, 2003; Stern, 2001). This was discussed by Boserup in some of the earliest research on the Greenlandic labour market. Boserup argued that the Greenlandic economic mentality is very short-sighted (earn money – spend it) and based on a 'Hand-to-mouth' mentality (Boserup, 1963). More recent scholarly literature still makes this argument for some members of the working-age Greenlandic population today (Hansen & Tejsner, 2016; Wilson, 2015). It will be interesting to see what type of mentality is be reflected in the employee interviews.

Comparing employers' current incentives to attract and retain labour with evidence from the literature brought to light that factors such as social belonging, subsistence economy and public benefits are competitors to paid employment and are not commonly considered by companies. In the employer interviews, the respondents found it difficult to find explanations for their employees' behaviour in regards to salary which points to differences regarding economic rationalities and a mismatch of expectations (Lau, 2005, p. 87).

The economic rationality of the working-age population in Greenland is discussed further in the analyses in sections 7.1 and 7.3. These analyses allow us to gain more insight into whether there is a special rationality towards money/wage in the Greenlandic working-age population.

5.3. MEETING THE DEMAND FOR LABOUR

In contrast to earlier sections in this chapter, the following section exclusively discusses the employer interview findings compared to the employers' measures. It was decided to not ask about recruitment processes in the survey as participants are unlikely to have enough insight into company recruitment processes to answer questions about it in a survey. Several findings from the employer interviews are, nevertheless, relevant to discuss. Recruitment processes were explored in detail in the third data collection (cf. section 7.8).

The size of the recruitment pool appeared to be a major challenge to companies. Respondents from all three companies stated their local recruitment pool for both MANs and EMPs was small. This was particularly true for low skilled labour. The reasons (as reported by employers) were as follows: low skills level, unavailability of needed skills and instability/absenteeism of employees (I-1, I-2, I-6, I-7, I-8, I-9, I-11, I-12, I-13, I-15, I-17, I-18, I-19, I-22).

> "In some places, we do have the potential to have bigger production, but we need to keep it simple as we neither have the workers nor skilled workers." (I-11)

> "We have departments with standing vacancies that never get removed. That always are there. Because we constantly have a high turnover. Sometimes, there are more employees that are stopping than we are hiring." (I-18; *although talking about another group than the official target groups of the study*)

The situation was reported to be especially challenging concerning MANs, as "(t)here are no potential supervisors or managers around the city who are unemployed" (I-9). Potential MANs either appeared to be already employed or not located where needed.

Further, finding a MAN with all the required skills was said to be difficult (I-1, I-9, I-11, I-15, I-18). Respondents from all three companies reported that they would be ready to hire and employ someone for a management position even if that person only had some of the required skills. The employers would then provide training (I-9, I-15, I-16, I-17, I-18):

> "Their papers [evidence of formal training] are probably the last thing I would look at." (I-9)

> "[The manager] has good manager skills but lacks some professional skills from our field. Yet that is something we will train him in." (I-15)

> "The managers I have now employed are professionals in their field, and I need to teach them the rest [social skills; management skills]." (I-17)

The candidates' experience in the field of work was repeatedly named as the most important criteria for hiring a new MAN (I-1, I-6, I-9, I-15, I-16). Along these lines, the employers reported that their new MANs were shocked about the number of tasks, high responsibility given and other requirements that they were met with. This was particularly mentioned regarding MANs who were recruited having only few of the skills required for the job (see also section 5.4 on turnover and section 5.5 on skills).

Two respondents from C1 talked about how they experienced employees being given managerial responsibilities based solely on their professional skills and not on their desire or ability to be a good leader (I-19, I-23). Both C1 and C3 offered courses or training as recruitment incentives for MANs. This has proven challenging as MANs would sometimes leave the company shortly after they had received training (I-1, I-16, I-17).

When it came to EMPs, it appeared that the recruitment of skilled EMPs was more difficult than recruitment for low skilled EMPs. This could be connected to the educational level of the Greenlandic working-age population and the unavailability of the right skills in the right place at the right time. While more informal methods

were used recruit low skilled EMPs, more formal methods were applied to recruit skilled EMPs.

Respondents from C2 and C3 explained that to recruit low skilled labour, potential workers could show interest via sign-up sheets provided by the companies. The lists are then used as a recruitment tool to call potential workers when work is available (I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4, I-5, I-6, I-8, I-14, I-15).

> "People come to the office, fill in an application list and mark which department and time of the day they wish to work and then we take it from there." (I-8)

> "We put up announcements or have a list where one can sign up." (I-14)

> "It is rare for us to actually advertise positions." (I-6)

When recruiting skilled labour, all three companies posted job advertisements in newspapers and on webpages (I-4, I-9, I-15, I-18, I-20). Respondents from C1 mentioned that they had recently started to try to make their job announcements more attractive. They realized that job applicants choose the workplace that sells the job best (I-18, I-19). C2 and C3 had also considered similar measures.

> "We would like to be more visual, social media friendly. Something that is sharable. […] For instance, we are not recruiting via Facebook yet." (I-11)

> "Our employees have chosen one person to advertise the workplace. The person writes features […] and sends them to media, so our workplace is in the media several times a year. […] This has led to more people showing an interest in this place and applying for jobs here." (I-20)

The experience of a small recruitment pool and a quantitative lack of labour was mirrored in the companies' official measures as these mainly concerned structural issues for both EMPs and MANs (e.g., incentives promoting mobility, enabling workers to move for job).

C1 had measures that would give recruitment benefits (coverage of moving costs and housing subsidies) as well as financial incentives for candidates who would take a job in remote settlements.

No formal recruitment measures could be found at C2. In the interviews, however, it was mentioned that the company (depending on the position and applied - mainly to MANs) was willing to support the individual candidate if necessary.

C3's formal measures regarding recruitment mainly concerned the recruitment of labour from other places in Greenland or abroad. In these cases, the hired labour

often received support for moving and housing costs, and/or a higher salary during their stay.

Comparing the employers' measures with existing empirical data and literature, the effect of the above outlined measures needs to be questioned. Social attachment to places of residence and thus high social costs of moving or financial unattractiveness of a position has been argued to keep the working-age population from leaving their settlements or towns (Berliner et al., 2012; Heleniak, 2009; J. N. Larsen & Huskey, 2015). Several studies about internal mobility in Greenland have argued that the Greenlandic working-age population is rather immobile (Rasmussen et al., 2010, p. 14; Rasmussen, Roto, et al., 2014, p. 181; see also section 4.3). This immobility can be a result of recruitment benefits such as housing provided by the employer as a person who lives in housing provided by the current employer is only able to change jobs if alternative housing is available and affordable. This could lead to a dependency relation of employees to the employer-provided housing, particularly as there housing shortages prevail in many places in Greenland (Departement for Finanser og Skatter, 2017).

Employer interviews also revealed other major issues regarding recruitment techniques. As employers depend on the availability of labour to a high degree, they need to constantly balance the need for professional, cultural and linguistic skills with the availability of labour when hiring new employees. The employers appeared to be unsure or unaware of the consequences of recruitment not based on skills but availability, whether the person is a personal acquaintance etc.

Respondents from C3 expressed how they often ended up hiring the best applicant which was not always the same as the right candidate with the right skills. These respondents also reported that they would hire someone who was not a fit for the job if they could not get anybody else (I-16, I-18).

> "In this situation [we need to ask ourselves] do we hire them because we do not have any other applicants?" (I-16)

> "If we want to hire right, it sometimes is also about hiring the best applicant." (I-18)

The companies planned to deal with these recruitment compromises once a candidate had been employed. However, in practice, this appeared to be difficult and none of the companies had official measures on the issue of compromising during recruitment processes and upskilling the candidate after employment.

It can be difficult to have generic measures on recruitment as each recruitment situation depends on the individual candidate. The skills needed for a particular position could, moreover, change over time. The employers' uncertainty or lack of awareness concerning the consequences of their choices is a critical aspect that must

be considered. If the candidate is promised training or something similar during the recruitment process which is not carried out in practice, it can affect employee retention, company productivity and the employers' image in general. Employers appear to have a need to be more outspoken about their requirements and priorities when hiring labour force. Awareness of how to provide training for missing skills once a candidate has been employed is also needed.

Factors that are difficult to follow-up on after employment are personality and personal acquaintance with candidates. In several interviews, and for the case of both EMPs and MANs, respondents stated that personal acquaintance with the candidate is a part of the companies' hiring culture (I-6, I-9, I-13, I-16).

> "You cannot just employ somebody you do not know; you need to know their background." (I-6)

> "Experience, personal background, how you are as a person, responsibility, etc., personal background regarding if you are loyal and stable, and willingness to work overtime. We value it a lot in the recruitment process." (I-9)

At the same time, concerns about personal acquaintance with candidates were shared:

> "For example, they hire somebody they know from a previous workplace. And that is something dangerous that we need to be more aware of. I am very careful to behave professionally concerning hiring." (I-16)

All three companies based their hiring process for MANs on internal recruitment, and thus personal acquaintance, at times. This was done even though it was not in accordance with the companies' official recruitment rules (i.e., the requirement to publicly announce job openings for public employers) (I-7, I-9, I-17, I-18, I-23).

Internal recruitment could either concern a candidate with the right qualifications or a candidate recruited based on his/her potential for 'upgrading'. One interviewee advocated this technique by explaining how the method serves as a retention tool for existing employees. This respondent believed that doing this was faster than hiring somebody from outside the company. The same respondent argued the benefit of this technique being that the company knows the candidate already and thereby reduces the risk of a bad hire (I-17).

The tradition for recruitment of personal acquaintance rather than a person's skills level, as confirmed in the interviews, can be connected to several other factors. Firstly, it may present a coping mechanism to deal with general skills shortages and shallow recruitment pool of skilled labour. Secondly, recruitment based on personal

knowledge about the candidate could require a more critical eye when evaluating the candidate's skill set for the job.

Recruitment of personal acquaintances should be connected to socio-cultural values and traditions which have also been shown to be prevalent in other places in the Arctic. Hiring based on personal acquaintance is often a common practice in smaller societies as it is traditional to look out for family and friends. Not hiring acquaintances could lead to social problems in societies where this practice is common (Kragh, 2012).

The empirical data showed that at times a candidate's experience was considered equal to a candidate's formal skills during the recruitment processes. This confirms Rasmussen's (2011) argument that in the Arctic a lack of formal education does not mean a lack of skills (Rasmussen, 2011, p. 108). The data seems to suggest that employers have adjusted their expectations towards new EMPs and MANs to match the reality of the recruitment processes.

Recruitment that is not based on needed skills but rather on personality, availability or experience could possibly result in work conditions that lead to absenteeism or turnover. A higher awareness is needed regarding how employees cope with their daily work tasks without having the right skills for the jobs they were hired for. Moreover, some recruitment techniques can be beneficial for the individual employer but not for the community. For instance, headhunting MANs from other companies is a common practice. This can result in the need for employers to start a recruitment process as they lose employees. This is not unique to the Greenlandic labour market and may contribute to a vicious cycle where employers must replace labour that has been headhunted.

Both active and informal hiring methods (i.e., internal recruitment and headhunting, social media and signage in the local neighbourhoods) were repeatedly referred to as beneficial by the employers interviewed. This is in line with the literature which suggests a need for employers to become more outspoken about job opportunities. A Canadian study argues that "[…] self-promotion is not the 'Inuit way'. Inuit are typically not comfortable with preparing résumés and answering questions in a way that promotes themselves" (PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2003, p. 33). This cultural norm points to the need for employers to increase their outreach and use more active methods of recruitment in the (Canadian) North. In other places in the Arctic, scholars have observed how locals are not able to find jobs even though there are jobs available (Berman, 2009; PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2003; Stern, 2001). This points to insufficient communication about job availability, which could be a result of employers' lack of outreach during recruitment. If the above-described culture of not being comfortable with promoting oneself still applies for some members of the working-age population in Greenland, this might be something employers should investigate.

Having candidates reaching out to workplaces to get a job is normal in most labour markets worldwide. In the findings presented above, the recruitment process for EMPs was based to a high degree on the candidates contacting the companies and not the companies reaching out to potential candidates. It is worth noting that most employers reported experiencing high turnover and circulation amongst their staff. This leads to the question of if employers in Greenland could play a more active role in reaching out to the working-age population. This is particularly relevant for positions with small recruitment pools. Informing the working-age population about existing job opportunities and motivating them to apply could be an approach that should be utilized in the future. Having established contact with the candidate beforehand could also contribute the reduction of the risk of making a bad hire. It may also serve as a retention tool.

A more active outreach from the employers' side could positively influence the working-age population's attitude to wage-work. The literature argues that wage-work is regarded as a secondary activity by some members of the working-age population in Greenland. Moreover, wage-work has been argued to compete with both subsistence activities and social benefits (Boserup, 1963; C. V. L. Larsen, 2014; Lau, 2005; N. J. M. Pedersen et al., 2018). The use of more active recruitment measures and a stronger effort to reach out to members of the working-age population who are not interested in wage-work may be needed by employers.

Yet, the active outreach by employers appeared at times to coincide with the usage of informal recruitment measures that may clash with company policies. It appeared as if formal hiring that complies with the employers' respective recruitment regulations only shows effect for a minority of employee groups. This was the case for both the recruitment of EMPs and MANs. As public and public-private employers have little to no leeway to bypass recruitment policies, this could be a particular challenge for C1 and C3.

Recruitment policies appear to need to be adjusted to the challenges experienced by companies when hiring and attracting members of the working-age population that are not interested in wage-work. Recruitment processes that were not based on skills as the first priority appeared to be complex. The need to obey recruitment policies that did not match the needs of employers did complicate recruitment processes even more.

One employer expressed, "[w]e lack an alignment of expectations that in particular is important when one is hiring" (I-16). The employees' opinion on the employers' recruitment processes and their own preferences when being hired is relevant for further investigation in the third data collection and is analysed in section 7.8 to shed light on how to improve the alignment of expectations between employers and candidates.

5.4. THE EXPERIENCE OF LABOUR FLUCTUATION, TURNOVER AND ABSENTEEISM

As shown in chapter four, there appears to be a knowledge gap on labour fluctuation in Greenland. For the purpose of this dissertation, labour fluctuation was defined as the repeated shift between jobs in the same geographical area, i.e., shifting between workplaces in a town or a settlement.

In the employer interviews used in this dissertation, the topic of labour fluctuation was raised repeatedly in relation to high turnover and absenteeism by some employees. Even so, only few employer measures concerning the matter could be found. The employee survey results emphasised the importance of discussing the topic as it both confirms and contradicts the employers' claims regarding labour fluctuation between workplaces.

5.4.1. EMPLOYER INTERVIEWS AND MEASURES

To begin with, let's focus on the employers' experiences. Whilst some employers reported experiencing instability, absenteeism and fluctuation of workers, the main share of respondents experienced the majority of EMPs and the vast majority of MANs as being stable workers (I-2, I-3, I-4, I-6, I-13, I-15, I-16, I-17, I-18, I-20, I-21):

> "I think that the adult workers are rather stable." (I-13)

> "Generally, they are very stable […] But of course there is absence if you are sick, or your child, or lack of childcare." (I-3)

> "80-85% of our workers are stable." (I-2)

> "Compared to my previous workplaces, some of which were in Denmark, I do not experience turnover as being high here." (I-21)

> "People in management positions do not move around much." (I-15)

Both C2 and C3 mentioned that particularly MANs who are in middle management showed a high retention rate (I-6, I-8, I-15). MANs were referred to as being stable and outspoken about what their preferences were for taking or staying in a position.

Factors such as a common culture regarding low absence (I-20), a positive work environment, effective internal communication and positive relations at the workplace (I-4, I-6, I-15) as well as strong leaders (I-15, I-19) were mentioned as reasons for stable employees and low turnover:

> "New employees figure out quickly that we put an emphasis on not
> having too much absence at this workplace." (I-20)

> "It is also a question of influencing their attitude and cultural
> understanding." (I-18)

Several employers considered instability and absenteeism of employees a central
problem with two major consequences: 1) A constant recruitment mode due to high
turnover[23] and 2) a "swing door effect" (I-2), as the same employees stop working,
and show up again after some time (I-2, I-7, I-9, I-8, I-12, I-19, I-23).

> "We have a lot of stable employees, but we are having difficulties
> finding replacements for unstable workers." (I-8)

> "We work in shifts of 9 workers but sometimes only 7 workers show up.
> Sometimes, we have additional shifts of 20-21 workers where only 12-13
> workers show up. That is a big problem." (I-2)

> "After the monthly payday we can be short of up to 30-40% of staff." (I-
> 7)

No explicit difference was mentioned regarding workers with a fixed monthly salary
or hourly-paid workers. A C1 respondent explained how some of their departments
have standing job announcements as the turnover for certain positions is that high (I-
18). Respondents from all three companies reported similar experiences (I-2, I-14, I-
19, I-23).

As reasons for the experienced turnover and absenteeism the following aspects were
mentioned (in no specific order): wages (i.e. looking for the best paid job or
absenteeism as soon as salary was received) (I-2, I-5, I-7, I-8, I-14, I-17), high
workload (I-2, I-5, I-7, I-8, I-9, I-21, I-23), lack of strong leaders (I-15, I-19),
competition with other employers (I-2, I-5, I-8, I-18), infrastructure and social issues
(I-2, I-12, I-15), starting an education (I-14), traditions, subsistence activities (I-9)
and difficulties to meet employer expectations (I-12, I-15).

> "They are looking for the job that pays best. That has the best salary
> level." (I-14)

> "My view about the reason for the high turnover is that there have been
> calm months without a lot of work and now people need to learn to take
> responsibility again." (I-7)

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[23] One of the employers' headcounts illustrates this: For 65 full-time positions, they counted
450 employees in one year.

> "Because there are some that you just cannot retain, either because they think it is too difficult, or their tasks are too demanding." (I-21)

Leadership was repeatedly related to turnover.

> "The relationship between the workers and managers can be problematic and lead to absence." (I-2)

> "One issue is, for instance, middle management. When they are busy, they do not have time for the workers. I started to hold meetings about this. How can we structure this to have more time for our workers during the day's work?" (I-1)

One interviewee pointed to a generational difference. According to the respondent, turnover caused by younger workers is related to them being aware of the work environment. Young workers switch jobs as soon as they are not satisfied anymore (I-23).

Employers further highlighted the difficulty to discipline no-shows and absenteeism (I-2, I-11, I-12, I-19, I-23):

> "I cannot fire them and hire them again because the problem will stay the same." (I-12)

> "[…] those that work from hand to mouth. They take work when they feel like it. There are a lot of them." (I-11)

Existing measures by the employers partly match the above accounts. The measures mainly concerned salary such as retention bonuses after 10 months (C1), increasing the hourly wages for hourly paid workers or offering a fixed monthly paycheck instead (C2, C3). Interestingly, the employers showed high awareness about financial incentives not always having the desired effect. Nonetheless, financial incentives seemed to be a preferred choice of measures.

Other employer measures focussed on communication. One practice used by both C2 and C3 was calling absent workers and convincing them to show up. This was done with mixed success (I-8, I-12). One respondent started to contact absent employees one by one, in order to understand the employees' reasons for absenteeism and attract them back to work (I-1).

If turnover is caused by a high workload and/or a low skills level for some employees (see also section 5.6) specific measures designed to tackle the issue seem lacking within the employers' measures. Both C2 and C3 offered education and courses that also covered personal and social skills (I-9, I-14). Some branches offered courses in order to retain labour (for example in low season) (C2, C3). The effect of such retention measures was not clear from the interviews. From the

employers' accounts, it appeared that not all members of the workforce were interested in skills development as a retention measure.

As will be shown in section 5.5, all three companies were focussing on leadership development. The question is if the goal of this measures was decreasing turnover amongst employees (as their managers leadership improves) or if courses focused on upskilling leaders.

The "importance of retaining employees. Not at any price but where you want to compromise on some things. Because [high turnover] is destructive for an organisation" (I-17) summarizes the employers' experience of turnover and labour fluctuation. Comparing the findings from the employer interviews with the employers' measures, a partial match between addressed challenges and existing measures was found. Interestingly, the named reasons for low and high turnover were similar.

Amongst employers, there seemed to be a common understanding of challenges with labour fluctuation, turnover and absenteeism. Companies also had established a range of measures designed to get to the bottom of the problem. Yet, as some employer measures did not seem to show the desired results, it appeared that the employers lack more specific knowledge about the reasons for labour fluctuation, turnover and absenteeism. Some factors seemed to be out of the employers' control such as the so-called swing-door effect and leadership challenges. The latter was due to a general shortage of leaders with the necessary skills in people management. Finally, the repeated accounts of labour fluctuation, turnover and absenteeism in the employer interviews connect to prominent public discourse concerning an unstable working-age population in Greenland (Kalaallit Nunaata Radioa, 2016b; Sermitsiaq AG, 2017, 2018b).

5.4.2. EMPLOYEE SURVEY

To learn more about the employees' fluctuation, turnover and absenteeism, the employee survey asked about seniority at the workplace, number of employers in the last year, self-employment and unemployment.

Important to mention is that turnover and seniority can be interpreted and perceived in different ways by employers and employees. If an employee has high absenteeism from the workplace, he or she might still be employed from his or her point of view while the employer could believe that the employee no longer has interest in employment. An employee could also change between two workplaces regularly and feel an affiliation to both places while the workplace experiences the loss of an employee.

Seniority

The employee survey asked about employees' seniority with their current employer. As the participation in the survey was voluntary, the result must be interpreted with caution as there is a risk that predominantly employees with high seniority participated.

MANs were repeatedly described as being rather stable by employers. This can be partly confirmed for C1 and C3, as 59% and 52%, respectively, of all MANs have been in their position for over two years. C2 showed different results with only 20% of MANs indicating that they had been in their position for more than two years. An explanation for this could found when talking to the main management at C2 as they recently had hired new MANs for most of their branches. The company management explained that most of the former MANs had been in their positions for at least 1 to 2 years with some having been in their positions for a longer period of time. This gives the impression that MANs tended to stay in their positions for all three companies.

50% of EMPs indicated that they had been with their employer for more than two years. 14% said they had been employed for 1 to 2 years and 36% had been employed less than a year (12% for 0-3 months, 3-6 months and 6-12 months, respectively). These numbers point to turnover being lower than anticipated by employers.

Younger members of the workforce moving around more and having higher turnover was mentioned briefly in the employer interviews. Looking at the survey data, seniority appeared to increase with age and younger respondents appeared to circulate between jobs to a higher degree. Only 12% of EMPs who had been with a workplace for more than two years were younger than 35 years. This could be connected to education and training and could also be related to the youth moving around a lot.

An expected outcome was that the difference in turnover between skilled and low skilled labour would be evident. Employers assumed low skilled labour had higher turnover. The survey results for low skilled respondents who had been with the company 0-3 months were significant. 19% of low skilled respondents indicated that they had been at the workplace for 0-3 months, compared to 5% of the skilled respondents. This difference could be explained by low skilled seasonal workers who were at the workplace for a shorter amount of time.

Seniority	Low skilled labour	Skilled labour
0-3 months	19%	5%
3-6 months	10%	15%
7-12 months	8%	16%
1-2 years	16%	12%
More than 2 years	46%	53%

Table 5.1 – Seniority based on skills level

No major differences were observed between the two groups for the other categories of seniority in the survey. The percentage for skilled respondents who responded was greater, but the difference was minor. The data thus indicates that the assumed turnover of low skilled labour is lower than anticipated by the employers.

The survey also showed that 43% of male respondents were employed between 0-12 months compared to 27% of the female respondents. While gender difference was not mentioned explicitly by the employers, this finding matches scholarly literature which discusses a gender difference in employment and the need for increased focus on the importance of wage-work for women (M. K. Poppel, 2015; Quintal-Marineau, 2017). If men move around more and shift jobs more often then more women working would provide households with a more stable income which could also play into women's perception of the importance of their salary level (ibid.). As previously found in section 5.2, female respondents perceived salary to be less important than men. Based on the above, it would not be the level of the salary that plays the most important role for women but salary security i.e., stable income over time.

Number of employers throughout the last year

In question 2A, the employee survey asked about the number of employers the respondent had during the last year. This included self-employment (if applicable). Only two thirds of all respondents chose to answer this question[24]. When typing the manually collected survey responses, it was observed that several respondents chose to simply write 'I don't know' or put a question mark. The results should therefore be seen in the light of a low response rate compared to the total number of responses and an anticipation of some participants having difficulties understanding the question. Kirk (2003) found that respondents had difficulty remembering how many employers they have had in the months before that particular study (Kirk, 2003, p.

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[24] 111 valid responses; including 41 by MANs (n=51), and 70 by EMPs (n=117).

109). In retrospect, it would have been better to pose this question personally instead of in the survey used in this dissertation.

The data showed that MANs had fewer employers than EMPs which echoes the employers' anticipated belief of higher stability for MANs. The data for EMPs is more difficult to interpret, as the response rate was much lower and possibly disrupted by seasonal workers who generally have a higher number of employers throughout the year. No major difference was observed when looking at different age groups.[25]

It is interesting to observe that according to the data low skilled respondents had a lower average number of employers than skilled respondents. This adds to the finding that low skilled labour did not have notable lower seniority compared to skilled labour which did not match with the employers' expectations.

Average							C1			C2			C3		
1.6	1.4	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.3	1.7	1.7	1.4	1.9	1.6	1.6	1.6
Total	MANs	EMPs	Skilled	Low skilled	Women	Men	⊘	MANs	EMPs	⊘	MANs	EMPs	⊘	MANs	EMPs

Table 5.2 – Average number of employers in 2018 (incl. self-employment), by company

In contrast to expectations and previous findings on seniority, the data suggests that men appeared to have fewer employers than women on average. This is also true when extracting data for EMPs only. As described in the beginning of this section, there could be a bias in the data if respondents remember the number of their employers incorrectly. Even so, this is an interesting finding. Combining male workers lower seniority at their respective workplace with their lower number of employers could point to labour fluctuation between the same employers or between the same employer and self-employment. While the survey asked the respondents to include self-employment in their employers count, it was not possible to extract these numbers separately.

If the above figures are considered valid, the figures for EMPs seem to be surprisingly low compared to some of the interview data. The turnover and supposed instability of workers has been a prominent topic in public discourse in Greenland and could have possibly been reinforced over time. Based on the low number of responses to the question about the number of employers the respondent had during

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[25] Over the age of 35 – 1.59; under the age of 35 – 1.63

the last year, the numbers might be higher for some workers. There is some uncertainty about whether some respondents remembered their job history correctly. In this sense, it would also be interesting to discuss why they would remember incorrectly, and what having different employers means to the members of the workforce.

Being self-employed

The survey asked if the respondent had been self-employed at any point during the previous year. For both EMPs and MANs, approximately 8% indicated having been self-employed in 2018. C1 showed the lowest average percentage (6%) which was not particularly surprising as C1 offers employment all year round and does not depend on seasonal work. C2 EMPs showed the highest number of self-employments with 29% answering 'yes' to the question, which is interesting connected with their previously observed strong attitude regarding importance of salary and considering that their jobs depend on seasons only to a small degree. When talking to the HR department at C2 about this result, they were not surprised. The HR department explained that many employees have additional work as cabdrivers or in the fishing and hunting industry. Conversely, these workers' employment at C2 could be a side employment at times used to supplement their household income. In the case of C2, the company seemed to accept the workers having several places of employment at the same time. Interestingly, this was not mentioned in the employer interviews. It would be interesting to hear the employees view on this observation and hear if the above (i.e., having several places of employment and sources of income at the same time) is the employees' preferred form of employment.

For low skilled workers, the numbers for self-employment were shown to be slightly higher than for skilled workers. Moreover, an age difference was observed, as respondents over the age of 35 years showed a higher percentage of self-employment than those younger than 35 years (over the age of 35 - 9%; under the age of 35 - 4%).

As all respondents of the study engage in wage-work already, a logical explanation for the higher numbers of self-employment for lower skilled workers could be that the salary level does not increase as much for low skilled labour as they age. This would explain why low skilled labour has a higher tendency to take additional jobs that could be considered self-employment, to supplement their income.

The above findings raise the question of what it means for the working-age population in Greenland to be self-employed. Why is this option attractive for them? Is it about increased freedom? A higher income? A preferred lifestyle compared to fixed wage-work? Is it a combination of these factors? Recently collected statistical data showed that there has been a growth in self-employment amongst the working-age population in Greenland over the last years. This is especially true amongst

women (Høgedahl & Krogh, 2019). This will be further investigated by discussing the motivation to combine wage-work and self-employment and implications for employees' job attribute preferences in chapter seven.

Unemployment

To learn more about the workforce's preferences, the survey asked if the respondents had been without work during the last year. If they had been, the survey asked the respondents to specify if unemployment was unwanted (e.g., loss of job) or their own choice (which would then need to be categorized as 'economic inactivity').

At approximately 9%, the findings for unemployment matched the official labour market information of Greenland. The following focusses on the findings concerning economic inactivity as this was assessed to be the most important aspect concerning the challenge of attracting and retaining employees.

15% of all male respondents indicated that they had been economically inactive during the last year compared to 7% of female respondents. More younger respondents indicated having been economically inactive (22% of the age group 18-34 years, compared to a total of 7% older than 35 years). 22% of low skilled labour specified having been voluntarily without work compared to 6% of skilled labour. It appears that males, low skilled labour, and those under 35 years of age, chose to not be economically active for periods of time at higher numbers.
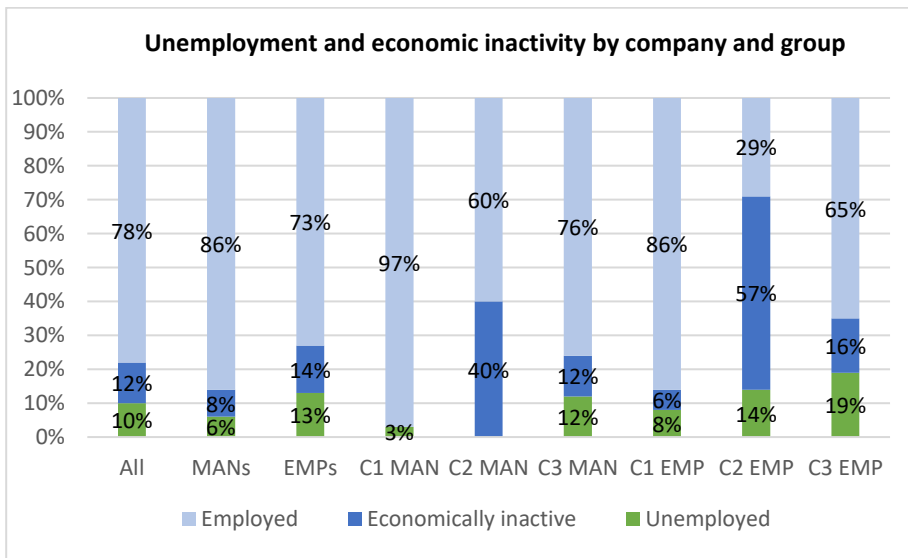

Figure 5.3 – Unemployment and economic inactivity in 2018, by company and group

Fewer MANs (8%) than EMPs (14%) indicated that they chose economic inactivity in 2018 which reflects the employers' perception of almost all MANs being employed because of the high demand for them. Looking more closely at the results for each company (as displayed in figure 5.3), C2 particularly stands out as all MANs who indicated having been without work during the last year were economically inactive (i.e., unemployed by own choice). The majority of C2 EMPs indicated having chosen to be economically inactive during the last year. As touched upon earlier, wage-work is considered by some as to be side employment that is taken only when necessary. C3 showed the highest amount of unemployment for EMPs (19%), which could be connected to seasonal work and dependency on natural resources at the workplace.

It is interesting to further investigate how the working-age population understands the term 'unemployment'. The term usually has a negative connotation whilst employment is positive and 'the goal'. Is the perception of unemployment different in the Greenlandic labour market? Is this perhaps based on a strong social security net and relatively good chances to create household incomes by other means than paid employment? Could the choice of being economically inactive also be defined as a type of 'voluntary unemployment'?

The motivation for choosing employment or unemployment remains unclear from the above results, and it is also unclear how employers could potentially influence these choices. More knowledge about the workforce's job seeking patterns is needed to shed light on the motivation for being employed.

Freedom to choose the number of working hours

The choice of being economically inactive or self-employed can be connected to another category: The importance of the freedom to choose the number of working hours by oneself. This category is the last that will be discussed in this section. Both the literature and findings from the first data collection anticipated a mismatch between employers' expectations and employees' preferences of working hours (Kalaallit Nunaanni Naatsorsueqqissaartarfik, 2004; Lau, 2005; Wilson, 2015). The concept of time and the working-age population's relation to it is analysed in section 5.9.

The results showed broad agreement on the importance of a person having the freedom to choose the number of working hours by him-/herself. No major deviations were visible between age groups, gender and educational level: all showed between 65% and 72% importance. On average, a slightly higher importance of this freedom was indicated by MANs (72%) compared to EMPs (68%).

Taking a closer look at each company, C3 EMPs indicated that this freedom was of least importance (59%), while C2 MANs indicated that this freedom was of highest importance (100%). Observing the highest importance of this aspect for managers does not come as a surprise as being employed in a leading position often is connected to a certain flexibility in working hours. This could also be connected to MANs' preference for being involved in decision-making processes (see also section 5.9 on work ethic).

The employers' assumption that freedom of working hours is important to EMPs (based on their absenteeism and fluctuation between workplaces) was partly confirmed by the survey results. An average of 68% of EMPs agreed on the importance of being able to freely choose working hours. Noticeably, however, when compared to the other factors in question 1, "freedom to choose the number of working hours" was the least important to all groups. This points to flexibility of working hours being important if it was seen as a single factor. If seen relative to the other factors in the survey, it was shown to not be a decisive factor for employees. This points to the understanding of time and individual preferences concerning work time and leisure time possibly influencing a person's approach to paid employment.

This section discussed the topics of labour fluctuation, turnover and absenteeism. To shed further light on what might be important factors regarding these topics and how absence, turnover and fluctuation between jobs could be connected, the employee survey asked a variety of questions aimed at better understanding these factors.

The main findings suggest that the perception of employment, absenteeism and turnover are different for employer and employee. They raise questions about whether the experience of turnover is reinforced by public discourse. The topics of self-employment, unemployment and economic inactivity as well as the motivation to combine wage-work and self-employment show relevance and will be discussed further based when examining the third data collection which is analysed in chapter seven (amongst others in sections 7.3 and 7.4.).

5.5. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AT THE WORKPLACE

With more than 60% of the workforce having primary education as their highest level of education, skills development is an important topic in both Greenlandic society and politics. All three companies in this dissertation showed a considerable number of formal measures aimed at developing skills. Even so, the results from the employer interviews and employee survey showed disparities about the efficiency of the company measures in practice.

5.5.1. EMPLOYER INTERVIEWS AND MEASURES

All three companies focused on skills development in their official measures.

C1 had several leadership development programs[26]. One program was mandatory for all MANs, another focussed on talent development and a third focussed on skills development. The two latter programs mainly focused on EMPs. In addition, C1 offered employee exchange within their company or other main collaboration partners as a skills development measure. Course content was mainly based on internal evaluations concerning what topics were relevant for the employees and on the company's core areas of work. Some of the courses were also offered in collaboration with other public employers in Greenland.

C2 had a measure to upgrade their MANs, but no official measures for developing the competencies of their EMPs. The leadership program for MANs was developed internally and was based on the need for a leadership that matched local values. This company tried to enhance dialogue between managers and employees on a regular basis. The company provided documents as a guideline for these dialogues. The document mainly covered topics on mutual expectations for daily tasks, collaboration, motivation, well-being and behaviour at the workplace. More specific competence development measures, such as courses, were occasionally agreed upon during these talks.

C3 had a management development program, a measure for talent development aiming at educating new leaders and a general competency upgrade program for their EMPs. C3 mainly used external providers for training. Their programs aimed at equipping their workers with new relevant skills and providing opportunities for further development to employees. Specific courses were offered to employees depending on their position and needs. The courses were focussed on the personal needs of the individual employee.

While these written measures seemed extensive and far-reaching, the employer interviews accounted for a different reality. In practice, the courses were often too expensive and time-consuming as they often could not be offered locally which resulted in them not being offered. Employers also reported that many courses were not entirely relevant as the course content could not be based on the actual needs of the employees. Due to the general lack of skills, the employees' needs proved to be very individual at each workplace (I-11, I-13, I-14, I-15, I-19, I-22, I-23).

> "It is a little difficult because we need to apply for a course and then there are no more applicants. That means, if there only are two or three

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[26] In 2018, one of the leadership programs was cancelled due to low participation and has been in the process of revision. It was not clear why there was low interest in the program.

applicants, the course cannot be established. […] If there are not enough that apply for a course, […] we need to wait until next year." (I-22)

"Our problem is that the course allowance that we get from the municipality is not big enough. […] In the past, it was rather unlimited as people could take courses, undertaking training. […] But it is limited now. The economic situation is currently very tight." (I-19)

The companies discussed for how they were unable send their MANs away to take courses as they were needed onsite and sending them away for several weeks a year was not financially viable. This was particularly true for smaller companies. C1 and C3 stated that they generally have sufficient funds and time for skills development of their MANs; however, they often could not offer courses internally and the actual completion of courses depended on other variables such as the requirement for a minimum number of participants for external courses (I-11, I-23).

There seemed to be general focus on MAN courses as opposed to courses for EMPs. Companies might have appeared to be more willing to invest in their MANs as such an investment is expected to have a higher impact on the workplace. It is also likely that the fact that there are fewer MANs than EMPs when it comes to the logistics and costs of attending a course played a role. The interviews showed that course participants most often needed to travel to attend courses whereas a better solution would be for course facilitators to visit the branches and offer the courses locally.

Some of the answers concerning EMPs mentioned how branches organized courses locally. This was at times done in cooperation with their head offices and at times done without the knowledge of the head office. Respondents from all three companies explained how they saved extra money from their budget to be able to offer courses (I-6, I-9, I-12, I-15, I-16).

Some of the answers concerning EMPs mentioned how branches organized courses locally. This was done at times in cooperation with their head offices and at times without the knowledge of the head office. Respondents from all three companies explained how they saved extra money from their budget to be able to offer courses (I-6, I-9, I-12, I-15, I-16).

"I felt it was a very slow process [to send employees to training]. So, I asked [an educational institution] for an offer for a group training, so they [the employees] can get a [specific] certificate. And lately we have had eight people go through the training." (I-6)

A big share of the employer interviewees reported how they had recently applied for courses for their MANs but had not yet receive them (I-6, I-11, I-13, I-14).

> "I applied for courses but have not heard back. It has not been mentioned
> again by my manager since." (I-14)

The above indicates difficulties regarding internal communication at the companies
(see also section 5.8 on communication).

Some branches used courses as a retention tool for stable EMPs (I-5, I-11) or during
low season (I-9). Some also said that due to the instability of their EMPs, they were
unable to offer courses to those who 'deserved' it as daily operation was a priority
and at times at risk due to absenteeism of workers (I-5, I-11).

> "If there is turnover amongst the workers, it is difficult to offer courses to
> all of them. The stable ones are those who are offered courses and those
> who attend courses." (I-5)

The offering of courses and skills development for MANs was seen as an important
recruitment tool for C1 and C3 (I-1, I-16, I-17); even so, some reported that they had
experienced their MANs quitting shortly after a completed competency upgrade (I-
16). From the interviews, it seemed like C2 was not using courses explicitly to either
attract or retain employees.

As previously mentioned, skills development offered by external providers was
reported to not be entirely relevant to the workforce's needs. Some employers
reported having experienced training offered locally in Greenland not always being
based on the reality that the trainees or students encounter (I-21, I-22, I-23). All
these respondents were from C1 and referred to employees without management
responsibilities whose main institution for receiving training has been heavily
criticized in recent years. The respondents from C2 mentioned how some of the
offered courses for competency upgrade did not reflect the Greenlandic reality and
thus were not useful to them (I-12, I-15). Both C1 and C2 repeatedly focused on the
need for courses that reflect the reality that the MANs operate under and that these
courses should not be too generic but rather tailor-made for each branch (I-13, I-14,
I-15, I-22, I-23).

As previously mentioned, some employers tried to cope with the challenges of skills
development by organizing them themselves. This may be a useful approach as the
literature argues that an unwillingness to temporarily move away is a reason for
employees' not attending or failing courses (Wilson, 2015). Additionally, employers
are the final users of skills and know best what skills need to be provided to their
employees (Tan et al., 2011).

The literature agrees on the importance of skills development and the importance of
employers' involvement in it (Tan et al., 2011) but also mentions a lack of relevant
and accessible options in Greenland (Greenland Perspective, 2016; Huppert, 2016;
Lennert, 2015). Ankersen (2008) argues that recruitment based on availability and

knowledge of the local community that is not primarily based on skills can result in a qualified employee with future potential *if* the person is upskilled (Ankersen, 2008). This is also discussed in section 5.3.

Kirk (2003) has highlighted how the combination of being able to master specific skills but also being financially rewarded for mastering the skills is important for the workforce (Kirk, 2003, p. 119). This requires increased attention from the employer's side to ensure that employees are both able to use their skills and experience and are rewarded sufficiently. While financial rewards can be a reason for some to attend courses, others may require other types of rewards such as recognition or simply being able to use their skills during their daily tasks (N. J. M. Pedersen et al., 2018; Schwalje, 2011).

There is a need for skills development and evaluation of the degree to which the workforce masters the needed skills, and it is also important to discover if employees are actually interested in attending courses.

Scholarly literature emphasises that in a society where formal education is still a rather new concept for some and social status is not necessarily connected to one's educational level, the feeling of professional pride does not express itself in the desire to gain more skills. Depending on life priorities, some employees may not be interested in developing competences. Work motivation or motivation to take further training or education could be solely economic or a step to achieve a better lifestyle. In these cases the ultimate goal is not necessarily a meaningful job (Lau, 2005, p. 80). Findings from other chapters of this dissertation also point to the definition of a meaningful job not necessarily being connected to skills (cf. section 5.9).

Based on the interviews, it appeared that employers were surprised if their workers were not interested in the offered courses or dropped out along the way. This was particularly true regarding youth. Respondents from C1 and C2 reported that they have the impression that youth rather stayed low skilled yet working in positions that would normally require skilled labour (I-13, I-15, I-23).

> "[Employee name] was not ready [for training]. She wanted a higher salary, so she stopped and started working in the factory instead […]. That was too bad because she was a very good trainee." (I-13)

At times, respondents connected such statements to geography. One of the main reasons for youth not furthering their education appeared to be the requirement of leaving familiar surroundings (I-11, I-13, I-23). This indicates that if training was locally available the situation might be different.

Two respondents from C2 explained how their trainees were repeatedly surprised about the length of education and low salary compared to what they could earn

working full-time as low skilled labour. This knowledge has resulted in education dropouts (I-14, I-15).

> "4 years is a long time, and their salary is low. Those trainees we have had before complained both about the length and the salary. […] I think there were several who did not realize what it means to be a trainee. The same number of hours but less salary." (I-15)

C1 stated that youth often lacked guidance regarding their ambitions and motivation as well as their rights and options on the labour market which left them 'shopping around' (I-23). C3 talked about the lack of relevant local courses for youth to achieve relevant skills for their workplaces (I-10, I-11). This could be primarily a geographical issue based on the infrastructural preconditions of education in Greenland, but it could also be connected to factors such as length of education, language of education, financial situation during education, etc.

While the above highlights how difficult it can be for employers to motivate younger employees to obtain further skills, there could also be groups that are more interested in skills development. For instance, the labour market information presented in chapter four showed that women statistically have higher educational levels and that workforce members under the age of 35 are more likely to participate in skills development. This was not mentioned specifically during the employer interviews.

Apart from personal motivation and interest in skills development, potential interest can also be restricted by insufficient communication and information. The empirical data showed how there may be a lack of communication or even miscommunication between the main offices, HR department, and local branches. This can also be seen in communication from the employees about their preferences regarding skills development (I-6, I-14, I-22). See also section 5.1 and section 5.8.

Communication was not only important in relation to the existence of courses but also when considering why employees should or should not participate. Especially for low skilled employees who may not be used to participate in education or courses, it is not necessarily attractive to engage in skills development. Firstly, these employees may lack knowledge about what it required to undergo training and feel unsure about their own capability. Secondly, being offered skills development by the employer might not always have a positive effect as to be offered skills development might be understood as an indication that 'you are not doing your job well enough'.

Finally, when discussing skills development from the employers' point of view, an awareness of existing skills amongst employees must also be taken into consideration. As previously indicated, being formally low skilled is neither equal to not having skills nor to not being interested in learning new skills. The importance of informal skills was not directly mentioned in the employer interviews even

though scholarly literature argues strongly for the need for increased awareness of existing skills in the Arctic. This literature also discusses how existing skills do not necessarily equal formal skills (Greenland Perspective, 2015; Ozkan & Schott, 2013; Rasmussen, 2011; Tan et al., 2011; Wihak, 2005; Wilson, 2015). Interestingly, as shown in section 5.3, informal skills are already used by employers in practice. This is observed when experience is considered equal to formal skills during recruitment processes which points to the employers' awareness of the importance of informal skills as well as the importance of upgrading formal skills.

5.5.2. EMPLOYEE SURVEY

The employee survey investigated the employee's interest in skills development on several levels.

As part of the first question, employees were asked to rate the importance of the possibility of taking courses provided by their employer. The results showed that employees felt that it was important overall to get skills development offered by one's employer.
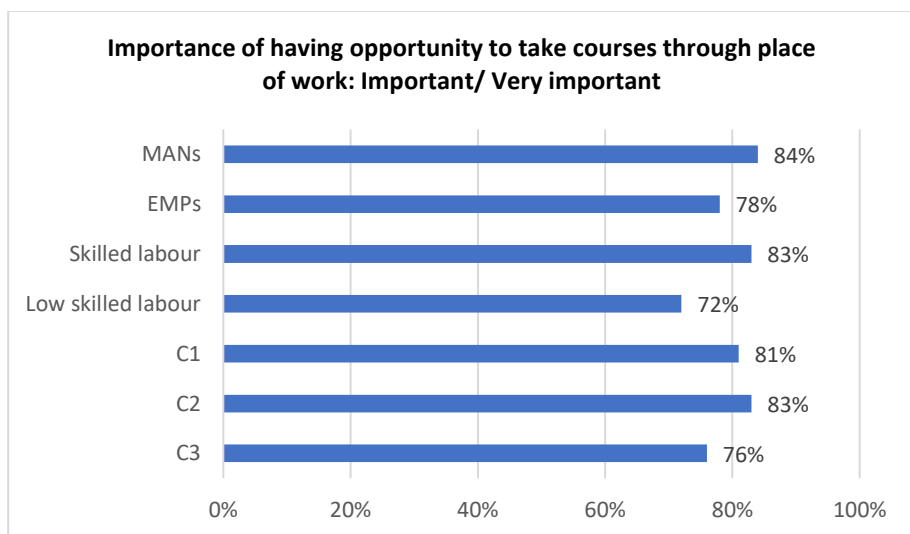
Figure 5.4 – Importance of having opportunity to take courses through place of work: 'Important', 'Very important'

The data showed that skills development is more important to MANs than it is to EMPs, and that having an opportunity to take courses is more important to skilled labour than it is to unskilled labour. C2 showed this as being of highest importance amongst the three companies, and C3 showed this as being the least important.

Interestingly, the differences for age and gender when it comes to interest in educational attainment found discussed in scholarly literature were not visible in the present data. A slightly lower percentage of women (78%) than men (81%) found the offer of skills development important. The expectation was to see higher interest amongst women as they generally are more highly educated than men. This does not mean that both men and women receive skills development to the same degree. As will be shown later, more women seem to act on their interest in skills development than men.

There has been a minor difference for the two age groups (over the age of 35 – 78%; under the age of 35 – 80%). An explanation could be that people of all ages desire to receive training and courses, even though the literature has shown that educational attainment is greatest for workforce members younger than 35 (Økonomisk Råd, 2016a).

To investigate the employee's interest in skills development and if they had actually received this development, the survey asked if the respondent had undertaken a course in the last 24 months.

More MANs than EMPs said they had undertaken courses (59% MANs, 46% EMPs). This makes sense in light of how MANs are not often recruited based on their leadership skills and thus likely need to have these skills upgraded. Additionally, one might consider the three companies' general focus on leadership development. Looking more closely at the MAN group, approximately half of the low skilled managers have undertaken a course compared to 62% of the skilled MANs. It is positive that managers are apparently not only in focus in theory but also in practice and are receiving skills development. It is also positive that the difference between skilled and low skilled MANs was not significant. A difference was anticipated based on the above finding of low skilled labour potentially being less interested in skills development and the findings that many MANs appeared to not be recruited based on skills but availability and personal acquaintance.

The data showed a greater number of skilled employees (60%) had participated in courses over the prior 24 months compared with low skilled employees (34%). When comparing this to the survey results for interest in skill development, it appeared that low skilled employee's interest in skills development was not fulfilled by employers.

Corresponding to the generally higher educational level of women, more women than men indicated participation in courses (58% compared to 42%). Connecting this to the previous finding that women and men are equally interested in skills development, it is interesting that women appear to act more on the opportunity to develop skills than men do.

The results for the two age groups showed no significant differences regarding interest in skills development. Mostly workers over the age of 35 received further courses and training (56%). Extracting more detailed data for this group shows that the age group 30-39 years and 45-49 years indicated the highest percentage of having participated in a course over the 24 months prior to the survey. The percentage for those under the age of 35 years who received skills training was 35%. This emphasises that being interested in courses and training does not equal receiving it. From the employer's point of view, it may make more sense to upgrade older workers who do not have training or have not undertaken an education recently rather than younger workers who recently finished an education.

When extracting data for each company, the most surprising result for this data set shows that while 65% of C1 and 41% of C3 respondents have undertaken courses, no respondents from C2 indicated that they had undertaken a course over the prior 24 months. C1 appeared to be the employer with most limitations for offering courses yet had the most respondents that had been receiving courses and training. In contrast, none of the private employees at C2 received training even though this employer supposedly had the fewest limitations for skills development when compared to public employers such as C1. Private employers could have an advantage in choosing and financing courses for their employees. In practice however, C2's small company size could make it difficult to send employees to courses. An informal exchange with the HR department at C2 shed light on the importance of communication about skills development at workplaces. The HR department was surprised by their employees' interest in courses. From the company's perspective, the employees already had all the skills they needed. This shows the importance of raising awareness of employees' preferences as well as the importance of recognizing existing skills amongst employees.

Combining the importance of opportunity to take courses through workplaces with respondents who indicated not having received any courses or training in the prior 24 months showed that 75% of employees still think participation in training is important (compared to 84% of those who have received training). This shows a strong interest from employees who want to develop their skills and undermines the employers' hypothesis that employees are not interested in skills development. This is in lines with Kirk's argument that the workforce is interested in learning something new (Kirk, 2003, p. 114) and leads to the question of what type of skills development should be offered for different groups of workers. For some, the actual learning of relevant skills should be in focus while for others recognition of existing skills by their employer would be more important.

Being offered courses or training is not always received positively. With a large number of workforce members in Greenland having only primary education, being offered a course can be challenging and could be perceived as the employer saying, 'you are not doing your work well enough'. This, in turn, could lead to more

turnover. Informal talks with local labour market offices shed light on how members of the workforce who are not used to upgrading their skills might hesitate to accept the offer of courses as it could be more challenging for them. Being offered a skills upgrade is not always understood positively by employees. In Greenland, being away from home for these courses is not necessarily seen in a positive light. It would be easier for skilled employees to undertake courses as they have received training before. This can partly be confirmed by the data as 72% of the low skilled employees surveyed for this dissertation indicated interest in skills development while only 34% received the training.

The survey also asked about the respondents' own assessment of how competent they felt during the day's work (Question 7). A high percentage of respondents indicated they felt 'satisfied' or 'very good' about their competences.

Average in %					C1			C2			C3		
Total Ø	MANs	EMPs	Skilled	Low skilled	C1 Ø	MANs	EMPs	C2 Ø	MANs	EMPs	C3 Ø	MANs	EMPs
84	90	82	91	74	87	93	83	100	100	100	80	83	79

Table 5.3 – Employee survey question 7: In general, how competent do you feel you are during your day's work? Responses for 'Satisfying' & 'Very good'. Unit: Percentage.

The observed difference between skilled and low skilled employees stresses the importance of training for employees who work in jobs that do not require many skills.

There was no significant difference looking at the results for MANs and EMPs (90% and 82%, respectively). Yet at 90%, the percentage for MANs who felt competent during their day's work was surprisingly high. All three companies considered recruitment of skilled managers to be difficult and mentioned the lack of competences amongst their managers. If the MANs feel competent in their jobs, this could contribute to their retention, regardless of whether they are seen as competent by their leaders and employees or not.

A surprising result was that all respondents from C2 indicated that they were 100% 'satisfied' with or felt 'very good' about their competences. This is interesting as none of the C2 respondents indicated having received skills development over the prior 24 months, but all indicated that they would be interested in courses or training.

This connects to the earlier finding that feeling competent about your ability to do your work does not need to be attached to one's skills level or whether or not you

receive training. Other factors (e.g., good colleagues, skilled management, a positive workplace atmosphere, etc.) can also play a role. Skills development also seems to be strongly connected to recognition for one's work and not only the learning of new skills.

This section found that there seems to be a difference between what employers see as relevant courses or training and how employees look at skills development. The findings confirmed the need for and interest in further skills development at workplaces. The companies' official measures on skills development match the employees' needs and expectations to a degree but not all employees with an interest in skills development had the chance to participate in training. Both communication at the workplaces about skills development and the employees' attitude to skills development will be examined more closely when analysing the employee interviews in section 7.6.

5.6. BUSY OR BORED: THE ROLE OF WORKLOAD

With respect to attracting and retaining employees, workload was mentioned as a challenge in almost all employer interviews. While too high of a workload was brought up as an issue for employees during the employer interviews, no formal approaches to solve this issue could be found amongst the employers' measures. The results from the employee survey showed that the employees in fact experienced a high, and sometimes too high workload. This makes the lack of formal measures regarding workload by employers even more serious.

5.6.1. EMPLOYER INTERVIEWS AND MEASURES

When examining the employer interviews, high turnover and absenteeism were particularly connected to high workloads by the majority of respondents from C1 and C3 (I-2, I-5, I-7, I-8, I-9, I-21, I-23).

> "This is a demanding work. It is. Long days, a lot of hours during the season. It is a demanding position [manager] […] At times, only working 60 hours a week is not enough." (I-9)

> "I think there are a lot that are shocked about the different work tasks they need to do." (I-7)

> "Because there are some [employees] that you just cannot retain. Either because they think it is too difficult, or the tasks are too demanding." (I-21)

No respondents from C2 explicitly mentioned high workload as a challenge; however, the company started to apply informal measures to try to spread out the workload. This points to high workload being an issue for C2 employees.

A common trait mentioned by employers for both their EMPs and MANs was that due to skills shortage, employees often need to know more or have more competences than their skills level suggests. Respondents also stated that motivated and skilled EMPs and MANs can end up being exploited and often get assigned too many tasks and responsibilities.

> "But this is how it is in general in Greenland. It is not always that we use our core competencies or what we think we are really good at. […] We figured out that there are some that get drained by having too many areas of responsibility." (I-19)

As a measure concerning high workload, an improvement within the division of responsibilities at the workplaces was mentioned by all three companies as a way to not give EMPs more tasks than they can handle (I-1, I-6, I-15, I-19, I-21).

> "[…] to divide the responsibility fairly from the beginning, so everybody has the tasks they are able to carry." (I-21)

A respondent from C3 stated that they started to employ more workers than they actually needed, in order to avoid the exploitation of the most skilled workers (I-7). Other respondents from the same company reported how they employed more middle managers to relieve both management and EMPs (I-9, I-11). Finally, the increasing use of external labour, or labour from other places in Greenland to decrease workload was reported by C2 and C3 (I-4, I-8, I-9, I-15).

None of these measures were written down as formal measures.

5.6.2. EMPLOYEE SURVEY

The employee survey asked how the employees experienced their own workload on average with the options to answer 'Too low', 'Low', 'Appropriate', 'Too high' (Question 4A). The purpose of this question was to shed light on employees' perspective on workload. Additionally, the intention was to look at the consequences of the non-skills-based recruitment reported by employers.

67% of respondents answered that they felt their workload was appropriate and 25% indicated that their workload was too high. Figure 5.5 below visualizes the results for those who indicated that their workload was too high.
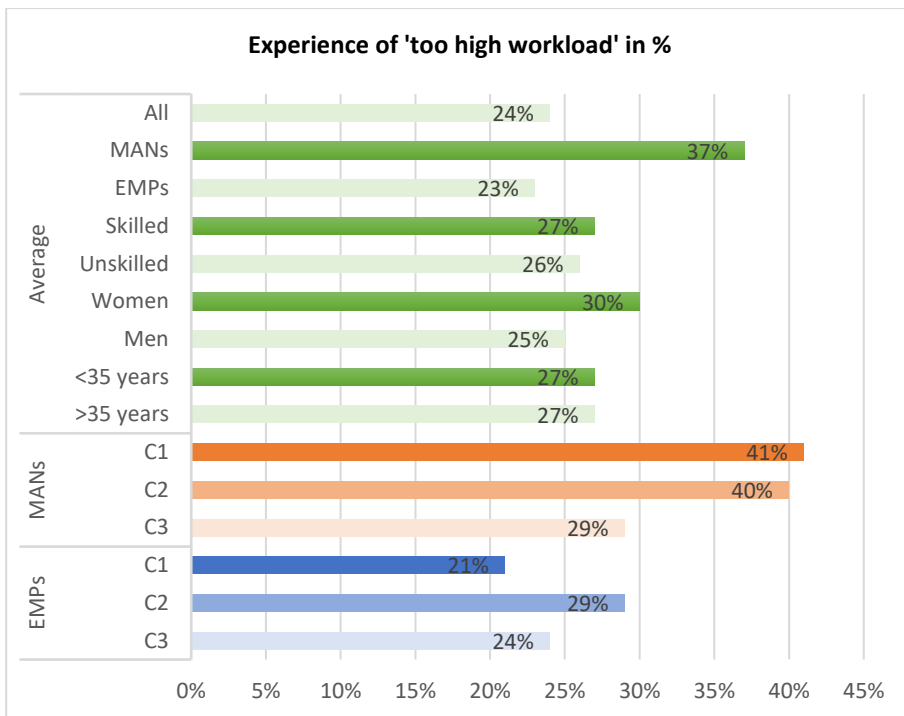
Experience of 'too high workload' in %

Average	All	24%
	MANs	37%
	EMPs	23%
	Skilled	27%
	Unskilled	26%
	Women	30%
	Men	25%
	<35 years	27%
	>35 years	27%
MANs	C1	41%
	C2	40%
	C3	29%
EMPs	C1	21%
	C2	29%
	C3	24%

Figure 5.5 – Experience of 'too high workload' in %

Surprisingly, the results of the survey suggest that the workload of different skills levels and ages is similar. In other words, the results do not suggest any major differences. The understanding of the concept of 'workload' could be different depending on the employee's position, daily tasks and skills level. It could also be anticipated that different groups of employees experience different types of workloads – such as work that causes physical or psychological tiring. Furthermore, several scholars have argued that workload can be culturally configured (Stern, 2001; Wihak, 2005; Wilson, 2015).

Experienced workload was high for MANs in all three companies. The only MAN group below average was the one from C3, and the only EMP group below average was from C1. Further analysis of the data revealed that no MANs indicated that their workload was *too* low, and only 4% of the MANs indicated to have a low workload in the survey. High workload amongst MANs is critical as the literature argues values such as 'being approachable', 'collaboration' and 'communication' as the most important for the relation between leaders and employees in Greenland (Kahlig, 1999), and MANs with high workloads might have difficulties in fulfilling these expectations. It is likely that a high workload for MANs both influences their retention and risk of turnover in a company and affects the way MANs communicate

with their EMPs, ultimately influencing the job satisfaction and retention of EMPs if their expectations from the MANs are not fulfilled.

7% of respondents indicated that their workload was *low* or *too low*. This group mainly consisted of EMPs and had only a few MANs (who, however, only indicated their workload being *low*, and none *too low*). Moreover, two thirds of this group who indicated their workload was *low* or *too low* was low skilled labour. This could indicate that some employees perhaps enjoy not having a lot of tasks.

In addition to asking about workload, the survey also asked about how much training of colleagues or employees occupies an average working day (Question 4B), and how important the option to train new colleagues or employees was seen by the respondents (Category in question 1). As two of the three companies implied that training of new employees plays a role for their employees' work motivation and workload, this was asked in order to grasp the extent turnover influences daily work and workload and if high turnover leads to constant new employments at the workplaces.

Results show that most of the respondents were involved with the training of colleagues daily. Only 3% of EMPs felt that the training of colleagues took up too much time, compared to 14% of MANs. The results are evenly distributed between the three company types (C1 – 7%, C2 – 8%, C3 – 4%). No notable results were detected based on age, gender and educational level.

The employers' hypothesis that the training of colleagues or new employees was a strong factor for high workload thus seems to be disproved for EMPs. However, the results seem to point to the topic as particularly important for MANs who were already experiencing a high workload. Training new employees further added to the workload. When compared to other factors that were asked about in the survey, training of new colleagues can be assessed as being a subordinate factor.

With a total of 25% of all respondents indicating their workload was too high, the employers' assumption of workload being a challenge for their employees can be confirmed. If generalisability of the above results is assumed, they show that between 25-40% of employees experience their daily workload as too high depending on the group which points to the potential for workload being an important factor for employee job attribute preferences. Even though most of the respondents indicated that they had an adequate workload, the question is if the amount of work that employees perceive as an adequate workload matches the employers' expectations. There could be a mismatch between the employer's expectations towards employees, and the employee's perception of having an adequate number of tasks.

The demonstrated importance of the topic of workload connects to the assumption of a "lazy Greenlandic workforce" that is part of the public discourse (Lennert, 2015; Sejersen, 2016; Winther, 2005). 'Laziness', which from an employer's point of view implies absenteeism and lack of work motivation, could be caused by a workload that is too high or too low based on the employee's point of view.

Considering factors such as current recruitment practices, the educational backlog and geographical conditions of the labour market, the experience of a too high or too low workload by employees does not come as a surprise. Recruitment practices in particular where employers are forced, or want to recruit a person based mainly on availability or personal acquaintance (rather than skills and competencies) can lead to employees that struggle with their assigned workload (Ankersen, 2008). This is especially true if companies struggle to upskill labour with the needed skills at the same time.

Both employees with and without the needed skills seem to experience workloads that are too high. This may be a particular challenge for employees without the right skills or competences as they complete their daily tasks. Skills development, as discussed in section 5.5, is not always an option. Employees that possess the right skills may need to do more tasks than they have time for as they may be the only ones who can actually complete the required tasks which could potentially lead to a stressful work environment (Kirk, 2003). The increasing use of external labour to support overworked locals as found in the empirical data may work as a short time solution (Ankersen, 2008) and enhance productivity (Green et al., 2009). Long term, employers may risk increasing unemployment of locals as well as a high burden for the external labour if responsibility shifts towards them as employees (Finnegan & Jacobs, 2015).

There is also potential for a share of the workforce being underemployed based on their skills if local jobs require less skills than the candidates possess. If migration is not in a person's interest or not practically possible, people could end up in jobs where they cannot use their skills, and thus experience a workload that is too low. This may result in consequences for work commitment, absenteeism and/or turnover. Especially those who migrate from their hometown or settlement in order to obtain an education and later return to their settlements or towns are at risk of such underemployment.

What is striking is that although the topic of 'workload' is highly present in the employer interviews and appears to be of major relevance from the employee survey data, no direct presence in the companies' official measures could be found. This needs to be noted as a big lack of alignment.

Scholarly literature supports the evidence for workload playing an important role in commitment to paid employment. Several scholars have talked about how societies

in the Arctic underwent a change of lifestyle and economy which led to severe social and cultural changes. These changes may have influenced people's approach to work, and the challenges observed in the workplaces (Danielsen et al., 1998; B. Poppel et al., 2005). In her study of Canadian Inuit approaches to work, Stern (2001) argues that workload, as well as the general attitude towards employment could be culturally configured (Stern, 2001). If similar norms apply for the working-age population in Greenland, some of so-called 'Inuit-identified clashes at workplaces' seen in the Inuit population of Canada (Wihak, 2005, p. 333) could be easily connected to how Greenlandic employees handle a workload that is either too high or too low. Wihak gave examples of defined clashes that could be connected to the case of Greenland: 'How to find out without asking'; 'How to contribute without standing out'; 'Time management'; 'Interpersonal space and relations' (ibid.). Wilson (2015) talks about how Greenlandic employees dislike tight schedules (Wilson, 2015) that can be caused by a high workload which results in absenteeism or turnover as reported by the employers.

Some scholars use contemporary society's complex cultural values (as described in chapter two) to argue that it is not necessarily high or low workload that leads to turnover and absenteeism but rather people's restlessness, a demotivated attitude to wage-work and low resilience (From et al., 1975; Kirk, 2003; Lau, 2005).

Generalising regarding workload is difficult as 'having a low/high workload' is based on individual perceptions for each member of the workforce. In addition to having low/high workload, other factors not connected to workload could play into absenteeism and turnover of employees. Yet, workload appears to play a major role when discussing the overall challenge regarding commitment to paid employment and employee job attribute preferences in Greenland. A further analysis and discussion of the topic of workload based on the findings from employee interviews can be found in section 7.2 and an analysis of the topic of turnover can be found in section 7.8.

5.7. LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING: A MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL WORKFORCE

Based on Greenland's history and contemporary cultural characteristics, multilingual and multicultural realities were assumed to be of importance when examining job attribute preferences of employees in Greenland. The Greenlandic language is the official language of Greenland and is used in public affairs.

The Greenlandic language, *Kalaallisut,* consists of three main dialects. These are the dialects spoken in Avanersuaq (North Greenland), Tunu (East Greenland) and Kitaa (West Greenland) (*Inatsisartutlov Nr. 7 Af 19. Maj 2010 Om Sprogpolitik*, 2010).

Additionally, the Danish language is used extensively throughout society. Although a mix of cultures, languages and values has existed side by side for centuries in Greenlandic society, misunderstandings based on speaking different languages are likely to occur in workplaces. Even speaking the same language does not always imply understanding things in the same way, and the use of different languages can be a challenge regarding getting education and both getting and keeping a job. In scholarly literature language is argued to be a clear barrier for employment and education. This is true not only in Greenland but in other bilingual regions of the North and the Arctic as well (OECD, 2011; PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2003; Rasmussen, 2011).

5.7.1 EMPLOYER INTERVIEWS AND MEASURES

The topic of language was rarely mentioned explicitly in either employers' interviews or in their official measures, but the survey data showed notable results for the importance of the topic. In total, 57% of all respondents answered 'yes' to the question regarding whether they experienced misunderstandings at times with colleagues or managers because of different linguistic backgrounds.

Looking at the employer interviews, there were few who directly emphasised the importance of their employees' language skills. Yet employers expressed how important language skills, or at least cultural understanding, are in managerial positions. They also spoke about the constant need to compromise on these skills when recruiting for positions as the recruitment pool for managers is limited (I-15, I-16, I-18). This was especially true for the recruitment of MANs, which is supported by scholarly literature (Ankersen, 2008; Kahlig, 1999; Langgård, 2005).

One company document says: "It is important to remember that it can be easier to advance an employee in his/her professional skills than his/her personality"[27]. Personality here presumably refers to both work ethic and the knowledge of the local (work) culture, society and language. This is also argued by Ankersen (2008). According to Langgård (2005), it may be unacceptable to only look at professional competences when weighing the professional and cultural/linguistic competences in the Greenlandic labour market. Specifically, language skills or cultural knowledge can be as important or even more important than professional skills and lead to employment (see also section 5.3 on recruitment).

The employer interviews also showed that MANs were not able to communicate directly with their employees or their own leaders at times when they did not speak the same language[28]. An example of this is that it was reported that bilingual

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[27] Confidential source

[28] Observation when preparing and conducting the employer interviews

employees were being used as interpreters (I-15). Several scholars mention the practice at Greenlandic workplaces where a person with the right linguistic competences is placed in a position and given assistance by an employee with the right professional competences or vice versa. This often happens without 'the interpreter' being acknowledged or compensated (Kahlig, 2000; Langgård, 2005, p. 154). While this practice was not mentioned in the interviews, it might be a model used by employers. Obviously, it is not beneficial if the leader and employee cannot communicate with each other without an interpreter. It is also not beneficial to 'use' another employee who happens to be bilingual as an interpreter. This practice could be one factor leading to cultural clashes at workplaces (Wihak, 2005, p. 333). It could also lead to a high workload of bilingual employees, as their linguistic skills are often sought after. Several scholars have argued that bilingual members of the workforce are at top of the hierarchy, i.e., highly sought after (Gad, 2009; Møller, 2011; K. Pedersen, 1999); however, none of these publications talks about implications on workload (or additional compensation).

With respect to EMPs, one respondent from a bigger town mentioned language as an issue. This respondent argued that employers at times need to make a stronger effort to retain Danish-speaking employees, as the majority of their employees speak *Kalaallisut* as main language (I-19).

> "We have some Danish speaking, really few Danish speaking, and many Greenlandic speaking [employees]. This is why we hired a person from Denmark, as we hope she stays. To provide more employees, so that they do not feel special. That is something we have thought about." (I-19)

The fact that miscommunication due to different spoken languages was rarely mentioned during the interviews and rarely acknowledged in the companies' measures may point to several different scenarios: 1) Employers are taking a rather pragmatic approach to language challenges in every day working life and by that, perhaps neglecting its importance as a challenge and also do not experience it as a challenge. 2) Language is a sensitive topic in public discourse and politics (see also section 4.3) which could be a reason for employers having little interest in engaging with the topic. 3) Miscommunication due to different spoken languages could pose a challenge for employees without the employers being aware of it. These scenarios are intertwined and could be simultaneously true for a workplace.

5.7.2 EMPLOYEE SURVEY

As the topic of language was rarely mentioned explicitly in the first data collection, the question in the employee survey was mainly explorative and primarily based on language and cultural understanding playing an important role in secondary literature. In the survey, the employees were asked if they experience

misunderstandings with colleagues or managers at times because of different linguistic backgrounds. 'Linguistic backgrounds' not only refers to the speaking of different languages but also to the speaking of the same language. Different cultural backgrounds (e.g., growing up in a town vs. growing up in a settlement) can increase the risk of misunderstandings even if people speak the same language.

On average, 57% of respondents answered 'yes' to experiencing misunderstandings with colleagues or managers at times because of different linguistic backgrounds.

Language barriers appeared to be a less serious issue for the private employer C2 (42%) than it was for C1 and C3 (59% and 57%, respectively). This could be because company or branch size possibly plays a role in the daily handling of a multilingual workforce. C2 is a smaller employer than the other two participating companies. The size of this company could have a positive effect on avoiding misunderstandings based on different languages in everyday work life. On the other hand, bigger employers might have more resources (e.g., internal interpreters).

As the employer interviews showed, C1 in particular found language to be an issue for their employees in managerial positions which was confirmed by the survey results. Respondents from C2 and C3 put slightly more importance on language issues for EMPs than for MANs.

	C1	C2	C3
MANs	69%	40%	47%
EMPs	53%	43%	60%

Table 5.4 – Question 3: 'Do you, at times, experience misunderstandings with colleagues or managers because of different linguistic backgrounds?' - 'Yes'

Table 5.4 shows that although there were some differences between the groups, misunderstandings based on different linguistic backgrounds is a major issue for both EMPs and MANs across the board.

When seniority was considered, the survey results showed that employees who had been in their positions for more than a year indicated a higher tendency to experience language misunderstandings at the workplace.

Employed less than 12 months	**40%**
Employed between 12-24 months	80%
Employed more than 24 months	63%

Table 5.5 – Answer 'Yes' to question 3, combined with employee seniority

The percentage of employees experiencing misunderstandings dropped for those employed for more than 24 months. This may be because employees with long seniority at a workplace may be used to the company's work culture when it comes to linguistic differences, whereas employees with short seniority could be more reserved while still adapting to the new environment and company policies. If there are no official measures in place and language issues are mostly dealt with day by day, daily handling of miscommunication could become more challenging for employees over time which could explain the results for those who had been employed between 12 and 24 months. The fact that the percentage of respondents who believed that they had experienced challenges because of language barriers decreased for those respondents who had been employed for more than 24 months might indicate that employees get more accustomed to company practices. The experience of language misunderstandings appears to not be a major influence for employee retention or turnover as employees appear to stay at their workplaces despite linguistic issues.

No notable results were apparent when differentiating the data by age group or gender as 50-60% of all groups indicated that they had experienced misunderstandings based on language. Respondents under the age of 35 and male respondents indicated experiencing these misunderstanding to a slightly lesser degree overall.[29]

When splitting the data according to the respondents' educational level, no major difference was found between skilled and low skilled respondents. Both groups indicated that they had experienced misunderstandings due to language difference with 56-57% of respondents answering 'yes' to this question. Currently, most skills development requires the knowledge of an additional language apart from *Kalaallisut* and skilled labour usually has mastery of both *Kalaallisut* and Danish to some degree which is why this group was expected to struggle less with misunderstandings based on languages. Skills development in Greenland currently requires that students are be able to speak (some) Danish. This means that it was anticipated that the skilled employees would have more language skills than low skilled employees. The findings suggest that educational background did not necessarily have a strong influence on the employees' experience regarding language misunderstandings. The conclusion can thus be that the ability to speak the same language can still lead to miscommunication as cultural background differences can affect the ability to communicate well.

It has been difficult to triangulate the findings with the companies or statistical data as no systematic review on the working-age population's language skills exists. An estimate that has been posited is that 70% of the population mainly speaks

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[29] Over the age of 35 – 60% yes; under the age of 35 – 50% yes. Women - 60% yes; men - 55% yes.

Kalaallisut and lacks sufficient knowledge of a secondary language to obtain an education (Langgård, 2005).

The above findings point to linguistic and cultural misunderstandings at workplaces being of higher relevance than anticipated by employers. These results show how difficult it can be for employers to balance language, cultural and professional skills during hiring processes. When connecting the results to the ongoing political discussion about the 'Greenlandisation' of the labour market (cf. section 4.3), public employers seem to struggle the most when attempting to meet professional needs while upholding political visions such as the political vision by the former governing party *Siumut* that all public employees should be able to speak *Kalallisut* by the year 2025 (Siumut, 2020, p. 59).

The survey results showed how miscommunication due to different languages at workplaces are a serious concern for many employees. This is demonstrated by fact that 57% of all respondents indicated misunderstandings with colleagues and managers due to language differences. Interestingly, there was no significant difference across age, gender and skills level. This shows that there is no simple explanation (or solution) to language issues at Greenlandic workplaces.

Several questions can be raised based on this. 1) Are workplaces discussing language and culture taking into account its relevance? 2) What is being done to approach this difficult topic? 3) What roles do linguistic challenges play in the retention or turnover of employees? 4) If there are substantial misunderstandings based on linguistic or cultural background differences in the workplaces, what consequences are there for the work environment that have not been explored? These questions are discussed further in the employee interviews during the third data collection and analysed in section 7.5.

5.8. THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

Communication, or rather the lack thereof, was repeatedly mentioned as a factor that plays into employee job attribute preferences. Communication was related to several other topics explored in this section. It appeared that employers only recently became aware of the importance of the topic as company measures designed at addressing communication issues were mostly new. This was evident during the employer interviews as the use of informal, undocumented measures was mentioned in over half of the 23 interviews. Communication did not play an explicit role in most of the companies' official measures. The employee survey results, on the other hand, pointed to the fact that employees put high importance on communication.

5.8.1. EMPLOYER INTERVIEWS AND MEASURES

In several employer interviews, communication was mentioned as an issue at workplaces (I-1, I-2, I-15, I-18, I-19).

> "Communication is something we work with all the time. It is very, very important […] also in regard to a flat organisational structure." (I-9)

> "We are like a small family. We need to hear and discuss each other's daily challenges to be able to solve them." (I-12)

Respondents from all three companies (both for the group of EMPs and MANs) additionally mentioned how communication during the recruitment process and the first weeks of employment was seen as crucial for successfully attracting and retaining employees (I-6, I-7, I-9, I-14, I-15, I-16, I-18, I-19).

> "To me it is very important that they get all the information [about their future workplace]. […] We tell them everything [good and bad]." (I-7)

Communication with younger employees seemed to be a particular issue. Both C2 and C3 reported high turnover amongst their younger workers which resulted in this group being especially hard to reach (I-3, I-15). C1 and C2 mentioned communication in connection with youth in education, as they experienced trainees who had not been informed and guided properly before beginning an education and who dropped out without finishing (I-15, I-23).

Respondents from C1 and C3 also mentioned how improving internal communication was something that they currently focussed on. Efficient internal communication was linked to an improved work environment for both EMPs and MANs, which could increase retention rates (I-1, I-11, I-17). In general, a high number of respondents regarded efficient internal communication as crucial to establishing a sense of community and creating positive employee-management relations at the workplace (I-1, I-7, I-8, I-9, I-12, I-13, I-20).

A lack of dialogue with employees and a public discourse that at times displays members of the workforce as lazy, unproductive or without skills could give the employees a feeling of being unimportant. In this context, it is valuable to mention that a lack of dialogue is not a one-sided challenge. Employees not expressing their preferences, uncritically accepting their work conditions and work environment and simply leaving when unsatisfied (Lau, 2005) could be part of the issue as well. Scholarly work argues that direct conflict solving is a new and rather unused concept in the Arctic (Aylward et al., 2013; Kirk, 2003; Lau, 2005) which contributes to the above argument of employees that might simply leave the workplace when unsatisfied instead of trying to communicate their unsatisfaction.

5.8.2 EMPLOYEE SURVEY

As the importance of communication was found to be of considerable importance in the employer interviews, the employee survey asked about both communication at the workplace in general and recognition by the management.

The results for the importance of 'good communication' at the workplace were high. 'Good communication' was the most important followed by 'good colleagues' and 'respect' when looking at all the topics that fell under question 1.

'Good communication' was shown to have 85-98% importance throughout the different groups. Very high importance was reported for skilled employees (95%) and MANs (98%), compared to low skilled employees and EMPs (86% and 89%, respectively). Minor variations were observed between the three different company types (C1 - 95%, C2 - 92%, C3 - 88%), and the topic appeared to be a little more important for men (Men - 94%; women - 90%) and those over the age of 35 (over the age of 35 - 93%; under the age of 35 - 90%).

Based on the survey results, the employers' recent focus on communication and implementation of measures appears relevant. Even so, the wording of the question about 'good communication' has the weakness of being generic. The major importance of communication, as shown in the survey results, points to a need to investigate the topic in more detail in order to be able to outline the employees' preferences with respect to communication. There is probably a difference between how MANs and EMPs understand and value communication as well as differences based on educational level, age and gender.

'Recognition by management', is likely to qualify under the general heading of 'good communication', and the survey asked respondents about this aspect. Recognition can refer to communication from manager to employee and things such as appreciative communication about one's daily tasks. The results from the survey showed that, as expected, MANs indicated higher importance to recognition than EMPs (MANs 92%, EMPs 77%, respectively). There were only minor differences looking at gender and age. Skilled labour regarded recognition by management as important to a much higher degree (89%) than low skilled labour (68%). Low skilled EMPs at C3 indicated the lowest importance of recognition amongst all groups (62%) which is interesting as C3 has reported successfully using measures focussing on the recognition of the employees' importance.

As expected when connecting the findings of recognition from management with the findings on the size of workload, appreciative management appeared to be more important for respondents who indicated experiencing a high workload.

As the survey did not ask about employees' experience with a lack of recognition but only how important it is for them, that question needs to be examined further. What kind of recognition do employees' value the most? Are there differences between the different groups? Low skilled labour (apart from C2) did not seem to put as much value on recognition for their work as skilled labour – could this be connected to different work motivation seen between skilled and low skilled labour?

In conclusion, while both the employers and employees' perception of the importance of communication seemed to match to a high degree, the biggest discrepancy was the lack of formal measures concerning the topic. As communication has been shown to be the most important aspect in the employee survey, more detailed knowledge is needed on what kind of communication employees prefer and maybe presently lack, in order to target future employer measures towards the employees' preferences. The topic is one of the foci in the employee interviews during the third data collection and is analysed further in sections 7.5 and 7.7.

5.9. WORK CULTURE AND WORK ETHIC

The philosophy and principles of a workplace as well as the attitudes of employees were touched upon in most of the employer interviews. This suggests that work culture and work ethic are important topics to explore when discussing employees' job attribute preferences.

While principles at the workplace are addressed as 'work culture' in the following, the term 'work ethic' refers to the employees' attitude to work in a more general manner than work culture does. Based on the work of Max Weber (Weber, 2000) the term 'work ethic' here implies devotion to your work and an ethical responsibility to that work (ibid.).

In order to investigate what influences employee work ethic, the concept has been simplified and divided into two levels for the purpose of the study: 1) The responsibility to show up at work on a daily basis and 2) devotion and ethical responsibility to work. This division was based on the empirical data. While the first level (the responsibility to show up at the workplace regularly) can be influenced by the employer or other external factors, the second level is viewed as more difficult to influence as it lies within the employee's attitude towards work. This means a change would need to come by the employee him-/herself.

5.9.1 EMPLOYER INTERVIEWS AND MEASURES

While the terms 'ethic' or 'moral' were not explicitly mentioned in the employer interviews or employer measures, the topic was present at several levels. A lack of a sense of responsibility, as in not showing up at work or taking responsibility for one's tasks and one's colleagues, as well as not sharing responsibilities was repeatedly mentioned in particular by respondents from all three companies (I-1, I-2, I-6, I-7, I-9, I-11, I-12, I-15, I-20).

> "In general, those who are unemployed as adults, lack responsibility to be stable workers. Understand me correctly, an adult with responsibility should be employed. […] Adults who are unemployed they have more than unemployment as an issue." (I-2)

> "There is one thing that is lacking, that is a change of attitude. The meaningful working life. It needs to make sense to go to work. There has been the opinion that it does not make sense to come to [their workplace / sector]. […] We are lacking a discourse. Why is it important that I go to work? Because I contribute to the economy of Greenland." (I-11)

The lack of respect, sense of responsibility and resilience in regard to daily work tasks were emphasised in a number of interviews (I-1, I-2, I-12, I-15, I-19). Some respondents stated a passivity amongst their employees and low devotion to work with respect to EMPs in particular (I-1, I-12, I-19).

> "They need to learn to take care of their work. That it is not enough just to be on sick leave. It is easy to be off sick today if you just have some pain in your leg. […] I have experienced that it seems like those who entered the labour market 20 or 15, 10 years ago, they are much more resilient than those we get [nowadays]." (I-19)

> "I do not think that there is only the need to have employees who are skilled. I think the most important is, that the employee has a devotion to his work and the most important is that the [employee] does not have a lot of absence." (I-20)

Two respondents stated that they associated the experience of workers not being used to taking responsibility with the employee's upbringing and/or lack of education (I-7, I-23). In scholarly literature, primary socialisation processes are identified as reasons for educational backlogs later in life and are also discussed in regard to the specific challenges in the Greenlandic labour market (Kirk, 2003, p. 13).

Another important point was revealed through the employer interviews. As previously discussed in section 5.4, the employers reported a form of absenteeism

amongst their workers which may point to some employees having a different understanding of the concept of time than their employers.

> "We have some [employees] who are really clever and good at their work, but then they are having a hard time following their working hours, showing up on time etc. That has always been a problem here, but that is how it is. We have gotten used to working that way." (I-12)

Mismatching views on schedules and leisure time between employers and workers is also mentioned in literature concerning both Greenland and Nunavut (PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2003; Wier, 2018; Wilson, 2015). Lau (2005) argues that work time is perceived as limiting to some members of the Greenlandic working-age population. Arguably, this perception has its roots in the historical culture of Greenland where working time and leisure time used to be fluid and much less scheduled (Lau, 2005, p. 81). A different understanding of time, especially in the sense as argued by Lau, could point to a mismatch that is rooted in the norms of Greenlandic society.

The survey responses in the category 'freedom to decide working hours oneself' showed 65-72% of the respondents indicating strong importance to this category. Although this number appears high, it was in fact the lowest when compared to other factors addressed in the survey (cf. section 5.4). If understanding of working time has changed over time, there could be some employees who have adjusted to foreign norms while others still hold on to local norms. This, in turn, could lead to a clash with both the employer's and employee's expectations. Along these lines, it is also interesting to note, that to date, part-time employment is not a common option in Greenland and very few people work part-time as is also described in section 4.3 (Høgedahl & Krogh, 2019; N. J. M. Pedersen et al., 2018).

No formal measures and only few informal measures concerning work ethic and workplace culture could be found in the employer documents. Some of the informal measures showed how employers tried to establish new norms amongst their workforce. Interestingly, those measures were reported as having positive influence on commitment and retention of employees seemed to be based on collective values which translated into things such as workplace culture on low absenteeism, flat hierarchies, 'feeling like a family', employee involvement and two-way communication (I-3, I-4, I-7, I-8, I-12, I-13, I-20).

> "We are like a small family. We need to hear and discuss each other's daily challenges to be able to solve them." (I-12)

> "We know each other well. I have worked here for 40 years now. Some others for about 20 years. We know each other quite well, and we help each other. No problem." (I-4)

> "From the beginning, I have made sure to talk with the workers. To share information. To hold meetings. I am honest with them and also wish that they are honest with me. Some kind of involvement." (I-3)

C1 and C3 referred to their introduction and onboarding process for employees as important to create a sense of a community and induce a feeling of pride towards the workplace. This was seen as improving the retention rate as well as the general image of the workplace (I-2, I-5, I-16, I-18, I-23).

> "Thank God, I do not lose many in general […]. When we get new employees, there is an introduction period where we thoroughly introduce them to their new job." (I-14)

An internal report by C3 confirmed this. The report indicated that a good introduction was one of the top three important things for employees. Specifically, one of the respondents stated a positive difference after improving the introduction for new employees (I-9). Respondents reported how they established a work culture where youth and adult employees share responsibility with the leader stepping in to help with tasks as needed. This was discussed while taking into consideration how this enhanced the stability of younger employees (I-3, I-15).

C1 and C3 respondents talked about how highlighting the importance of employees improved their workplaces and work culture (I-7, I-11, I-23). A respondent from C3 explained how they started to publish positive stories about their branches and workers both internally and externally. This was particularly done to highlight the importance and contribution of their low skilled employees. According to the company, the employees were surprised about being the focus of such campaigns as they were not used to being referred to in positive terms (I-11). Another branch started to select an employee of the month (I-7).

The involvement of employees in the decision-making processes was another topic that came up during the employer interviews and mainly in connection to manager recruitment. A respondent from C1 admitted that they needed to be better at involving their employees (I-16). In an interview with C2, employee involvement was reported to be difficult due to the high turnover amongst employees. A low seniority amongst employees was stated by the company to result in a low significance of employee involvement, i.e., employees were not involved in decision-making processes as the company assessed that the opinion of employees who had only recently been employed did not matter (I-15). Scholarly literature also emphasises joint decision-making and knowledge about the company's processes and results in order to retain employees (Kirk, 2003; Winther, 2005).

> "Retention is especially particularly important, because our organisation is not a very good workplace. Because we are not good at cherishing our employees so that they feel ownership. And this feeling of ownership is

very important if we want to pull together as a unit as it is written in our strategy." (I-16)

Employers reported that the lack of soft skills and work ethic made courses or training difficult for companies to offer and for the employees to complete. C3 mentioned how they used to have workshops and courses regarding work ethic, soft and social skills. The outcome of the courses however was unclear. The company considered offering those courses again in the future in a revised form (I-11).

"We got the green light to offer such courses [that focus on challenges not related to the workers professional skills] as long as we are not acting like social workers." (I-11)

Employers seemed to experience a large number of working-age persons who have a rather self-centred model regarding being an active member of the workforce. Some employers try to counteract this and appeal to the working-age population's collective values by putting focus on interhuman values while highlighting the importance of employees both at the workplace and beyond. As shown in the above, the interview results pointed to a common work culture and efficient communication at workplaces as the key to low absenteeism and turnover. These findings were often related to local leaders with strong competencies in personnel management.

Employee involvement, appealing to community loyalty, employee ownership and a flat hierarchy at workplaces have been argued to be preferred values in the Arctic (Barr & Serneels, 2009; Cooke et al., 2013; Kahlig, 1999; Kirk, 2003; Lau, 2005). Secondary literature also argues for the importance of creating interest and knowledge about the company processes and results as well as having debates and dialogues with employees instead of just informing them via one-way communication (Kirk, 2003; Lau, 2005; Winther, 2005). Lau (2005) highlights the paradox that employees feel offended if they are not respected at the personal level while a poor working environment does not have an influence on them. Work values are mainly framed for social interaction in every day working life which again connects to how a sense of community spirit may be an important value (Lau, 2005). Scholarly literature argues social aspects of going to work as being of high importance in the Arctic (i.e., you go to work because of a positive social atmosphere at work) whilst at the same time, a lack of social contacts at the workplace could lead to leaving it (Brincker & Pedersen, 2020).

Comparing this emphasis on social aspects in scholarly literature with the employers' experience, it is interesting to note that collective values are argued to be a core cultural value across the Arctic. These values are argued to be strongly connected to a traditional way of life where survival depends to a high degree on a sense of community. If employees show self-centred behaviour as a member of the workforce even though social norms tell them to behave with a focus on collective values, the question is how this has happened. It might be connected to the process

of intertwining local and foreign norms (see chapter 2). Self-centred behaviour at workplaces can be connected to employees experiencing that they need to adapt to the 'foreign' norms presented by the employer. At the same time, a collective mindset based on local norms and values might still prevail for other aspects of life.

The above shows the essence of the employers' struggle with work ethic: to what degree is it their job to assist the workforce in developing soft skills such as responsibility-taking, resilience and devotion.

5.9.2 EMPLOYEE SURVEY

Examining the employee survey results, the findings from the employer interviews were partly confirmed. Moreover, new insights with respect to work culture and work ethic were observed.

The survey asked about the importance of good colleagues (Category in question 1) based on the empirical findings in the employer interviews about solidarity and collective values. The findings showed around 90% importance in all companies, among MANs and EMPs and across age and gender. A difference was expected when combining the answers with 'seniority at workplace'. This difference was observed to be minor. Having good colleagues scored the second highest of all included factors right after 'good communication'.

Asking about the importance of good colleagues might have been a leading question. Who does not like having good colleagues? The survey results showed the potential of employer measures such as teambuilding to increase retention and job satisfaction. This is supported by employer interviews which referred to workers as 'family'.

The survey results indicated the importance of being a good colleague professionally and socially is an important factor to the Greenlandic workforce. Focusing on the sense of community could open employees' eyes to consequences of their absenteeism and/or turnover as well as enhance a sense of community.

The survey also asked about the employees' contribution to society. One category in question 1 asked about the importance of one's work contributing to the development of society. Question 8 reads 'Do you think you contribute to societal development with your work?' By asking about the topic in two ways, the aim was to learn more about the employees' perception of their value to society and to see if their approach to work could be considered primarily 'individual' or 'community' based. Even though these questions could also be interpreted as leading questions, their combination led to a more in-depth investigation of the topic.

An average of 85% of respondents indicated that contribution to societal development through their work was important or very important to them. No notable age and gender differences were apparent. The importance of this factor was observed to be higher for MANs (88%) and skilled labour (91%) than for EMPs (84%) and low skilled labour (77%). For other factors asked about in the survey, a higher percentage for MANs and skilled labour was also observed.

The results of question 8 (asking if the respondents think they are contributing to societal development with their work) showed similar results as shown in table 5.6 below.

Average in %									C1		C2		C3	
All	Skilled	Low skilled	Female	Male	MAN	EMP	>35 years	<35 years	MAN	EMP	MAN	EMP	MAN	EMP
93	95	92	93	94	98	91	95	90	97	94	100	86	100	89

Table 5.6 – Employee survey question 8: 'Do you think, that through your work, you contribute to societal development?' 'Yes'. Unit: Percentage.

As shown in the table, the overall percentage of respondents who thought their work contributed to societal development was high (93%). Again, a higher percentage for skilled labour (95%) and MANs (98%) could be seen compared to low skilled labour (92%) and EMPs (91%), and there were no major differences between the companies, age groups and genders.

The participating employees not only found societal contribution to be important but also strongly believed that they contributed to it with their work. In contrast, in a Greenlandic study from 2003 only one participant mentioned his value for societal development as a member of the workforce (Kirk, 2003). Even though 16 years have passed between that study and this one, it is important to note that a shift in the belief of work being valuable for the development of society can be observed in Greenland. The results of the survey show the significance of collective values for the respondents. Employees could still make individual decisions that are not necessarily based on their societal contribution but on topics that are important for them individually. There appears to be a potential for employers to apply measures within this area.

Based on the interview findings, the survey also asked about the importance of employee involvement. It found 92% importance for MANs compared to 81% importance for EMPs. It further showed a higher importance for skilled labour

(90%) than for low skilled labour (74%). No substantial differences for age and gender could be found as the percentages were around to be 85% for all groups. When comparing all three company types, C1 showed the highest importance (92%) with C2 at 75% and C3 at 78%.

The higher percentage for MANs was expected as involvement is an essential aspect of being a manager. The high percentages for the remaining groups point to involvement being an important part of workplace culture. Generally, employee involvement at workplaces corresponds well with the previously shown collective values of employees.

The concept of involvement also connects to the importance of respect which was also asked about in the employee survey (category in question 1). The term 'Respect' refers to the importance of being acknowledged, mutual recognition and respecting each other.

The survey results showed that the importance of respect was the third most important topic for employees (of all factors asked about in question 1). Its overall importance was at 88% for those surveyed and again the importance for MANs and skilled labour (98% and 94%, respectively) was higher than for EMPs and low skilled labour (84% and 78%, respectively). The results for the different age groups and genders were between 86% and 88%. It is interesting to note that the category of 'importance of respect' is at a lower percentage at C3 when compared to C1 and C2 (see table 5.7 below).

C1		C2		C3	
96%		92%		78%	
MAN	**EMP**	**MAN**	**EMP**	**MAN**	**EMP**
97%	94%	100%	86%	100%	72%

Table 5.7 – Importance of respect at workplace by company, MANs and EMPs

The results show differences between companies with EMPs at C3 reporting a lower 'importance of respect'. In the previous sections, low skilled labour from C3 repeatedly showed results at a lower percentage compared to the other employee groups. The employee interviews that are analysed and discussed in chapter seven will shed more light on if this is a particular characteristic for C3 EMPs.

Being respected and valued was shown to be important for most employees who took the survey. But are these values realised at workplaces? What are the priorities of those respondents that indicated little importance to these values? The question asked about the importance of respect - and not if the respondents felt that they are treated respectfully.

Communication, respect and good colleagues were the topics that were emphasised most by respondents in the survey. These findings point to the need for a collective approach that is connected to both work ethic and work culture.

In conclusion, the findings above echo some of the scholarly literature that discusses the principles of wage-work and its norms in the Arctic. As previously discussed, scholars have argued that the introduction of wage-work and other 'Western' concepts in the Greenlandic labour market would clash with employees' notion of a good work life (From et al., 1975; Ozkan & Schott, 2013). Foreign norms and values have also been argued to challenge local norms and values in society (Danielsen et al., 1998; From et al., 1975; Greenland Perspective, 2015; Kirk, 2003; Lau, 2005; B. Poppel et al., 2005). From this analysis of work culture and ethics of the Greenlandic workforce, it appears that some employees still struggle to balance local norms and values, and the foreign norms and values presented by employers.

Whilst there have been efforts to approach work ethic and work culture of employees, it appears that thorough knowledge about employees' preferences and struggles with respect to work ethic and work culture is currently widely lacking. This was especially shown by the lack of employer measures aimed at improving employee involvement, respect, recognition and collective values. These topics were shown to be of high importance for the respondents in the employee survey. Further knowledge about the employees work ethic and preferred work culture was acquired during the third data collection and analysed in sections 7.3 and 7.5.

5.10. SUMMARY – WHAT TO TAKE FROM HERE

This chapter provided a first analysis on the job attribute preferences of employees in Greenland. It was based on the findings from the employer interviews, and official measures (see section 3.5.1) as well as the employee survey results (see section 3.5.2). A data analysis that solely applied T3 theory (see section 3.6.1) gave valuable first insights regarding the research questions defined in chapter one. Discrepancies and new issues regarding both employers' expectations and employees' preferences were identified. Topics were also found where employers' expectations and employees' preferences aligned.

The analyses in this chapter could thus provide some answers to the overall conundrum of the dissertation (cf. chapter one); even so, some questions need further investigation. The upcoming employee interviews will address these areas as the interview guide for the employee interviews was designed on the basis of the findings of this chapter in combination with the 'theoretical lenses' introduced in chapter six. The employee interview guide can be found in appendix F. An elaboration on the data collection processes can be found in section 3.5.

Short summaries follow based on the concrete findings of this chapter. What was learned is further investigated in the analysis in chapter seven. Findings for differences between MANs and EMPs and differences between the three company types are presented in separate sections (sections 5.10.1 and 5.10.2, respectively).

Areas for further investigation

Although high workloads were mentioned by the employers and anticipated to be an issue, no formal employer measures on the topic could be found. Both EMPs and MANs indicated that this topic was important by a high percentage which points to strong potential for future measures.

Language challenges were not mentioned directly in the interviews; however, due to Greenland's history, an influence of language and culture on employees' job attribute preferences was anticipated. The employee survey confirmed this expectation as misunderstandings based on different languages was observed to be a common issue for more than half of the respondents.

All employers used financial incentives to try to prevent turnover and showed a certain awareness of the workforce's attitude to salary. Yet, the employers' measures appear to lack the right focus as they mostly did not give the desired results. The employee survey showed how salary plays a role for some employees while different values played a more important role for others. More knowledge on the employees' attitude to salary is thus needed.

The findings regarding recruitment pointed to a needed alignment of expectations. They also pointed to the need for more knowledge about how the workforce is looking and applying for jobs.

The opportunity for training and courses for the workforce was stressed in both the employer interviews and measures. The employee survey confirmed the employees' interest in skills development, yet the findings indicated the need to discuss if offered training and courses match the type of skills development that employees are interested in.

The topic of communication was very relevant both from the employers' and employees' point of view. Moreover, the importance of recognition was prominent in the results of the employee survey.

In addition to the above, the employee survey highlighted the importance of collective values, good colleagues, employee involvement and respect at workplaces. Therefore, questions regarding these topics will be part of the employee interviews.

Taken together, the findings can be divided into three overall categories: 1) findings that concern the employees' individual work-life relationship, 2) findings that concern work conditions and environment and 3) findings that concern social and external factors. These three empirically derived categories form the starting point for the choice of the theoretical lenses in chapter six and are elaborated on in detail in section 6.1.

5.10.1. OBSERVED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES

The findings from this chapter indicated a general higher awareness by employers regarding the needs of MANs compared to the needs of EMPs. This may be related to the limited availability/supply of MANs and thus the need for more knowledge about them in order to recruit and retain them.

MANs were found to have a higher workload than EMPs which is not surprising as they also have more responsibility. It is, however, an important find in connection with MANs who have been recruited for other reasons other than their professional competences. A lack of competences combined with high workload may result in a combination that is not beneficial to MANs job satisfaction. MANs in Greenland have been shown to be more stable in their positions (i.e., less turnover) than EMPs. A correlation between the higher awareness of needs and less turnover could not be directly connected to this in the present data for MANs, yet it probably plays a role. From the employer's point of view, it was crucial to retain MANs due to their low availability amongst the working-age population in Greenland. The findings showed that two thirds of MANs had received training in the last 24 months which was significantly higher than EMPS (46%). There were few findings about MANs' work ethic as challenges with MANs work ethic were not mentioned explicitly by the employers.

For EMPs, it was interesting to note that workplaces that reported only having few challenges attracting and retaining EMPs seemed to have high awareness of their employees' general contribution to the workplace and efficient internal communication.

Skilled EMPs also seemed to be a less challenging group for the employers as employers' measures and skilled EMPs needs were found to be partially aligned. The employers' anticipation about the preferences for skilled EMPs (such as a high importance of salary level, skills development and recognition by management) could be confirmed by the results of the employee survey.

In contrast to MANs and skilled EMPs, low skilled EMPs were perceived to be the most challenging group by employers. A lack of knowledge of low skilled EMPs preferences and work motivation prevailed. The results of the employee surveys

indicated that this was the most challenging group. This is especially critical as low skilled EMPs are the biggest group of the working-age population according to official Greenlandic labour market data (approx. 60% of the working-age population; cf. section 4.2). It is therefore particularly important to learn more about the job attribute preferences of low skilled employees.

Overall, the above points to an alignment of employer expectations and employee preferences for some employee groups, yet a lack of alignment for other employee groups. Employers and MANs seem to have a good understanding of each other's needs and expectations while there is partial alignment between employers and skilled EMPs. Little to no alignment of expectations and needs was seen for low skilled EMPs.

5.10.2. OBSERVED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE THREE TYPES OF COMPANIES

What follows is a short summary of the preliminary findings from the observed differences for the three company types.

The employers' experiences and measures

Generally, the three companies appeared to experience similar challenges. Their respective approaches to workforce challenges mainly depended on the company's size and financial situation rather than type of organisation (public, private, or public-private company) as was presumed.

This was exemplified when looking at the findings regarding the private employer C2. In theory, private employers are said to have an advantage compared to public employers as they are not subject to the same political regulations as public companies. Private companies are said to have more leeway in raising salaries or other employee benefits. Public employers, however, are said to have a greater impact on the establishment of relevant education, training, courses or similar programmes.

Compared to public employers, C2 was expected to have better opportunities to offer training, more leeway for recruitment incentives and more ability to implement incentives. Findings showed that C2 did not make much use of these benefits, (e.g., C2 had no skills development for EMPs even though it was anticipated that it would be easy for a private employer to offer training).

For C1 and C3, the findings exemplified how regulations can stand in the employer's way of applying relevant measures (e.g., when it comes to internal recruitment of managers or not being able to give a higher salary). Local managers at both C1 and C3 often found a way to avoid restrictive regulations. It was mostly

local managers who decided which measures they would like to implement in their branch. The influence of the main management or HR seemed minor which could have made it easier for local managers to work around restrictive regulations.

Employees job attribute preferences

Another interesting angle to analyse was whether the employee survey could give first indications on differences between EMPs and MANs job attribute preferences depending on whether they were employed at C1, C2 or C3. There were some specific findings for each employer.

Generally, few differences were observed for MANs which was why only examples concerning EMPs are given (see also section 5.10.1).

The results of the employee survey indicated that C2 EMPs put much higher importance on salary level and chance for salary increase than C3 EMPs. This could be connected to EMPs being aware of leeway differences between a private and public-private employer when it comes to wages.

When answering the question of whether respondents felt they contributed to societal development through their work, C1 EMPs answered with the highest rate of 'yes' whereas C2 showed the lowest rate. Being employed at a public company could contribute to employees feeling closer to societal contribution than employees at private companies do. The results for all three companies were high for this question (C1 EMPs – 94%, C2 EMPs – 86%, C3 EMPs – 89%) which challenges the claim that the employees at the different company types have different experiences of societal contribution. It is interesting to note that the percentage was highest for C1 and lowest for C2.

When asked about whether the respondents experience misunderstandings with colleagues or managers at times because of different linguistic backgrounds, the public EMPs at C1 had a strong opinion ('yes', 69%) compared to both the public-private ('yes', 47%) and public EMPs ('yes', 40%). This could be related to private and public-private employers having better opportunities to, for example, provide language training. This could also be connected to the size of the company as C1 and C3 have a significantly higher number of employees than C2.

At this point, it remains uncertain if these findings prove that employees are aware of if the company where they are employed is a public, public-private or private employer, or if the findings are coincidental. The employee interviews will shed more light on this. These findings on variations between company types can be found in section 8.5.

CHAPTER 6. THEORETICAL LENSES: ESTABLISHING ANALYTICAL TOOLS BY WAY OF THEORY

On the background of existing theory and using the empirical data presented in chapter five, certain theoretical aspects have been selected and formed to a theoretical toolbox. This toolbox is in the following referred to as the 'theoretical lenses'. The problem-based and pragmatic methodological approach required an iterative approach to theory, as elaborated in section 3.6.1. The term 'lens' is applied to illustrate how theory is used in combination with empirical data. The use of theoretical lenses allows you to 'zoom in and out' on the empirical data and focus on different aspects. The development of theoretical lenses was inspired by the analyses of the first and second data collection. The derived theoretical lenses, in turn, were used to inspire the third data collection as well as the final analysis of employee job attribute preferences in chapter seven.

This chapter consists of three parts: 1) A presentation of empirically derived categories based on the findings in chapter five - these categories informed the development of the theoretical lenses; 2) A presentation of the selected theories presented and their applicability in the context of Greenland; 3) A discussion of the combination and limitations of the selected theoretical lenses.

6.1. EMPIRICALLY DERIVED CATEGORIES

The empirical data from the first and second data collection, as presented in chapter five, was sorted into themes and inspired by existing research on job preferences and employee's work values (Gallie, 2007, 2019) three empirical categories emerged. Inspiration by existing research was necessary and relevant in this process to further qualify the findings. Gallie's research on 'work values' was chosen as the concept proved sufficiently broad to assist the categorisation of the empirical findings further, without delimiting the exploration of the empirically derived categories.

The three empirically derived categories are illustrated below. Overall, the categories are permeable as they were observed to continuously interact and influence each other.
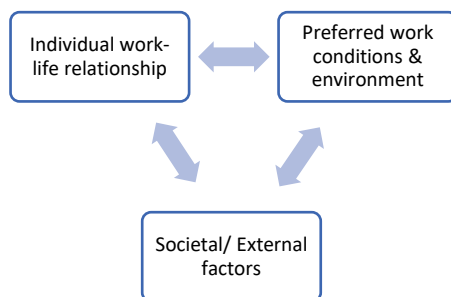
Figure 6.1 – Empirically derived categories

The empirical data showed that in part, the perception of the importance of work lies within the employee personally, is individually configured and primarily changeable within the employee (as for example shown in section 5.9). The category *'Individual work-life relationship'* embodies the relationship to and importance of work for a person. According to Gallie, the individual relationship to work encompasses "[…] the absolute level of importance of work to people's lives (often referred to as employment commitment) or its relative importance in relation to other life values." (Gallie, 2019, p. 27). To a degree, this relationship can be influenced by external influences as well as the conditions and the environment at the workplace.

The findings from the empirical data further suggested certain factors that can be configured by companies (see for example section 5.5 and 5.8). The category *'Preferred work conditions and environment'* encompasses these factors, and includes the nature of work, namely the conditions and environment of a workplace as experienced and preferred by the employee. At times, configuring these factors can be difficult for companies, as either external regulations or restrictions may apply or their knowledge about the employees' preferences is insufficient. Gallie found the nature of work environment as the primary factor with respect to employee preferences (Gallie, 2019, p. 37).

Lastly, the analysis emphasized how there are both political and institutional regulations and laws, as well as cultural contexts that play a role with respect to employee job attribute preferences (as for example shown in section 5.7 and 5.9). The category *'External and societal factors'* embodies these factors which "may vary significantly between societies as a result of differences in the structure of opportunities and constraints provided by national institutional structures" (Hult and Svallfors, 2002; In: Gallie, 2007, p. 181). In the context of Greenland, this category also includes geographic preconditions, the rather recent introduction of wage-work and formal education and hence the experienced process of local norms and values intertwining with foreign norms and values (as discussed in sections 2.1. and 4.3). The empirical data further showed that this category also includes upbringing and

socialization (cf. section 5.9) While neither the employees nor the company can easily influence these aspects, external and societal factors might influence the individual work-life relationship and preferred work conditions and work environment of the employees.

6.2. SELECTED THEORY

Several theories have been considered regarding their value for using them as theoretical lenses in this study. To begin with, different T2 theories were examined concerning their applicability to facilitate the exploration of the empirically derived categories. Based on the findings from the analysis in chapter five, the search for theory firstly circled around concrete terms such as workload, leadership, work-life balance, communication at workplaces, skills development, salary and nonmonetary rewards, etc. When trying to apply theories that concern these terms to the empirical data, it became clear that such specific terms were too narrow to be able to encompass the complexity of the empirically derived categories. Therefore, T2 theories were sought, which could encompass the empirical data on a broader level, and which were adaptable to the context of the study.

Two theories have been selected as the primary approach to facilitate the exploration of the empirically derived categories: 'Commitment Theory' (Allen, 2016; Allen & Meyer, 1996; Cohen, 2007; Gellatly & Hedberg, 2016) and 'Job Characteristics Theory' (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980). The theories originate in the fields of organisational commitment, theories of motivation and organisational behaviour. They are considered relevant for the field of the study as they provide the necessary categories to investigate 'job attribute preferences' of employees, i.e., employees' preferred job characteristics regarding wage-work if they are given a choice (cf. chapter one). The inclusion of elements from organisational commitment theory inspires the investigation of why employees chose to engage with paid employment. Elements from job characteristics theory enhance the analysis of employees preferred job characteristics.

Each theory presents a model covering a variety of the aspects found relevant in the analyses in chapter five. By combining the theories in a model created for the purpose of the study, they encompass all empirically derived categories (see figure 6.8 – The job attribute preferences model). Commitment theory centres around the employees' relationship to their workplace, also called organisational commitment. Yet it goes beyond the workplace as in recent years, theoretical approaches to organisational commitment have been extended and come to include entities and courses of action that are placed outside of the workplace. As will be shown below, the application of commitment theory is relevant with respect to the empirically derived category of 'individual work-life relationship', as well as the category

'social and external factors'. Job characteristics theory focusses on job characteristics offered by the employer which matches the category 'preferred work conditions and environment'.

Both theories are prominent within their fields and have been used by other scholars to conduct case studies as well as theory development. *Commitment theory* is a well-established theory that has been applied in international contexts and has been continuously developed (see for example Cohen, 2007; Culpepper, 2000; Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). For the purpose of this study, the original approach of commitment theory (Allen & Meyer, 1996) has been combined with newer approaches (Allen, 2016; Cohen, 2007; Gellatly & Hedberg, 2016). The *job characteristics theory* has been applied by researchers worldwide to analyse workplaces and has been used to develop theories of management (Oldham & Hackman, 2005). Even though there has been major development in the field of job characteristics since the theory's creation in the 1970s and 1980s, the original model (cf. figure 6.5) has been chosen as a starting point for the theoretical toolbox. The original approach of the job characteristics theory was assessed to provide a fruitful model to analyse the company's responsibility to influence job characteristics, yet at the same time it could be used to illustrate the employees' preferred work conditions and environment. The original model has not been applied uncritically, but its content has been adjusted to the context of this study (cf. section 6.2.2 and figure 6.7).

As described in the beginning of this section, the choice of theories has been based on their relevance and practical applicability to the empirical data – the empirical data suggested the choice and adaptation of theory.

Whereas both commitment theory and job characteristics theory have been created in a foreign, or 'Western' context (see chapter two), there is much to suggest their applicability in the context of Greenland – particularly because they are sufficiently spacious. Both theories encompass broad categories and present models that can be adapted to the specific context of the study without being restricted by the context in which they were created. Still, there is a need to be critical towards the theories' implicit understandings. The theories constantly need to be tuned in to the unique context of the Greenlandic labour market.

6.2.1. COMMITMENT THEORY

The empirically derived category of 'individual work-life relationship' showed how the importance of work is individually configured based on a person's relationship to the workplace and work in general, compared to other aspects of life.

Commitment theory (hereafter: COT) appeared central to investigate a person's relationship to work, and employee's job attribute preferences. Originally,

commitment theory concerns a person's organisational commitment; that is, the employee's relationship to the organisation/workplace.

A common approach to organisational commitment is the three-component model by Allen and Meyer (1996).

Affective commitment	A deeply personal and emotional bond with the organisation
Continuance commitment	The logical and rational evaluation of one's circumstances and costs associated with staying or leaving the organisation
Normative commitment	A sense of obligation, duty and fulfilling expectations

Figure 6.2 – The three-component model of organisational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996)

According to Allen and Meyer, the difference between affective, continuance and normative commitment is the 'nature of mindset'. Mindsets are defined as a psychological state (or commitment experience) comprised of one's perceptions, beliefs and feelings with respect to the commitment object (which could be one object only or several objects at the same time). A person's commitment is made up by a combination of all three, but some can be dominant. Components develop based on different work experiences and perceptions. Further, individual commitment can change during a person's work life (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Gellatly & Hedberg, 2016, p. 195).

Whereas the above model concerns commitment to an organisation only, there might be additional dimensions of a person's commitment when it comes to work. The sociologist Duncan Gallie uses the term 'employee commitment' which, according to Gallie's definition, encompasses the employees' nature of attitude towards work thus the importance of work to people's lives (Gallie, 2019). This importance can be absolute or relative in relation to other life values (ibid.).

Cohen (2007) offers a reconceptualization of the original model by Allen & Meyer, which embodies both organisational commitment and dimensions of commitment placed outside the organisation. Cohen argues that the categories in Allen & Meyer's model partly overlap and works with a two-dimensional conceptualization of commitment. Yet, his model has an additional dimension as a distinction is made between commitment that develops before entering a workplace and after entering a workplace (although it is argued that they influence each other). Further, the term propensity is introduced in connection with commitment before entering the organisation. His model is presented in figure 6.3, below.

Commitment		Bases of commitment	
dimensions		*Instrumental attachment*	*Psychological attachment*
	Before entry to the organization	**Instrumental commitment propensity**	**Normative commitment propensity**
Timing			
	After entry to the organization	**Instrumental commitment**	**Affective commitment**

Figure 6.3 – The four-component commitment model (Cohen, 2007, p. 337)

In Cohens model, the concept of normative commitment propensity is placed before the individuals' entry into the organisation, while affective commitment is placed after the employee's entry into the organisation. The original conceptualization of continuance commitment is reconceptualized to instrumental commitment propensity, that is placed before entry to the organisation, and instrumental commitment placed after the entry to the organisation (ibid.). Finally, Cohen uses general commitment dimensions in his model: *Instrumental attachment* and *psychological attachment* (Cohen, 2007, p. 337).

The model proposed by Cohen was assessed as more viable for the purpose of the study than the three-component-model for the following reasons: Firstly, the different sources and influences on commitment stand much clearer. Secondly, the category of continuance commitment becomes more tangible when divided into the proposed dimensions of instrumental commitment propensity and instrumental commitment. Finally, Cohen's model highlights the so-called 'multidimensionality' of commitment, which refers to interactions between different forms of commitment and connects to the previously mentioned understanding of work being of absolute or relative importance in relation to other life values (Gallie, 2019).

The understanding of commitment being multidimensional has been established in recent years when the concept of 'organisational commitment' has developed to a stage where commitment not only is associated with the organisation/workplace but also other entities and courses of action (e.g., commitment towards the community, family, co-workers, etc.). According to Natalie Allen, a Canadian scholar within industrial/organisational psychology, commitment can be multidimensional and an individual can have multiple commitments at the same time and thus stretch further than organisational commitment only (Allen, 2016).

Such multidimensionality also prevailed in the empirically derived categories, as the empirical findings from chapter five emphasised how the relationship to the workplace might be only one out of many commitments a person might have.

The following empirical example illustrates the relevance of the multidimensionality of commitment: Employee A perceives his salary to be too low for the work he is doing and struggles to pay his rent and provide for the family. He could ask for a higher salary, and his wife wants him to do this. However, Employee A knows that his employer struggles financially and will not be able to pay him more, even if he asks for it. Therefore, he does not ask his boss for a higher salary. He really likes his workplace but because of this, thinks about changing jobs. The employee thus stands between commitment to provide for his family and commitment to the company.

Combining Cohen's model with the empirically derived categories and the concept of multidimensionality, the below 'multidimensional commitment model' was developed for the study.

Commitment dimensions		Bases of commitment	
		Instrumental attachment	*Psychological attachment*
Influenced by…	*Factors external to organisation*	**Instrumental needs**	**Normative commitment**
	Factors internal to organisation	**Instrumental benefits**	**Affective commitment**

Figure 6.4 – The multidimensional commitment model

Based on the empirical data and previous analyses, several adjustments have been made to Cohen's original model: The timing dimension has been replaced by a new dimension called 'Influenced by'. The collected empirical data indicated that the timing dimension may be of little importance. Rather, commitment was shown to be influenced by internal or external factors regardless of if the timing was before or after entering the organisation. The empirically derived categories showed a clear division of influences from different standpoints: either factors outside of the organisation such as individual work-life relationship or societal and external factors, or factors within the organisation such as work conditions and environment. This is the reason for adjusting Cohen's 'Before / After entering an organisation' categories to 'Influenced by factors external to organisation' and 'Influenced by factors internal to organisation'.

Additionally, the term 'propensity' has been removed. The terms *normative commitment propensity* and *instrumental commitment propensity* have been adjusted as 'propensity' infers a sense of predisposition or tendency. The empirical data showed that for the workforce, neither normative nor instrumental commitment was significantly related to propensity or tendency. Instead, the workforce orientated

themselves on actual norms (normative commitment) or actual instrumental needs (instrumental commitment). The term *instrumental commitment propensity* has been adjusted to 'instrumental needs', and the term *normative commitment propensity* has been renamed to 'normative commitment'. In relation to this, the term *instrumental commitment* has been adjusted to 'instrumental benefits' that the employee receives from their job.

Through the adjustments, the terms match the empirically derived categories. At the same time, the reciprocal influence of the different factors should be acknowledged as in reality the drawn lines are more permeable than indicated by the model.

According to the proposed model, the four commitment dimensions in the above presented 'multidimensional commitment model' can be defined as follows:

A) *Instrumental needs* based on the individual situation and life-circumstances of each individual but also normative commitment that influences economic rationality.

B) *Instrumental benefits* that the individual receives from the workplace and that either match or do not match the employees' instrumental needs.

C) *Normative commitment* primarily coming from factors outside the workplace; based on upbringing, socialization, and surrounding society/community values.

D) *Affective commitment* towards the company which includes factors within one's workplace such as: the company as a whole, one's manager, one's colleagues and/or one's task.

The theoretical approach taken towards commitment in this study thus is a multidimensional approach, based not only on organisational or work aspects, but on commitment in all aspects of an employee's life. In the context of the study, this multidimensionality is especially important in order to include the societal or external factors that can influence commitment. Seeing commitment as multidimensional proposes potential for synergies, but also raises questions about compatibility and potential conflict.

6.2.2. JOB CHARACTERISTICS THEORY

Whereas *commitment theory*, as introduced above, concerns employees and their commitment to and attitude towards paid work, the second main theoretical approach adapted to this study concerns how employers can shape job characteristics that enrich a workplace.

The *job characteristics theory* (hereafter: JCT) is a theory of motivation focusing on the employer's responsibility to shape job characteristics that enrich the working life experience (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980). Developed in the 1970s by J. Richard Hackman and Edward Lawler, JCT originally was based on Maslow's theory on the hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943, 1970) and expectancy theory (Miner, 2015). JCT is one of the most prominent theories in the field of organisational behaviour. Yet in some of their more recent publications, the authors have argued that investigating organisational behaviour from the employer's point of view might be outdated and the focus should rather be in the employees' point of view (Hackman & Oldham, 2010). JCT has been assessed as a relevant theory to depart from when developing theoretical lenses for the purpose of the present study as the research questions both concern the employer's as well as the employee's point of view. The combination of JCT and COT showed high potential for a qualified analysis of employee job attribute preferences as they complement each other. Together, the theories cover both the employer's and the employee's perspective. The combination of theories is elaborated further in section 6.3. The present section will elaborate on how JCT has been adapted to this study.

The empirically derived category of 'Preferred work conditions and environment' referred to which work conditions and environment (offered by employers) were preferred by employees. A theory such as JCT fits this category well to enable the investigation of employer-offered components that make up the preferred work conditions and environment for employees. If employers are shaping job characteristics that enrich the workplace, these job characteristics are meant to make the workplace more attractive to employees. If the workplace is attractive to employees, this means that the employees' preferences are met by the offered job characteristics.
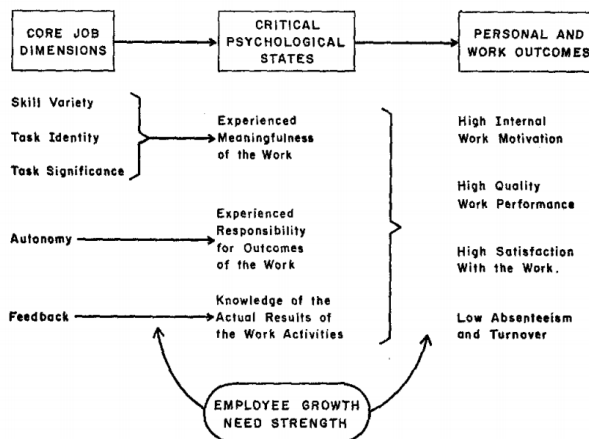

Figure 6.5 – The job characteristics model of work motivation (Fig. 1. in Hackman & Oldham, 1976, p. 256)

As shown in figure 6.5, the original model of JCT presents five core job characteristics: skills variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. These core characteristics can be configured by the workplace and are argued to contribute to the psychological state of the employee. Skills variety, task identity and task significance are argued to contribute to the job's meaningfulness, autonomy is argued to contribute to a sense of responsibility and feedback is argued to result in knowledge of results and thus ownership (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

In later adaptions of the theory, it is argued that an employee's overall job satisfaction is based on three components: job security, a feeling of fair compensation and a perception of good collaboration with managers and co-workers (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). This overall job satisfaction needs to be in place before the five core job characteristics (skills variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback) can be configured successfully (ibid.). Finally, Hackman and Oldham argue that if both the overall job satisfaction and the five core job characteristics are in place, employee satisfaction, performance and attendance is highest (ibid.).

Figure 6.6 below shows an attempt to illustrate this later adaption of JCT as an adaption of Maslow's hierarchy of needs by including the overall satisfaction as a base line of the model, which needs to be in place in order to be able to configure the top of the pyramid successfully.
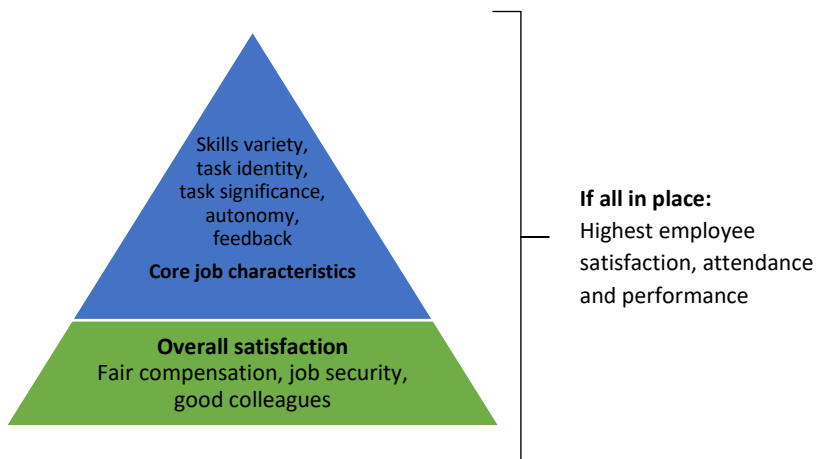

Figure 6.6 – Illustration of the original JCT (author's interpretation)

The choice of adapting JCT for the purpose of this study was based on the need for a broad theory in order to investigate which job characteristics are most important to employees in Greenland and, therefore, vital for employers to consider when it comes to shaping job characteristics that enrich workplaces. in a Greenlandic context. The theory provides spacious and flexible categories covering a wide range

of job characteristics that became visible in the empirical data (e.g., compensation, security, colleagues, feedback and skills variety).

Yet the empirical findings indicated that there might be no preconfigured, hierarchical combination of factors in the case of workplaces in Greenland, as otherwise suggested by JCT. In order to be as responsive as possible to the empirical data, the model has been adjusted to one that is more flexible, rather than strictly hierarchical. Based on a combination of figures 6.5 and 6.6, the proposed model is designed like a cone where the factors stated in JCT are illustrated as hovering spheres that can move up and down according to their importance to the employees.
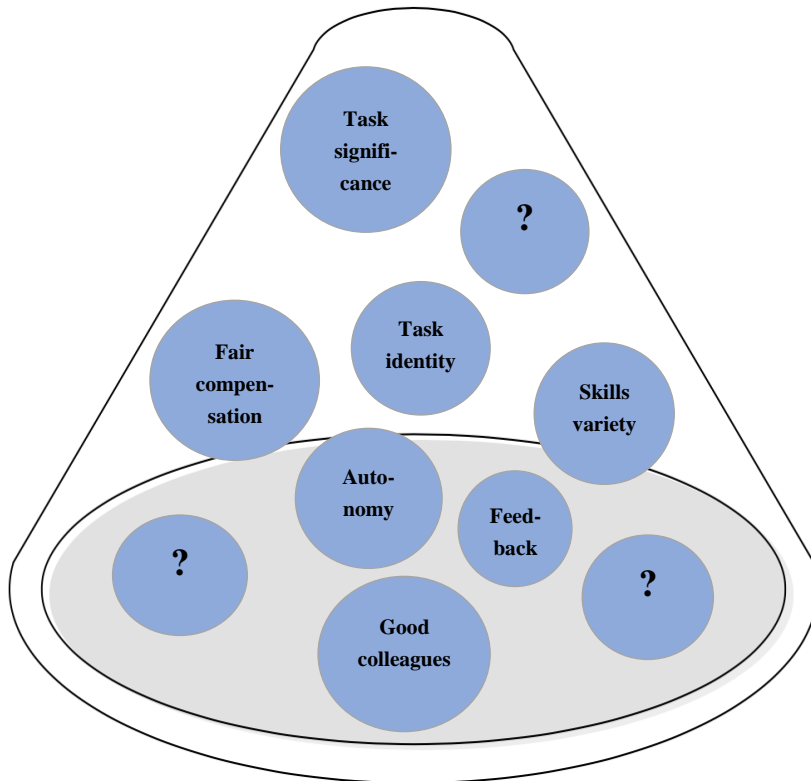
Figure 6.7 – The flexible job characteristic preferences model

The form of a cone still implies a hierarchy as those spheres that settle at the bottom build the base line, yet it is sufficiently spacious to allow the categories to float up and down. The base line refers to the basic satisfaction which, according to JCT, needs to be in place before the other factors which are floating higher up can be adjusted. Yet by designing the model in the form of a cone with floating spheres, the

baseline has not been configured beforehand. To keep the approach open for new categories that might result from the analysis, the spheres with question marks indicate spaces for additional factors. In the analysis will show if similar factors as suggested in JCT are relevant for employees in Greenland or if basic job satisfaction is based on different or additional values.

In this way, the model enables the display of individually configured themes of employee job characteristic preferences. The model is expected to differ for each individual member of the workforce, yet it can be easily adjusted to different groups and segments as for some employees, the same things will be at the base line while others show different tendencies. Instead of a constant baseline, one could also imagine a baseline that changes throughout the individuals work life influenced by social and external factors as well as changes in a person's commitment to paid work. Employers would need to adjust to changing job characteristic preferences of employees to continuously provide workplaces that are attractive to employees.

6.3. COMBINATION & LIMITATIONS OF THEORY

The combination and selective application of the theories presented above inspires the exploration of the empirically derived categories and assists the qualified investigation of 1) the employees' preferences with respect to type of commitment and job characteristics and 2) the areas that propose potential for alignment for employers.

As an overall theoretical approach, selected elements from COT and JCT will now be combined into one model. The synthesis of the two theories proposes high potential for a qualified analysis of the empirical data as together, the elements from the two theories allow the coverage of both employee job attribute preferences and the accommodation of these preferences by employers. The theories supplement each other and, in this way, allow for the coverage of the empirically derived categories and sub-themes.

In addition, the spacious and flexible character of the theories, as described in section 6.2, enhances their use in the specific context of the study, which requires a nuanced and open approach to theory (see also section 2.1 for elaboration).

Figure 6.8 below is a combination of the figures and models which have been introduced in this chapter. This final model illustrates how the empirically derived categories (orange) are matched with theory (blue), and how combining the theory and empirical data assists and inspires the investigation of the core interest of the study: employee's job attribute preferences.
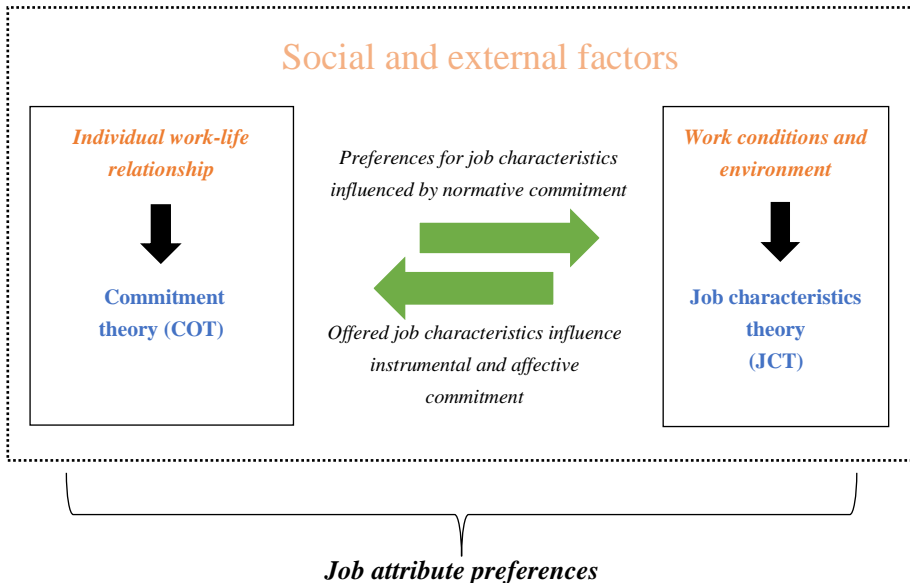
Figure 6.8 – The job attribute preferences model

From left to right, the model shows that individual differences in types of commitment can be affected by both intra- and extra-organisational factors, and how they can influence the employee's preferred job characteristics (green arrow from left to right).

From right to left, the model illustrates how job characteristics in the company connect to work conditions and environment. To a degree, job characteristics are influenced by social and external factors, which could restrict the company's offers. Job characteristics offered by the company can influence the employee's instrumental commitment and affective commitment (green arrow from right to left).

By this, JCT qualifies the discussion of the preferred work conditions and environment employees in Greenland. COT qualifies the discussion to which degree the employees' preferences are based on instrumental or affective commitment, as well as if and how these preferences originate from a person's individual relation to work compared to other aspects of life, or the conditions and environment at the workplace.

Recommendations for changes will mainly concern the factors that are changeable by either the employee or the employer – that is "individual work-life relationship" and "preferred work conditions and environment". The influence and importance of social and external factors will be acknowledged and discussed; however, giving recommendations for societal, political or similar changes (that are beyond what

employers and employees typically can influence) would be beyond the scope of this dissertation. Still, they are essential to note as they also mark the limit of useful measures that can be introduced by employers.

CHAPTER 7. ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYEE JOB ATTRIBUTE PREFERENCES

This chapter analyses the employees' job attribute preferences in detail and is based on the third data collection of the study, the employee interviews. The job attribute preferences are defined as the attributes that individual members of the workforce indicate as preferred if given a choice (cf. chapter one), and they are analysed here based on the theoretical lenses introduced in chapter six. As a result of the analysis in chapter five, the focus in the employee interviews and the following analysis is on EMPs entirely (cf. sections 3.5.3 and 5.10.1). Consequently, this chapter focusses on EMPs only. Section 7.7 focusses partly on MANs, although from the viewpoint of EMPs.

In total, 12 interviews that lasted between 30 and 90 minutes were carried out at several locations in Greenland. A detailed description of how data collection was carried out can be found in section 3.5.3.

In the following quotes, (R) refers to the researcher, (T) to the interpreter, and the interviewees are marked by I-A, I-B, … to I-H. All interview quotes were translated by the author and were adjusted when necessary to anonymise the interviewees. (…) stands for a natural break in the interviewee's speech. […] means that part of the quote has been omitted. [Text in square brackets] is an explanatory comment by the author.

7.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF SALARY

Attitude towards salary was of high importance in the first and second data collection as salary increase or other financial incentives regularly appeared to be used by companies as measures to attract and retain employees. Often, companies used these measures without having detailed knowledge about their relevance and effect.

When investigating this further, the employee interviews showed that most of the interviewees were not entirely satisfied with their salary.

> (R) (11:43) So you work (…) is it 48 hours a week? (…)
> (I-D) (11:47) Yes. I started (…) we have one shift a week. We take turns (…) taking the outdoors shift. I came in at 7 am and worked to 7 pm.

(R) (12:08) Woah, that is long time.

(I-D) (12:11) Excuse me?

(R) (12:12) Is it not (…) that is a long working day. Is it not?

(I-D) (12:16) Well, I have to make money.

(R) (12:17) Yes.

(I-D) (12:19) Right? I do not find it hard.

(R) (12:26) And you get paid by the hour like the others?

(I-D) (12:29) Yes. Collective-agreement salary.

(R) (12:33) Yes, and is it OK?

(I-D) (12:36) Yeah [(I-D) rather hesitant], beside that (…) we get a salary
supplement. So it is OK.

(R) (39:24) And are you satisfied with what you make? For your work
contribution?

(I-B) (39:29) No. No, I am not. I hold an undergraduate and a graduate
degree. […]

(R) (40:07) So you do not feel your educational background is taken into
account when it comes to your salary? That perhaps you should get a bit
more given the degrees you have obtained?

(I-B) (40:17) Yes. I have not had the opportunity to (…) negotiate. There
was no negotiation. The signing of my contract part was not 100%
according to procedure.

(R) (40:39) How so?

(I-B) (40:40) [The manager] said: "If you write me a letter, I will forward
it to HR". It is like (…) there is no direct [(R) interrupts]

(R) (40:52) What were you going to write in the letter?

(I-B) (40:55) That I would like to get a salary supplement. And I still
have not gotten an answer. It has been 4 months [followed by laughter
from both persons present]

(R) (28:56) You touched upon (…) salary. Are you satisfied with your
salary? You get paid by the hour?

(I-A) (29:06) Yes… [seems hesitant]

(R) (29:11) Just be honest.

(I-A) (29:13) OK. Well, I got three (…) as I told you… I got three
children. And a home. We pay 6000 DKK in rent, or 7000 DKK. Each
month. And then there is the internet- and the electricity bill, kids,
clothes and all that. When that is getting more expensive, there is so little
(…) It makes me sad, because things are getting more expensive, and
then (…) When I buy dinner, I have to buy the cheapest sort of
everything. Because we are a household of five. So, if we are going to eat

until we are full, we have to buy a lot of groceries. They should not
starve. […]
(R) (33:33) Could it also be because of it is difficult to ask for higher
earnings?
(I-A) (33:38) Definitely.

Only three interviewees said their salary was satisfying. These three respondents all
had reached retirement age but were working full-time (I-C, I-H, I-J), which is a
topic that will be elaborated further on in the section 7.3 on work ethic.

Conversations about salary also showed that job security could be equal to financial
security for some interviewees, which means that the expected instrumental benefits
from their work was very important for most. Even though employees' earnings
were not high they needed to be high enough to live off and thus give financial
security. From many companies' perspective, financial security was seen to relate to
a fixed salary instead of being paid on an hourly basis. The interviews shed new
light on this as very little interest in fixed, monthly paid salaries was shown. For
most respondents, being hourly paid had several advantages. Firstly, being
employed on a contract that pays hourly means that the salary is paid biweekly
instead of monthly.

(R) (30:11) Mhmm. What about salary?
(T) (30:23) [(T) translates (I-K)s answer] I am OK with the (…) salary
which I get every 14th day.
(R) (30:28) Yeah. Would it make a difference for you if you would
receive a monthly salary instead of getting paid by the hour?
(T) (30:45) [(T) translates (I-K)s answer] I do not know. It could be too
much of a waiting time, waiting for the salary.
(R) (30:58) Yeah! But it could perhaps mean higher earnings? [(T) Does
not hear the question, (R) repeats]
(T) (31:25) [(T) translates (I-K)s answer] Perhaps (…) it would be nice,
if I were a different person, a person who (…) was good at saving
money.

Secondly and mainly, respondents seem convinced that a fixed monthly paycheck
would result in lower earnings as extra hours would be more difficult to consider.
Almost all respondents seemed to work more than the standard working hours of 40
hours per week and preferred to be working a lot of hours in order to earn more.

(R) (24:41) Yes. (…) And when you say you work a lot, and get paid by
the hour, are you then earning a decent salary? Is your salary OK?
(I-G) (25:01) Yes.
(R) (25:03) Yeah, and perhaps because you work a lot of hours.
(I-G) (25:05) Yes.
(R) (25:10) Is it possible (…) It wouldn't make more sense for you get a

monthly salary as you would get less paid? [Refers to something mentioned earlier in the interview]
(I-G) (25:18) Yeah, I earn more than on (…) a monthly salary.
(R) (25:23) Yeah because you have the opportunity to earn more when you need to?
(I-G) (25:27) Yes.

(R) (25:44) Being hourly paid. Would it make a difference for you to receive a monthly salary? A fixed salary, you would only get paid once a month? How much is the monthly salary [(T) interrupts]
(T) (25:19) [(T) interprets (I-L)s answers] It would depend on how much (…) how much the monthly salary is.
(R) (26:25) Yes. And would it make a difference for you to get paid every second week or each month?
(T) (26:53) [(T) interprets (I-L)s answers] I have no experience getting paid by the month, so I could not say.
(R) (26:59) […] But would you like to work more or less hours?
(T) (27:21) [(T) interprets (I-L)s answers] I would like to have more hours.

(R) (33:57) Why would not you receive a monthly pay? Would it make a difference?
(I-A) (31:03) If I get a monthly pay, my salary goes down. If I get a monthly salary, then it would be like for [the manager]. If he works extra hours, he does not get paid for it. He only gets his monthly salary.
(R) (31:23) And you get paid for each hour?
(I-A) (31:25) Yeah, and if I work extra hours, I get paid for them but not [the manager]. That is why.
(R) (31:32) So you are alright with getting paid by the hour?
(I-A) (31:34) Yes.

Being hourly paid gives the option to earn more than one would with a fixed work schedule and a monthly paycheck. Financial security thus must be seen in connection with the salary level. This could explain why the employers' measures of offering a fixed salary on a monthly paycheck in order to retain their employees is not always successful. The security of a monthly paycheck anticipated by the employers does not seem to play a significant role for the employees. Their security lies in having a sufficient income through wage-work, which was especially true for those workers receiving a minimum wage.

Having a job implies receiving a paycheck, and at best, the paycheck is sufficient to make a living. For most low skilled interviewees, this seemed to require them to work more than standard working hours. Salary was thus shown to be of major importance. At the same time, the overall perception of not receiving sufficient earnings prevailed with most interviewees (as they perceive their salary to be too low).

This is interesting as 'fair compensation' is one of the three overall job satisfaction factors defined by JCT. Do employees feel forced to be satisfied with the offered wages as the small size of settlements and the general geographic preconditions leave little to no alternatives? The interviewees seem to know the current labour market situation quite well, and also know if there are alternatives to their current employment or not. The workers expectations towards instrumental benefits might be influenced by this. Disappointment about the instrumental benefits not meeting instrumental needs might be less if the workers know that there are no alternatives. This becomes problematic if the workers think there are no alternatives but have become used to a life, where working 50 to 60 hours a week in order to receive a sufficient salary without being able to see alternatives is considered normal. Alternatively, this could also be seen as an acceptable lifestyle, as further discussed in section 7.3.

The employee survey also asked about the importance of the possibility of receiving a raise, which proved to be more important than the actual salary level. This makes sense if the salary is perceived to be insufficient, and also seen in the context of recognition, and that what tends to be important to people is their salary relative to others salary. Based on the fact that most employees were more interested in hourly pay versus a monthly salary, asking about a raise might have been understood as a raise of the hourly payment.

Yet another perspective is that talking about earnings in general seemed difficult and only few employees seemed to speak up about their needs. This was one of the most prominent challenges shown in the interviews: lack of communication about money and earnings.

> (R) (21:44) (…) so you have permanent contract, but do you get paid by the hour?
> (I-I) (21:49) Mm [(I-I) responds in the affirmative].
> (R) (21:50) Yeah, and is it alright?
> (I-I) (21:51) No.
> (R) (21:52) No.
> (I-I) (21:54) I think it is too low.
> (R) (21:56) Yes
> (I-I) (21:57) Sadly. I don't protest against the salary level. I just work.
> (R) (22:05) Yeah, so when I ask about (…) when I asked if you would be

willing to talk about everything, but salary is perhaps not something you would like to talk about.
(I-I) (22:13) Yeah, but I do not talk so often about it. Last year I said: "[manager], my salary is too low, I am only making 90 DKK per hour, and I have been here since 2017". He said: "You can get 5 DKK extra per hour".

But it is difficult to talk with him [the manager] about private life the first time. We are also different (…) like in Denmark prices are much lower. And here in Greenland it is much more important. If you have (…) my husband does have an education, and I have a higher hourly pay than most others, but we have three children and a home. Sometimes it can be difficult to pay the bills or (…). When I need to talk to him [the manager] about my private life, it can be a little difficult to tell him about it without risking that he misunderstands me. Also when telling jokes. I just know that Greenlandic and Danish jokes are very different. And this can be misunderstood. (I-A)

(T) (25:05) [(T) interprets (I-L)s answers] I am (…) I get a litte bit less than (…) at my former workplace.
(R) (25:10) Mm. Is that something you talked about when you were hired?
(T) (25:24) [(T) interprets (I-L)s answers] No.
(R) (25:26) Mm. So you got hired, and were just told what your salary will be (…)?
(T) (25:37) [(T) interprets (I-L)s answers] Yes, that is correct.

(R) (31:35) But you would like to earn more?
(I-A) (31:37) Yes, because (…) sometimes it is a lot. Sometimes not so much. When we are not that busy at work. But sometimes when we are way [too busy] or (…) short on staff. Then my (…) off course (…) our bodies, they get tired, so sometimes the hourly salary is not high enough. Sometimes. And sometimes not so. And my husband usually says: "You should tell them, that you should get a little bit more." And then I say: "No". I was lucky, I got 20 DKK extra.

As illustrated in chapter two and four, paid employment and salaries in general might still be considered as a rather new, and for some alien, concept in Greenland; and the general attitude to money might be influenced by this. From the interviews, there seemed to be no culture of talking about earnings and especially no culture of

asking for a raise. This could be a general trait anchored in Greenlandic culture, and a consequence of wage-work being a relatively new concept. It might also be influenced by the so-called birthplace criterion. From 1964 until the 1990s, non-local labour received special employment benefits and a higher salary than locals, even if both had the same educational level. While this disparity between non-local and local labour is not official policy anymore, some still argue its presence on other levels. The topic is regularly discussed in public debate in Greenland (Janussen 1998, p. 285. In: Petersen, 2005, p. 165; M. K. Poppel, 2005, p. 133). Yet being hesitant to talk about money could also connect to ways of communicating and what other researches have called a silent culture (Berliner et al., 2012, p. 393).

The feeling of having been discriminated against and treated unfairly as a society might still be deeply ingrained in some Greenlanders. In this sense, it is interesting to note that two out of the three interviewees have non-local managers (all coming from Denmark). This points to an intercultural dimension that might influence communication about salary. I-A expressed a fear of misunderstanding based on her manager's different cultural context. Not talking about money relates to normative commitment and Greenlandic society norms where at times, other's needs might be set higher than one's own needs.

> (R) (27:59) Well… yeah. But could you tell [the manager], that you
> would like to work more hours?
> (T) (28:21) [(T) interprets (I-L)s answers] yes, I could of course mention
> it. But it would affect my co-workers.

The interviewee emphasizes how she does not want to bring harm to others by focusing on her own needs which shows strong community values.

In addition, I-A talked about an awareness of how much the company's budget allows for employee weekly salary and how she was trying to follow these rules. I-F said his salary is low but acceptable and that he does not want to complain. He thinks that younger colleagues need a higher salary if companies want to retain them. This shows an affective commitment both to the company as well as colleagues. As previously established, looking after co-workers can be deeply anchored in local culture and lifestyle and thus refers to normative commitment.

Supplementary income from subsistence activities, social benefits or similar and their influence on the working-age population's attitude to employment was anticipated by both employers and in secondary literature. The EMP interviews gave partial insight on sources of income other than wage-work. Several interviewees mentioned how they would go hunting and fishing in their spare time, but none reported earnings from these activities to be noteworthy. Generally, earnings from subsistence activities cannot be regarded as monetary income per se but rather the provision of goods, that may have monetary value. When discussing subsistence activities, it needs to be considered that all interview locations had opportunities for

wage-work employment and thus no strict dependence on subsistence activities as it is the case in some Greenlandic settlements.

Being unemployed and receiving social benefits has been reported to be not enjoyable (I-D, I-F). One interviewee mentioned how he unquestionably preferred to work instead of receiving social benefits.

> (R) (05:45) When you switch (…) when you switch jobs (…), does it
> happen that you are not employed? Could you for example say: "Now I
> do not want to work more", and then you have [(I-D) interrupts]
> (I-D) (05:56) No, I (…) I have been (…) I was at the municipality (…)
> like, social benefits. I do not like it.
> (R) (06:06) No.
> (I-D) (06:07) I would rather work. After two months, my case officer
> said: "[Interviewees name], would you like to receive incapacity
> benefits?" "What? No, no I want to work", I said. Back then (…) since
> then I have found work (…)

To prefer employment rather than social benefits seems logical, yet public authorities repeatedly have mentioned their observation of some members of the Greenlandic workforce preferring a lifestyle financed by social benefits rather than wage-work (N. J. M. Pedersen et al., 2018). This is relevant to highlight as among the interviewed there was no account for the preference of social benefits. Obviously, all the interviewed had a job at the time of the interview and the picture might look different when talking to unemployed members of the workforce, or even those that choose to be economically inactive, which however would be a different study.

Yet, a general commitment to working and earning money was seen amongst the interviewed. Even though many perceived their salary to be insufficient, they would rather work than receive money from the public purse. This shows instrumental commitment to provide for oneself and one's family. It also demonstrates that in order to commit normatively, the interviewees preferred to receive instrumental benefits based on their own efforts and not from public authorities. In a sense, this economic rationality can be interpreted as a notion of taking care of oneself and providing for yourself without being individualistic as well as pride of working and being able to earn money.

Another issue is not connected to different sources of income but the general low earnings for low skilled workers. One respondent mentioned a connection between some worker's absenteeism and their inability to save up for holidays.

> (I-C) (10:05) But (…) how should I put it (…) I think (…) that they are
> used to (…) my colleagues can get by with almost no money. When they
> get salary, they start from scratch. But the occasional not showing up for

> work when we get salary on a Friday, that still happens. It must be (…) it is not (…) it is not just here in Greenland. It also happens in other countries. They tend to (…) how should I put it (…) I am afraid to say it. (R)(11:21) When your colleagues do not (…) show up for work [(I-C) interrupts].
> (I-c) (11:25) Yeah, when they do not show up. They are maybe drinking (…) enjoying each others company. They get way too little salary (…) or whatever you call it (…) you could call it pocket money. Then they cannot save up and then […] (…) there is not much to save.

As cited previously, another interviewee highlighted how she prefers a biweekly salary as she is not good at saving up (I-L). These quotes strongly point to both an issue with an insufficient income for some, but also that administering this income might not come naturally for some. The interviewee also refers to the myth of employees drinking their salary away as soon as they receive it. If employees are absent after payday, it could be better to have a payday once a month instead of biweekly. The topic of alcohol will be further discussed in section 7.3, on work ethic. Both the topic of administering one's earnings as well as spending one's salary as soon as it is received refers to a 'hand to mouth' mentality that has been mentioned in early literature and still seems to be applicable for some members of the working-age population today (Boserup, 1963; Hansen & Tejsner, 2016; Kalaallit Nunaanni Naatsorsueqqissaartarfik, 2004; Wilson, 2015).

What is relevant to observe is the interviewee saying that he probably does not dare to say this. He could be afraid of confirming / playing into an inter-cultural taboo when mentioning both alcohol, absenteeism, favouritism, insufficient salary. By this, it is suggested that some labour market issues in Greenland might be sensitive topics (see also section 5.1). In addition, the importance of good colleagues and a positive atmosphere at the workplace is emphasised as the interviewee seems to be uncomfortable to speak negatively about his colleagues. See also section 7.5 on workplace culture for an elaboration of the importance of good colleagues and a positive workplace atmosphere.

The previously mentioned preference of being hourly paid instead of monthly paid indicates that salaries are low in relation to the workload. As established, many interviewees felt obliged to work more than 40 hours a week to make a living. Very few complained about this, which points to a certain attitude to work and commitment to employment. The next section provides an analysis and discussion of the interviewees attitude to their workload, followed by a section on work culture and ethic.

In the above, it is also clearly shown how the experience and attitudes reported by the interviewees are one reality, but how there also are other realities that do not necessarily show themselves explicitly in the interviews.

7.2. EXPERIENCING A HIGH WORKLOAD

Chapter five illustrated that most employers anticipate their workers having a high workload. Yet none of the employers had measures in place to address this challenge. The employee survey results showed that indeed, a high percentage of respondents did indicate their workload was too high with an average of 25% (37% for MANs, 37% and 23%. for EMPs). No distinct difference for skilled and low skilled labour was observed (27%, 26% respectively). Women, to a slight degree, perceived their workload to be higher than men did (30%, 25% respectively).

The employee interviews reported a high workload for almost all respondents. Interestingly, amongst the interviewees, workload has mainly been understood as working many hours and having a busy workday. It was not necessarily connected to skills or competences (e.g., if the employee has the necessary skills for a task or not). From the employers' view, workload mainly has been discussed in relation to the skills level of the workforce. This focus is likely to need revision.

> The job [her previous occupation] was (…) a good position, and my salary was higher, than it is today. And I worked 35 hours work week, and here [at the new workplace], I work more than full time, if you can put it like that. You have to be here all the time (I-B, 54:45)

> (R) (11:43) So when you are working (…) is it then 48 hours a week?
> (I-D) (11:47) Yes. I started (…) we have shifts once a week. We change teams doing (…) taking the outdoor shift. I show up at seven in the morning until seven in the evening.
> (R) (12:08) Woah, that is long.
> (I-D) (12:11) Excuse me?
> (R) (12:12) Isn't it (…) that is a long working day, isn't it?
> (I-D) (12:16) Well, I have to make money.
> (R) (12:17) Yes.
> (I-D (12:19) Right? I do not find it hard.

> (R) (04:04) When you moved here, was it easy finding work? [at the interviewee's current workplace]
> (I-G) (04:08) Yes. But-but-but (…) when I get time off from work, then I go sailing (…) hunting. In Saqqaq. But not here. I do not have the time for it. I work the entire week. The week and weekend.
> (R) (04:33) So you work more here [at this workplace]?
> (I-G) (04:37) Yes.
> (R) (04:38) Why?

(I-G) (04:39) We have so much we have to get done.

[…]

(R) (05:13) Do you miss going out hunting?

(I-G) (05:16) Yeah, once in a while.

(R) (05:18) Have you completely stopped doing it?

(I-G) (05:20) No [almost whispering].

(R) (05:21) Not even during the summer?

(I-G) (05:22) No. If I have (…) time off, then I could go sailing. But for summer I am thinking (…) reindeer hunting.

[…]

(I-G) (14:41) Yeah. We work overtime. In [20]16 I worked 16-18 hours a day. [when asked about how they handle the absence of colleagues]

(R) (14:59) Wow.

(I-G) (15:00) It is because there is so much that needs to be done (…).

[…]

(R) (15:11) Are there any rules on how much you are allowed to work?

(I-G) (15:13) No. It is up to me, how much I want to work.

(R) (15:18) Yeah, and that is because you get paid by the hour?

(I-G) (15:20) Yes.

Other respondents also reported that they worked 12-14 hours some days (I-A, I-H). It was accepted amongst interviewees of all ages that it is positive or at least acceptable to work many hours. This indicated a strong commitment to their job that could either be instrumental, affective or normative. This will be elaborated on in the following.

In the first Greenlandic labour force survey, which was published recently (Høgedahl & Krogh, 2019), it was found that appointed working hours matched the actual working hours of the workforce to a high degree and that only few respondents had worked overtime during the reference week of the study (ibid. p.46). This points to the possibility that the many working hours have been mutually agreed to by employee and employer, or at least recognised implicitly as a precondition for many positions.

As also seen in the quotes below, instrumental benefits can be a positive side of working many hours. I-K mentioned how she would like to work more hours if someone could pick up her child from day care. She also mentioned how financial benefits play an important role for her motivation to work, and thereby puts her family's needs in focus. Others do not specifically mention instrumental needs or benefits, yet still would prefer to work more hours based on affective or normative commitment.

(R) (09:41) How many hours do you work each week (…)?

(I-I) (09:48) Not so many. I wish that I could get six working days, but I get five working days. Sometimes it is from 11am to 6pm like today.

> And sometimes from 9am to 6pm. And sometimes from 8am to 4pm. it varies. As long as I (…) do not work during the evenings, then I am happy.
> (R) (10:14) Yeah, you would like to go home?
> (I-I) (10:16) Yes.
> (R) (10:20) But you are not allowed to work more? More hours?
> (I-I) (10:22) Yes! I get a phone call if they need someone. If I have the time, I can go to work as a replacement
> (R) (10:30) Yes. But it is because you would like to work six days a week. Not just five.
> (I-I) (10:34) Yes.
> (R) (10:35) So you would like to work all the time.
> (I-I) (10:37) Yes.
> (R) (10:38) Why?
> (I-I) (10:39) I love working here.
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>
> [asked if he would like to change job and work fewer hours]
> (I-D) (25:41) No, I like working many hours (…) Like now. 7am to 7pm. It is fine
> (R) (25:51) 7am to 7pm five to six times a week?
> (I-D) (25:55) Yes. Just like this week. I will be working until 7pm. From 7am to 7pm
> (R) (26:03) Do you then work less next week?
> (I-D) (26:06) Yes. From 7am to 4pm in the afternoon.

Both examples show affective commitment to the workplace (I-I really likes her work; I-D expresses that he likes to be at his workplace).

The fact that several interviewees really like their job and therefore have no issues with working many hours could point to a voluntarily high workload and stands in contrast to the perception of 'laziness' amongst members of the workforce that has been part of the public discourse.

Another advantage of working many hours that has been mentioned repeatedly is the preference of being at work instead of being bored at home (I-A, I-D, I-I). One respondent mentioned that working a lot helps him to stay focused and keeps him from being absent from work which, in a sense, refers to being responsible and taking ownership.

> (I-D) (11:03) […] And then in between there is a long weekend when we have to (…) when we do not need to work. But thank God we have started working on Sundays. Yes, each Sunday. So, we only have one day off each week. On Saturdays. Yes.

(R) (11:38) And that is fine?
(I-D) (11:39) Yes. I am really happy about it.

This also echoes responses from I-C and I-I. To have one's work time determine leisure time seemed to be satisfying for the three interviewees.

(R) (26:10) These are some long days.
(I-D) (26:15) Yes, but I do not have anything to do at home.
(R) (26:20) No.
(I-D) (26:22) Otherwise I am just running after girls [followed by a laugh by (R) and (T)].
(R) (26:29) And that is also challenging.
(I-D) (26:31) That is also challenging. Especially during the winter.

I-Ds account also tells something about work ethic and work-life relationship (he says to have nothing to do at home and therefore prefers to work a lot) that we will come back to later. Working many hours might connect to meaningfulness as keeping yourself busy with work has been reported as something positive. This does not necessarily mean that the employees experience their actual tasks at their workplace as meaningful, but the act of working as such seems meaningful for them.

Potential downsides to working many hours were also mentioned. I-H reported how youth might be put off by high workloads, and thus pointed to a generational difference - which will be discussed later.

(T) (04:43) [(T) interprets (I-H)s answer] Well, there is a lack all year around – even during the winter. So (…) it might be explained by, that the place, where they are at, is like, where there are a lot of machines, and there is noise. And if they have had a busy first day, where it has been a hard first day at work, it can happen that they do not come back.
(R) (17:18) Yes. Is it younger workers?
(T) (17:26) [(T) interprets (I-H)s answer] They are also very young, those who are looking for work.

Several respondents reported that working many hours could lead to illness, pain in the back or similar, which could result in a bad day at work.

But I also get a migraine from the (…) our freezers or machines. When I work too much, when my body is tired, I often have experienced that my migraine appears. But I have got Treo [pain remedy]. (I-A) (16:47)

As seen in the quote above, some employees suffer from a condition that makes it hard to work. However, it is not something they complain about. Rather, they take the remedies that are available against the pain and keep on working. In fact, interviewees expressed understanding for situations at their workplace that required them to work many hours as shown in some of the previous quotes (for instance sick

or absent co-workers, weak management or similar). This points to both affective commitment as well as normative commitment and responsibility to the workplace. This stands in sharp contrast to the lack of a sense of responsibility experienced by employers (cf. section 5.9).

In section 7.5 on workplace culture, it will be shown how not complaining about work can be part of the workplace culture and how those who are complaining might even be looked down upon. Another section analyses the employees' attitude to working time and leisure time as from the above findings on voluntary high workload and many work hours, a specific attitude to work-life balance appeared and is important to analyse further.

From a theoretical perspective, working many hours and having a high workload can be connected to different types of commitment: instrumental benefits, as hourly-paid employees increase their salary by working many hours, but also instrumental needs as many employees gave the impression to be depending on these extra hours in order to receive an income that is high enough to live off, as they otherwise experienced their income to be insufficient (see also section 7.1).

Further, employees seemed to experience working many hours as a matter of course and did not call this practice into question. Besides the instrumental benefits, this points to the role of both affective and normative commitment, as well as responsibility-taking and meaningfulness to the act of working itself.

The interviewees convey the perception that working many hours is part of the Greenlandic work culture. As seen in the employer interviews the companies are not unaware of their employees working a lot. Yet, it could be questioned how much employers actually acknowledge the work of their employees or how much working many hours is seen as an integral part of Greenlandic work culture. This will be discussed further in the section 7.5 on workplace culture.

With respect to the core job characteristics, meaningfulness for the employees can both be connected to their skills and tasks but also simply the act of working, which shows an additional dimension to JCT. Moreover, meaningfulness appears even though most employees reported not receiving a sufficient or fair compensation for their work. For some employees it seemed that fair compensation could be obtained by way of increasing the number of working hours.

7.3. THE EMPLOYEES' WORK ETHIC

The discussion of workload already gave a hint as to the employees' work ethic. The findings from the section on workload drew a picture of hardworking employees

who also show responsibility towards their colleagues and the local community, and often consider a positive atmosphere at the workplace a primary goal. The latter concerns workplace culture rather than work ethic and will be considered in section 7.4.

In section 5.9, the term 'work ethic' was defined to comprise both the employees' sense of responsibility to show up at work every day and their devotion and sense of responsibility to work. This definition was based on the findings from the first and second data collection which indicated a relation between work ethic and normative commitment.

According to scholarly literature, early socialization and high education is argued to have a major influence on employees' work ethic and commitment to work (Gallie, 2019). The effect of upbringing and socialization on commitment is an established field of research in organisational commitment (see for instance Meyer et al., 1998). Along these lines, many of the interviewees spoke about how they were raised to be proud, modest and hard-working. This can be seen in some of the interviewees' responses on the question about their first job.

> (T) (09:27) [(T) interprets (I-H)s answer] (…) the first thing she remembers, it is around the age of 14, the place where she comes from […] Where they bring supplies (…) supplies with small ships. And (…) there are no facilities (…) port facilities in the settlements, so they arrive (…) it gets transported by small boats. They get signed up when they would like to start working [(I-H) interrupts]
> (T) (10:04) [(T) interprets (I-H)s answer] Then they are told: "Now you can get started".
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> (I-F) (00:38) My first job was at a factory in Sisimiut.
> (R) (03:42) Yeah?
> (I-F) (03:43) Like (…) I love fish. If one could (…) consider fishing as a job, then that would be my first job, onboard a small fishing vessel. I was not even 12 years old. We worked around 12 hours a day. Removing guts from cod.
> (R) (04:09) Did you do it because you enjoyed it, or because you… [(I-F) interrupts]
> (I-F) (04:12) It was a part of my upbringing.
> [(R) poses question if money was a reason for working in this job]
> (I-F) (04:46) Ah, well [(I-F) hesitates and (R) responds with a laugh]. When I think about it, they probably owe me a lot of money [followed by laughter by everyone present]. But I usually put it this way: "I have learned to work that way". So, I am grateful for having been a sailor on such a small vessel.

(R) (02:44) But why did you take the job? Just before, you said you kind
of did not need it.
(I-B) (02:47) It was my parents, they wanted to teach me: "Now you are
14 years old – now you are going to learn to work". […] I was a bit
against it because I did not need the money or something. But it was
because, I had to learn how to work. So, I did.

(I-D) (03:11) Yes, it was at GFI/Greenland Fishing Industry. I was only
14 years old.
(R) (03:20) What did you do there?
(I-D) (03:22) I left school for work and to help my parents. It was back
when they (…) needed the money. (…) yeah.

To start working at a young age seems very normal for most interviewees, both
those who are currently in their twenties, as well as the older ones. That this is part
of the upbringing is also shown by some interviewees mentioning how they are
trying to pass these values on to their own children.

(I-I) (32:42) Because he [her father] always told me: "You have to be on
time. You have to be on time."
(R) (32:47) Yeah, so you learned it at home.
(I-I) (32:52) He thought it was important.
[In another part of the conversation, I-I also mentions how she tries to
give this attitude to her son. Her son keeps on saying that he wants to
work just like his mum. He is 11 years old at the time of the interview.]

Another interviewee thinks that his own high work ethic was inherited from his
father, and he relates how he now tries to pass it on to his own children (I-J).

Both normative and instrumental commitment appeared to be connected to work
ethic. While instrumental needs undoubtedly have played a role for some
interviewees, for others starting to work was much more part of their upbringing,
and contribution to society. One interviewee told that at age 14 she was not
interested in working in the first place as her family did not need the money (I-B).
Another interviewee mentioned that he did not receive salary for his work, although
he hesitated before adding that he might have an outstanding balance but then
quickly points at how thankful he is to have learned to work in this way (I-F). It is
not clear with whom the interview person thinks he might have an outstanding
balance, and who he worked for back then – it could be his parents, the local
community, or the local company. Yet from his response as well as the others it
becomes clear that apart from instrumental needs or benefits, normative
commitment and potentially also autonomy (which, according to JCT, leads to

responsibility-taking) played a role for the interviewee's work ethic since childhood, as this is how many claimed that they have 'learned how to work'. From an early age, the interviewed employees seem to have been raised to become engaged in local society and help with tasks, and this not solely for financial benefits but rather to contribute and to achieve competences themselves. This echoes a way of living in Greenland where family and societal needs are often placed above one's own needs which illustrates the kind of collective responsibility previously mentioned in other scholarly work (cf. section 4.3).

A lack of a sense of responsibility was perceived as one of the main challenges by employers (cf. section 5.9), and it must be questioned where the employer is placed in this 'hierarchy of responsibility' described by the interviewees. A lack of a sense of responsibility was only accounted for in one interviewee, in which the interviewee told about how he changes workplaces according to his own 'free will' (I-D). From the employer's point of view, this could be perceived as a lack of taking responsibility that could be more widespread than what is visible in the interviews. Yet, the main part of the interviewed employees expressed how they had learned a good work ethic and how to be responsible towards a job from childhood, based on instrumental needs and/or normative commitment. Even though no generational differences among the interviewees could be observed, issues for younger workers were mentioned at times, pointing to a lack of a sense of responsibility being a particular problem amongst younger employees. One interviewee mentioned how a heavy workload might put off younger workers, while older workers are used to it (I-H). This might point to a lack of patience to get used to high workload.

With the ongoing development of the educational system in Greenland during the last decades, youth nowadays enter the labour market at a later age (Rasmussen, 2011, p. 42). For many parents, it might be more important that their children attend an education than teaching them how to work. There were only few young participants among the interviewees. All the above quoted interviewees were over the age of 25 (aforementioned I-D is 50+ years old). Accounts from youth thus lack in the interviews yet the employee survey result point to workload being as much a problem for youth as for older workers (see figure 5.5). The purpose of going to work may have changed over generations, especially with the still ongoing process of local norms and values intertwining with foreign norms and values and thus contemporary society's complexity when it comes to cultural values. Yet the generational change is difficult to examine based on the present data. Upcoming publications such as the Arctic Youth Project might give further insight into youth's work ethic (J. N. Larsen & Ingimundarson, n.d.). As seen in the above, the results from the study at hand point in several possible directions: Youth that still to a high degree learn about work ethic during upbringing and socialization; youth that are more influenced by their own/their family's/the society's desire for education, which could result in them starting working late in life; youth that are in a limbo between wanting to further their education (that might require them to move, but in the long

term would give them a higher salary) and earning (fast) money in low skilled jobs; youth that struggle with the new, foreign norms at the workplaces, and old(er), local norms that they receive and bring from home.

Scholarly literature and the employer interviews pointed to a lack of purpose beyond money-making, and therefore a focus on salaries and monetary motivation for low skilled workers. When investigating this topic, the employee interviews could not confirm a solely monetary motivation for low skilled workers. However, a strong focus on the purpose of work was seen for skilled workers (I-A, I-B, I-E, I-F). For low skilled workers, a monetary motivation was present as due to lower salaries, they needed to earn money to make a living. Due to the perceived insufficient salary, most low skilled workers expressed the need to work many hours for this purpose.

In spite of this, most low skilled interviewees also showed non-monetary motivation. For some, task identity and significance as well as colleagues showed to be at least as important job attribute preferences as are financial benefits. Some even showed affective commitment to the workplace despite receiving what was perceived to be an insufficient salary.

The importance of other factors than salary becomes even clearer when talking about retirement. A couple of the interviewees had reached or were close to retirement age but did not plan on retiring.

> (T) (14:20) [(T) interprets (I-H)s answer] She has a (…) she is in good health, so on one side she would like to continue working, but she has also thought it over – a few days ago -, about whether she should go to SIK [the union] and fill out the forms for pension [(T) turns to (I-H) for confirmation]. So, she is in a dilemma, whether she will do it or not is hard to tell for her.
> (R) (14:46) Yeah.
> (T) (14:56) [(T) interprets (I-H)s answers] She does not want to leave [the workplace], she is really happy to work there.
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> (T) (03:59) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] I can retire as of March 1st, but I am going to continue working.
> […]
> (R) (21:34) And are you satisfied with your salary, or how do you feel (…) about the salary you get?
> (T) (21:46) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] Yes, he is satisfied with it.
> (T) (22:00) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] I still feel, that I am in good health
> (T) (22:10) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] That is why I want to continue working for a while

(R) (22:13) Yeah. But is it also because of financial reasons that you want to continue working for a while?
(T) (22:21) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] Yes.
(T) (22:35) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] Well, personally we do not have that many expenses, because we own our house.
(T) (22:49) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer]But I like working. That is why I want to continue with it for a while
(R) (22:53) Yes. So the reason is (…) you like your job, you like your colleagues or the factory?
(T) (23:08) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] Yes.
(R) (23:09) So if they would not pay you, you would still show up?
(T) (23:36) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] Well (…) uh (…) if you like to work, and if you like your colleagues, than it is like that, that you want to continue working. Just stopping here and right now (…) that is no good.

(I-C) (00:26) And so after I retired, I found out that you receive a really, really small amount of money. Really small earnings or (…) pension here. But I get some money from Denmark: PensionDanmark. But it is taxed 50%. So, I am forced to work. My son goes to school. He will soon graduate. So, I have to work. I am (…) turning 69 this summer.
[…]
(I-C) (15:55) Next year, I'll turn 70. I do not know. It is (…) I think, I have to (…) there is something pulling me to Denmark (…) my friends. They say, I have an apartment (…) or that there is room for me in Denmark. But I love working, yeah?

Salary did not seem to play the main role for the interviewees' decision to keep on working, but more a conviction that they were healthy and fit and did not see any reason to stop working, as they still could contribute. Yet it was not clear if they saw their contribution primarily as a contribution to their own household income, the workplace or the Greenlandic economy.

While most interviewees highlighted their commitment to work as main reason for not retiring, salary might play a more crucial role than expressed by the interviewees, as for example seen in the quote by I-C above. Especially low skilled workers might only have few retirement savings. Whereas all citizens are eligible to receive a small amount of state pension, retirement savings through workplaces has only been made obligatory since January 2019 which means that it is not sure that workers in retirement age actually can live off their retirement savings and thus have instrumental benefits from continuing to work.

In addition, due to cultural reasons, the concept of retirement might be understood differently in Greenland than to the 'traditional western' understanding. Traditional

living patterns had no such concept as retiring which potentially plays into the employees' understanding of work time and leisure time.

There were however also accounts for a different type of work ethic that for instance concerned (former) alcohol problems.

> (T) (41:02) [(T) interprets (I-H)s answer] Yeah, when you are always working, then sometimes it can happen, that it is pleasant with those days you have off [followed by a laugh by everyone present].
> (T) (41:36) [(T) interprets (I-H)s answer] 15 years ago, she stopped smoking and drinking alcohol, because she rather wanted to work. She prefers working over smoking and drinking.
> (T) (42:00) [(T) interprets (I-H)s answer] That is why she is enjoying the good life, without any problems
> (R) (42:07) What happened back then (…) when you decided to stop smoking and drinking? Why? What happened?
> (T) (42:27) [(T) interprets (I-H)s answer] Once she got grandchildren.
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> (T) (13:36) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] We have gotten some people Tasiilaq. These are young people, who work the required hours in a stable manner
> (I-J) (13:50) [(I-J) speaks to (T) about the question in Greenlandic followed by a laughter by (I-J)]
> (T) (13:54) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] It is probably because, they do not (…) yeah, drink alcohol.
> (R) (13:59) Yeah. Well that is good.
> (T) (14:07) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] Yeah, it has been (…) our team from Tasiilaq had some good workers. Young people.
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>
> (I-D) (01:19) Yeah [(I-D) hesitates]. I guess you can ask me about it. It is (…) I party from time to time, so I change workplaces sometimes.

Social skills and relations to colleagues were also connected to work ethic.

> (T) (13:10) [(T) interprets (I-K)s answer] Sometimes I get tired of it, but I know that I got to do it, if I want to continue living .
> […]
> (T) (13:52) [(T) interprets (I-K)s answer] I am almost over it, but sometimes I am really unhappy [the end of the sentence cannot be heard on the tape].
> (R) (14:04) Really?

(T) (14:05) Sad and tired.
(R) (14:08) Yeah. Because of your work?
(I-K) (14:11) No.
(R) (14:14) Ok.
(T) (14:17) [(T) interprets (I-K)s answer] Homesickness.

(I-C) (14:38) And they love it when we show up every day. Those who do not show up, or those who show up (…) one (…) three times a week. Then you change as a person, right? In the morning when I get out bed then I always tell myself: "Oh, I cannot do anything else (…) I have to (…) get up and work. I cannot sleep, I am not supposed to sleep. It's over".

(T) (07:58) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] (…) The problem is, they show up late, but they always show up, but show up late. That is a problem we have.
(R) (08:09) Yeah. Yes, and you are kind of dependent on the others. Even though they are bothering you by showing up late, you are happy when they show up?
(T) (08:40) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] I find it easy (…) what are we supposed to do with all those people that show up late. There is nothing you can do, because there is a lack of workers.
(R) (08:56) Yeah, so you just got to take what you can get, even if they show up late?
(T) (09:11) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] There is nobody else, so we thank them when the show up.

It must be emphasised that the interviewees mentioned that they thank their colleagues for showing up even though they might have been absent or show up late. This could be about work ethic, politeness, a consequence of not having enough workers available, or indeed of sarcasm. This reaction likely influences the colleagues who show up late or fail to show up at times. It could be normalising that behaviour or shaming them into not doing it to their colleagues again.

The above quotes also touch upon a new topic: work, no matter how hard, is better than drinking, social problems or similar. Absenteeism due to social problems or alcoholism were rarely mentioned in the employee interviews. I-C referred to how some colleagues might drink their salary away as soon as they receive it. The reference to sober colleagues as something positive indicates the experience of the opposite.

Alcoholism and social problems are sensitive topics and therefore probably not mentioned explicitly in the interviews. Employees with such problems probably are not interested in provoking a conflict by admitting them to their managers and thus result in what employers might experience as a lack of responsibility-taking. As companies already lack labour, problems with existing labour and absenteeism likely are more visible and more problematic than in labour markets that have a sufficient supply of labour.

While absenteeism, alcoholism etc. can be a lack of sense of responsibility from the employees, it might also be misinterpreted as such. Due to the ongoing process of local norms and values intertwining with foreign norms and values, it might be a more widespread societal problem than an individual's lack of sense of responsibility. In the employer interviews this has been expressed by insecurity about whether companies should only offer workplace related training or also a more general training of life skills, a need that was experienced by employers.

The findings on work ethic showed that there are employees who have a clear sense of responsibility and raise their children to have it also. Combining the findings from the analyses on workload and work ethic, the results point to a strong normative commitment by employees, based on values that they are brought up with and that are reflected at the workplaces.

Those who do not show a sense of responsibility may struggle with adjusting to new, foreign norms. From an employer's point of view, these workers may exclude themselves from the mass that acts responsibly. Yet, behaviour such as absence or changing jobs without telling the employer might be misinterpreted as a lack of a sense of responsibility by employers when in reality it is about having different norms and values (such as being reserved, not provoking a conflict) as well as different attitude to the importance of work in life, which is elaborated further in the next section.

7.4. WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance is usually defined as the division of one's time and focus between working and family or leisure activities (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2020). The ILO has emphasised the challenges that could occur for employees from increasingly blurred boundaries between work time and leisure time (ILO, 2020b).

The findings on Greenlandic work ethic did, however, indicate that this is much less of an issue for the average employee in Greenland. It seems that for many of the employees there was no clear distinction between work and leisure time. Rather,

there is a smooth transition between them, and – importantly – an apparent desire to keep it that way.

This becomes obvious when talking about the fishing industry. It was interesting to observe that some members of the workforce did not see working in fisheries as a job.

> (I-F) (3:43) … if you (…) can consider fishery a job, then my very first job was on board of a small fishing vessel.
>
> ---
>
> (R) (25:39) (…) Has there been a time in your life where you did not have a job?
> (I-G) (25:48) I became (…) I have been a fisherman.

Fishing is one of the vital pillars of the Greenlandic economy; yet workers in this sector did not seem to regard their work in this industry as important as working in fisheries seemed to be just a normal part of life. This makes sense when the history of Greenland is taken into consideration. Traditionally, fishing and hunting have always been part of life while wage-work was not.

As discussed earlier, attitudes to retirement also indicate a fluid relationship between work and leisure time. This can be seen in the response of many of the older respondents who saw being occupied as a part of life and thus could not see a reason to retire.

This could be an expression of either being used to working 50-60 hours a week without complaining or not seeing any alternatives. The discussion of salary in section 7.1 pointed to a lack of apparent alternatives. Being paid hourly (compared to a fixed monthly salary) was preferred by employees as they experienced the possibility of earning more. This brings forth to discuss if monthly salary would give the same earnings for working fewer hours, and if some employees would be interested in this, or if being occupied remains more important to them than earnings.

If working 50-60 hours a week is not perceived as a problem that can be solved, and no alternatives are apparent, it just becomes 'the way it is' and different work conditions will not be discussed by employees and their employers. Based on the discussion about work ethic (section 7.3), consideration should be given to that fact that some workforce members preferred to work many hours so they would not be tempted by "bad environments" (I-D) in their leisure time. Work in this sense connects to both commitment to oneself and normative commitment to society as work appears to be perceived as an integral part of one's identity within the context of Greenlandic society.

A loose division between work time and spare time also refers to how employees
create meaningfulness. Instead of being connected to specific skills and tasks, as
suggested by JCT, meaningfulness in Greenland seemed to lie within the act of
working as an integral part of life. In this sense, it is neither the use of certain skills
nor work tasks that give 'meaning'. Rather, working is a part of life. This points to a
relaxed attitude to work which for some might result in a work performance that is
lower than expected by employers.

A relaxed attitude to work could also explain the choice of being economically
inactive as well as labour fluctuation between workplaces for some persons of
working-age. If work is seen as integral part of life and neither pressure nor high
ambitions are connected to it, it might be more acceptable to change workplaces
frequently and stop working periods of time. As will be shown in section 7.5, this
matches the findings on workplace culture and the definition of taking responsibility
by employees. It is also elaborated on how responsibility felt towards an employer
can be shifting, depending on life circumstances.

Obviously, there are also employees who clearly divide work time and leisure time
which should be taken into consideration as approaches to work-life balance are
individual. In the context of Greenland, the ongoing process of local norms and
values intertwining with foreign norms and values (cf. section 4.3) could also
explain the observation of different approaches to work-life balance.

7.5. TYPES OF WORKPLACE CULTURE

The findings from chapter five pointed to the following factors playing an important
role with regard to workplace culture: Communication, a sense of community at the
workplace, open communication about mutual expectations for work before hiring
an employee and respect and recognition towards the employees.

In the employee interviews, a sense of community in particular was emphasised with
respect to workplace culture. The previously observed notion of seeing one's
colleagues like family was confirmed in the interviews. All interviewees were asked
if and to what degree they perceived their colleagues as family. Nine out of 12
interviewees substantiated this notion, which indicates affective commitment.

> (I-F) (18:45) Yeah-yeah [followed by a laughter by everyone present],
> we tease each other (…) well, we are really close [at our workplace].

> ---

(T) (31:00) [(T) interprets (I-H)s answer] It is one big family. Well, for example, those workers from China, that she works with, one of them asked: "How do you say 'niece' (…)? How do you say it in Greenlandic? ", (…) and she says to (…) him: "[Greenlandic noun] Big niece or something. And then she gets replied with: "Small niece [Greenlandic noun]" [followed by a laughter by everyone present]

(T) (23:36)[(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] Well (…) uh (…) if you like to work, and if you like your colleagues, then it is like that, and you want to continue working. Just stopping here and right now (…) that is no good. (R) (23:57) Yeah. There are some, who have told me, that they feel like that their colleagues are kind of like a family to them. (T) (24:12) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answers] That is true. (R) (24:16) Because you know each other so well, or? (T) (24:25) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] Yeah, that is correct. (T) (24:42) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] While we work (…) if I discover something, that is not good, then I say it right away. And it is a good thing to tell (…) to do it in that manner.

To I-J, his workplace is as a second home to him. Those interviewees who reported not feeling like they were close to their colleagues mentioned this in an almost apologetic way.

(I-B) (22:36) I have always [(I-B) chuckles] felt like an individualistic person since elementary school. I do not consider co-workers as [there is a phone that rings in the room, and someone is on the phone, until the interview continues from 23:37) (…) No, I do not feel like my co-workers are like a family.

(I-C) (13:14) Yeah, yeah, I do. Also because (…) we know each other so well, then (…) we find out what they do, and then (…) it varies (…) they have so many (…) yeah I do know what (…). I always head home (…) I am not that kind of person, that walks around (…) all the time (…) what do you call it (…) visiting people. It happens rarely. I stay at home and read books, watch television and listen to radio and think. I am not looking for friends or something (…)

For the interviewees it was essential to have a family-like feeling among the colleagues at work and a positive workplace atmosphere where there is space to both teasing and praising of each other. One interviewee mentioned that a positive atmosphere for him is motivation to show up every day (I-D). Another interviewee mentioned that she would not consider changing jobs to work for another company

in town (even though there was a possibility of better salary) as she had heard that the atmosphere amongst the workers there was poor (I-L). This refers to the theoretical concept of affective commitment. Informal, direct relationships not based in hierarchy were generally found to be important at the workplaces. These often also included MANs. The empirical findings illustrated that less structured hierarchical relationships were preferred by both employers and employees.

Good colleagues combined with a positive atmosphere at the workplace was one of the most important factors for employees. This confirms JCT which argues that good colleagues are a basic factor for job satisfaction. In a society like Greenland, where social relationships play an important role, this finding did not come as a surprise. The employee survey results showed 'good colleagues' was the second most important category for employees (right after the category 'good communication'). Existing research has previously confirmed the role of colleagues as a motivational factor for the workforce (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). In this sense, workplace culture can be argued to be based on both normative and affective commitment which is influenced to a high degree by employees themselves. Most of the interviewees showed awareness of how they themselves needed to contribute to establishing a positive workplace culture.

A collaborative atmosphere at the workplace should be of interest to company managers and employers and is clearly connected to communication and recognition. The analysis in chapter five showed that communication is of major importance for both EMPs and MANs. The topic of linguistic and cultural differences refers to communication, workplace culture and positive atmosphere at the workplace. It was expected to be prominent in the employee interviews based on the employee survey results showing that over half of all respondents experienced misunderstandings based on different linguistic backgrounds. However, linguistic and cultural differences did not prove to be an experience that many interviewees referred to as problematic.

> (R) (17:09) Yeah, it varies a lot. What is it like working with (…) people from out of town? Or people from Denmark? Do you notice any difference,   in   a   way?
> (I-I) (17:19) Yes, you notice a difference. They are a bit silent and laid back. But we Greenlanders, we: "Bla-bla-bla-bla", we laugh so much.
>
> ---
>
> (Pa) (11:36) Sometimes, I stutter. So sometimes I cannot (…) I always say to [the manager] "I cannot talk to you today". And then: "What did you say?" [followed by a laugh by everyone present]. But he has learned Greenlandic. A lot. He is a quick learner.

Interviewee I-H emphasised the good collaboration and communication with Chinese and Thai workers (see quote at the beginning of this section).

It is possible that some employees have linguistic or cultural difficulties with their managers but do not discuss it. For instance, I-A inferred that she is expected to be an interpreter even though she feels that she spoke Danish poorly when she met a new Danish manager.

In chapter five it was found that language issues at the workplace are handled on an everyday basis, rather than strategically. The employee interviews confirmed this. Yet even though the workplace might have everyday measures to handle language issues, the survey results pointed to how important it is to discuss these issues. Offering language training would be a solution yet is expensive for the employer and time-consuming for both the employer and the employee. In practice, only few employees received language training in a form that improved understanding at workplaces (as shown in section 5.7). Instead, it appeared that employees handle misunderstandings themselves on an everyday basis without much help from their managers. More communication about these issues, but also intercultural communication training could possibly help resolve such problems.

In JCT, responsibility-taking for and ownership of one's work are defined as part of the core job characteristics. If the responsibility for handling cultural and language misunderstandings at a workplace, however, was not part of the job description or was not mutually agreed on, it likely does not contribute to a positive employee attitude towards the workplace.

Two distinct types of workplace cultures could be seen from the interviews. Firstly, a culture where you are supposed to keep problems to yourself. We have previously seen how language issues at the workplace are not openly discussed. Another example of the notion that one should not share problems at work is when I-E remarks that being a bit under the weather is nothing to talk or complain about. Furthermore, interviewee I-C talked about how colleagues that complain about private problems are 'pathetic'.

> You do not talk about it when you are feeling bad. Not in details. You just 'fix it' yourself, and then you show up for work. That is just the way it is. (I-C)
>
> ---
>
> (I-E, 24:24) There are a lot of things (…) we help each other with at the workplace. It is nice. But some people think that they are better than us [followed by a laugh]. Then they complain too much or tell that they are not feeling well or something. [] I (…) know, we are all different. […] There are some, that (…) yeah, we are not all in good health right? There

are some (…) that have it like that (…) and when yeah (…) they have it (…) they find out that they, that their manager is (…) how should I put it (…) all those insignificant illnesses (…) all the hard ones and all types (…) you get them as well. There are some that cannot write, right? Dyslexics. They stay out of the spotlight, right? And do not talk about it.

Both quotes refer to how some colleagues complain too much about small problems. At the same time, as interviewee I-E mentioned, only talking about small problems is criticisable when there are more important problems that are not discussed, such as being dyslexic. Previous findings on workload (cf. section 7.2) showed how high workload could result in health issues, that however are not taken very seriously by employees nor employers and are not talked about at the workplace (I-A reported to just take pain killers and continue to work).

This could be connected to a 'culture of silence' as a cultural value, as previously found by other scholarly work on Greenlandic communities (Berliner et al., 2012, p. 393). From the above, it cannot be concluded on community level. Yet it is pointed to unspoken rules at workplaces about how to behave, what to say and what is to be silenced.

The second workplace culture that was observed was an open culture. In this culture employees and managers talk about everything and seem to be in good dialogue about all kinds of topics. This echoes the previously mentioned feeling of being a family. Several employees mentioned that they could talk about anything with their managers except for salary. Although there is an awareness about indirect communication about salary, no direct communication was observed through the interviews. Interviewee I-I, for instance, recalled that she had been moved around in different branches of her company against her will but was motivated by a raise every time. Her manager knew she would like to earn more, and she agreed to the transfers; however, in reality, she did not want to be moved.

The latter example reflects a certain passivity that connects to the first-mentioned workplace culture: one does what is said without complaining or questioning. This was also observed in other accounts, e.g., I-A who took managerial responsibilities without being asked, or I-H who asked for fewer hours as she had reached retirement age, got a negative answer and accepted it. Working many hours for what was perceived as insufficient salary without complaining is another example.

There are likely other workplace cultures that were not observed. The interviews showed two of them that are in contrast with each other but also show parallels. Both affective and normative commitment appeared to play into workplace culture.

7.6. SKILLS: ATTAINMENT, FORMAL, INFORMAL AND APPLICATION IN PRACTICE

The analysis of the employer interviews and the employee survey in chapter five ascertained that skills development is important for both sides. It also found that not all employees who desired courses or training had received them. Echoing this, communication and dialogue about skills development was found to be an issue, as was the question about which type of skills development is relevant for employees. The employee interviews confirmed some of the points made earlier but also added some new insights especially on differences between low skilled and skilled labour.

JCT argued for skills variety, task significance and task identity as a crucial part of a job's meaningfulness.

For skilled labour, this proved to be true to some degree. This was expressed by some of the skilled interviewees who complained about having skills and not being able to use them. Yet the other factors mentioned in JCT – autonomy and ownership – proved to be as important as skills. Meaningfulness was shown to be achieved through use of skills, own individual commitment and the job's relevance for society (I-B, I-E, I-F).

For low skilled employees, skills or tasks were not of high importance to the meaningfulness of a job. For some, instrumental benefits played a role when thinking about training. Low skilled employees who have attended courses and obtained certificates seemed to be satisfied with their salary as they receive salary supplements based on their additional skills (I-D, I-G, I-H).

An early study on workforce preferences found that many Greenlandic workers do not obtain education or take courses to create meaningfulness in their jobs. Instead, they engage in additional training mostly for economic reasons (Lau, 2005, p. 79). In the current study, this seems to be particularly true for low skilled employees.

In general, both low skilled and skilled employees are self-deprecating about their skills.

> I-C (12:29) I have only been her for two years. I don't have a lot of experience [he had passed retirement age]

For some interviewees, formal skills seemed to be more valued than experience. Even those who had started a vocational education and had dropped out for any reason did not speak as if they had obtained skills. This could either be self-deprecating or shame over not finishing the course of study. For example, both I-I and I-G reported that they had many years of experience and passed parts of several vocational education programmes, yet they had not finished any. Both hesitated

when they were asked about their importance for the company. It appeared that they felt like their lack of formal skills did not contribute to their importance for the company and that their experience was not enough to add meaningfully to their workplace.

In some interviews, low skilled employees expressed the desire to receive further training, yet they were unsure about which type of training to pursue. Several respondents mentioned that they would accept training or courses offered by the employer if the employer regarded the course as relevant.

> (I-K) (R) (18:44) Yeah. You could obtain your education here [at this workplace]
> (T) (19:00) [(T) interprets (I-K)s answers] If I do not get rejected.
> (R) (19:02) Yeah, but why should you get rejected? You are (…) you sound like a hard-working employee.
> (T) (19:23) [(T) interprets (I-K)s answer] Well, because sometimes, I completely shut down.
> (R) (19:27) Mm. What do you mean by that?
> (T) (19:38) [(T) interprets (I-K)s answer] Because sometimes (…) I cannot say, what I mean. Like (…) I cannot say, what I mean. Like (…) find the words.
> (R) (20:07) All right.
> (T) (20:13) "Put it into words" is what I mean.
> (R) (20:15) Put it into words. So perhaps you have not told [the company] that you would like to start the education, or that it is something that you dream of? Or have you told them?
> (I-K) (20:24) No, I have not.
> (T) (20:34) [(T) interprets (I-K)s answer] I told my husband, I would like to study. But it is myself, that is setting the boundaries
> (T) (23:19) [(T) interprets (I-K)s answer] If they [the workplace] would offer it, I would take it. I would accept it.

Another respondent used a similar phrasing 'To accept an education if offered' (I-I). In addition, this respondent expressed feelings of a lack of support or acknowledgement regarding participation in further skills development.

Even though the survey showed a strong interest in skills development by employees, it appeared difficult to actually participate in courses or training. It also seemed challenging for the interviewees to ask their manager about further training. Still, the employees mentioned that they would accept training if offered. This could possibly make the role of recognition and acknowledgment more important than actual skills development. This also connects to scholarly work that argued social status not being based on educational level (see also section 4.3).

The employee interviews showed that low skilled workers had obtained a variety of informal skills through experience. Yet, informal skills and experience did not seem to be acknowledged at workplaces to the same degree as formal skills. As mentioned in chapter four, the strong political focus on formal skills development could have contributed to a lack of recognition and awareness of existing, informal skills. The above findings point to how increased communication about skills and experience could lessen the gap between supply and demand on the labour market and lead to higher awareness of all employee skills. Just offering skills development might not be enough. A further empowerment of their current competences appeared to be desired by the employees.

The employee interviews shed further light on youth and skills development. In the findings presented in chapter five, it was reported that employers wondered about the phenomena of youth staying in lower skilled positions without furthering their education. The employee interviews only included four younger persons, all of them female (I-A, I-H, I-I, I-K). Their answers showed an overall interest in furthering their education; however, they all came up with reasons why this would be difficult. For three of them, committing to further education would require them to move and reduce their current income for a length of time (I-A, I-I, I-K). The length of education was also mentioned as an issue. I-K expressed how she dreamed about a specific education that would take four years and require her to move (for several periods of time). She chose, however, to apply for another one that only took one year, as that would fit her family life better. Whilst the young women emphasised their interest in skills development, present opportunities for extensive education and training seem to be unachievable or unacceptable for them.

Further, the topic of skills development seemed difficult to approach for the young women. Both I-A and I-H mentioned that they had not spoken with their employers about their desire for further education. It appeared that insecurity from the workers' perspective played into this. Affective commitment (to not disappoint the employer), normative commitment (social status is not connected to education) and instrumental needs (the need to provide for a family, lower income during education) seemed to play into this.

There were however a few matters where skills and competencies were spoken about positively. One field was the on-the-job training that almost all workplaces used to train new employees. There was a positive attitude to this kind of training overall, and it was not referred to as an extra task or something that increases workload more. Rather, it was seen as enjoyable. The survey results predicted this as a high percentage of respondents answered that training new staff was important to them (cf. section 5.5). The theoretical concept of feedback that leads to ownership is also applicable in this context. When talking with the interviewees about on-the-job training, their pride about their acquired competences started to show, which was not

observed in other contexts. Employees were proud about being able to teach
something new to others and by this obtaining ownership to their work.

> (T) (06:59) [(T) interprets (I-H)s answer] Back in the days, there were
> these older ladies, that had worked here for years. They have been really
> good at teaching others, and they were good (…) colleagues, doing a
> good job.
> (R) (07:14) Yes.
> (T) (07:24) [(T) interprets (I-H)s answer] As an example (…) the
> supervisor has other things to do than working on with the production of
> shrimps, so the older ladies, they are just really good at showing and
> explaining how it is done.

I-G proudly emphasised how his 'trainees' were working faster than he was after
training. While it seemed difficult for the employees to relate their own skills,
experience and needs for training to contribute to the meaningfulness of their job (as
argued by JCT), the above shows that using their skills to train others contributes to
a meaningful job for some. This also emphasises the previously mentioned
importance of acknowledgement and recognition. Training each other could possibly
also draw upon and contribute further to the strong collective values that were
observed at most workplaces. Even though most interviewees expressed themselves
positively about on-the-job training, it should be noted that this is a precondition at
most workplaces. With high turnover and a lack of skills, on-the-job-training is part
of skills development in many companies.

Moreover, the term 'skills variety' as mentioned by JCT also appeared to contribute
to meaningfulness. In the section on workload (7.2), doing the same tasks again and
again and not being challenged during daily tasks was reported as leading to
boredom and absenteeism for some. Being busy at work was considered the opposite
of being bored, and thus a positive job characteristic.

As previously mentioned, there might be a norm in society to not talk about how
skilled you are. The interviews found that further skills development is not explicitly
strived for by employees even though they are interested in it. If social status is not
connected to educational level, there might be no normative motivation to take
further education. As seen in the above, individual motivation to obtain further skills
and competences can be met by infrastructural restrictions or by personal insecurity
and not mentioning it to the employer. Normative values probably also play into
how one is perceived in society when striving for education. Openly seeking skills
development for some could be perceived as being too pushy.

When asked more concretely about skills, for instance about on-the-job training,
pride about one's formal and informal skills showed clearly. In a way, on-the-job
training is an important example of how to train the employee's own awareness of
existing skills, as their own skills, knowledge and experience becomes visible in

another person (the trainee). Training others increases pride and ownership. Task significance and task identity possibly also increase and by this the job's meaningfulness. Moreover, this type of skills development contributes to team building and perhaps a positive atmosphere at the workplace. Especially the last two values seemed to be of high importance for most employees.

In the employer interviews, some respondents mentioned another issue: Those employees that mostly deserve and/or need further training often are not able to receive it due to high turnover amongst their colleagues. The employee interviews could not contribute further to this topic, yet it appears that a lack of communication (i.e., employees who do not ask for further training) could be as much a factor for not receiving skills development as turnover.

Finally, employers mentioned that they had to make compromises with regards to the need for specific skills when recruiting MANs. Companies would then offer training to MANs in order to teach them the needed skills. For the case of EMPs, this practice was rarely described. As the employee interviews only concerned EMPs, the outcome of employing MANs without the needed skills and upgrading them later could not be investigated in detail. Yet, based on the interviewee's statements concerning the topic of on-the-job training, teaching new skills and competences to new employees seems very common and at least nothing to discuss or complain about by the employees. Concerning MANs, some of the interviewee's comments point to how the above recruitment practice that compromises on MANs competences might be challenging. On the other hand, MANs could be more inclined for skills development. This will be expanded in the next section which also elaborates further on points that can be made towards leadership and MANs based on the employee interviews.

7.7. LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES

The employee interviews provided several insights into experiences and preferences with respect to leadership.

Overall, many EMPs felt positive about their MANs and showed affective commitment to either their managers or the workplace. Good cooperation with the manager, employee involvement and an efficient communication culture at the workplaces were highlighted in several interviews (I-A, I-G, I-H, I-I, I-J, I-K, I-L)

> (T) (10:41) [(T) interprets (I-L)s answer] But we are really open. Like with our managers.
> (R) (10:49) Mm, could you tell [the manager] when you have some

critique, or?
(T) (11:02) [(T) interprets (I-L)s answer] Yes.

(T) (24:42) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] While we work (…) if I
discover something, that is not good, then I say it right away. And it is a
good thing to tell (…) to do it in that manner.
(T) (25:03) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] And it is our right to point out
something when we notice that there is something that is not right.
(T) (25:26) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] And then we (…) come up with
suggestions on how we can improve things.
(T) (25:37) [(T) interprets (I-J)s answer] And then we can achieve
something that is better.

As previously outlined, fewer challenges were reported in work environments with a
flat hierarchy, managers with good skills in personnel management and/or
appreciation and recognition for employees. In the interviews, recognition was
weighted as positive even though at times it was expressed in peculiar ways by the
management:

(I-D) (13:53) Yes. The last time I got a warning, then my supervisor
downstairs and my manager in there said (…): "Come inside for a talk
[…] You have gotten three warnings. If we would not need you, you
would be kicked out from here. So, it is only because, you work long
hours and do a good work (…), that we are keeping you on. So next time,
you got to watch out". Ok, ok, ok…
(R) (14:42) That is nice, they really like you?
(I-D) (14:44) Mm, yes. I think it is nice.
(R) (14:52) But why does one get a warning?
(I-D) (14:55) When you do not show up (…) without calling in sick,
without calling for two or three days. Then you get a warning.
(R) (15:13) And how do you receive the warning? Do they call or …?
(I-D) (15:16) First just a verbal warning. Then a written one once, twice,
and then for the third time: goodbye.

(T) (27:48) [(T) interprets (I-H)s answer] Some time ago, she asked if
she could not – well she is 64 years old now - so she asked if she could
work eight hours a day instead of those 12-13 hours a day. (…) They
hesitantly said: "No", because of all the things she does (…) they want to
keep her.
(R) (28:11) Yes.
(T) (28:31) [(T) interprets (I-H)s answer] For example she has acted as

> supervisor a few times when the manger is not there. That is why, they
> have said, that preferably she should not cut down on her hours.

Both quotes show communication from managers that seem to lead to misunderstandings instead of what could have been recognition and positive feedback to employees. For I-D, this resulted in the notion that there are no consequences of absenteeism if you are a good worker. I-H tries to open a dialogue about her working hours and desires for the future and receives the answer that the employer needs her and cannot do without her (which shows recognition but different than what I-H seemed to have expected). While one needs to bear in mind that the interviews only show the employees perception of the situation, the above matches some of the employers' accounts, such as the need to retain labour at all costs (cf. section 5.4). Interestingly, both of the interviewees referred to in the above told these stories with pride, so the employers' recognition of workers seemed to find its way even though both situations easily could end with losing an employee.

Communication with managers generally played an important role and was mentioned in several interviews. When asked about necessary improvements at the workplace from the employees' point of view, the topic of communication was almost mentioned exclusively. Here it is important to bear in mind that communication was the topic with the highest importance in the survey results (cf. section 5.8). Communication, especially from manager to employee, is all-encompassing in the three data collections and its importance as a basic factor for job satisfaction is thereby argued for.

Yet, the interviewees also shed light on techniques to cope with unclear communication or a lack of communication at workplaces. For instance, both I-D and I-F mentioned that a high turnover of managers led to a better collaboration amongst co-workers as they were forced to work more independently from management. EMPs might also be cautious or reluctant to get too close to their manager if they have experienced hight turnover.

Another concern that was repeatedly mentioned with respect to managers was of 'being forgotten'. Managers were reported to be competent and engaged but forgetting agreements or tasks.

> (R) (40:34) Yes. If there was something, you could tell the [company],
> that could be improved, something you have thought about, what would
> it be?
> (T) (41:10) [(T) interprets (I-K)s answer] I do not know.
> (T) (41:22) [(T) interprets (I-K)s answer] Perhaps it would be an
> improvement if they allocated time to (…) talk about (…) the
> information, they bring forth.
> (T) (41:43) [(T) interprets (I-K)s answer] Instead of putting up a note,
> (…) they could be better in putting it into words, the changes for the day.

> (T) (42:02) [(T) interprets (I-K)s answer] (…) Because sometimes (…)
> we do not notice the note, and just continue on (…), without (…)
> realizing it.
> (R) (42:17) Yeah. So perhaps more meetings, or morning briefings, or?
> (T) (42:43) [(T) interprets (I-K)s answer] They have promised, that we
> are supposed to get together once a month.
> (R) (42:48) Mm.
> (T) (42:54) [(T) interprets (I-K)s answer] But (…) it has never happened
> (R) (42:58) No. But could you (…) could you go to your manager and
> say: "(…) We would like to have a meeting"?
> (T) (43:25) [(T) interprets (I-K)s answer] we could do that, but
> sometimes they forget, they get rather busy with work.

The employees connect this to their MANs being very busy which relates to the high
workload indicated by MANs in the survey. This connects to the lack of leadership
competences amongst managers and how difficult it can be for companies to send
their managers to trainings or courses. It also refers to how some employees
experience troubles with MANs without complaining, and how most EMPs
indicated that they are unhappy with their manager's competences (I-B, I-E, I-F, I-
G, I-L).

Several respondents from C1 expressed a lack of empathy and recognition from their
managers and wished for higher efforts from the managers to solve daily challenges
(I-B, I-E, I-F). C1 is the company with the most skilled employees compared to C2
and C3. The fact that C1 EMPs most clearly expressed their thoughts about
managers perhaps is connected to their educational level. We have seen earlier how
skilled employees and MANs were more outspoken about their needs (cf. section
5.10).

At the same time, employees expressed awareness of how managers are recruited,
the small recruitment pool for managers and a general lack of competences and
limited availability of training.

> We are few Greenlanders. We are not many. We cannot put on more
> hats, and still, we take on a lot of areas of responsibility. This is also a
> problem in itself. We should educate managers. More managers. (I-B,
> 37:38)

I-B refers to the bigger picture, which is that taking responsibility requires the right
skills. Some interviewees have experienced being asked to take managerial
responsibilities, others reported that they were just told to do it. Interviewee I-I,
according to her own account, was just told to do it, stayed in the position for a
while until she told her manager that she did not want to have managerial
responsibilities. I-A related how she received more and more responsibility without
having asked for it. Today, I-A holds a semi-managerial position and seems to have

adjusted to it. She never received formal training for this position. I-I is back in a position without managerial responsibilities but said she would accept it if she was offered management training.

As previously mentioned in the section on workplace culture, improved teamwork amongst EMPs can be a result of turnover, unavailability, absenteeism or incompetence of managers. Autonomy, which leads to feeling responsible according to JCT, appeared to be reinforced when connected with employees who need to solve issues at the workplace themselves or with the help of their colleagues but without the manager. A limited availability, fluctuation or (mental) absence of managers possibly reinforces the importance of having good colleagues as well as the employee's autonomy and areas of responsibility (but potentially also workload).

Further, a communication issue comes with this: with turnover amongst managers (and thus new managers that need to get to know the workplace) or managers without the right skills, EMPs appeared to be cautious of getting too close to their manager if having previously had bad experiences. This could lead to issues of miscommunication between employees and managers, which can make collaboration even more difficult for both sides.

7.8. RECRUITMENT AND LABOUR FLUCTUATION

Section 5.3 presented findings on recruitment. It differed from the other sections as the employee survey did not include questions on recruitment. Several open questions resulted from the empirical data which this section aims to answer. Questions concerned how employees would look for a job, how they got hired in their current job and if they consider changing jobs soon.

The previous findings pointed to personal acquaintances being a crucial part of the hiring culture in the Greenlandic labour market. In the employee interviews, most of the interviewees reported that they were hired informally. I-H got her job through an informal inquiry, I-I was recommended through her daughter's friend, I-K signed up on a list and thinks she got the job because her mother-in law already was part of the workplace. I-D told about how he moves between jobs when he feels like it which also points to informal hiring processes.

Informal hiring and seeking jobs through contacts/network might be common for low skilled labour. Yet this technique also was found common for managers. An awareness of these processes as well as critique could be found in the interviews for instance about cronyism (I-I).

Informal recruitment possibly has influence on commitment. Finding a job through personal acquaintances can both be argued to result in more commitment as the employee feels responsible, or in less commitment as it is perceived to be easy to find another job with the same technique. Some respondents mentioned that they are very aware of their workplace being a good place to work and that they did not want to change jobs (I-A, I-L). Still, they appeared to have an awareness of how easy it might be for them to get another job, as there is a high demand for employees. Some have tried this but returned to the place where they are now (I-A, I-D, I-I, I-H). By this, the employers' anticipation of employees that are very aware of workplace environment and the importance of workplaces promoting themselves is confirmed. This also confirms the importance of a positive workplace atmosphere as a job characteristic. This was previously discussed in section 7.5 on types of workplace cultures, too. The above also connects to how the working-age population can have certain demands to workplaces that must be supplied. If there are more workplaces than available workers, the dependency of supplying the working-age population's needs by workplaces is even more urgent.

It appears that employees are very aware of available job opportunities. It also appears mostly to be the workers who reach out, not the companies. More active and informal measures by employers, as seen in the employer interviews, might thus benefit current experience of hiring processes for potential candidates, and present unrealised potential for companies.

Moreover, some points on mobility and labour fluctuation can be made based on the employee interviews. The employers had an assumption about an immobile but locally fluctuating workforce (cf. section 5.4), so the interviews aimed to shed light on the employees' motivation to change jobs.

Several interviewees expressed that they did move for a job in the past and had actively looked for a job in other towns. As a main reason for moving was indicated the lack of jobs at their place of residence.

Only few of the 12 interviewees expressed a desire to move in the future. I-I wanted to move to another town because she likes the town. I-J would like to move back to her hometown or southwards to obtain education. I-C recalled how his friends are trying to convince him to move to Denmark but was not clear about his own intentions.

Interviewees who stated to have moved for their current job most referred to unemployment in their previous place of residence. These moves can thus relate to work ethic, sense of responsibility and instrumental needs. When talking about moving in the future reasons mentioned mainly concerned social aspects or education, but not another job or a specific company that employees would like to

work for. For employers, it is interesting to note that moving for a job appeared to be based on other factors than work itself.

Labour fluctuation within the same town was also mentioned in the interviews.

> (R) (00:52) And where have you previously worked? Now you are at [company A].
> (I-D) (00:55) Uh, I was (…) at [company B] and [company C]. Then back again. And then [company C] again. And now here.
> (R) (01:16) Yeah. Why did you change work?
> (I-D) (01:19) Yeah [(I-D) hesitates]. I guess you can ask me about it. It is (…) I party from time to time, so I change workplace sometimes.
> (R) (01:34) Yeah.
> (I-D) (01:36) But I do not know, for how many years I have been employed steadily (…) yeah.
> (R) (01:45) When you switch between jobs, is it because of the colleagues, is it because of the salary … [(I-D) interrupts]
> (I-D) (01:49) Well, it is like (…) by my own free will.

Changing jobs seemingly without knowing the reason for this himself possibly is perceived as irresponsible by employers. Another interviewee's account shed more light on the phenomenon of which might be short term thinking.

> (I-G) (10:29) But uh (…) once in a while I think: "If I get another job, I will change jobs". When I get so tired. Then comes a new day, and it is all forgotten. Then I start fresh all over.
> (R) (10:50) So you (…) when you are at home during the evening you think: "Uh, it was a hard day".
> (I-G) (10:57) Every now and then.

Both quotes demonstrate decision-making without considering long-term consequences. In the case of I-D his repeated absence has not led to serious consequences from the company, as also discussed in section 7.3. Spontaneous decisions have also been found with respect to salary and might be based on different value cultures. For some, job security and foreseeability appeared not to be the most important values in life. Spontaneity as part of lifestyle in the Arctic has been explored in several publications (Flora, 2019; Stevenson, 2014) and likely contribute to conflicts between employees and employers. Being spontaneous does not translate well into company needs and as a cultural trait possibly needs to be considered when discussing employees' job attribute preferences. As previously mentioned, the interviewed employees show knowledge of labour market tendencies and where and how to find a job, which allows them to be spontaneous with respect to decisions that concern changing jobs.

CHAPTER 8. DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in detail as the sub conclusions from chapter five and seven are used to explore the stated aim of this dissertation.

Based on the discussion, potential for sustained alignment between the employees' job attribute preferences and the employers' measures to attract and retain employees are examined. Conclusions are primarily drawn for employed members of the workforce, as the collected data focussed on this group. Yet, the discussion and conclusions can be extended to a broader range of members of the Greenland working-age population, as regular shifts between paid employment, self-employment, unemployment and economic inactivity are common for members of the working-age population in Greenland.

The first part of this chapter discusses findings on socio-cultural values. The chapter then moves on to discuss the sense of responsibility of employees. Thirdly, the perceived purpose of work for employees in Greenland is discussed. Each of these three sections ends with a short summary on the potential for sustained alignments between the employees' job attribute preferences and the employers' measures of attracting and retaining employees.

Lastly, the chapter briefly discusses the findings on specific job attributes for MANs (section 8.4) and the variations across the three company types (section 8.5).

8.1. THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUES

The empirical data showed that socio-cultural values were largely defined by an individual's upbringing and experiences throughout life. By this, the term is distinguishable from ethnocultural values and does not refer directly to ethnicity. Socio-cultural values as understood in the context of this study are influenced by social norms and can include ethnocultural influences. Further, the geographical differences in Greenland might also indicate socio-cultural differences depending on a person's place of residence.

Individual cultural values potentially clash with the values that make up corporate culture at workplaces. The perception or interpretation of a situation or a challenge at the workplace could be based on different sets of values, which could lead to misunderstandings between employees and employers. Employee's socio-cultural values develop through upbringing, socialisation and the surrounding community, and must be seen in strong connection to normative commitment as described by COT.

The findings of the analysis in chapter seven suggest that ways of communication are highly influenced by socio-cultural norms and values. Communication needs to be regarded as prominent topic when it comes to employee job attribute preferences. The empirical data showed how different ways of communication led to misunderstandings that likely could have been avoided if there was a higher awareness at workplaces of how to communicate efficiently with each other. Most employees expressed a desire for better communication and dialogue with their managers (instead of one-sided communication from the manager). However, this desire for better communication was not always communicated to the managers, as some employees appeared hesitant to ask for it. Others mentioned how they have tried to tell their managers about their desire for improved communication at the workplace but reportedly the manager either did not listen, forgot about it quickly again or was too busy.

Concerns not being voiced can be connected to the previously mentioned cultural trait of conflict aversion (see for instance section 4.3 and 5.8). Trying to avoid conflicts likely results in employees either not communicating their preferences at all, or not wanting to repeat their preferences after having mentioned them once. The perception of what constitutes a 'conflict' is important in this context. Many employees appear to avoid open disagreement, even if it might lead to fruitful dialogue and improvement of conditions as they seem to consider any such disagreement to constitute a conflict. The employer however might not consider this a conflict but a concerned attempt at improvement, showing a sense of responsibility on the part of the employee.

In addition to some topics being uncomfortable to talk about as they could lead to disagreement or conflict between employees and employer, employees also reported how some topics were a taboo at many workplaces. This was for example the level of earnings, language issues, conflicts with colleagues or managers etc. (cf. section 7.5).

Instead of discussing these issues, employees coped with them in an indirect way, seemingly avoiding confrontation and keeping up a positive atmosphere at the workplace. An example could be an employee who does not want to address an issue at the workplace with the manager. Instead, the employee talks about the issue with colleagues and together they figure out a solution without involving the manager. Whilst a topic such as efficient communication was emphasised several times in the data collection as being of vital importance to the employees' job satisfaction (cf. sections 5.8 and 7.7), only few explicit complaints by employees could be observed when workplaces showed a lack of efficient communication.

This shows one of the most interesting findings with respect to socio-cultural norms and values at workplaces: The employees' constant ability to adapt to changing circumstances and new challenges at the workplace, often without guidance by

management. This form of adaptation can be seen as informal problem-solving, which stands in contrast to formal problem-solving by management.

The fact that the workforce is highly adaptable to changing circumstances has not been highlighted in secondary literature. This, however, should not be a recommendation to employers to not focus on the employees' job satisfaction as employees will simply adjust by themselves. In the short term, the observed adaptability of employees is beneficial for the workplace as issues seemingly are worked around in a pragmatic way. Yet, in the long run, the experience of issues at the workplace will still result in turnover. If the quality of communication is poor at a workplace, the employer likely will not get to know the reasons for turnover or how it could have been avoided. In this sense, formal and informal problem-solving rhymes with explicit and implicit knowledge.

Another corporate value that the analyses show to clearly contribute to employees preferring a workplace was a flat hierarchy. The employee interview findings showed a dislike of hierarchies amongst employees. To be able to speak up freely about one's preferences and issues at a workplace appeared to require a workplace culture with easy access to management and few layers of it. A flat hierarchy at workplaces would appear to contribute to fewer cultural clashes (see also section 8.4) and thereby contribute to a positive workplace environment and atmosphere, which has been shown to be a vital job attribute preference of employees (see also section 8.3 for elaboration).

The use of different languages in Greenlandic society also showed to play into the employees' job attribute preferences. The employee survey highlighted that over half of respondents experiencing misunderstandings at their workplaces based on different languages spoken (cf. section 5.7). Both the employer and employee interviews demonstrated that the topic of language challenges is a sensitive topic that is difficult to talk about with each other. Although not expressed directly, several examples of how speaking different languages is incorporated in workplace culture were visible in the data. At some workplaces, bilingual employees are used as interpreters without being given a choice, or being asked if this is a task they would like to have. Several employees expressed how at times they did not want to communicate with their manager who came from another culture as they expected to be misunderstood (cf. sections 5.7 and 7.7). The need to constantly balance different cultures and languages at workplaces, without openly talking about difficulties and problems that might results from this, consequently, needs to be considered when discussing the impact of socio-cultural norms and values.

Finally, the employees work-life balance, and thus their normative commitment (COT) also played into preferred cultural values at the workplace. Culturally conditioned behaviour that influences employee job preference attributes has been observed amongst employees, such as for example being modest about one's

competences; not directly showing ownership and pride about the workplace; being highly adaptable to new circumstances at work, as well as spontaneous decisions and impromptus behaviour based on other responsibilities than work (cf. section 7.4). By employers, a lack of awareness about this culturally conditioned behaviour can result in interpreting it as poor work ethic and a lack of sense of responsibility when *de facto* it is an integral part of local culture, reflecting a different kind of responsibility-taking.

8.1.1. POTENTIAL FOR ALIGNMENT

To avoid misunderstandings about the employees' work ethic, the above shows a strong potential in training workplaces (and managers in particular) in culturally conditioned behaviour of employees (cf. section 7.3).

Sustained alignment is generally needed with respect to communication. Measures for more efficient communication and dialogue about topics that matter to the employees seem to lack at many workplaces. For many employees, communication is also about cultural sensibility and intercultural communication. Communication also refers to feedback to and recognition of the employees' endeavours (and their workload, cf. section 7.2). We have seen how improved communication could lead to employees feeling more ownership and responsibility to a workplace. This would be a positive result for both employees and employers. Further, there should be clear agreement about how to communicate at the workplace without it being perceived as a conflict, as well as the ability of the management to understand expressions of dissatisfaction or desires by employees, that are expressed in a different or more 'subtle' way than the management may be used to and expect. The organisation needs to 'get wiser' but will not if employees remain afraid of voicing their concerns and keep 'working around' management by informal problem solving. Management in turn needs to create a safe environment, in which constructive criticism is not seen as conflict-making but condoned.

The daily management of employees who likely experience misunderstandings based on speaking different languages also needs to be mentioned when discussing potential alignment with respect to communication. Even though the matter was only mentioned explicitly by few interviewees, the employee survey results indicated the importance of employers showing more awareness to potential conflicts based on language (cf. section 5.7). Problems based on different languages appeared to be silenced by many employees which stresses the importance of this matter even more.

Further, creating flat hierarchies at workplaces has shown to be a preferred job attribute of employees. This would require the encouragement for employees to approach their management more often and taking less 'informal' responsibility themselves. At the same time, it requires managers to reach out and actively take

their share of responsibilities. Likely, the imbalance between employees not reaching out to managers and managers not being readily available has been influenced by the strong adaptability of employees which results in employees reporting how they would work independently without their manager. This adaptability likely could be acknowledged more, yet it appears that management should primarily work towards creating a positive workplace atmosphere that allows employees to utter concerns and ideas. Thereby, employers would reach more detailed understandings of the employees' behaviour and preferences, and presumably also more insight into what makes employees stay at workplaces, and what makes them leave.

8.2. A VARIETY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The analysis in chapter seven showed that employee job attribute preferences are influenced by employees sensing a variety of different responsibilities.

Responsibility-taking was first mentioned in the employer interviews, where employers reported to experience a lack of sense of responsibility amongst some of their employees and perceived this to be the main cause of absenteeism and instability. This perceived lack of sense of responsibility was considered to be one of the main issues as regards to attracting and retaining employees.

The empirical findings from the analysis in chapter five included both employer interviews and an employee survey and, based on the employers' accounts, two types of employee responsibility were described in section 5.9: 1) The responsibility to show up at work daily and 2) The responsibility and devotion to one's workplace. The findings from the employee survey, however, led to the question of possible additional types of responsibility when seen from the employees' point of view. It appeared that employees recognized more than the two introduced types of responsibility, some of which were not visible to the employers.

The employers appeared to solely be focused on responsibility towards work (e.g. showing up daily or work tasks) – which comes naturally from their point of view. On top of taking responsibility for one's work, however, employees also felt responsibility towards community, society and family. In this sense, responsibility would refer to COT which argued that employees have several types of commitment that are influenced by both internal and external factors when it comes to the workplace. This will be considered later in this section.

'Responsibility' as a term was also part of the job characteristics theory. JCT argues that supporting employee's autonomy leads to an increased sense of responsibility. Autonomy and the resulting feeling of a sense of responsibility are defined as core

job characteristics in JCT and arguably lead to increased employee satisfaction, performance and attendance.

The analysis of the employee interviews revealed three types of responsibility from the employees' point of view: 1) Responsibility to community, 2) Individual and household responsibility and 3) Responsibility towards the workplace (cf. sections 7.2, 7.3, 7.4 and 7.7). Along the lines of the theoretical term of multidimensional commitment (Allen, 2016), these responsibilities showed to overlap at times.

The employees' responsibility to community was most prominent in the empirical data (cf. sections 7.3). The empirical data illustrated how community responsibility was part of one's upbringing. Most interviewed employees said that they had learned how to work based on their upbringing and that collective values played an important part in their socialisation. Several employees recalled their first job as a type of community service which was not necessarily salaried but crucial to the local community (e.g., unloading a ship, helping in fisheries, helping at the local shop). This type of responsibility could be seen as being related to normative commitment yet goes beyond traditional commitment theory as it appeared to be an integral part of one's lifestyle and in this sense appears as multidimensional.

Individual and household responsibility was the second type of responsibility accentuated in the empirical data. This type of responsibility involved individual and family needs, such as instrumental needs, childcare, housing and activities such as hunting (cf. section 7.4).

Thirdly, and as expected based on the employer's accounts, a sense of responsibility towards the workplace was brought in focus by employees. This type of responsibility concerned both the manager and colleagues and thereby partly overlaps with responsibility for community (cf. sections 7.2 and 7.7). Employees felt that workplace responsibility encompassed respect towards the employer and understanding for the challenges that the company experienced. In JCT, this type of responsibility is conceptualized as ownership, which is based on feedback that the employer needs to give to the employees (i.e., to create ownership of the workplace). As discussed previously in section 8.1, the empirical data showed a lack of feedback and communication at many workplaces. Yet most employees expressed ownership towards their workplace. This third type of responsibility illustrates, that employees can take ownership without necessarily receiving feedback from their employer. Ownership towards a workplace might thus come naturally to employees based on the observed community spirit.

Overall, the described set of responsibilities can be connected to the empirically derived category of 'individual work-life relationship' (cf. section 6.1) as employees balance the different responsibilities based on their individual priorities in life. It was observed that often the responsibilities were competing, and thus a 'hierarchy of

responsibilities' emerged. Employers could understand a shift in priorities as a lack of responsibility-taking by the employees. This could be seen in the empirical data when for instance a focus on individual needs was viewed as self-centred and a possible neglect of other responsibilities.

Many employees, on the other hand, expressed how their upbringing had focussed on devotion and responsibility in several dimensions, of which work life is only one. By this, the employees demonstrated their ability to balance several responsibilities at the same time. In the empirical data a focus on community responsibility vis-á-vis workplace responsibility was found. If employees focus on society needs rather than workplace needs, the employers might experience a lack of responsibility-taking when it actually is a shift of responsibilities as the employees show a sense of responsibility on more than one level.

Further, from the employees' point of view, shifts between workplaces did not show irresponsibility to the current workplace. From their perspective, they had plenty other responsibilities outside their workplace. Having a high workload and working many hours can be connected to this: the employees could see themselves as entitled to shift their responsibility and allow themselves to be absent or voluntarily unemployed, while employers would perceive this as irresponsible behaviour, some even as a sort of betrayal. From some employee's point of view, you could be a hard-working and responsible member of the workforce and yet be absent at times. Nonetheless, such behaviour can be seen to show a lack of awareness of collective consequences – for the workplace and society as such (i.e., absent workers do not contribute to societal economic development).

The lack of sense of responsibility of employees towards a workplace, as experienced by employers, can also be connected to the previously shown lack of consequences for absence and the small pool of available employees. As observed in the empirical data, the employers balance between keeping employees at all costs and coping with inappropriate behaviour. Sanctions for absence, for example, were seldomly imposed, which could give employees the understanding that being absent from time to time is acceptable (cf. sections 5.3 and 5.4).

The employees also showed knowledge about the labour market and an awareness of the benefits of their current job and their options to change jobs (cf. section 7.8). Labour market knowledge and knowing that unexcused absence from the workplace does not necessarily lead to being discharged, appeared to give some sort of security to the members of the working-age population. This was especially valid for lower skilled EMPs. In JCT, job security was one of the basic categories for job satisfaction. In the context of Greenland, however, security can also be connected to the community support system in Greenlandic society (as opposed to the public purse). With the previously described hierarchy of responsibilities, the community appears to 'have your back' when needed. Here, security seems to be perceived

differently due to socio-cultural norms and values as it refers to security in an enlarged sense, compared to a more 'western' perception where community might play a minor role. In this sense, security is defined differently than suggested by JCT. It does play a role as a factor for job satisfaction yet has an additional dimension as it includes community responsibility.

JCT furthermore connected autonomy and sense of responsibility. In light of the present discussion about responsibility-taking, giving employees more autonomy could result in them acting in a manner considered by employers and managers to be more responsible. Increased acknowledgement of the different types of responsibilities, that employees have, is needed by employers. Yet it needs to be questioned how employers could increase autonomy, and thereby sense of responsibility, without letting the employees slip too far away.

This discussion illustrated that the employees who have been part of the study experienced different types of responsibilities. The responsibilities were shown to coexist and influence each other. Responsibility towards the workplace, which naturally is the focus of employers, did not show strongest for employees. Responsibility to community/society did. As discussed previously, the importance of community responsibility likely is based on upbringing and socialisation. Collective values were also seen to play into the responsibility towards the workplace, yet in a different manner than employers seemed to expect. The empirical data showed that most employees, once they are at the workplace, feel responsible for their work and took ownership as their work is important to them. The lack of responsibility-taking, as at times experienced by employers, is not experienced in the same way by the employees. For them, it is different sets of responsibilities with different priorities. This does not mean that they do not care about the workplace, but that their focus is not always is on the workplace.

It appeared difficult for employers to familiarize themselves with how their employees approach responsibility to the workplace and generally. For companies, it can be easy to wag a finger at the employees and be critical towards employees who, according to the employer, do not show enough sense of responsibility or commitment to the workplace. Increased knowledge on the role of work for employees compared to other factors in a person's life would ease the employers understanding of their employees' sense of responsibility.

8.2.1. POTENTIAL FOR ALIGNMENT

Based on the above discussion of how employees experience responsibility, the employer's perception of lazy, irresponsible workers who only work for money and do not care for their workplace must be challenged. No example could be found of employees who did not care for their workplace. Their way of caring for the workplace yet differed from the employers' expectations.

From the employees' perspective, their sense of responsibility for the workplace is shared with a sense of responsibility for other parts of life. Work-life balance is based on work being part of life and not life being work. Yet, a stronger focus on a sense of responsibility towards the workplace could be preferred by Greenlandic employers who struggle with labour supply, difficulties in attracting and retaining employees and a lack of consistency of existing employees.

Based on the above, the strongest potential for alignment seems to lie within increasing understanding and dialogue about responsibilities and commitment at workplaces. As seen in section 8.1, socio-cultural norms and values such as being modest will need to be considered by employers to increase their understanding for employee job attribute preferences. For employers, the most important learning from the above must be that even without showing it actively, most employees feel both ownership and a sense of responsibility to their workplace. The employees' existing ownership and sense of responsibility towards the workplace are a natural point of departure for future measures within this field.

Further, a more collective approach to work and highlighting the collective responsibility of employees potentially could be a resource to align some of the experienced challenges with respect to responsibility and commitment. In chapter five, we have seen, that individual approaches by employers such as financial incentives showed fewer positive results than approaches that addressed the collective values at workplaces. This also echoes the employees expressed desire for flat hierarchies at workplaces, a positive work atmosphere and good collaboration with colleagues.

An increased focus on collective values could also contribute to another topic: the dependence of the employers on the workforce as some workers fluctuate between employers or are absent from work. By trying to appeal to the employees' collective values, awareness could be raised to the consequences of absenteeism and turnover. Consequences not only concern the employees and their families but also their colleagues, colleagues' families, the company, and lastly, the community as such. According to the employee survey, the latter is of strong importance to most employees.

Another suggestion is to appeal to the *employers'* sense of collective values. An increased engagement by companies in the local community could build 1) a better organisational understanding of the hierarchy of responsibilities among employees, and 2) a shared responsibility by employees towards an organisation that can be seen to assist the community in upholding other responsibilities. It is important to note that many Greenlandic companies already engage in society, through their corporate social responsibility approach or similar. Yet, none of the employers touched upon such approaches in the employer interviews in chapter five. Increasing the awareness on the connection between employees' commitment to paid employment

and employers' corporate engagement in the community could be a beneficial approach for companies.

Another potential for alignment lies within showing consequences of absence. The empirical data demonstrated how today, the absence of workers mostly is not reacted to by employers as they depend on the workers and tend to be tolerant when it comes to absence. Yet, the data also showed how some employers started to engage in a dialogue about absence with their employees as well as showed the employees that not all behaviour can be accepted. As described above, increasing ownership to a workplace and appealing to collective values could be an approach that works. This includes outlining how absence can have consequences on different levels: Consequences for the individual employee (lower earnings), for colleagues (higher workload; less leisure time for them to commit to other responsibilities and activities), for the company (lower productivity) and for the community (for instance higher expenses on social benefits). Sanctions of absence, however, appeared to be primarily a suitable approach towards employees who show excessive irresponsible behaviour. Along these lines, an improved clearing of expectations (for instance of working hours) during the hiring process is another approach that employers could consider.

The above suggestion of showing consequences of absence also emphasises certain requirements to managers in addition to (inter)cultural competences as discussed in section 8.1.1. Management should also be about taking responsibility on behalf of employees when there is excessive behaviour by other employees.

In addition, providing a work culture where employees and managers can openly enter into dialogue about working hours and align expectations has been shown to be beneficial at some workplaces and shows potential for other workplaces. This requires mutual respect for values and preferences (e.g., culturally conditioned behaviour of employees, corporate values, and preferences of employees).

8.3. THE PURPOSE OF WORK – WHAT IS A MEANINGFUL JOB?

This third section of the discussion concerns the question of the employees' purpose of going to work. In other words, it discusses the meaningfulness of paid employment to the employees.

Previous parts of the study have shown that salary and earnings are not as meaningful and motivating for employees as anticipated by employers (cf. sections 5.2 and 7.1). A mismatch between the employees' instrumental needs and the perception of employer-proposed instrumental benefits repeatedly surfaced in the

empirical data. Yet the employees did not seem to take this mismatch too serious. Earnings needed to be sufficient to make ends meet, and even if earnings were insufficient, most would not complain. The question if earnings from a job could fulfil instrumental needs to a sufficient degree, or if their earnings were fair compared to their competences and workload did not appear to trouble most of the employees. Some would work more hours to make ends meet, which also relates to the previous observation that being busy (i.e., working many hours) is seen as socially acceptable and positive (cf. section 7.2). However, it places employees in a situation where they can easily be exploited by employers.

As discussed in section 7.1, receiving a fair compensation was not a high priority for most employees which stands in contrast to JCT where fair compensation is one of the main factors leading to overall satisfaction for employees. The Greenlandic labour market is based on unions and most workers get paid according to union agreements (even without being a union member). Yet this does not imply receiving a fair salary for individuals. Especially lower skilled workers have argued how their level of earnings is neither fair nor sufficient. Negotiations for higher earnings do not seem common, however, which could be based on the history of wage-work in Greenland (cf. section 4.3) or an upbringing reflecting values of not being pushy but accepting of whatever salary is offered.

More than individual needs, the attitude to salary appears to be based on community norms. As an example, many employees disregarded the fact that they perceived their own salary as low or even insufficient but argued that their colleagues would deserve a higher salary. This points to a desire of fairness across society and reflects the strong community spirit that has also been observed in other findings from the analyses.

The previously mentioned lack of communication about salary also plays into this. The employee survey for instance showed that many respondents considered a salary increase to be important, but the employee interviews revealed that many respondents did not ask about it. Some knew (or thought they knew) that their employer was unable to pay them more and thus did not ask the employer for it. Others did not dare to ask as earnings is a taboo topic for them and/or at their workplace. Not wanting to talk about salary was also seen to be connected to a general conflict aversion throughout society (cf. sections 7.2 and 7.7).

The principles of wage-work appeared to contrast somewhat with local norms in society. It did not appear natural for employees to ask about money, and they rather accepted what they were offered. To be satisfied with a salary that one is able to live off, rather than paying much attention to whether one's compensation is fair based on one's competencies and workload could be connected to labour market structure and history. Employees have likely developed a type of 'forced satisfaction' with currently offered earnings and maybe also with being hourly paid instead of

receiving a fixed monthly salary. In addition, the employees' economic rationality and work-life balance (cf. section 7.4) play into their relation to earnings.

The findings further showed that it was not desirable to receive money from the public purse and employees would rather work for their own money even if the salary was not sufficient to cover their instrumental needs. Insufficient salary was not shown to be a reason to change jobs. This also echoes the employers' experience that salary increases were not decreasing turnover. Other factors showed to be more important to the employees than the purely financial benefits of having a job.

A factor that contributed more to the meaningfulness of work than earnings was the role of colleagues (cf. sections 5.9 and 7.5). Having good colleagues clearly showed to be connected to being satisfied in one's job. The analysis showed a strong connection of having good colleagues to preferred workplace culture as it related to a positive workplace atmosphere. A positive workplace atmosphere was by the employees argued to be one of the most important attributes to stay in their job.

The term 'good' referred to good social contacts, efficient communication, to be able to good-humouredly tease each other, etc., according to the employees. To see one's co-workers as family was emphasised as something positive and a motivation to show up at work every day. Having good relations and collaboration with colleagues was also stressed as a measure by which to cope with poor management.

It is important to note that the employees' notion of having good colleagues relates to social norms. Many interviewees also weighted how having good colleagues is especially important if their manager is not accessible / skilled / competent enough. Teamwork amongst colleagues appeared to become especially important in that case. The interviews also confirmed that the working-age population had detailed knowledge of the workplace environments at other local workplaces, which would influence their decision to become employed at these. This also points to an awareness of management style that likely influences the employees in their decisions to stay at a workplace or leave for another workplace.

Other socially related aspects of being at work seemed to play a major role for the employees to see their job as meaningful. According to JCT, a meaningful job is also related to employees' skills and to what degree these are needed during their work. In the empirical data, this was only true for skilled employees and managers (cf. section 5.5). For many employees, it was important not to be bored at work which somehow refers to have challenging tasks once in a while, yet to a minor degree refers to skills variety and task identity as the theory does (cf. section 7.6).

Scholarly literature accentuated a professional pride amongst the workforce and a focus on being acknowledged and rewarded for existing skills before being sent to further training and courses (Kirk, 2003; Langgård, 2005; Lau, 2005). Respondents

did not directly touch upon this in the interviews, yet when asking employees about their importance to the employer, their answers were vague and gave the impression of modesty (cf. section 7.6). If employees are reserved to express their importance to the workplace (or even not aware of their contribution to a workplace in the first place), the necessity and benefits of skills development might not be clear to them.

The empirical data showed one aspect where skills and tasks did play a major role for employees: On-the-job-training repeatedly was described as something that gave meaning to the employee's work as it contributed to the previously highlighted social aspects at work. At the same time, training each other was reported by employees as contributing to becoming aware of one's own competences (cf. sections 5.5. and 7.6).

From the employers' view, the finding that skills and competences are not as important for most employees as they might be for politicians and employers is useful knowledge. Skills development among the working-age population of Greenland is currently considered to be of high importance for the development of the labour market. The finding that skills and competences are not as important for most employees as they are for employers is a reminder of the need to acknowledge existing skills and experience amongst employees first, in order to align the expectations of skills development. As seen in section 8.1, there is no culture of showing off one's skills. Employees can be modest and highly skilled at the same time. To a high degree, social status is based on family ties and the employees' role in society. The employees' educational level, skills and tasks at work seemed to play a secondary role when it came to the meaningfulness of work.

Taken together, the above shows that for employees, the meaningfulness of work is created by several factors. Meaningful work can be a combination of fulfilling instrumental needs (sufficient earnings) and normative commitment (contribution to society). This was also shown in the findings on work ethic (cf. section 7.3). Social aspects play a major role when discussing meaningfulness of a job, while ownership to the workplace plays a minor role for many, yet still exists (cf. section 7.2).

Lastly, some notes on an observed generational difference in meaningfulness must be made. Youth did not appear to be as interested in working many hours as much as older employees did. To a higher degree than older workers, youth focused on the workplace offering positive challenges during the workday. Older workers also emphasised how 'being bored at work' was problematic, yet it was mostly youth who connected variety during work with positive challenges. With a later entry on the labour market, young workers' commitment to work and purpose of work can be based on different factors. Some findings in the data also point to how youth are better in speaking up about their preferences. The younger generations might show higher awareness of the consequences of meeting foreign norms and values for the working-age population in Greenland (cf. section 4.3).

8.3.1. POTENTIAL FOR ALIGNMENT

Employers, it seems, expect or at least would prefer if the employees' motivation to work would be based more on skills and tasks. For the employees in this study, a meaningful job mostly showed to be based on upbringing, socio-cultural norms and values, and lifestyle. Working is a natural part of life and meaningfulness is created firstly by the act of working itself, its social aspects and instrumental benefits, and secondly through skills or tasks. For many employees, meaningfulness is created by being independent and self-sufficient to the degree where their earnings are sufficient to their individual life circumstances. In addition, being busy and not bored at work is regarded as meaningful.

In relation to salary, it has been shown that the purpose of work for many is to earn a sufficient salary even if this requires to work more than standard hours. This is beneficial for employers as it likely decreases their need for additional workers. Paying a higher salary could result in some workers working fewer hours and the employer needing to hire additional workers. Yet it would also show acknowledgement and recognition to the workers that in the long term could influence their retention positively. In section 7.1, we have seen how many employees preferred to be hourly paid as their monthly earnings are higher this way than by receiving a fixed monthly salary. This should also be an important consideration for employers. When trying to attract or retain employees by offering a fixed monthly salary, the comparison should not be made with hourly paid standard working hours, but the actual working hours of the employee that for many appeared to be more than 40 hours a week.

It must be stressed again that if employees were able to earn a sufficient salary at their current workplace, the salary level was not a decisive factor for employee turnover. Financial incentives should therefore not be one of the most used measures by employers.

To make earnings less of a silenced topic, there is potential for better communication about salary between employers and employees. In the long run, this could result in a more open dialogue about instrumental needs in society and thus better preconditions for an alignment of instrumental needs and proposed instrumental benefits. As discussed in section 8.1, flat hierarchies also would improve communication and a more open dialogue at workplaces.

As colleagues and a positive atmosphere at the workplace showed to be of high importance, employers could enhance this by further teambuilding measures. Also, on-the-job training has been reported as positive and measures concerning intern collaboration and a non-hierarchical approach at workplaces likely could be beneficial for attracting and retaining employees. This points to the importance of the social aspects of going to work and highlighting a positive dependency on each

other as potential for measures. To motivate managers and employers towards increased involvement in local community matters also could contribute to working towards a positive work environment that also goes beyond the company, as also discussed in section 8.2. This could for example be expressed in leisure time social activities organised by the company, involving both employees and managers.

With respect to skills, a more direct acknowledgement of employees' importance and contribution to workplace and a recognition of their workload might be a beneficial starting point for measures. Respect and recognition of existing skills (that also might equal with experience as they have been achieved informally) has been requested by employees. In this sense, being rewarded for work with words and appreciation could play a more important role for the commitment and retention of an employee than offering higher salaries.

Communication about skills development as well as recognition and awareness about existing skills also appeared relevant to employees. Currently, the topic of training and courses appears to be a silenced topic between most managers and employees. Some employees are apparently sent on courses without knowing why. The employees seem to be aware of political visions to upgrade the skills of the working-age population (cf. sections 4.3, 5.5 and 7.6) yet the above discussion on meaningfulness showed that some employees are not aware of their own benefits from skills development yet.

Political visions concerning skills development could be reached more easily if the focus was less on creating meaningfulness through skills but accepting that employees create meaningfulness in a different way than anticipated by employers and politicians.

Another goal could be to work towards a shift in society that it is accepted or even enhanced to be openly proud of one's skills and contribution to society. While pride about skills was observed amongst employees, it was rarely expressed openly. As mentioned earlier, many employees had difficulties to express how their work contributes to their workplace. Yet, most employees showed strong awareness and desire to contribute to society and social status has been shown to be connected to community spirit. There likely is potential in highlighting contributions to society at workplaces.

8.4. SPECIFIC JOB ATTRIBUTE PREFERENCES FOR MANS

While the previous sections in this chapter were primarily concerned with EMPs, the present section will briefly discuss the specific job attribute preferences found for MANs. To investigate potential differences between the job attribute preferences of

employees with managerial responsibilities (MANs) and those without (EMPs) was a subsidiary aim of this dissertation.

Firstly, some specific findings on recruitment were noted. The employee survey results showed that the salary level showed to be more important to MANs than to EMPs were expected to be satisfactorily settled before beginning in a new job (cf. section 5.2). Generally, it appeared that during hiring processes of MANs, certain conditions needed to be in place for MANs to consider a position. Employers appeared to be aware of many of these preferences of MANs (cf. section 5.3). The observed practice of recruiting MANs without the right skills and trying to upskill them later was not of concern for MANs nor employers. Yet, it needs to be noted that EMPs criticized this practice strongly. In their experience, many MANs did not receive the necessary training after employment which would lead to problems at the workplace, poor collaboration between managers and employees and even disrespect of managers on the part of EMPs (cf. section 5.5). There seems to be strong potential for alignment in regards to manager training. Ideally, such training would include some of the inter-personal, inter-cultural and communication skills as proposed earlier in section 8.1.

Secondly, the empirical data revealed specific preferences of workplace culture for MANs. MANs appeared to keep the responsibility given to them closely. Instead of asking for help from other branches or the main management, they showed a strong desire to solve problems themselves (cf. sections 7.5 and 7.7).

Some local managers appeared to be in a cultural limbo as they needed to balance their own norms and company norms at the same time, often without having learned how to do this. On the one hand MANs wanted to follow society norms they were brought up with. On the other hand, they also needed to follow company rules and values, some of which are were considered to conflict with social norms. From the employees' point of view, this led to disagreements between managers and employees. In this sense, many workplaces showed to have more than one work culture that from time to time could result in conflicts. An example is a manager who has a similar background to and generally shares the values of employees, but also needs to relate to the company's corporate culture. This can lead to the manager becoming unpopular amongst employees. By serving corporate culture, the manager represents a culture that is not necessarily seen to match local culture and values.

Sustained alignment for MANs could thus lay within enhancing cultural understanding which for example could be approached by starting a dialogue about the cultural limbo that some managers seem to experience daily. One approach to manager training could be to enhance the community spirit at workplaces and thus enhance local collaboration. This likely would make it easier for managers to ask for help when needed.

8.5. FEW VISIBLE VARIATIONS ACROSS COMPANY TYPES

Based on the composition of the Greenlandic economy and the political vision of a growing private sector (Økonomisk Råd, 2019), a subsidiary aim of this study was to examine if the job attribute preferences of employees varied depending on which company type, they were employed at: A public, private or public-private employer.

The results of the analyses in chapter five showed that the three companies experienced similar challenges, even though differences were anticipated when talking to the employers individually. The companies approach varied based on branch size, management style and financial situation rather than if the company was driven as a public, public-private or private company.

In the analysis in chapter seven, it was looked for if employees showed awareness of the advantages or disadvantages of working for a public organisation, private company, or public-private employer. The differences found were less substantial than expected.

Some of the interviewees showed awareness to the specific benefits offered by the different employers, such as housing, higher salary or other financial benefits. Yet these benefits were not the primary reason for the employees to work for the company.

What mattered most to the employees with respect to the company was the management style as well as workplace environment in general. The quality of management appeared to have a strong influence on how the employees perceived the workplace, and if it was attractive for them to stay employed at a company. The workplace culture at each branch or department of a company was of higher importance for the employees than whether the company was publicly, privately or public-privately owned.

The employees' awareness towards management style stresses the importance of management education, as also discussed in section 7.7 and 8.4. Along these lines, the strong influence of managers on workplace culture, environment and atmosphere needs to be stressed.

Along the lines of what has been emphasised in section 5.10.2, the above further accentuates that rivalry between companies based on being different company types and having different leeway for employee benefits is largely a futile endeavour as the type of company was of little importance to employees.

CHAPTER 9. CONCLUSION

This dissertation has explored and provided analyses of Greenlandic employees' job attribute preferences when it comes to paid employment, with a starting point in employers' presumed need for increased knowledge about the preferences of the working-age population in Greenland in relation to paid employment. Additionally, this dissertation has shed light on what makes a workplace attractive for employees.

It points to unrealized potential for establishing improved employer-employee dialogue and better understanding of employee expectations and preferences in Greenland when it comes to paid employment. It further gives recommendations for sustained alignment between employer measures and employee preferences.

To date, this dissertation is the most comprehensive study on the employees' point of view when it comes to paid employment in Greenland. Large data sets were produced by combining quantitative and qualitative methods. The data sets were collected consecutively and analysed using a pragmatic and hermeneutic approach. Overall, the explorative and pragmatic research design proved to be satisfactory in regard to the ability to have confidence in the analyses and conclusions of the study. In hindsight, a full focus on qualitative interviews with employees could have provided more detailed knowledge on employee job attribute preferences. However, because employee job attribute preferences in Greenland are under-researched, the pragmatic approach and the use of mixed methods including data from the quantitative survey has proved vital for a qualified discussion of the job attribute preferences of employees.

Using theory in an iterative manner in the analyses has shown to be a useful approach when investigating a problem within a field of little prior research. The complexity of Greenlandic society today demonstrated the need to construct theoretical lenses which can provide usefully adjusted categories enabling an analysis that combines terms and concepts with contextual knowledge.

The explorative analysis presented in chapter five was based on two data collections as well as the secondary literature introduced in chapters two and four. This first analysis provided a solid basis for the selection, modification and application of the chosen theoretical approach and contributed with fundamental knowledge to the content of the third data collection. The theoretical toolbox presented in chapter six consisted of selected theories that were adjusted to the purpose of this dissertation, based on findings from the analysis in chapter five. The selected theories were developed into a qualified model and applied in the analysis in chapter seven.

Although the dissertation's approach to theory is best described as iterative and thus includes elements of inductivity, the primary contribution of the study is not the

development of new theory. It provides, of course, insights that can be related to existing theories, but the purpose is not the construction of grounded theory. The theoretical contribution of the dissertation lies in concrete knowledge-building about how to select relevant tools from a large body of theory, adapt them to and apply them in a highly complex context (for which they were not originally designed). As outlined in chapter two, contemporary Greenland consists of a complex mixture of social and cultural elements, which can be labelled both Indigenous and non-Indigenous (but also specifically Greenlandic as well as specifically Danish).

Content-wise, the analysis in chapter five presented significant insights into the employers' experience with employee job attribute preferences and brought attention to the discrepancies between the employers' experiences and used measures as well as preliminary findings on the imbalance between employee job attribute preferences and employer measures. What stood out as the most prominent issue in this first analysis was a lack of knowledge about financial preferences of employees, the need for better alignment of expectations during hiring processes, a lack of skills development incentives that match the employees' interest, collective values and community spirit at workplaces. In addition, the findings from the analysis emphasised the following topics as important for further investigation: high workload of employees, language challenges and issues with communication and recognition. These topics had in common that none or few formally announced measures towards these issues could be found within the participating companies.

Chapter seven added findings from employee interviews to the discoveries from the first analysis. By applying the theoretical lenses, an analysis of employee job attribute preferences was presented. The combination and adjustment of *commitment theory* and *job characteristics theory* as theoretical lenses (cf. figure 6.8) enabled a qualified analysis of employee job attribute preferences, including the employees' individual work-life relationship and their preferred work conditions and environment.

Findings on employee job attribute preferences were then discussed in detail in chapter eight and are summarized in the following as the main findings of this dissertation.

At a more general level, the dissertation demonstrated that employee job attribute preferences centre around three main matters: socio-cultural values, a specific set of responsibilities that each employee has, and individual interpretation of the purpose of working. The next sections will summarise in more detail and list up the most significant potential for alignment giving recommendations as to how the most prominent gaps can be bridged.

Firstly, certain characteristics of employees could be determined based on the analyses in the study. Employees have been shown to be hard-working (i.e., working

many hours), to enjoy being busy with a variety of tasks (in contrast to being bored at work or having repetitive tasks), to be highly adaptable and flexible (especially when it comes to solving new tasks without necessarily having somebody with the right skills at hand), and to value social relations at workplaces highly. The employees likewise have been shown to be proud of their work with strong ownership and respect for what they do even though they are modest about their role at the workplace, and do not often speak out about personal preferences. Additionally, employees felt responsible to their workplace while at the same time not being sure about how their daily tasks contributed to either their company, or society as a whole. The discussion of the results proved that acknowledging and recognizing these characteristics is important and can be an easy and effective first step when it comes to retention of employees. While the need to recognize and acknowledge one's employees is not unique to the Greenlandic labour market, it is vital in the present context where negative discourse about the working-age population appeared to be prevalent (Kalaallit Nunaata Radioa, 2016b; Sejersen, 2016; Sermitsiaq AG, 2017, 2018b).

One of the most important findings of the study has been the vital role of community and social norms to employees' job attribute preferences. For almost all employees, social relations at the workplace – and based on this, a positive workplace atmosphere – were an essential part of motivation to come to work every day and commit to one's job. Along these lines, flat hierarchies at workplaces were preferred and were seen to enhance community spirit – an important cultural value, which many grew up with and which still has a substantial role in the construction of employees' work ethic. Corporate engagement in the community was also found to be important to employees.

The findings on work ethic showed the perhaps greatest discrepancy between the employer's and the employee's view. In the employers' accounts it was assumed that a number of members of the workforce were lazy and irresponsible. Yet findings on the employee work ethic illustrated that most employees showed pride and ownership of their work while at the same time being modest about their role at the workplace. Many were also working more than the standard 40 hours a week. From the employees' perspective, this was the only way to earn enough to sufficiently support their households. Financial incentives to attract and retain employees, as used by many employers, did not appear to be a preferred solution to the workforce. For most employees, their earnings were not a decisive factor for turnover if they earned enough to make ends meet (or had the opportunity to work additional hours). This is an interesting paradox from a conventional capitalist and socialist point of view: there are employees who are willing to work more than 40 hours to earn a salary that is sufficient to them, yet they show little interest in salary increases.

More than high earnings, employees desired involvement, respect and recognition at the workplace which points to the need of appreciative and social outreach approaches by company management. Such approaches require both time and engagement from the employer. Assuming a company already struggles with their daily operations due to a lack of (skilled) labour, the suggestion of in-depth involvement and engagement with their employees may be seen as an unwelcome distraction from the everyday running of a company/organisation by some employers. Yet to achieve sustainable alignment of the current imbalance of interests between employees and employers, a stronger focus on strategic engagement with (and involvement of) employees should be considered strongly by the employers.

For higher skilled employees and managers, salary played a more important role during the recruitment process and a higher awareness of salary fairness was observed. It was observed that for skilled labour, the salary level was not a primary factor for their turnover either.

Skills development is another area where a major imbalance between the employers' and the employees' expectations could be observed. Workforce development was seen as vital to company growth and is a major political goal of the Greenlandic government *Naalakkersuisut*. The findings of the study showed that this topic was more present on the employers' agenda than on the employees' agenda. The employees showed interest in skills development at the workplace. However, there was either little interest in the way skills development was offered by employers, or employees had difficulties expressing their desires for concrete training. The employers' current approach to skills development of employees was shown to be based mostly on company needs (or political attention) on the subject. Hence, much potential lies in improving the dialogue with the working-age population about the concepts of 'skills development' means to them compared to the employer's or the politicians' understanding. Moreover, it appeared that there is a discrepancy regarding what type of training employers' think their employees need and the type of training preferred or desired by the employees. As an example, on-the-job training showed noteworthy popularity amongst most employees, yet none of the employers mentioned this type of training when asked about skills development incentives.

The employees' attitude to skills development can be connected to the Greenlandic cultural trait of modesty. It can also be connected to respect for education and potential logistic challenges around training or education, as well as immediate financial implications of undertaking training. Along these lines, employers would do well to take into account that social status in Greenland is not necessarily connected to educational status but often rather to community service and collective values which aligns with the finding of the importance of social relations at workplaces.

Another major key to improved alignment of employee job attribute preferences and employer measures is communication. Communication at workplaces needs to be (inter)culturally appropriate. The findings of the study showed several examples of miscommunication based on intercultural issues, which demonstrates a clash between cultures appearing in corporate culture. Culturally sensitive communication should be an essential part of all employer measures. Along these lines, emphasis should also be on the finding that employees' often express signs of discontent in more subtle ways than anticipated by employers.

Some employers expressed that their employees did not give enough feedback regarding challenges experienced at the workplace. The analysis showed how this is likely based on employees being reserved and modest about their opinion, as well as a general aversion to conflicts in Greenlandic society which spills over to the workplace. This lack of communication from the employees' side, however, should not be mistaken for employees being satisfied with their working conditions. For employers, reaching out to learn more about their employees' opinion likely requires time and resources, and engaging in this approach promises to be effective in the long run. On the other hand, employees need to speak more openly about their needs. This will likely require a comprehensive change in social norms (at least work related) in the long term, or more efficient internal communication in the company with a positive encouragement to speak up about one's needs. It would also require a different style of communication in which critique can be voiced and received in a more subtle fashion; perceived as less confrontational.

Language differences and challenges was another communication matter with strong potential for alignment. As pointed out, intercultural competencies are needed to handle this issue more efficiently. More open dialogue about current experiences and ways of handling language challenges are needed in order to determine future ways of dealing with the issue in active cooperation between employees and managers.

Improved communication at between employers and the working-age population also seemed to be vital to understanding current job seeking patterns. The analyses shed light on a paradox as employers appeared to act passively when it comes to hiring processes while employees are expected to reach out. At the same time there is a short supply of job-seeking workers. The analyses showed that a more active role of employers in the recruitment process of employees could likely improve this situation. In addition, employers need to take the described job attribute preferences of employees more into consideration when recruiting.

Based on indications given by local employers, the study also investigated if there were major differences between employees with and without managerial responsibilities as well as variations in employee job attribute preferences based on different company types.

The exploration and discussion of differences between employees with and without managerial responsibilities (MANs and EMPs, respectively) indicated that companies mostly lack knowledge about the preferences of EMPs. Observed challenges concerning MANs were widely based on the offered job conditions for MANs as well as a quantitative lack of skilled managers in Greenland. This suggests strong potential for alignment in the field of management training which was also expressed by employees. This recommendation is difficult to elucidate further as based on the first empirical findings, the final qualitative data collection focussed only on EMPs. The MANs points of view were not explored in such detail. Future research might well focus on managers' job attribute preferences specifically. From the present dissertation it can be concluded that the primary challenge of attracting and retaining managers is their low availability. The secondary challenge, according to the employees, is the managers' level of competencies.

Another important observation concerning managers was made based on employee interviews. This was the 'cultural limbo' that managers seem to face on a daily basis. They constantly need to balance corporate culture and individual culture (both of the manager him/herself and the employees' culture). Potential for alignment therefore lies within enhancing cultural understanding, such as culturally sensitive communication as also highlighted previously.

For the three different company types (public, private and public-private), only few variations were observed in the study. A stronger focus on this aspect would likely have given more detailed results. Yet the present results indicate how the company type was secondary to most employees as focus was on basic conditions such as sufficient salary, efficient communication and good social relations at the workplace. Differences between company types will likely become more apparent for employees in the long term once their more basic job attribute preferences are fulfilled.

Further, the dissertation showed that it was mostly the companies themselves assuming that competitors had advantages when it comes to measures to attract and retain employees. The management style, workplace environment and workplace culture mattered more to employees, than whether the company was publicly, privately or public-privately owned. The employers' fear of inter-sectional competition was therefore found to be unfunded and thus it seems unproductive to challenge competitors when the focus should be on establishing measures that work in one's own context.

Returning to the opening quote of the dissertation, a final conclusion may be that even though work matters in many ways to Greenlandic employees, other aspects of life, such as community responsibility, was proven to be equally important. The working sphere and social sphere of the working-age population in Greenland are interwoven and cannot be divided sharply.

> *He was in Thule and there he asked a hunter's wife, who was cutting up a seal, if she liked doing it. "That's my job", she answered, slightly confused about such a foolish question.*[30]

The interpretation of the importance of having a job varies for each individual member of the workforce. For sustained alignment, employee job attribute preferences must be taken into consideration, and employer measures should be based on a bottom-up approach rather than the currently widely used top-down approach.

Future work & practical implications

While the dissertation was in writing, a pilot study of an annual Greenlandic labour force survey was successfully initiated (Høgedahl & Krogh, 2019). While the present study has been one of the most comprehensive studies of members of the Greenlandic workforce in recent years, the upcoming annual labour force survey will contribute with much needed quantitatively procured knowledge in the future. This likely will increase the knowledge about the Greenlandic working-age population significantly. There will still be a need for further qualitative insights into the Greenlandic workforce's preferences based on the results of the present study and future quantitative findings. A study focused on the role of community at workplaces as well as the social aspects of going to work and maybe even the social aspects of attending training or courses could further expand the knowledge in the field.

The findings of the study brought to light several practical implications and recommendations for future measures by employers, which have been described in detail in sections 8.1.1, 8.2.1 and 8.3.1. These findings will hopefully function as a catalyst for renewed dialogue about the interplay between employers and employees in the Greenlandic labour market. They also present an obvious starting point to reassess current approaches to workforce development in Greenland.

The study has shed light on how employers can analyse challenges regarding employee attraction and retention more independently in the future and detect potential gaps themselves. A more direct involvement of employees in the suggestion and creation of measures would be beneficial and appeal to the community spirit which was shown to be of crucial importance to employees. Such involvement would be beneficial also because it would allow employers to draw on the employees' knowledge and experience about hiring and turnover. The employees themselves know their reasons for seeking and accepting a job as well as staying in a job. In the interviews, employees provided important insights into how they would approach the present issues if they were heard or asked about the matter.

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[30] Lidegaard, 2017, p. 92, author's translation.

Whilst this is a rather obvious finding, many employees reported how they were either not asked or misunderstood by employers when trying to give suggestions or raising their voice about their expectations and preferences when it comes to paid employment. This highlights how informed and respectful communication and dialogue should be a key for all employers in order to increase their knowledge about employee job attribute preferences. It also emphasises the importance of company outreach and involvement in the local community to create commitment on both sides.

I believe this dissertation contributes to improve employee-employer dialogues in Greenland. For a long time, different cultural norms and values have influenced each other in Greenland as local and foreign norms and values got intertwined. This dissertation facilitated the creation of unique connections in the complex socio-cultural context of the Greenlandic labour market and has its raison d'être in illustrating how paradigms of understanding cannot be lifted uncritically from one culture to another. Its results contribute to the ongoing post-colonial process of understanding and acknowledging contemporary norms and values of the workforce in Greenland, and thereby the transition into a complex hybrid with new norms and values in the future.

My upcoming activities to disseminate the results of the study (as outlined in appendix G) aim to contribute further towards breaking down barriers of understanding between actors in this field as well as towards alignment of the current supply and demand imbalance in the Greenlandic labour market on the long term.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Employer interview guide

Semi-structured – investigative – explorative

- What kind of measures does the company use in order to attract and retain employees?

- What is the process when hiring employees? Are there any special strategies and/or measures that are in use?

- What are the processes to keep/retain employees? Are there any special strategies and/or measures in use?

- What challenges does the company experience?

Topics of interest to ask about:

Salary
Employee housing
Responsibility
Leadership
Communication
Stability / Turnover of employees
Geographical differences
Education
Skills level / development
General thoughts about what the challenges are

Appendix B. Employer interview overview

Company	Code	Position	Type	Duration
C1	I-23	Head of Union	Personal interview	60 min
	I-22	Middle manager	Phone interview	10 min
	I-21	Middle manager	Personal interview	30 min
	I-20	Middle manager	Answer via e-mail; translated from Greenlandic	N/A
	I-19	Middle manager	Personal interview	30 min
	I-18	Current and former head of HR	Personal interview	37 min
	I-17	Manager	Personal interview	44 min
	I-16	Manager	Personal interview	30 min
C2	I-15	Head of HR; Head of Sales	Personal interview	78 min
	I-14	Middle manager	Phone interview with simultaneous interpretation	17 min
	I-13	Middle manager	Phone interview	23 min
	I-12	Middle manager	Phone interview	15 min
C3	I-11	Head of HR; Head of Education	Personal interview	67 min
	I-10	Head of Union	Personal interview	53 min
	I-9	Manager	Phone interview	33 min
	I-8	Middle manager	Phone interview	20 min
	I-7	Manager	Phone interview	21 min
	I-6	Manager	Phone interview with simultaneous interpretation	38 min
	I-5	Middle manager	Phone interview with simultaneous interpretation	33 min
	I-4	Middle manager	Phone interview	11 min
	I-3	Middle manager	Phone interview with simultaneous interpretation	16 min
	I-2	Middle manager	Phone interview	17 min
	I-1	Manager	Personal interview	30 min

Appendix C. Employee questionnaire, *Kalaallisut* version

[Insert introduction here - different introduction for each case]

Suiaassuseq:

☐ Arnaq
☐ Angut
☐ Allamik suiaassusilik

Utoqqaassuseq:

☐ 18-it ataallugit
☐ 18-19
☐ 20-24
☐ 25-29
☐ 30-34
☐ 35-39
☐ 40-44
☐ 45-49
☐ 50-54
☐ 55-59
☐ 60-64
☐ 65+

Maannakkut atorfik:

☐ Nalinginnaasumik suleqat pisortatut akisussaaffeqanngitsoq, atuartoq, ilinniarnermut atatillugu suliffimmiittoq
☐ Pisortatut atorfilik (Suleqatigiinnut naalagaasoq, immikkoortortaqarfimmi pisortaq, pisortap tullersortaa, pisortaq)

Ilinniagaq naammassinikuusat qaffasinnerpaaq:

☐ Ilinniagaqarsimanngilanga
☐ Meeqqat atuarfiat (9./10. klasse)
☐ Inuussutissarsiutinut tunngasumik ilinniagaqarneq
☐ Universitetimit ilinniagaqarneq

Qanoq sivisutigisumik maannakkut atorfigisanniippit?

☐ Qaammatit 0-3
☐ Qaammatit 3-6
☐ Qaammatit 7-12
☐ Ukiut 1-2
☐ Ukiut 2-niit sivisunerusumik

1. Suut pingaartippigit imaluunniit suliffiulluartup suut ilisarnaatigai?

	Pingaannglaq	Pingaalaarpoq	Pingaartuuvoq	Pingaartorujussuuvoq
Suliffiup iluani attaveqaqatigiilluarneq	☐	☐	☐	☐
Suleqatigiilluarneq	☐	☐	☐	☐
Aqutsineq nersorinnippalaartoq	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sulisitsisoq aqqutigalugu pikkorissarnissamik/ilinniarnissamik periarfissaqarneq	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sulilerlaamik sungiusaanissamik periarfissaqarneq	☐	☐	☐	☐
Suliffiga ilinniakkannut naapertuuttoq	☐	☐	☐	☐
Suliffeqarfik ataqqinnippalaartoq	☐	☐	☐	☐
Suleqatitut aalajangiisoqassatillugu peqataatinneqartarnissara	☐	☐	☐	☐
Suliakka inuiaqatigiinnut sunniuteqaqataammata	☐	☐	☐	☐
Suliakka pikkunartunik unammillernartortaqarmata	☐	☐	☐	☐
Akunnerit suliffiusut nammineq kiffaanngissuseqarfigineri	☐	☐	☐	☐
Akissarsiama annertussusaat	☐	☐	☐	☐
Akissarsiat qaffannissaannut periarfissat	☐	☐	☐	☐

2a. 2018-imi sulisitsisut qassit akissarsiaqarfigisimavigit? (namminersortutut akissarsiaqarsimaguit taakku aamma naatsorsuutigineqassapput)

_____

2b. 2018-imi piffissap ilaanni imaluunniit piffissani arlalinni namminersortutut sulisimavit?

☐ Aap
☐ Naamik

2c. 2018-imi piffissap ilaanni imaluunniit piffissani arlalinni suliffeqarsimanngilanga?

☐ Aap, 2018-imi nammineq toqqakkannik piffissami killilikkami imaluunniit piffissani killilikkani arlaleriarlunga suliffeqanngilanga.
☐ Aap, kisianni nammineq toqqagarisimanngilara.
☐ Naamik, 2018-i tamaat atorfeqarlunga sulisimavunga aamma/imaluunniit namminersortutut sulisimavunga.

3. Ilaannikkut misigisimasarpit, oqaatsit assigiinngissutaat peqqutaalluni, suleqatitillu/sulisutillu imaluunniit aqutsisutillu akunnissinni paasinerluisoqartartoq?

☐ Aap
☐

4a. Suliassavit annertussusaat, agguaqatigiissillugu qanoq nalilersinnaavigit?

☐ Annikippallaarput
☐ Annikipput
☐ Naammaginarput
☐ Annertuallaarput

4b. Ullup suliffiup ingerlanerani suleqatinik/sulisunik sungiusaaneq qanoq initutigisarpa?

☐ Soqanngillluinnarpoq
☐ Annikippoq
☐ Naammaginarpoq
☐ Annertuallaarpoq

5. Piginnaanerit ukunani allassimasut arlaat ulluinnarna sulininni qanoq atortartigivigit?

	Atortanngilakka	Atulaartarpakka	Naammaginartumik atortarpakka	Atortartorujussuuvakka	Naluara
Ilinniagarisimasannit piginnaanikka	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pikkorissartarninnit piginnaanikka	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Piginnaanikka allat – assersuutigalugu: Misilittakkakka, imminut ilinniartillunga piginnaanerilikkakka, piginnaanerit suleqatinnit ilikkakkakka	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Ukiuni marlunni kingullerni (sulisitsisup akiligaanik imaluunniit namminersuutigisannik) pikkorissariartarsimavit?

☐ Aap
☐ Naamik

7. Ataatsimut isigalugu, ulluinnarni suliannut tungatillugu piginnaneqartutut misigisimasarpit?

☐ Annikitsumik
☐ Akunnattumik
☐ Naammaginartumik
☐ Ajunngilluinnartumik

8. Isumaqarpit suliatit aqqutigalugit inuiaqatigiinnut sunniuteqaqataallutit?

☐ Aap
☐ Naamik

Ukunani unammisitsinermut peqataanissamut periarfissaqarputit; pisiniarfimmut tunissummut allagartaq, oqarasuaativit normua uunga allanneratigut – taanna taamaallaat unammisitsinermut tunngatillugu atorneqartussaavoq:

_____

Akissutinnut qujanarujussuaq.

Akissutit toqqorsinnaajumallugit, inussiarnersumik qinnuigissavakkit 'Naammassivoq'

Klippeværktøi

tooqqullugu, imaluunniit inussiarnersumik piumaffigissavakkit akissuteqaat
suliffeqarfinni akisussaasumut tunniuteqqullugu.

Misissuinermi apeqquteqaasiat Kalaallit Nunaanni sulisussarsiornermut sulisullu
sulisoriuaannarnissaannut iliuuseqartarnerit pillugit, lisimatuutut misissuinermi suliap
annertuup ilagaa. Paasisaqarnerorusukkuit, Verena ugguuna attaveqarfigisinnaavat
huppert@cgs.aau.dk, imaluunniit telefoni 54 27 01.

Appendix D. Employee questionnaire, Danish version

[Insert introduction here - different introduction for each case]

Køn:

☐ Kvinde
☐ Mand
☐ Andet

Alder:
☐ Under 18
☐ 18-19
☐ 20-24
☐ 25-29
☐ 30-34
☐ 35-39
☐ 40-44
☐ 45-49
☐ 50-54
☐ 55-59
☐ 60-64
☐ 65+

Nuværende stilling
☐ Alm. medarbejder uden ledelsesansvar, elev, praktikant
☐ Lederstilling (Mellemleder, afdelingsleder, souchef, chef)

Højeste gennemførte uddannelse:
☐ Ingen
☐ Folkeskole (9./10. klasse)
☐ Erhvervsuddannelse
☐ Universitetsuddannelse

Hvor længe har du været i din nuværende stilling?

- ☐ 0-3 måneder
- ☐ 3-6 måneder
- ☐ 7-12 måneder
- ☐ 1-2 år
- ☐ Mere end 2 år

1. Hvad er vigtigt for dig eller karakteriserer en god arbejdsplads?

	Ikke vigtig	Lidt vigtig	Vigtig	Meget vigtigt
God kommunikation på arbejdspladsen	☐	☐	☐	☐
Godt kollegaskab	☐	☐	☐	☐
Anerkendende ledelse	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mulighed for kurser/uddannelse gennem arbejdsgiver	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mulighed for at oplære nyansatte	☐	☐	☐	☐
At mit arbejde svarer til min uddannelse	☐	☐	☐	☐
At der udvises respekt på arbejdspladsen	☐	☐	☐	☐
At jeg som medarbejder bliver inddraget i beslutninger	☐	☐	☐	☐
At mit arbejde bidrager til samfundsudvikling	☐	☐	☐	☐
At der er positive udfordringer i arbejdet	☐	☐	☐	☐
Frihed til selv at bestemme arbejdstiden	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hvor meget jeg får i løn	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mulighed for lønstigning	☐	☐	☐	☐

2a. Hvor mange forskellige arbejdsgivere har du fået løn fra i 2018? (hvis du
har fået løn som selvstændig tæller det også)

_____

2b. Har du arbejdet som selvstændig på et eller flere tidspunkter i 2018?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nej

2c. Har du været uden arbejde på et eller flere tidspunkter i 2018?

- ☐ Ja, jeg har selv valgt at være uden arbejde i en eller flere perioder i 2018.
- ☐ Ja, men det var ikke mit eget valg.
- ☐ Nej, jeg har været ansat og/eller selvstændig hele 2018.

3. Oplever du indimellem misforståelser med kolleger/medarbejdere eller
ledere på grund af forskellige sproglige baggrunde?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nej

4a. Hvordan opfatter du din egen arbejdsmængde i gennemsnit?

- ☐ For lavt
- ☐ Lavt
- ☐ Passende
- ☐ For højt

4b. Hvor meget fylder oplæring af kolleger/medarbejdere i din arbejdsdag?

☐ Slet ikke
☐ Lidt
☐ Passende
☐ For meget

5. Hvor meget bruger du de følgende kompetencer i dit daglige arbejde?

	Bruger dem ikke	Bruger dem lidt	Bruger dem passende	Bruger dem meget	Ved ikke
Kompetencer fra uddannelse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Kompetencer fra kurser	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Andre kompetencer - for eksempel: Erfaring, selvlærte kompetencer, kompetencer fået fra kolleger	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Har du været på kursus (arbejdsgiverbetalt eller privat) i de sidste 2 år?

☐ Ja
☐ Nej

7. Generelt, hvor kompetent føler du dig i dit daglige arbejde?

☐ Mindre kompetent
☐ Mellem
☐ Tilfredstillende
☐ Meget godt

8. Mener du at du via dit arbejde bidrager til samfundsudviklingen?

☐ Ja
☐ Nej

Du har mulighed for at deltage i konkurrencen om et gavekort til butikken ved at skrive dit telefonnummer her – den bliver udelukkende brugt i forbindelse med konkurrencen:

_____

Mange tak for din besvarelse.
Venligst klik på 'Afslut' for at gemme din besvarelse eller aflever skemaet hos den ansvarlige på din arbejdsplads.

Dette spørgeskema er en del af et større forskningsprojekt om rekruttering og fastholdelse af arbejdskraft i Grønland. For mere info, kan du kontakte Verena via huppert@cgs.aau.dk eller 542701.dk.

Appendix E. English translation of employee questionnaire

Questionnaire for [insert employee group for each employer]

You – the employee – are the starting point for this questionnaire. The questions ask about what is important to you in your working life. Your opinion and experience of work life is important and will help to improve your own and others working conditions.

The questionnaire will only take 5 minutes.

Your replies will be anonymous. No one will be able to recognize who answered the questionnaire.

By answering the questionnaire, you can participate in a competition to win [insert price, depending on employer]. The winners will be drawn at the end of February.

Gender:

☐ Woman
☐ Man
☐ Other

Age:
☐ Under 18
☐ 18-19
☐ 20-24
☐ 25-29
☐ 30-34
☐ 35-39
☐ 40-44
☐ 45-49
☐ 50-54
☐ 55-59
☐ 60-64
☐ 65+

Current position:
☐ Employee without management responsibilities; trainee; intern
☐ Manager (Middle manager, head of department, deputy manager, manager)

How long have you been in your current position?
☐ 0-3 months
☐ 3-6 months

☐ 7-12 months
☐ 1-2 years
☐ More than 2 years

---

1. What is important or characteristic for a good workplace for you?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Good communication at the workplace	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good colleagues	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recognition by management	☐	☐	☐	☐
Possibility of taking courses provided by employer	☐	☐	☐	☐
Option to train new employees or colleagues	☐	☐	☐	☐
That my work corresponds to my education	☐	☐	☐	☐
That respect is shown at the workplace	☐	☐	☐	☐
That I as an employee get involved in decision making	☐	☐	☐	☐
That my work contributes to the development of society	☐	☐	☐	☐
Positive challenges at work	☐	☐	☐	☐
Freedom to choose the number of working hours yourself	☐	☐	☐	☐
How much I get paid	☐	☐	☐	☐
Chances of salary increase	☐	☐	☐	☐

2A. From how many employers did you receive salary from in 2018? (including self-employment if applicable)
_____

2B. Have you been self-employed at any point during 2018?
☐ Yes
☐ No

2C. Have you been without work at any point during 2018?
☐ Yes, I have been unemployed by own choice at some point during 2018
☐ Yes, but the unemployment was not by own choice.
☐ No, I have been employed and/or self-employed all of 2018.

3. Do you, at times, experience misunderstandings with colleagues or managers because of different linguistic backgrounds?
☐ Yes
☐ No

4A. How do you experience your own workload on average?
- ☐ Too low
- ☐ Low
- ☐ Appropriate
- ☐ Too high

4B. How much does training of colleagues / employees occupy your average working day?
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Little
- ☐ Appropriate
- ☐ Too much

5. How much/often do you use the following competences during in your daily work?

	Do not use them	Use them a little	Appro-priate use	Use them a lot	Don't know
Competences from education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Competences from courses or training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other competences, for instance: Experience, self-taught competences; competences gained from colleagues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Have you undertaken a course (paid for by your employer or by yourself) in the last two years?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

7. In general, how competent do you feel you are during your day's work?
- ☐ Little
- ☐ Medium
- ☐ Satisfying
- ☐ Very good

8. Do you think, that through your work, you contribute to societal development?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

You have the option to participate in the competition to win [price depending on company] by writing your phone number here - it will only be used in connection with the competition:

_____

Thank you very much for answering the questionnaire.

Please click 'Finish' to save your reply or hand the questionnaire to the responsible person at your workplace.

This questionnaire is part of a bigger research project about the preferences of the workforce in Greenland. For more information, you can contact Verena via huppert@cgs.aau.dk or 54 27 01.

Appendix F. Employee interview guide

Semi-structured interview guide

[Researcher introduces herself and her interpreter in *Kalaallisut*]

Introduction to study: Study about employees in Greenland – it is about giving the Greenlandic workforce a voice.

Employers often speak up about their challenges and expectations, but we seldomly have heard the employees' preferences.

Once the study is finished, recommendations will be given about how employer-employee relations can be improved, and how companies can align better with employee preferences.

Our conversation is confidential and anonymous, your name will not appear written. However, I'd like to record our conversation, so I'll be able to remember better what we talked about. Is that alright with you?

<u>Questions:</u>	Connection to empirical data	Connection to theory
Are you from this town/settlement? (Why did you move here?)	(has it been different to work in other towns or settlements?)	Intro
How old were you when you got your first job? What kind of jobs did you have until now? Where did you work?	Intro	Intro
Family: What do your parents, partner, siblings work?		Upbringing and socialisation
Current job: How long have you worked here? How did you find the job or how did you hear about the job?	How to look for a job – can relate to the meaning of work	Skills variety Task identity
What happened, did you contact the	Formal vs informal recruitment	Feeling responsible Feeling needed

employer, or did they contact you?		Commitment
Why did you want to work at this company? Why do you think they wanted to have you as an employee? Do you think your daily work is important for the company? Do they show you that you are an important part of the company? How?	Collective values, to be part of something bigger, could that be the key to retention? Are you being heard? Is it important to the interviewee to be heard?	Communication, dialogue, involvement
Best day at work Are you sometimes tired of your work? Why? Are you sometimes happy for your work? Why?	Why are you going to work? How does going to work give meaning to you?	
Future opportunities in company Is there something that you would like the company to assist you to become better at? Have you received any offers? Career opportunities	Understanding of the word "training" or "course"	Autonomy Skills variety
Family feeling at work – showed up in other conversations. What is your opinion? In other conversations, one's colleague's turnover or absence also has been mentioned as something that is experienced difficult. What do you think about it? Are you annoyed by it? Do you miss your colleagues when they are absent? What happens if you are sick, need to leave earlier one day, or similar…. What is your manager's reaction, or your colleagues' reaction when you cannot come to work, arrive late, or need to leave early?	Social values are important, collective values/thinking Can you feel important for the company and at the same time be absent and change jobs? Flexibility did not show important in survey, but employers seem to think it is important for their workers How would you like your manager to react?	Task identity Task significance Feeling responsible Autonomy Recognition Do they see me Representation, dialogue Overall job satisfaction Commitment to colleagues? To manager?
Are your colleagues fun to work with? Where do they come from, from this town,	Importance of colleagues;	

other towns? In other conversations, language differences or cultural differences were often mentioned as a challenge on many workplaces. How do you experience this?	preferences Challenges based on language, highlighted in survey; need more details on this	
Are you satisfied with your salary? Being hourly paid – would it make a difference for you to receive a fixed monthly salary? Or rather 5-10 DKK more per hour? Fixed monthly salary – would a raise make a difference for you? Do you have other occupation apart from this job?	Salary level in general vs. raise The meaning of money Sources of income – structure of household economy	Overall job satisfaction, salary Continuance commitment – rational & logical?
Is there something that could be improved at the workplace, what could that be? If you would stop working here, would the company be able to replace you easily?		Opens up to additional topics that may have been overlooked
Do you think you will have the same job in six months? Have you thought about working elsewhere? If yes, why? Which offer would make you consider changing jobs? (Which better conditions could you wish for?)	Workers are not changing jobs as much as assumed Some remember badly how many employers they have had in the last year	Job security Own desire to change jobs
Have there been periods in the last years where you have not been employed? Voluntary or involuntary?	Earnings showed to be more important to those that were economic inactive by own choice (survey)	Commitment to other things than work Work-life balance
If you could decide freely – how would your working life would look in the future? ("The dream")		Opens up to additional topics that may have been overlooked

Appendix G. Dissemination of results

A. Executive summary of findings and recommendations to be distributed to partners and other interested parties. *Kalaallisut* and Danish version.

B. Short summary of findings and recommendations to be distributed to the interviewees/respondents that participated in the data collection. *Kalaallisut* and Danish version.

C. Dissemination of findings and recommendations to local media (KNR, Sermitsiaq.AG, etc.)

D. Public presentation of findings and recommendations. Organised in cooperation with a local partner (for example the Greenland Business Association or the municipality of Sermersooq). Possibility for online participation. Nuuk, Sisimiut, Ilulissat (TBD).

E. Facilitation of workshops with partners and other interested parties about how to implement the recommendations. Nuuk, Sisimiut, Ilulissat (TBD).