COMPLEMENTARITY OF SITE AND SITUATION:

A CASE STUDY OF KULUSUK, EAST GREENLAND

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Abstract

Site and situation are dynamic factors in the origin, success, demise, and adjustments of human settlements. Over a period of 106 years, modern settlement on Kulusuk Island in East Greenland has undergone a number of changes brought about by the interplays of site and situation. An isolated virtually uninhabited island which had held little prospect for the Inuit has been transformed largely by extrinsic factors to become the "gateway" to East Greenland and a place where vestiges of traditional Inuit lifestyles co-exist with the modern. Through field work and literature review, the interactions between site and situation were examined and analyzed to present a regional study of the island from the first Danish mission up to the present time. Danish colons, the Second World War, the Cold War, and the emergence of a tourist industry have all played roles in the development of a settlement and its transformation over time Settlements in Greenland can be ephemeral and there is the question as to whether Kulusuk will remain a viable place in light of demographic changes, proposals from Nuuk, and possible global warming.

Keywords

Site, situation, cultural integration, Greenland, Kulusuk, Ammassalik

Introduction

The rise, development, and subsequent progression or regression of a settlement (city, town, or village) can often be explained by examining aspects of that location's site and situation. The village of Kulusuk[1] which is located on Kulusuk Island in East Greenland provides a fascinating example as to how geographical, political, and social factors within the framework of site and situation have shaped a small human settlement in the Arctic.

The *Tunumiit* (Inuit) of East Greenland had lived in virtual isolation for several centuries until Danish naval captain Gustav Holm and his party of Danes and West Greenlanders sailed around Cape Farvel and then ventured north along the East Greenland coastline. Eventually they wintered in the Ammassalik [2] region in 1884-85. Prior to Holm's landing the only contact the people of the region had with outsiders may have been European whalers that had been blown off-course in the 1700s or perhaps Norwegian seal hunters around 1860 (Correspondence with Ole Lund, August 2015). Inaccessibility was due to the inland ice which prevented any "overland" transport between the east and west coasts and to the fact that pack ice on the east coast is much greater than on the west coast where navigation can occur throughout most of the year (Banks, 1975: 13-14). Around 1885 Holm returned and set up a trading station on Ammassalik Island. This set in motion the transformation of the region. Subsequently, a number of events and programs brought about notable changes in the lifestyle, material culture, economy, and cultural landscape of Kulusuk Island.

Kulusuk Island in the East Greenland archipelago (Figs. 1, 2, and 3) had no permanent human habitation until 1909.when Danish Lutheran missionaries set up a mission in their attempt to convert the *Tunumiit* (East Greenland Inuit) to Christianity. While the island had never been attractive to the Tunumiit before, several families from surrounding islands came and settled near the mission. For a few decades they were able to maintain much of their traditional hunting/fishing subsistence, but as the Twentieth Century progressed situation changed several times because of external forces. The purposes of this paper are to illustrate some of the ways in which the dynamic interplay of site and situation, real and perceived, at various times shaped the settlement and cultural landscape of Kulusuk Island and also demonstrate what Nassauer (1995: 230) implied when she wrote that "humans not only construct and manage landscapes, they also look at them, and make decisions based on what they see (and know and feel)".

2. Materials and Methods

An extensive literature review of books, papers, and websites dealing with the island's history, culture, and physical geography was conducted to ascertain how Kulusuk's region evolved in a different manner than most other locations in Greenland. Once this was established, a theoretical framework was developed by examining some of what had been written regarding the components the site and situation. To gain further insights and in preparation for a visit, correspondence with several current and former residents began in January 2015. In order to integrate theory and the reality of Kulusuk, the authors undertook field work in the region during June 2015. Field work consisted of several guided excursions with Arctic Wonderland Tours and Icelandic Mountain Guides and independent explorations of the village and the island. A brief trip by helicopter to the regional capital Tasiilaq was also made to view the island and its environs from the air. A series of casual interviews was conducted with several local residents and tourist industry personnel to gain their perceptions of the region's geography, history, and sociology. Upon returning home the authors

continued correspondence with several current and former residents and continued to monitor news reports from the region. Then commenced the fashioning of a descriptive analysis of the island and its surrounding region. All photographs in this paper, except where noted, were taken by the authors.

Figure 1. Greenland. (Cartography by Ken Shonkwiler).

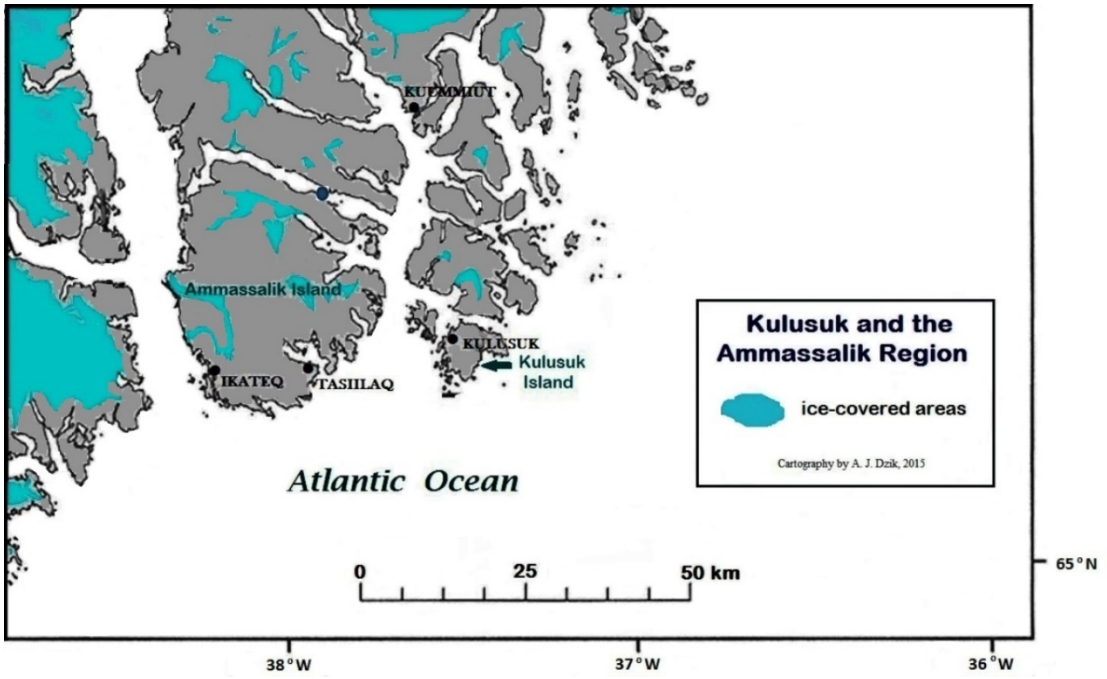

Figure 2. Kulusuk and nearby settlements. (Cartography by Anthony Dzik)

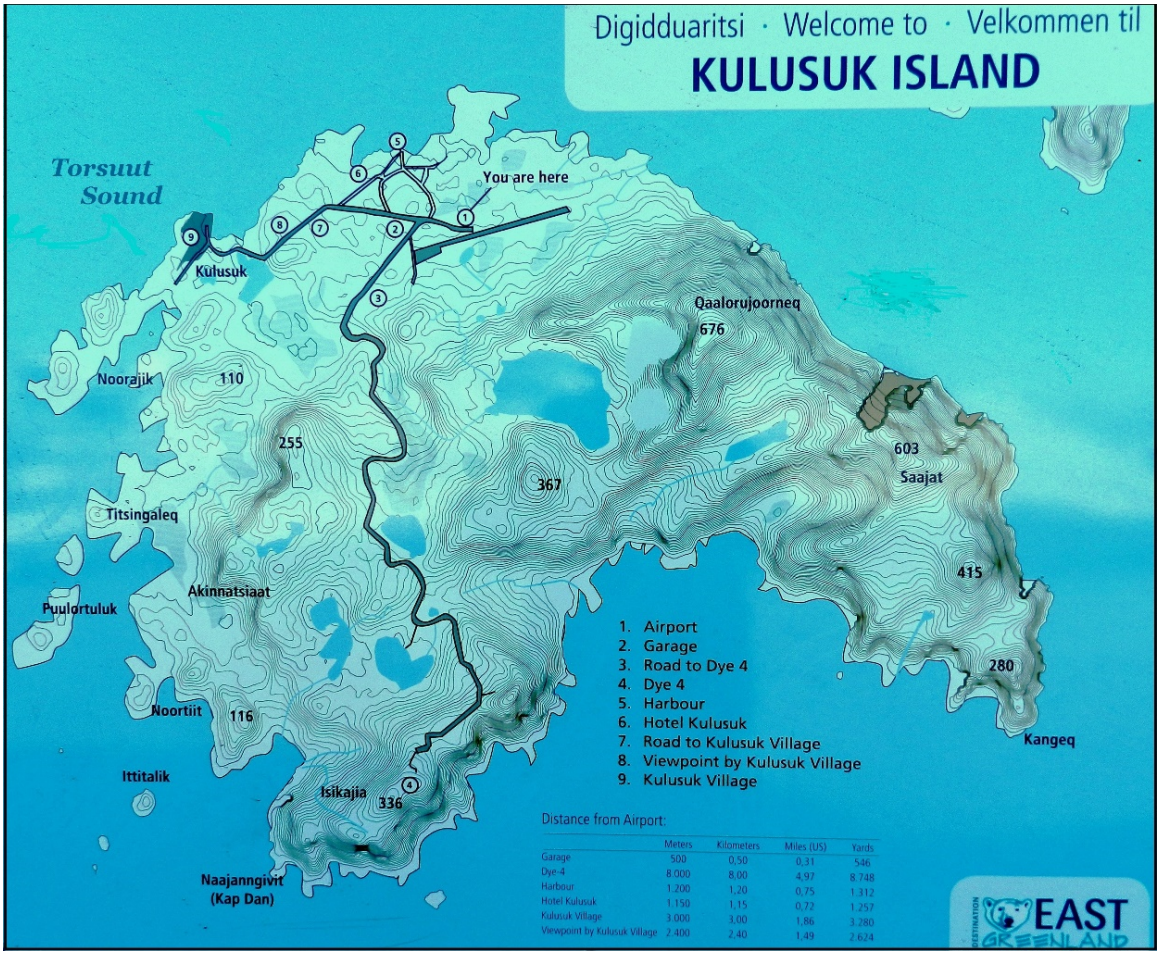

Figure 3. Topography of Kulusuk Island. (Photograph of wallboard at the Kulusuk airport).

Site and Situation

Site and situation are often complementary forces in the origin and development of a settlement. They often "play" off of each other and the interactions can result in fashioning a settlement's unique story. Site is the actual location of a settlement and is composed of the physical characteristics of that location. Examples of natural site characteristics are climate, proximity to a navigable body of water, soil fertility, local flora and fauna, landforms, and relief. Human-built features such as airports, canals, and other infrastructure may also be viewed as site characteristics. Situation is more complex. Some of the circumstances that may be considered situational factors are 1) the location of a place within a broader regional or global framework, 2) relative location, 3) natural or human-caused disasters and climate change, and 4) economic, demographic, and/or social changes. Once a settlement has been created, situation advantages (and disadvantages) can take on a site aspect (Patton, 1983: 148-150).

Whittlesey wrote that humankind's sense of place varies over time and place (1945:1-2). A culture group's sense of place develops not simply because of the economic possibilities and limitations presented by the natural setting, but also because of the group's perception of the land. The initial motive for creating a settlement tends to arise from perception of the site characteristics, but it is often situation that leads to expansion, regression, demise, or alteration of the settlement over time. In the case of Kulusuk's origins, the site was selected by the Danes for their purposes and not by the Tunumiit who perceived the island as a mediocre hunting ground. Jain (1994: 88) suggests that situation is "far more important for the destiny of towns for their longer future". As will be demonstrated in this paper, it has largely been extrinsic forces (situation) that have worked to shape the settlement and evolution of Kulusuk since its founding.

The Physical Geography of the region and Kulusuk Island

Kulusuk Island is located at 65.5500° N, 37.1167° W in the East Greenland archipelago. Its areal extent is approximately 8 km from north to south and 11 km from west to east. Like other islands near the East Greenland mainland it has a geologic basement complex comprised largely of pre-Cambrian granitic-gneissic-migamatic rock (Humlum and Christiansen, 2008: 5). The alpine-like landscape and the fjords of the region exhibit the effects of continental glaciation and there are remnants of the Greenland ice sheet on nearby islands, but no icefield persists on Kulusuk today. The terrain is generally rugged with elevations ranging from sea level to about 35 meters at the airport to 676 meters at the summit of Qalorujoorneq Mountain. Despite the northerly latitude and the tundra climate, there is only discontinuous permafrost on the island. What permafrost that exists is found intermittently on high northerly slopes and sporadic occurrences in sheltered lower elevations It may be relict permafrost from the Little Ice Age from the years 1300 to 1870 A.D. (Humlum and Christiansen, 2008: 18). The ground under parts of Kulusuk village appears to have some intermittent permafrost (authors' observations, June 2015). Parts of the island are devoid of a soil layer. Soils, where they exist, are primarily immature shallow tundra gelisols and entisols.

The Köppen-Geiger system classifies the climate of Kulusuk and its region as ET, the tundra climate. Temperatures are very low all year-around, the January mean being -7°C and the July mean 6.9 °C. Summers are short. Winter is the dominant season. Average annual precipitation is around 900 mm. Snow is part of the landscape for much of the year with a

minimum ground cover of 150 mm for 260 days (Robert-Lamblin, 1986: 8). Recent data (December 2000 – December 2015) for nearby Tasiilaq indicate an annual average of 107 days with measurable snowfall and an average snow depth of 130 mm from December through April (Climate Robot, 2016). No such data is available for Kulusuk; however, it can be surmised that its snow number would be slightly higher as the island's mountains in the face of easterly winds off the Atlantic produce an orographic effect. In some years there is snow cover in places as late as August (authors' conversations with residents) and Smutylo (2013: 85) observed during his August visit that townsfolk had to negotiate six meter high drifts just outside Kulusuk Village. The island is windswept with average velocities ranging from 9-15 km/hr. Powerful systems such as the *piteraq* and the *neqqajaaq* possess intense velocities. The piteraq is a cold katabatic wind from the west-northwest blowing down from the inland ice with hurricane-force and can approach 180 km/hr. (Ultima Thule, 2013). The piteraq is mainly an autumn and winter phenomenon, but may occasionally develop in the summer as a cold sand storm. In late winter and springtime Kulusuk is often hit with a snow-filled northeasterly *neqqajaaq* which also has ferocious winds. When these systems descend upon Kulusuk all human activity on the island is severely limited.

The fjords and the surrounding ocean are choked with pack ice that constrains navigation except during the summer (usually June through September). Icebergs and floes are part of the seascape year-around, but ice conditions and climate have never been stable in East Greenland (Buijs, 2010: 41). For example, from 1930 to about 1960, sea-water temperatures were a bit warmer, but by the mid-1960s they had fallen. In the early 1980s Sermilik Fjord was generally frozen-over the entire winter, but in recent years there has been open water until February. The local *Tunumiit* (East Greenland natives) have noticed that sea ice in recent years appears later in winter and breaks up earlier in spring. (Buijs, 2010: 42). Winter in Kulusuk, however, is capricious. During the last week of June 2015, there was still a large amount of ice in Kulusuk harbor and in the surrounding fjords (Figures. 4 and 5). Movement of all but the largest watercraft was impeded and several local people say that no recent year has been "normal" (authors' personal observations, June 2015).

Because of the climate and the paucity of adequate soils, vegetation on Kulusuk Island is quite sparse and discontinuous. A study near Tasiilaq (21 km west on Ammassalik Island) provides data that would largely be representative of Kulusuk. 161 native and 13 introduced species have been identified there with 72% being arctic and low arctic varieties and 28 % being boreal types (Daniels and de Molenaar, 2011: 653). All plants are of very low height and the types vary as to location. The vegetation of the coastal fringes consists of a few species adapted to long periods of snow cover while flatlands and sunny hills exhibit arctic willow bushes, grassy places with angelica and arctic bluegrass, and heathlands. Assorted lichens and clubmoss are common except on the high slopes which are essentially bare of plants.

Figure 4. Kulusuk harbor in late June, 2015. Season's first landing of the regional supply ship out of Tasiilaq.

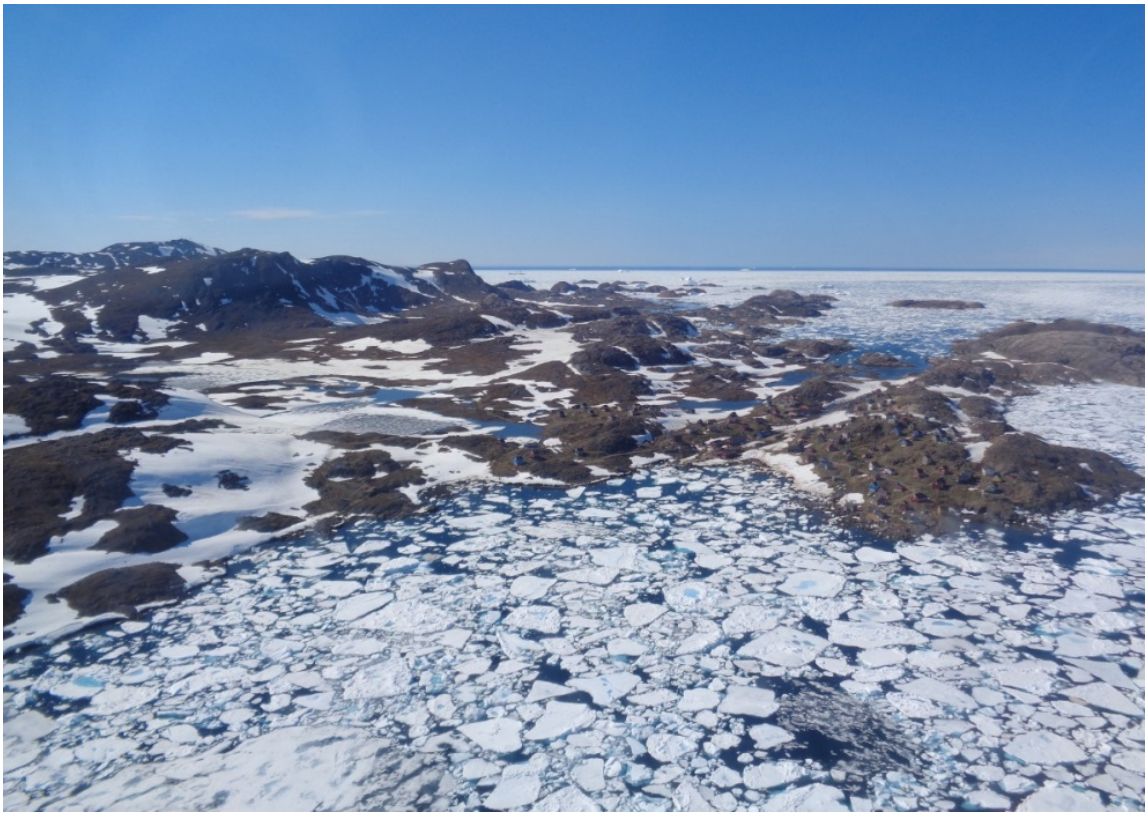

Figure 5. Ice in Torsuut Sound as viewed from helicopter leaving Kulusuk Island for Tasiilaq.

Few terrestrial animals reside on Kulusuk Island. Only the arctic fox appears in appreciable numbers today. Reindeer formerly lived in the area, but were extirpated by the 1800s (Petersen, 2010: 343). The *nanoq* (polar bear) is an occasional visitor and there are reports of more frequent human-bear encounters on Kulusuk Island (Knickerbocker, 2000; Arctic Portal, 2012; author's conversation with Jesper Krogh of Hotel Kulusuk, June 2015). When a polar bear appears, there is great excitement in the village and it is hunted if the regional quota allows. Sightings and kills vary year-to-year because of ice conditions and variations in the area's seal population. At the time of this writing, the most recent kill (June 24, 2015) was by local professional hunter Frede Kilime (Fig. 6) near Kuummuit on an island 30 km north of Kulusuk.

Figure 6. Local hunter Frede Kilime and the polar bear he shot June 24, 2015 on an island 30 km north of Kulusuk.

Birdlife on the island is not exceptional. There are a few permanent dwellers such as raven, snowy owl, and ptarmigan. Eagles and falcons are occasionally present. Most of the birds that frequent the island are migratory species such as eider, wild goose, tern, and gulls. Of course, there is also the black guillemot, a member of the auk family. Kulusuk means "chest of the black guillemot".

What the island lacks in terrestrial and avian fauna is more than made up for by plentiful sea life. The waters of the region are frequented by several kinds of marine mammals such as seals, narwhal, beluga, and minke whale; however, these animals are usually not abundant in the waters immediately surrounding Kulusuk. The sea mammals along with fish such as capelin, codfish, halibut, polar cod, and redfish form the basis for human subsistence in the region.

Site and Situation of Kulusuk Over Time

The region around Kulusuk Island has been discontinuously inhabited by human beings since about 1800 B.C. (Robert-Lamblin, 1986). The earliest inhabitants were Arctic Small Tool Tradition people of the Saqqaq culture who seem to have disappeared from East Greenland around 800 B.C. (Apollonio, 2008: 3). They were followed by members of the Greenlandic Dorset culture around 600 B.C. Recent findings based on DNA analysis have determined that the Saqqaq and Dorset are more closely akin to Siberian cultures and are not the ancestors of modern Inuit (Rasmussen, 2011). While it appears that the lands around Kulusuk were uninhabited during most of the Middle Ages until the Thule people arrived during the 14th and 15th century, there may have been a remnant of the late Dorset still present (Gulløv, 1997). At first the Thule were hunters of whale, but in time became seal hunters as local whale populations fell due to pressure from European whalers. The Inuit of Kulusuk are the descendants of the Thule.

When the Inuit of the Ammassalik region were "discovered" by Danish navigator Holm in 1884 the population of the region numbered 413 (Apollinio, 2008: 6). Ten years later the population had diminished to 293 due to migration to Southwest Greenland and, perhaps, in part because of disease and blood feuds. In order to stem population loss in Ammassalik, the Danish colons established a trading post and a Lutheran mission at the site of present-day Tasiilaq in 1894. Within a few years some of the people who had left the district returned because of these developments.

The hunter-fishers of the region were seasonally nomadic, but Kulusuk was only occasionally visited by hunters because the animal resources on the island were generally sparse and other locations in the archipelago were more productive (Robert-Lamblin, 1986: 91). As part of their efforts to consolidate a relatively far-flung population and to convert Inuit people without having to move them to Iddimiit (near what is today the Tasiilaq heliport) on Ammassalik Island for several winters, the Danes in 1909 set up a small mission near the northwest corner of Kulusuk Island along Torsuut Sound (See upper left of Figure 3; the mission was on the site of present-day Kulusuk). The Danes called the village Kap Dan (not to be confused with a headland on the southwest part of island that used to bear the same name.) This site (Fig. 4) was selected for easy access and the potential for a harbor that could accommodate ships from Europe. The mission consisted of a single long building that served as the church, school, and parsonage. Such was the humble beginning of Kulusuk village with the site chosen to suit the purposes of the Danes, not the Tunumiit. Soon families from along Ammassalik Fjord moved to Kulusuk and settled in proximity to the mission and by 1923 the village numbered 108 persons. By 1930 Kulusuk had grown to have 165 residents, surpassing Tasiilaq's 112. The island's population then exceeded its potential carrying capacity as it was a mediocre hunting ground and the populace had all but abandoned summer hunting migrations because of a shortage of 10-15 person sealskin-covered boats called *umiaks* (Robert-Lamblin, 1986: 91). Because of overpopulation and mediocre local hunting, Kulusuk's population was becoming more dependent upon trade goods from Europe. Ironically, at this time the Danish colonial government strictly limited contact between Kulusuk and the outside world in order to not jeopardize the traditional subsistence economy and culture and also protect the Tunumiit from imported infectious disease (Robert-Lamblin, 2008).

Protection and isolation began to erode as a new situation, the Second World War, brought American military personnel to East Greenland. Their main installation was an airfield

"Bluie East 2" at Ikkadeq (Ikateq) about 50 km northeast of Kulusuk. Because of the mountains and strong winds this base did not participate much in aircraft ferrying to Europe and was mainly used for search-and-rescue operations. A weather station was also set up at Kulusuk in 1943. While neither facility had much direct impact on the Inuit life on Kulusuk Island at the time, the locals were exposed to a number of new technologies. After the war in 1947, the U.S. closed Bluie East 2. The Danish government had no interest in the airfield and any useful abandoned equipment and articles were scavenged by the local population, introducing them to new pieces of material culture.

With the war over, a new geopolitical situation affected Greenland. The Cold War between the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union brought significant changes to Kulusuk. In 1956-1958 construction began on the U.S. DEW (Defense Early Warning) Line radar facility DYE-4, an airstrip, and a 9.5 km road from the airstrip to the radar installation on the south end of the island (See Figure 3 for location). This work brought American and Danish workers to the island. A small contingent of American servicemen was based at the station and airfield until the DEW Line was decommissioned in 1991. Although fraternization with the local Inuit was discouraged, there was a lot of contact and the people of Kulusuk were introduced to new material culture and modern technologies (authors' conversations with local residents, June 2015).

The transformation from a military installation to a civilian airport illustrates the complementarity of site and situation in that external forces (situation) brought the need for a strategic installation and its closure when the need ceased left what evolved to be an important site characteristic. The airstrip became an important site characteristic for the island when civilian flights begin using it in the late 1950s. After the DYE-4 closure in 1991 the airport was ceded to the Greenland Airport Authority. Today the airport is a true gateway. Occasional tourist day excursions from Iceland to Kulusuk had begun in 1959 (Kaae, 2002). These increased in frequency with the thawing of the Cold War and by the end of the 20th Century an entire industry had developed to serve regular day-trips from Iceland during the summer months and longer tourist stays year-around. In recent years it is estimated that approximately 6000 visitors come to Kulusuk annually (Wolffsen et al, 2014). For some Kulusuk is their ultimate destination, but for many Kulusuk is merely a connection point for visits to Tasiilaq or other locations in East Greenland. Air Greenland also flies from Kulusuk to the nation's capital Nuuk.

The airport (Fig. 7) is the gateway to East Greenland. The airport is about 3 km east of Kulusuk village. The site obviously was selected by the U.S. military because of open space, flat terrain, and suitable meteorological conditions. The airport is part of a rather utilitarian landscape consisting of the 1159m x 30m gravel runway, several helipads, the terminal, and several outbuildings. A short distance from the airport are dormitory buildings for workers and the Hotel Kulusuk. Near these facilities is a small, largely industrial, harbor and several fuel storage tanks (Fig. 8) With the exception of the hotel which was built in 1999, most of the structures on this part of the island exhibit architectural styling from the 1960s and 1970s and therefore this area may be considered to be the most "modern" part of the island.

Figure 7. Kulusuk Airport with its gravel runway.

Cultural and demographic changes can be viewed as situation (Patton, 1983; Dzik, 2014) and this is evident in Kulusuk in two ways. First of all, the Tunumiit of the island have largely adopted modernization and in the process the traditional lifestyle which the Danish colons attempted to protect in the early years has been compromised. Secondly, in recent years Kulusuk has experienced notable out-migration. Today there are 149 houses in the village and only 81 are occupied (conversations with local residents, June, 2015). Some abandonment may be due to the inhabitants leaving temporarily to seek opportunity in the regional capital Tasiilaq and they may return to Kulusuk. Many, however, have made Tasiilaq their permanent home. Both situations can be seen throughout the village (Fig. 9).

The story of Kulusuk has been largely tied to the attitudes and programs of external forces. Danish control over Greenland had been set by the establishment of The Royal Greenland Trading Company in 1776, and until the Second World War, Denmark essentially had a state monopoly on trade and investment in their colony (Graugaard, 2008: 10). The Danes practiced a paternalistic colonial policy (Sørensen, 2007: 12) which may be termed "positive isolation" or "economic paternalism" (Nutall, 1992: 17; Loukacheva, 2007: 21). Extensive modernization policies, formulated in Copenhagen, were implemented in Greenland in the 1950s and 1960s (Graugaard, 2008: 13). In many locales these efforts were stained by *"Danization"* strategies involving forced population concentration and resettlement. Many Inuit had to relocate to larger towns, adversely impacted local hunting cultures. Modernization probably made Greenland economically more dependent on Denmark than in earlier times (Petersen, 1995: 121) as traditional subsistence activity was diminished. Denmark granted Greenland Home Rule in 1979. In many respects the Home Rule and the 2009 Self Rule governments in Nuuk have, like the Danes, focused most of their attention and investment on the larger towns in West Greenland.

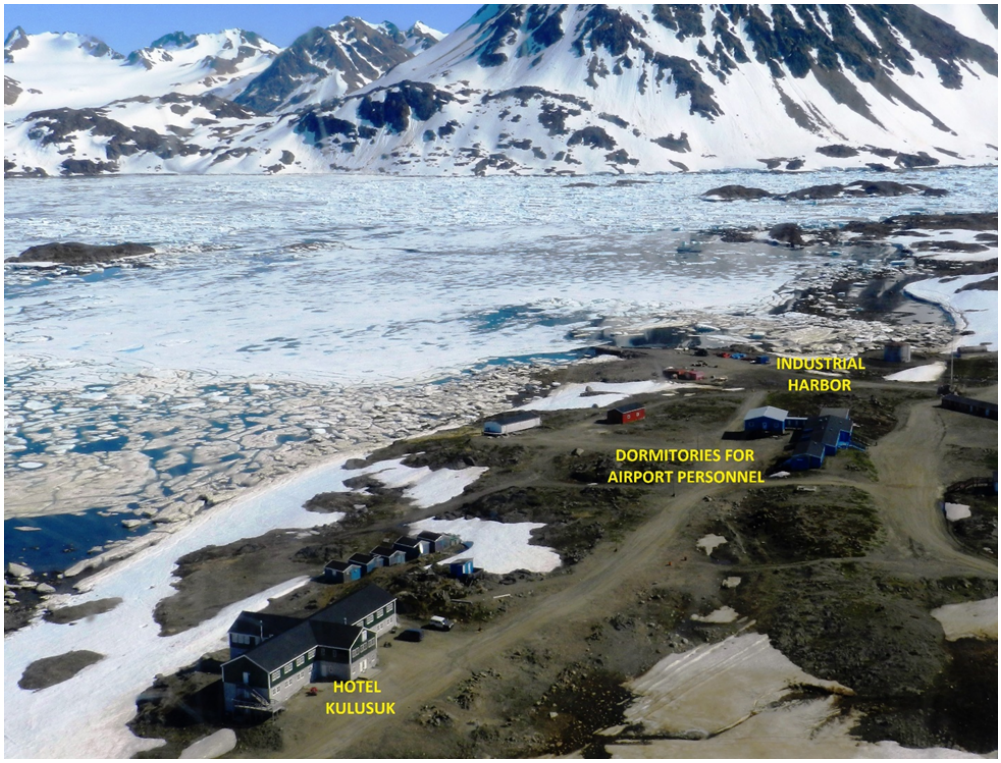

Figure 8. The area near the airport can be viewed as a functional settlement that services commercial interests and a transient population.

Figure 9. Where modernization and out-migration meet. In the foreground is the village power plant. The faded green house across the road is one of a number of homes that have been abandoned in recent years as residents have moved away to Tasiilaq.

Over the course of 131 years, relations between Kulusuk (and Ammassalik in general) and the central government of Greenland (Copenhagen in the past and, more recently, Nuuk) have generally been inconsistent and usually have favored the purposes of the government rather than those of the local population (Source: interviews with current and former residents). In the early days Denmark was interested in Ammassalik primarily to have a little trade and Christianize the natives, but little other development ensued. Danish interest was rekindled a bit in the 1920s as East Greenland became a possible flashpoint when Norway tried to rationalize their claims to part of the east coast, The colons responded to Norwegian incursions by sending 70 Tunumiit from Ammassalik to reside in in a colony near Scoresby Sound some 1000 km up the coast. Pia Arke (2010), a descendant of one of the settlers contends that not all relocations were voluntary. After WWII, the Danes initiated some infrastructure development and social programs in the East that have been in some form or other continued by subsequent central governments; however, in many instances, the government focused attention and investment on the fishing industry in western coastal towns where housing and schooling were made available. Settlements elsewhere were neglected, forcing inhabitants to relocate from outlying districts and to send their children to schools in larger towns (Dahl, 2005). In the late 1970s and early 1980s Anders Andreasen, a politician from East Greenland, headed a ministry for settlement and remote district development whose programs led to some improvements in infrastructure and some industrial initiatives. But by the 1990s, Nuuk's efforts began to focus more on the growth poles on the west coast (Sørensen, 2007: 165). Many East Greenlanders today believe that their concerns and aspirations are not understood nor are being met by the central government or Sermersooq, the municipality that includes both the Ammassalik region and Nuuk (Source: authors' correspondence with current and former residents). There have been a few meetings recently between members of the central government, Sermersooq officials, and local officials in an attempt to solidify relations (Damkjær, 2015).

Conclusion

While the people of Kulusuk have managed to adapt to some degree to the changes brought by external forces of the past, three current situations may greatly test their resilience and may alter both the traditional and modern economy of the island. The first of these is the prospect of mineral exploitation. A recent study suggests the possibility of nickel-copper ores in the Ammassalik region and olivine deposits on Kulusuk (21st North, 2012). If these were to be found commercially viable there likely would be increased employment opportunities, but at the cost of environmental and cultural disruptions.

Of more immediate concern is potential global warming. Annual temperature data from the past 110 years appears somewhat inconclusive (Figure 10) in terms of a warming trend; however, it seems that in most recent years sea ice in the fjords comes later in the autumn and the springtime break-up begins earlier. In their study of narwhal sea-entrapments, Laidre et al. (2012) found strong statistically positive trends from 1979-2009 in later dates for the sea's autumn freeze-up around Ammassalik. Interviews in Kulusuk with active and retired *Tunumiit* hunters suggest that they are facing growing uncertainty in a situation of warming seas as marine mammal and polar bear numbers will likely decline with increasing temperatures (Space Daily, 2005; Buijs, 2010). Changes in sea ice patterns will also limit access to prey off the island.

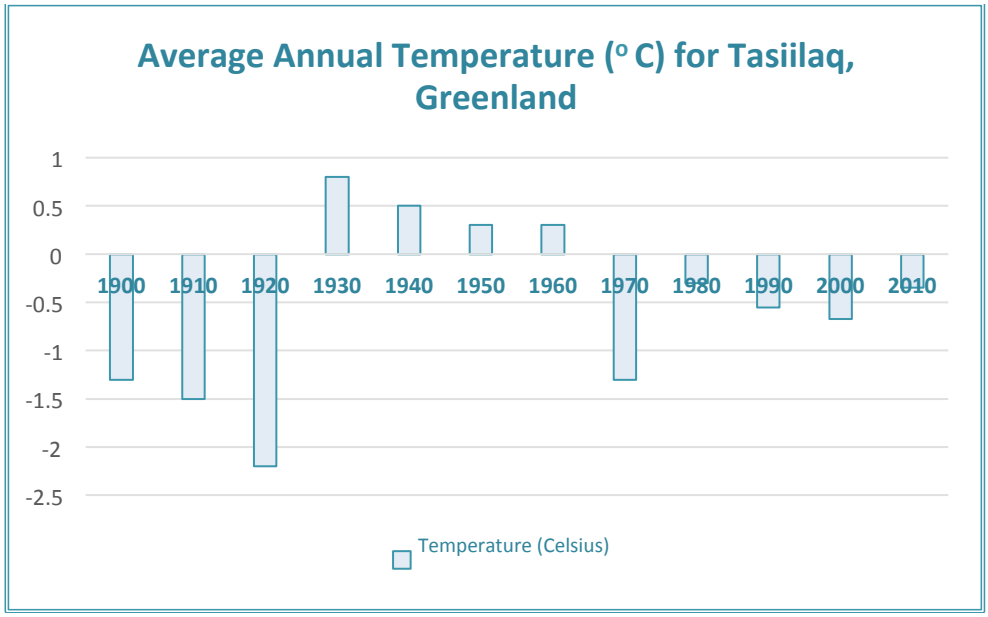

Figure 10. Average Annual Temperature for nearby Tasiilaq (formerly, Ammassalik). Long-term records for Kulusuk are unavailable. (Data gathered from Goddard Institute of Space Studies, http://data.giss.nasa.gov/gistemp/ and Tasiilaq Heliport).

A third potential threat to the island comes from discussions about closing the Kulusuk airport or greatly reducing its function. In 2011 the Transport Commission of Greenland recommended that a new airport be constructed at Tasiilaq because there would be significant savings by reducing helicopter transport from Kulusuk and it would improve tourist access to the region (Bendsen et al., 2011, p.8). In its statement of objectives for 2014-2018, Greenland's coalition government also favors a new airport in Tasiilaq (Greenland Home Rule Government, 2014). It is true that many tourists, business people, and East Greenlanders have to be ferried by helicopter to Tasiilaq after landing at the Kulusuk airport, but the airport serves the day trippers as well. It is largely them who support the island's tourist enterprises. The closure of the airport could be catastrophic for this part of the island's economy. It might even lead to a further decline in the population as airport workers would likely relocate to Tasiilaq. This kind of scenario has been played out several times in West Greenland during the island's development as Danish traders and missionaries initially encouraged dispersed Inuit to come to isolated settlements, but then in the 1950s the government withdrew investment and services from some unprofitable settlements forcing the residents to relocate to larger towns (Porteous and Smith, 2001: 104-105). A similar closure occurred at Qullissat a coal mining town founded in 1924 on Disco Island where 500 people were coerced to relocate when the government closed the mine in 1972 (Tejsner, 2014).

It has been demonstrated that the interplay of site and situation have impacted the evolution of human occupance and economy of Kulusuk Island for more than a century. Both of these locational factors are dynamic and likely will continue to shape and adjust conditions in East Greenland. Will Kulusuk continue to exhibit, as Smutylo (2013: 85) observed, a juxtaposition of a recent western consumer-driven culture atop its traditional hunting and fishing lifestyle? Will the village population continue to shrink and perhaps succumb to domicide due to outside forces? Could what remains of the hunting society collapse because of climate change? Might mineral exploitation revitalize the island?

East Greenlanders have a word *uupaa* which essentially means "we'll see, maybe, perhaps". Most often the word refers to the vagaries of sea ice or weather. It might well be applied also to the uncertainties that Kulusuk faces from changes brought about by future alterations in site and situation.

Notes

1. In this paper Kulusuk may refer to the settlement on Kulusuk Island or to the island itself. The authors have tried to be clear as to which is being referred to in the text. For example, at times we refer to the settlement as Kulusuk Village or simply "the village."

2. There are a number of names given to this particular region of East Greenland. Ammassalik had referred to a municipality covering 232,000 km^2 in Tunu, the former county of East Greenland. *Tunu* is the term that West Greenlanders often use in referring to East Greenland. It means "the backside" or "back country". To further complicate matters, the town known as Tasiilaq today was called Ammassalik or Angmagssalik "the place with *ammassat*" (capelin fish) by the Danish explorers back in 1894. Kulusuk in the past has also been spelled as Qulusuk and is also occasionally referred to by its old Danish name of Kap Dan (To further complicate matters, a headland on the island's southwest coast was also called Kap Dan by the Danes). With regard to the indigenous people of the region, the terms Inuit and *Tunumiit* are used in this paper. Inuit refers to the modern "indigenous people" of Greenland irrespective of where they reside. Tunumiit refers to Inuit with ancestral roots in East Greenland.

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