Introduction: Ethics and the Arctic

Recently, the developments of ethics and politics in the Arctic region have again become an issue for international discussion. One main issue is the problem of climate change and sustainability of the Arctic region. This problem is linked to the issue of exploitation of natural resources in the Arctic region, not at least in Greenland. Indeed, the general issue is how we should define ethics of the environment and sustainability as a general principle for the Arctic region. It is important to discuss what is at stake and how we define the problem in relation to the different participating stakeholders.

In relation to the general theme about ethics, politics and law of this study group in the Nordic summer University this topic deals with the issue of how to analyze the problem of sustainability in the Arctic region. With the climate crisis and the damage to the environment new possibilities and dilemmas have emerged concerning the Arctic region; Many countries are searching to benefit from the natural resources of the region and they discuss who has the legitimate rights to the region (Greenland, Iceland, Canada, Norway, Denmark, Russia), and the US, China and EU are also implied in the struggle for the resources of the Arctic region.

Accordingly, we need to discuss the future of the ethics of the environment and sustainability as a general principle for the Arctic region – What are the different ethical issues in debate that are at stake? Here we can mention the following themes:

– Who owns the Arctic?
– What is the impact of climate change issues?
– What is the status of the sea and land – Is it common heritage of mankind?
– What model of sovereignty in the collaboration of the Danish state community?
– What role of Iceland and Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland)?
– What is the relation to Canada and the US?
– What is the role of the United Nations in formulating international law for the region?

The starting point of this discussion could be an update about the natural and social facts of the region in order to clarify what do we know about the environment? What is at stake?

What do the climate specialists say and what are the new possibilities of the region? We can mention the following themes as topics that are important when we deal with the Arctic region from the point of view of sustainability:
Political and ethical issues. What is good politics of the region that is opposed to power politics? – what would be the right political way to deal with the problems? And what is the right way to deal with the resources in relation to the Arctic region?
Economic issues. Indeed we can mention both address fundamental philosophical and sociological issues, but also economic problems and responsibility of corporations and business in relation to the exploitation of the Arctic region. The question is the philosophy of the political economy of the Arctic region.
Legal issues. We can also mention topics of philosophy of law and international law and justice. Legal problems and responsibilities are important part of the debate about the Arctic region. Indeed the problem is how we should define the protection of the Arctic region in terms of international law and local legal questions.
Issues of history, sociology and anthropology. Here the problem is what kind of region that we want the Arctic region to be? How do we for example preserve culture for the future and what are the important issues for the people living in Greenland?
The general problem is what are the ethical challenges for the Arctic region and how we deal with the present situation of for example a country like Greenland?

1.Greenland and the challenges to sustainability: A case -example

A recent debate in Denmark that can illustrate the topics that are at stake in this context is the debate about uranium and who has the right to get access to the rich raw materials of the soil in Greenland. This case is interesting because it appeals to the important issues of social and environmental ethics and responsibility that we face in the Arctic region.

1.1. Self-determination of local government

Autonomy of Greenland and self-determination of the home government has been the official policy since 2009.[1] In relation to environmental and social sustainability Greenland has its own determination which was an agreement that was a political agreement with the Danish government in 2009. Greenland has on its own to take care of that responsibility, economically, administratively and politically. Internally in Greenland the law on raw material has been discussed in order to take over. With this in mind we can suggest that the decision-

making about the land and environment in Greenland has been left to the self-determination of local government. Many people think that the relation between Denmark and Greenland has not been better with this new issue of exploitation of raw-material. The Danish government is obliged to respect the agreement of self-determination from 2009. So it is difficult for Danish government and politicians to have an impact on the issues of self-determination in Greenland.

One consequence of the self-determination is an increase in hunting of whales that has made Greenland problematic from the point of view of international authorities for protecting the whales.[2]

1.2. State responsibility: The debate about Uranium mining

A more fundamental debate is the issue of mining of Uranium as the basis for use of this for energy of for other atomic technology. After the decision not to use nuclear energy the Danish government decided in 1985 not to export Uranium from Greenland. The Danish government was formally against Atomic energy and therefore it would not export uranium from Greenland for the use for Atomic energy or other purposes. [3] However, this position is now challenged with the self-determination of Greenland and the Danish government has not been doing much for policy-development even though there in Greenland has been development of mining of Uranium by the Australian mining company Greenland Minerals and Energy LTD.[4]

Moreover, according to the newspaper *Politiken* Denmark has done nothing to accomplish its responsibility towards international treaties with regard to Atomic technology.[5] The problem is the responsibility of the government in relation to bid business of so-called Kvanefjeld in Southeastern Greenland where there are many possibility of mining of different rare metals and other substances. Building a mine in Southeastern Greenland could have very good impact on local society. However, the problem is that general mining would also lead to discovery of Uranium because this would be a part of the metals that would be found at Kvanefjeld in Eastern Greenland.[6] It is not clear whether it is possible to have other kinds of mining without also having Uranium mining.

The states of Greenland and Denmark have responsibility to ensure to have a policy that respects their international conventions and treatises that they have agreed to. Even though

Greenland has self-determination the problem of Uranium is a problem of security and foreign policy where not only Greenland but also Denmark has the decisive power because the foreign policy of Greenland is a part of Danish foreign policy.[7] However, the Danish diplomatic body has not been doing much to ensure that Uranium mining in Greenland is submitted to the relevant international conventions. In 2004 Greenland decided to adhere to the treaty on Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons but this has not been officially confirmed by international bodies.[8]

On the other hand there is a wish to begin mining today and some voices do not think that the impact on Uranium markets would be so important. So with Green technology it may be possible to do mining and still respect international Treaties of non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. [9] It seems Greenland wants to maintain the traditional policy in relation to Uranium mining.[10] Indeed, a majority of the Danish parliament will not block the development of Uranium exportation in relation to the mining in south-eastern Greenland if it is the wish of the self-government of Greenland. However, another worry is still the impact on the world market of Uranium mining in Greenland. It would make Uranium much cheaper on the world market if Greenland started to produce it and this may destroy the economic impact of the eventual uranium mining from Kvanefjeld. Indeed, this is a good example of government responsibility in relation to the discussions of using the soil in Greenland to develop society with exportation of raw materials.

1.3. Issues of Corporate social responsibility and good governance

A fundamental issue in relation to this situation of self-determination of Greenland is the role of corporations in the context of the question of control and management of internal resources. Greenland is a very huge country at the size of a continent with only around 50.000 inhabitants. At the same time there are many interested parties (stakeholders) who want to explore the possibilities of mining and finding raw materials in Greenland.

In particular a Chinese financed firm London Mining has asked the self-government to get the right to establish a large iron mine on the Greenland. This proposal is at the moment being discussed by the Greenland self-government. With a budget of 14 billion DKK the project involves more than 3000 Chinese workers who will have to live in Greenland.[11] But in 15 years this will give earnings to the state of more than 30 billion DKK. This money is much needed since the public budget of Greenland is 6 billion of which have comes from

Denmark.[12] Accordingly, such a proposal of a mine is very important for the independency of Greenland. But the situations raise many questions of sustainability of Greenland in relation to the Chinese workers and the dependency of the economy on such a mine in addition to issues of environmental consequences of the project. At the same time Unions in Denmark and Greenland are skeptical because they fear that the new mining projects will imply very bad working conditions in Greenland. [13]

In this context, there is the danger of the vulnerability of a developing economy like Greenland. And in particular we face issues of conflicts of interests and distributive justice for development of a modern welfare state. The minister of raw materials Ove Karl Bertilsen has many times been approached by lobby activity and propositions from China and in order to avoid conflict of interests he and Kubick Kleist who is the head of the local government have made their wives take over their positions in the board of the Greenland Raw material company in order to follow regulations enacted by this government.[14] The minister of raw materials in Greenland Ove Karl Bertilsen denies conflict of interests and argues that the wives of him and Kubick Kleist are independent enough to have their positions in the Board of the Raw material Company while they are ministers of government.[15] Indeed, in such a small country like Greenland there is the danger of corruption as suggested by the organization “Transparency Greenland”. There is the danger of bad management in relation to the natural resources where the ruling class takes advantage of the resources instead of providing a use of resources for general development of the country – like we have seen in many African countries.[16]

2.Towards global: Technological, political and economics responsibility

The case of Greenland can be used as an example of the changed conditions of ethics, law and responsibility in the global age. Even though philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Emmanuel Levinas in their phenomenological work have been aware of the infinite character of the concept of responsibility they are not able to give this concept a significance that can be a basis for a technological and environmental ethics. The cases of Arctic indicate that we need a more global concept of responsibility. It is only with the German philosopher Hans Jonas that we can reach such a conception of responsibility. In his book *Prinzip Verantwortung. Versuch einer Ethik der technischen Zivilisation* (1979) Jonas has defended a global and metaphysical conception of responsibility. He proposes the argument that the

technological and scientific development implies a need for increased responsibility for humanity and its environment that is much greater than other times in the history of humanity.[17] Because the technological and scientific civilization has so much power to destroy the globe the responsibility of humanity has become even much greater.[18]

2.1. Technological responsibility and sustainable development

Accordingly, Hans Jonas proposes an important foundation of bioethics and ethics of science in relation to technological civilization with his new formulation of the categorical imperative as an imperative to ensure existence of human beings forever on the earth : « Act in this way that there will always be authentic human life on earth ».[19] This implies an extenuation of the concept of responsibility that concerns not only the present in time and space but in particular in relation to the future including future human beings as well as animals and the integrity of nature and the biosphere in its totality. Instead of the dominant technological optimism Jonas proposes a heuristics of fear in relation to the technological and scientific progress.[20] One can say that Jonas makes an integration of the concern for the weak and fragile important in order to develop a foundation of responsibility human action in relation to the future.

The work on the concept of sustainable development in international politics can be considered in this perspective. And we can say that the government of Greenland needs to apply a concept of responsibility based on sustainability in order to deal with the problems of responsible mining in Greenland.

In international politics the work on sustainable development can be considered in this perspective. The world commission on the environment, the 1987 Brundtland Commission defined the concept of sustainable development as the fundamental aim of the international community.[21] Sustainable development is defined as the respectful use of natural resources with the aim of respecting the good life conditions for future generations on earth. We will have to ensure that future human beings can have the same or better life conditions than present generations. In this sense, sustainable development has since 1987 been a very

important concept for the international community.

It is indeed such a concept of responsibility that we would have to apply to deal with complex issues of mining in Greenland

We can in particular mention the close link between economic, social and environmental development that is expressed in the idea of "the triple bottom-line", according to which a corporation or an organization does not only search to deal with its profits and economic gains, but also include its influence on the environmental and its social relations with the employees, with local community and with the government in the evaluation of its economic success and of the general economic wealth of the organization.[22] In this context, it is the general intention of the concept of sustainable development to integrate the social, economic and environmental concerns in a general policy of responsibility for sustainable development in the world.

2.2. Political responsibility in the welfare state

With the thought of Hans Jonas following the phenomenological concept of responsibility by Sartre and by Levinas and with its application on the concept of sustainable development in international politics we face a change and a radicalization of the reach of the concept of responsibility. We can say that we are not only responsible in the strict legal sense of attribution and imputation of an action. Responsibility is not only based on the fault or on an action that is not justifiable and punishment is not sufficient as retribution. Our responsibility is much heavier. We are responsible for the survival of humanity in all our actions.[23] This development of the concept of responsibility can also be shown in the context of the modern welfare state.

On the basis of this change the philosopher Paul Ricœur has in a very important work on responsibility emphasized that we should rethink the semantic and juridical content of the concept of responsibility.[24] Even though the strict legal significance still exists, Ricœur makes the point of that the meaning of responsibility has changed a lot with the thought of Levinas and Jonas where we move beyond the strict obligation of being submitted to punishment. It is time to propose a new conceptualization of the concept of responsibility

within the politics of the welfare state. Ricœur recalls us that the project of philosophical and legal positivism was to demoralize the attribution of responsibility to the individual. However, with the ethical notions of responsibility this project was destroyed and we are facing a new moralization of the concept of responsibility. Today we can talk of the emergence of a responsibility without fault.[25]

The strict legal responsibility opens for a social much larger social responsibility. The conceptions of vulnerable human beings of Levinas and of the fragile and suffering agent by Ricœur can help us to understand the anthropological foundations of this concept of responsibility. It is the responsibility for the other human being and for the future generations that we find again in law. This change is also present in the legal development of the notion of the protection of the human person not only in penal law but also in health law. François Ewald shows in his book *Histoire de l'Etat Providence. Les origines de la solidarité* how the emergent welfare society compensates risks of labor accidents, disease and health risk and social problems by developing a strong systems of insurance of work and health insurance based on collective systems of treatment and responsibility that oblige corporations and society to offer a compensation for the poor and vulnerable.[26]

We can say that we face a concept of law that goes beyond the contract of the individual liberal responsibility that is based on principles of community and solidarity.[27] This state responsibility implies an interpretation of sustainable development and of the heuristics of fear where the respect for autonomy, dignity, integrity and vulnerability in the framework of responsibility is determined as the framework of the scientific and technological development of a society of protection of future generations.[28] In this way we can observe a collective responsibility that goes beyond the singular responsibility of individuals and we face a development of this responsibility beyond the nation state towards common responsibility in the international sphere of cosmopolitan community.

2.3. Corporate social responsibility as institutional accountability

The debate about the social responsibility of the corporation – that is indeed very important in the context of the mining adventure in Greenland – also manifests an indication of a

change of the concept of responsibility going beyond a strict legal definition in terms of attribution of action to the individual. Here we face an institutional attribution of responsibility to a corporation.[29] In addition, this responsibility is proposed as voluntary and moral responsibility that goes beyond the positive responsibility by the law. A responsible action is in this sense a free and voluntary act. This is the case of the politics of the European Union and in the principles of Global Compact of the United Nations. In this sense the social responsibility of the corporation includes the respect for sustainable development, nature and future generations in the sense that Paul Ricœur calls the «good life with and for the other in just institutions » as a vision of the judgment and phronesis of practical reason.[30]

The concept of corporate social responsibility goes beyond the juridical concept of imputation and adds that the corporation is a political and moral actor that has to respond to its duty to live as a good citizen with respect for its collective duties. Lynn Sharp Paine from Harvard makes in the book *Valueshift. Why Companies Must Merge Social and Financial Imperative to Achieve Superior Performance* (2002) the argument that there is a change of values in the modern capitalist economy where we no longer consider the corporation as an instrument for profit maximization or as a fictive legal person, but as a responsible moral actor with its values and ethical principles.[31]

According to a famous article by Archie B. Caroll, who is a pioneer of the ethics and responsibility of the corporation[32] we would have to distinguish between: 1) economic responsibility 2) legal responsibility 3) ethical responsibility 4) philanthropic responsibility.[33]

This is the basis for what one according to the classical tradition of political philosophy can call the republican conception of the mining corporations as a good corporate citizen contributing to the wealth of society, that is not only concerned with economic profits but also takes an ethical position in relation to the political, social and ecological problems of its surroundings.[34] This concept of the corporate social responsibility implies that the

corporation does not only have to obey the law, but engage in a constructive manner for the social perfection of society.

In this moral sense, the concept of responsibility is linked to the power and capacity of the corporation to be imputable and take over its own action. The argument for taking into consideration the responsibility of the corporation is based on the realization of the enormous capacity and power of a large modern enterprise in a global context. In this context it is possible to distinguish between the institutional responsibility of the corporation, the responsibility of the directors and managers of the corporation and finally the responsibility of the employees of the corporation. The concept of the moral responsibility of the corporation goes further than a specific legal responsibility and includes a large number of responsibilities that are ethically defined in relation to the stakeholders of the corporation.

Conclusion and discussion

The conclusion is that we can say that the self-determination of Greenland opens for a new kind of responsibility in relation global problems. In this context we can say that the virtue of responsibility is not only a legal concept, but indeed an ethical concept of the concern for sustainable development.

We can say that is the virtue of responsibility as suggested by the Chinese philosopher Confucius that is important.[35] With the virtues we go beyond a strict separation of morals and the system of actions. We can say that politics and economics have been dominated by a conception of governance as founded on technological rationality. Responsibility was not a governance virtue as such but a concept of professional responsibility and of vocation in Weber's sense of responsibility of politics where responsibility was defined as objective neutrality or in the sense of Milton Friedman where economy and responsibility is defined as a fidelity to the professional principles of the officers of the corporation: the social responsibility of the politician or the manager in order to ensure profits for stakeholders as well as it is the task of the union leader to fight for the interests of the members of the union.

An important aspect of the change of the meaning of the concept of responsibility is the

emergence of the collective and institutional responsibility.[36] Even if we are not dogmatic collectivists we can admit that responsibility without fault goes beyond the individuals and can be attributed to the public or private organizations or institutions without having a reference to a precise individual culpability. Ethical responsibility is a collective responsibility that can be undertaken by groups of individuals in common. With this collective dimension we have found the link between the individual and institutional responsibility with regard to the assurance of the progress of humanity towards the common good of present and future generations.

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[1] *Information,* 11/2 2013.
[2] *Weekendavisen*, 1/2 2013.
[3] *Politiken* 27/1 2013.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Information 29/1 2013.
[11] Politiken 6/2 2013.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Politiken 3/2 2013.
[14] Politiken, 6/2 2013.
[15] Politiken 3/2 2013.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Hans Jonas: *Das Prinzip Verantwortung*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt 1979, p. 15.
[18] Ibid., p. 31.
[19] Ibid, p. 36: “Ein Imperativ, der auf den neuen Typ menschlichen Handelns passt und an den neuen Typ von Handlungssubjekt gerichtet ist, würde etwa so leuten: ”Handle so, daa die Wirkungen deiner Handlung verträglich sind mit der Permanenz echten menschelichen Lebens auf Erden”; oder negative ausgedrückt: “Handle so, dass die Wirkungen deiner Handlung nicht zerstörerisch sind für die künftige Möglichkeit solcher Lebens”; oder einfach: Gefährde nicht die Bedingungen für den indefinite Fortbestand der Menschheit auf Erden”; oder, wieder positiv gewendet: “Schlesse in deine gegenwärtige Wahl die zukünftige Integrität des Menschen als Mit-Gegenstand deines Wollens ein”.

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[20] Ibid., p. 392.
[21] The World Commission on the Environment: *Our Common Future*, New York 1987.
[22] John Elkington: *Cannibals with Forks*, *The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business*, Capstone, Oxford, 1997, 1999.
[23] Paul Ricœur: "Le concept de responsabilité" i *Esprit* 1993. Aussi dans *Le Juste*, Paris 1994, p. 41ff. Ricœur montre que nous devrons trouver "La juste distance entre les trois idées d'imputabilité, de solidarité et de risque partagé". Voir aussi: Paul Ricœur sur Hans Jonas: *Lectures 1, Politiques*, Paris 1991. "Postface au temps de la responsabilité", p. 270.
[24] Paul Ricœur: "Le concept de responsabilité" i *Esprit* 1993. Aussi dans *Le Juste*, Paris 1994.
[25] Ibid., p. 45.
[26] François Ewald : *Histoire de L'Etat Providence. Les origines de la solidarité*, Paris 1986.
[27] Mireille Delmas-Marty: *Pour un droit commun*, Paris 1995.
[28] Jacob Dahl Rendtorff and Peter Kemp: *Basic Ethical Principles in European Bioethics and Biolaw, Vol I-II*, Copenhagen & Barcelona 2000.
[29] Jacob Dahl Rendtorff: *Virksomhedsetik. En grundbog i organisation og ansvar*. København 2007.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Lynn Sharp Paine: *Valueshift. Why Companies Must Merge Social and Financial Imperative to Achieve Superior Performance.*
[32] Archie B. Caroll: "A Three Dimensional Conceptual Model of Corporate Performance", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 4, no. 4, 1979. Voir aussi Michel Capron & Françoise Quairel-Lanoizeelée: *Mythes et réalités de l'entreprise responsable. Acteurs, Enjeux, Stratégies*, La Decouverte, Paris 2004, p. 105.
[33] Andrew Crane & Dirk Matten: *Business Ethics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2004., p. 44.
[34] Simon Zadek: *The Civil Corporation*, London 2006.
[35] Tomonobu A. Imamichi : *Betrachtungen über das Eine*, Institut der Ästhetik, Philosophische Fakultät, Tokio Universität, Japan 1968, p. 32.
[36] Jacob Dahl Rendtorff: *Virksomhedsetik. En grundbog i organisation og ansvar*, København 2007. See also Jacob Dahl Rendtorff. *Responsibility, ethics and legitimacy of corporations*, CBS-Press 2009.