

UiT

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## Drilling oil into Arctic minds?

*State security, industry consensus and local contestation*

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# Abstract

The thesis' title *Drilling Oil into Arctic Minds?* points to the central role of geographical imaginaries in state and industry efforts to push oil production northward, and the extent to which local communities and civil society respond to these imaginaries. Critically examining how imaginaries describe and legitimize opportunities for future oil and gas extraction and expose scenarios of economic growth and activity, the thesis identifies the territorial, political and discursive strategies of the state, industry and society, looking at emergent (re)constitutions of economic- and geopolitical space in the Norwegian north.

By employing analytical tools and insights from critical geopolitics and security studies, I unpack the processes and practices of the state in relation to other actors. The thesis is composed of four articles, which independently examine these dynamics. Through the articles I illustrate the power of the Norwegian state in how it frames a *hierarchy of security concerns* where climate change and environmental concerns are pitted against economic, territorial and energy security interests. This is reflected through new geopolitical imaginaries, relating to environmental concerns and energy security such as *opportunistic adaptation* in the Arctic. The combined contribution of the articles is to unpack state-industry relations that are characterized by consensus. I also show how the established state-industry geopolitical construct of the Norwegian Arctic as an economic space is challenged, if not destabilized, as the Norway's northern seascapes might not be as promising as initially asserted. Focusing on the political dynamics taking shape in northern Norway, I show that Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja have been targeted by a unified industry/state complex. The people and political stakeholders in Lofoten respond in ways that reflect their own regional challenges, highlighting concerns that extend beyond 'the petroleum age' in Norway. The thesis emphasizes the significance of local narratives and perceptions when it comes to how oil is understood to provide security. These perspectives from Lofoten are important when assessing the role of oil and gas development for the future and how local narratives can contribute to a *post-petroleum* discourse as well.

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## Chapter 1: GOING NORTH



*Image: Fredvang in Lofoten. Photo by Berit Kristoffersen.*

In 2005, the Norwegian government announced that one of its main objectives in the years to come was to expand oil- and gas production to the north as part of the High North strategy.<sup>1</sup> This move was welcomed by the oil and gas industry, which had been pushing for a northern expansion for some time. With the state and industry both making moves to develop these areas, 'security' fast became a core concept in the rhetoric of both parties. Among the questions discussed at the time were: How can a vulnerable Arctic nature be secured in the face of oil production? How should the state and the industry position themselves in relation to the growing activities on the Russian side of the Barents Sea, particularly with regard to the long-standing unresolved border issue with Russia? Would a successful start in the Barents Sea enable the 2/3 government-owned Statoil to take part in the development of the Stocjkman field? Could it contribute to fulfilling the story circulated by advertisement campaigns in the early 2000s, that the next chapters of Norway's 'oil fairy-tale' would take place in the North, under water and abroad?

A different set of security concerns were being raised by communities in the regions where new oil projects were being planned. Political mobilization in northern Norway reflects long-term dimensions of conflicts in the political landscape (i.e. center-periphery), especially when it comes to how the region's natural resources are exploited.<sup>2</sup> Questions being raised amongst local and regional actors in the mid-2000s were how the oil 'in stock' would be governed, who would profit and how they should be managed vis-a-vis renewable resources, like the cod 'at stake'. The strategies of a movement northwards was negotiated between the industry and the government, but also triggered debates and discussions in northern communities about how to respond. As a result, different visions of cultural, political and economic futures emerged, many of which would prove difficult to reconcile.

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<sup>1</sup> The High North strategy was launched by the Norwegian government in 2005, and formalized in 2006 as The Norwegian Government's Strategy for the High North, where it became a stated objective to "Further develop the petroleum activities in the Barents Sea through an active licensing policy to follow upon the exploration results and the need for further exploration areas" (only available in Norwegian, but overall strategy and various policy documents can be found at [www.regjeringen.no](http://www.regjeringen.no) in English). Also, in the updated version of the High North strategy in 2009 it states that (page 17-18): "...petroleum operations in the north will potentially play a significant role in the further development of the region. Experience shows that the petroleum industry generates significant economic growth nationally, regionally and locally. There is currently considerable interest and optimism in our northern counties related to the High North as a petroleum province."

<sup>2</sup> Røvik, Kjell A., Svein Jentoft, "Det politiske Nord-Norge," in Svein Jentoft, Røvik, Kjell A. and Jens I. Nergård, eds., *Hvor går Nord-Norge? Politiske tidslinjer*, Orkana Forlag, Stamsund, 2013. pp. 14.

The pressure for commercial drilling was focused most heavily on the Archipelago groups Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja. This is where the continental shelf – where drilling takes place – is at its narrowest, and it has a unique and rich ecosystem where the major cod fisheries in Norway thrives. It is also quite densely populated, structured around fishing villages that have played a pivotal role for stockfish exports, a backbone for societal and economic development in Norway for centuries. Lofoten is the foremost symbol and icon in national politics regarding whether or not commercial drilling should be allowed in the region, due to its key role historically and culturally, and as a tourist attraction, potentially becoming a World Heritage site. Lofoten is also the place where the petroleum authorities and the oil and gas industry believe that the biggest oil prospects are located. Vesterålen and Senja have had less symbolic power than Lofoten in national debates. They are considered to be less ‘prospective’ because gas, not oil, was found during the preliminary mapping process by the Petroleum Directorate.<sup>3</sup> The context is further encased in the powerful imaginary of a wild and beautiful nature with an abundance of oil in the rich fishing fields, an imaginary that is often evoked by opponents to oil and gas developments.

Governmental Ministries in Oslo and corporate headquarters in Stavanger appeared to be more concerned with the imagery statistics portrayed of oil and gas development in the more established, southern Norwegian sites: the picture was not one of abundance, but of shortage and deficiency. In fact, the significance of the northern expansion was connected to one particular aspect of Norwegian oil production – it was believed to have peaked in 2001. Hence, the oil and gas industry had a strong motivation to expand northwards, so as to maintain production levels. Peak oil was also increasingly acknowledged as a factor in state politics. The assumption was that the future of Norwegian wealth, including its ability to fund a comprehensive welfare system, depended on a commitment to discover and utilize new petroleum resources.<sup>4</sup> Then, as now, revenues from oil and gas production held a highly privileged position in the economic imaginary of the political elites. An often-used mantra by Norwegian politicians in debates about the importance of opening new areas for petroleum

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<sup>3</sup> Norwegian Petroleum Directorate, “Petroleum Resources in the Waters off Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja”, Report, 2010, available online: <http://www.npd.no/no/Publikasjoner/Rapporter/Petroleumsressursene-i-havomradene-utenfor-Lofoten-Vesteralen-og-Senja/>

<sup>4</sup> See chapter five in Kristoffersen, Berit, *Spaces of Competitive Power*. Master thesis in Human Geography, *University of Oslo*, 2007, for a thorough discussion with state and industry representatives on this topic.



exploration is: ‘We must produce in order to distribute’.<sup>5</sup> In other words, revenues from oil and gas were to secure a strong state with an extensive welfare system to offer its population.

Paralleling the rise of an economic imaginary of oil as a prerequisite for state security was growing global concern over climate change. Towards the end of the decade, climate change became an international security issue, reflecting “apocalyptic concern”.<sup>6</sup> There was however optimism about the prospects of a new global agreement leading up to the international summit in Copenhagen in 2009 (COP 15). The work of the Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)<sup>7</sup> and Al Gore’s *Inconvenient Truth* in 2007 resulted in the joint award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2008. The following year however, states in Copenhagen failed to agree on a long-term binding agreement to reduce GHG-emissions, making the challenge ahead even greater as it was expected that climate change would affect humanity in unprecedented ways if not acted upon. Events traditionally considered as natural disasters were increasingly attributed to human-induced, or anthropogenic climate change.<sup>8</sup> The warming of the Arctic region was at the time flagged as the precursor of global climate change, illustrated through popular uses of the polar bear as an icon.<sup>9</sup> The most recent IPCC-report (AR5) chapter on human security emphasizes that the changing geographies in the Arctic will not only generate more geopolitical attention, but that the ongoing and anticipated geophysical changes will contribute to greater human insecurity in the Arctic as well.<sup>10</sup> The government and the oil and gas industry in Norway had embraced energy security as the most important lens through which future developments in the north were expected to take place. It is thus evident that the northern Norwegian political and geographical ‘periphery’ has since

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<sup>5</sup> This is a translation of the Norwegian political rhetoric, ‘vi må skape for å dele’. This was for example the title of the Labor Party’s program from 2009 to 2013, and is much used within most political parties to argue that to have a generous welfare state, the generation of these services are dependent upon extraction and use of natural resources.

<sup>6</sup> Dalby, Simon, *Security and Environmental Change*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2009, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> This science underlying this report made it even clearer that human activities are influencing the climate system, contributing to increases in global temperatures, the widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising average global sea levels. Referenced in O’Brien, K., St Clair, A. and B. Kristoffersen, “The framing of climate change: Why it matters,” in O’Brien, Karen, St Clair, Asun and B. Kristoffersen, eds., *Climate Change, Ethics and Human Security*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Trombetta, Maria J., ‘Environmental security and climate change: analysing the discourse’. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 21(4), (2008), p. 595.

<sup>9</sup> O’Neill, Saffron and Sophie Nicholson-Cole, “‘Fear Won’t Do It’ Promoting Positive Engagement With Climate Change Through Visual and Iconic Representations,” in *Science Communication*, 30(3), 2009, p. 358.

<sup>10</sup> Agder, Neil et al., Human Security, Chapter 12 in IPCC WGII AR5, 2014. Available online at [http://ipcc-wg2.gov/AR5/images/uploads/WGIIAR5-Chap12\\_FGDall.pdf](http://ipcc-wg2.gov/AR5/images/uploads/WGIIAR5-Chap12_FGDall.pdf), page 12.

2005 been increasingly embroiled within national, regional and global issues of energy security and climate change. A question that arose along-side this, was how the new sensitivity towards environmental vulnerabilities would be evaluated vis-à-vis energy security concerns. And, who would be able to set the agenda and enforce their vision for the future through decision-making processes.

Last but not least is the relevance of the construction of new geographical imaginaries and the impact these imaginaries have on the dominant and subordinate discourses on energy security and climate change. A important example of such a construction is the aforementioned High North strategy. Since 2005 the Norwegian north and surrounding areas have increasingly been approached as a flexible territorial entity through the emerging reference of the 'High North'.<sup>11</sup> Within this policy framework, oil and gas extraction was promoted as a main driver for technological and capital-intensive development, establishing a new economic resource space.<sup>12</sup> One of the key arguments in this thesis is that such imaginaries may well have real material consequences. In other words, when examining the relationship between security and geography, space and territories are not simply physical backdrops.<sup>13</sup> Space is also a medium for relations and representations.<sup>14</sup> In a relational view, space is undergoing continual construction through the agency of things and actors encountering each other in more or less organized circulation. Rather than space being viewed as a container within which the world then develops, space is also a co-product of these accounts and of encounters.<sup>15</sup> Some geographers discuss this as structural space, emphasizing the spatial effects of economic interactions (i.e. between nodes, districts or regions).<sup>16</sup> Lastly, spatial representations in human geography and political science reflect different accounts and degrees of recognition of how images and discourses are key elements of space, and how they are linked to power. Taking the scalar intervention of a High North as a starting point, which can be understood as a new level

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<sup>11</sup> In Norwegian it is called Nordområdene which directly translates as the Northern areas, but the government itself translates this as the 'High North' into English.

<sup>12</sup> See footnote one for examples of how the Barents Sea was framed as a new 'energy province'.

<sup>13</sup> Powell, Ricard and Klaus Dodds, "Polar Geopolitics," in Powell, Richard and Klaus Dodds, eds., *Polar Geopolitics? Knowledges Resources and Legal Regimes*, Cheltenham and Northampton, Edward Elgar, 2014, pp. 9

<sup>14</sup> Thrift, Nigel, "Space: the fundamental stuff of geography", in Holloway, Gill et al. *Key concepts in geography*, London, Sage, 2003, pp. 95-108.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 96.

<sup>16</sup> Agnew, John, "The territorial trap: the geographical assumptions of international relations theory," in *Review of international political economy* 1(1), 1994, p. 55.

for political and economic developments, exposes how space has multiple qualities (entity, medium, discourse). The rescaling of the High North does not entail claims to this as a geographically demarcated entity, but does include epistemic claims that institute in it territorial, economic and representational values, where the High North is sought made globally competitive in terms of oil and gas developments.

### **1.1 Research question**

At the time I started the PhD program, security discourses were becoming increasingly clear in the context of oil and gas development, and in discussions between state-representatives and the oil and gas industry. I was interested in tracking networks of actors and institutions involved in these processes, how ideas and subsequent imaginaries developed and circulated, and what this meant in terms of material transformation in the everyday of northern Norway. The empirical focus of my work in northern Norway has been mainly on Lofoten, but I have also explored how debates have unfolded in Vesterålen. When I refer to the data I have generated from the Lofoten and Vesterålen regions, I employ the abbreviation LoVe, whereas when I refer to the region's role in national politics, then including Senja, I will use the abbreviation LoVeSe.<sup>17</sup> In LoVe I conducted 20 interviews, while at the national level I have conducted 32 interviews, half of them with the oil and gas industry. It should also be noted that three 'events' have been central to the formulation of the study's research questions. The 2004 peak of oil and gas production in Norway; the initiation of the 2005 High North initiative by the centre-left government; and the subsequent decision to postpone commercial drilling in Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja (2006).

On the basis of the context elucidated thus far in this introduction, this thesis is concerned with the following question: *In the period between 2004-2014, how have state-based, industrial (oil and gas), and local actors configured and/or reconfigured (geo)political interests and specific spatial notions of security in relation to environmental concerns (climate change in particular) and the expansion of oil and gas developments into the Norwegian Arctic?*

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<sup>17</sup> I am aware, and have to 'warn' the reader, that in the first three articles, I reference this conflict as LoVe also in national debates. The reason why the fourth article and this introduction then distinguishes between these two abbreviations of LoVe as fieldwork, and LoVeSe in terms of the role in national politics is for further clarity. In the fourth paper, my co-author and I only draw on interviews from Lofoten, and thus only reference Lofoten.

This research question is addressed from various vantage points through the four articles submitted as the core contribution of this thesis. The four articles are complemented with this five chapter introduction and overview of the project. This first chapter will continue with short summaries of the articles, as well as briefly account for studies that speak to similar research questions, demonstrating the way in which this dissertation provides new insights into a complex problem. Norway's development as a petroleum-dependent state has a long history with a number of key developments that have taken place during the time period under examination (2004-2014), thus how this context has developed is relevant to the subsequent analysis in the four articles. I have therefore included a background chapter that explains the development of oil and gas policy and how the state and the industry around the turn of the century so to speak joined forces (Chapter 2). This particular chapter draws heavily upon a submitted (and accepted) book chapter that is co-authored with oil historian Helge Ryggvik.<sup>18</sup> I subsequently provide an overview of the research strategy and methods in Chapter 3, giving most attention to the 52 interviews I have conducted. Chapter 4 moves to elucidate the theoretical approaches employed in the articles, presenting the core literature upon which I draw in designing the thesis' theoretical foundation. In this section I will provide a general overview of some of the key theoretical elements that are employed, structuring the discussion on the concepts of geopolitics, state space and security, before I outline what I consider to be my contribution drawing out two core concepts from the articles. This takes the thesis to the conclusion, where I outline the political developments over the past decade in the context of the thesis' question of 'drilling oil into Arctic minds'.

Including this introduction, the PhD-thesis comprises two articles and two book chapters. These publications have all been subject to peer-review and are either published or in press. I am the single author of the two book chapters, am lead author of the first article (co-authored with Stephen Young<sup>19</sup>) and lead author of the fourth article (co-authored with Brigit Dale<sup>20</sup>). Three of the four publications are in journals or on publishing houses ranked on level two (highest level) according to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD – Norwegian abbreviation). For simplicity, I refer to all four of these works as 'articles', and reference them

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<sup>18</sup> Ryggvik, Helge and Berit Kristoffersen, "Heating up and cooling down the petro-state: The Norwegian experience," in Princen, Tomas, Manno, Jack P. and Pamela Martin, eds., *Ending the fossil fuel era*, forthcoming, MIT press 2014

<sup>19</sup> Assistant professor of geography and international relations at University of Wisconsin-Madison.

<sup>20</sup> Senior researcher, anthropologist and political scientist at Nordland Research Institute.

in this introduction in the order of their appearance. During the time in which I have been a research fellow, I have also published two ‘popular scientific’ articles,<sup>21</sup> and three peer-reviewed book chapters and articles that are relevant to the PhD-project, but not included in the dissertation. These peer-reviewed publications address various aspects concerning the context in which Norwegian oil- and gas development moves northward. This includes the aforementioned history of Norwegian oil and environmental politics (co-authored with Helge Ryggvik). The second (co-authored with Leif Christian Jensen) is a discourse analysis of Norway’s high north policy where we discuss the relationship between the three main policy ‘drivers’ of the center-left government (2005-2013) - climate change, oil and gas development and Norway’s relationship with Russia. These we then contrast with local discourses in LoVe regarding risks and economic development.<sup>22</sup> Finally, the last article (co-authored with Kirsti Stuvøy) analyzes how the Arctic cod transcends the divisions between domestic and foreign politics and how this relates to discussions on oil and gas development in LoVe.<sup>23</sup> I have also co-edited a book on climate change, ethics and human security (with Karen O’Brien and Asun St.Clair)<sup>24</sup> and edited a thematic issue for the Norwegian Journal of Geography (with Anders Underthun), on the internationalization of the Norwegian petroleum industry.<sup>25</sup>

## 1.2 The four articles

In the first article, *Geographies of Security and Statehood in Norway’s ‘battle of the North’* my co-author and I explain the centrality of territorial mapping strategies to the process of imagining the north in the wake of peak oil in the early 2000s.<sup>26</sup> The industry wanted to gain access to LoVeSe and the Barents Sea to address what they perceived as an ‘energy crisis’. The use of statehood rather than a singular concept of the state is employed to underscore the

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<sup>21</sup> Buck, Marcus and Berit Kristoffersen, ”Boring etter olje og gass i nord. Lokal strid langs nasjonale skillelinjer?,” *Ottar*, 2 2011, pp. 48-54; Kristoffersen, Berit and Leif Christian Jensen, ”Nordområdepolitikken: A license to drill?,” *Tvergastein*, 1(2), 2012, 74-80.

<sup>22</sup> Jensen, Leif C., and Berit Kristoffersen, ”Nord-Norge som ressursprovins: Storpolitikk, risiko og virkelighetskamp,” in Svein Jentoft, Kjell A. Røvik and Jens I. Nergård, eds., *Hvor går Nord-Norge? Politiske tidslinjer*, Orkana Forlag, Stamsund, pp. 67-80.

<sup>23</sup> Stuvøy, Kirsti and Berit Kristoffersen, “‘En feit og fin og norsk en?’ Lofottorsken i internasjonal politikk,” in *Tidsskriftet Internasjonal Politikk*, 71(1) 2013, 109-119.

<sup>24</sup> O’Brien, Karen, St.Clair Asun and Berit Kristoffersen (eds.), *Climate Change, Ethics and Human Security*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

<sup>25</sup> Underthun, Anders and Berit Kristoffersen, “Petroleum-related regional development in Norway: The possibilities and paradoxes of internationalization,” *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift-Norwegian Journal of Geography* 65(4), 189-190.

<sup>26</sup> Kristoffersen, Berit and Stephen Young, “Geographies of security and statehood in Norway’s ‘Battle of the North’,” in *Geoforum* 41(4), 2010, 577-584.

dynamics and reflexiveness of ongoing struggles and power within society, where the state is not a bounded, static or neutral actor that exists separate from the economy and civil society. We then show how visions of energy security are actively produced by the industry and policymakers. The public-private partnership Konkraft (2001-2008) is discussed as one key model through which the Norwegian government worked with the industry in the 2000s. This ‘partnerships for policy consensus’, is illustrative of changes in what we discuss as transforming state spaces where oil companies are enrolled as active participants. The article also shows how a permanent decline in oil production opened up the political space between local and civil society actors, the state, and industry, to contest further expansion through antagonistic geographies of security relating to LoVeSe and the Barents Sea (i.e. eco-region, petroleum-free zones). However, the article argues, the potential for grassroots activism for environmental NGOs was weak, as the 1990s were characterized by an ‘environmentalization of the state’ where these organizations’ strategies were increasingly absorbed within governmental institutions.

The second article *Opportunistic Adaptation: New discourses on oil, equity and environmental security* examines how, in the period from 2008 to 2013, Norwegian political elites relate climate change and expanding oil production in the north to environmental security.<sup>27</sup> In the article I explain how tensions between state-centered interests and environmental and equity concerns provide the basis for a hierarchical state security approach, which I then elaborate as *opportunistic adaptation*. Accordingly, a state security approach is established and follows two logics. First, increased temperatures are equated with more economic activity (economic adaptation), where climate change and petroleum extraction are framed as independent variables. This reveals that climate change in the Arctic is treated as a problem to be managed and not resolved. Second, in a hierarchical security approach, it is argued that Norway is drilling for ‘climate change and global development.’ Energy security conceptualizations have shifted from a state-to-state security of supply perspective, which characterized the first decade of the 2000s, towards a global conceptualization of energy interdependencies and environmental security. In this perspective, it is arguably better that petroleum is extracted in Norway, than elsewhere (‘elsewhere’ meaning less capable, less competent and less ‘clean’ and

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<sup>27</sup> Kristoffersen, Berit (in press), “Opportunistic Adaptation: New discourses on oil, equity and environmental security” in O’Brien Karen and Elin Selboe, eds, *The adaptive challenge of climate change*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2015.

environmentally managed oil and gas extraction, though ‘less’ is not clearly defined). This will secure stability in global fossil fuel markets, which in turn is represented to be a prerequisite for economic development in the Global South. The power to define the security context can thus be seen as a political resource, providing elites with political-discursive ground for moving petroleum development into the Norwegian Arctic. Finally, the article draws on interviews within the center-left government to show how these perspectives are being challenged, if not destabilized, from ‘within’. Key to these challenges is to question whether climate and environmental concerns can be congruent with the interests of an expansive oil and gas industry.

The third article, entitled *‘Securing’ geography: Framings, logics and strategies in the Norwegian high north*, provides a more comprehensive analysis of the strategies of the center-left government’s High North initiative, along with policies and practices for drilling in the north, developed from 2005 to 2013.<sup>28</sup> It thus builds on the two former articles and provides three key findings. The first relates to how the realist perspective of state security (territorial, economic, political), is reframed within an Arctic context as anticipatory logics (i.e. discursive statements about the future) that the government thinks Norway is well positioned to respond to. This relates to the role of Russia in the Barents Sea and thus Arctic governance, and to the mapping processes of LoVeSe and the Barents Sea. Put together, this provides a Norwegian model for ‘sustainable resource development in the Arctic’. The second key finding is how the oil and gas industry on the one hand supports these efforts as it enables them to move ‘deeper into the Arctic’, whilst they challenge governmental efforts to make geographical knowledge ‘fit’ the state’s territorial practices. This especially relates to where potential prospects are located, as mapping strategies by the government have intensified. By drawing on interviews with the industry from 2006 and 2011, I show how industry enthusiasm for the Barents Sea, presented in the first article, is downplayed, as especially LoVeSe is fronted as the best prospect ‘of what is left’. However, the state ‘wins’, as it has managed to boost exploration levels in the Barents Sea. The third major finding of the article is how the industry shares the visions of political elites when it comes to the state security approach of opportunistic adaptation (as outlined in the second article).

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<sup>28</sup> Kristoffersen, Berit, “‘Securing’ geography: Framings, logics and strategies in the Norwegian High North,” in Powell, Richard and Klaus Dodds, eds., *Polar Geopolitics? Knowledges, Resources and Legal Regimes*, Cheltenham and Northampton, Edward Elgar, 2014, pp. 131-148.

The fourth and final article entitled *Post-Petroleum Security in Lofoten: How identity matters*, analyzes political discussions regarding petroleum development in Lofoten from 2008 to 2013.<sup>29</sup> Co-author Brigit Dale and I define the above negotiation between the industry and the government as ‘strategic advancement’ that foremost reflects how, for strategic reasons, the least politically controversial areas are opened first in the Norwegian Arctic. This negotiation serves as the backdrop for the main undertaking in the article, which is to analyze local security perspectives in Lofoten in relation to the petroleum state. From a local and regional perspective, three major findings emerge. First, by drawing on Anthony Giddens’ approach to ontological security, we show how interdependencies between nature, individuals and communities are considered as a primary basis for securing a meaningful future that extends beyond ‘the petroleum age’ in Norway. Thus, we show how time is a decisive variable when the question of when (or *if*) petroleum resources should be extracted is considered. While in national debates, Lofoten’s oil and gas resource are popularized as national ‘reserves’ and ‘future welfare’ that sustain the (future) security of the state *within* the unfolding petroleum age, it simultaneously creates a sense of *insecurity* (for some) in Lofoten, thus revealing the complexity and tension in the state’s role as provider of security. This draws attention to the second and related finding: The strong emphasis put on an identity based coastal culture in the region, thus entails that the security concerns for Lofoten and its inhabitants – that ‘the oil’ ought to secure local, not national interests, can be in opposition to national concerns. In this, we emphasize both the everyday and symbolic importance of the fisheries, where risks extend beyond the threat of oil spills, as the oil is also a threat to the viability of coastal communities in the long-term. After a decade characterized by prolific production of reports and political debates, we then show how a major concern locally, from both adversaries and supporters of petroleum development, is whether a decision on the matter – be it a decision to open for petroleum or not – leaves the region adequately prepared for a post-petroleum era. The third finding then is that the petroleum resources are believed to be valuable where they are, and as long as extracting it for energy consumption *now* is perceived as representing a threat to what the Lofoten future can be in a post-petroleum period, a friction between local and national interests will remain.

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<sup>29</sup> Kristoffersen, Berit and Brigit Dale, “Post-petroleum security in Lofoten: “How identity matters,” in *Arctic Review on Law and Policy* 5(2), 2014, 201-226.



### 1.3 An emergent Norwegian research field

There is a certain amount of literature on how Norway's position in the north is so to speak affected by external forces employing a realist approach towards security, but yet little has been written on matters concerning the north from political economy or social constructivism.<sup>30</sup> Recent publications discuss how Norway's move towards drilling in Arctic areas have been negotiated in international relations. Relevant PhD-theses in this regard are Torbjørn Pedersen's analysis of how Norwegian diplomacy has been counterproductive in relation to Svalbard,<sup>31</sup> and Kristine Offerdal's analysis of how Norway's High North dialogues with its most important allies (in terms of energy security from the Barents Sea) have failed.<sup>32</sup> Leif Christian Jensen's thesis has been pioneering in understanding the discursive dynamics underpinning Norway's High North approach, especially relating to environmental considerations in the Barents Sea and the role of Russia.<sup>33</sup> Climate change was not included in his study, nor were local concerns. Brigit Dale, co-author of the fourth article in this PhD, extensively discussed this latter issue in his anthropological PhD-thesis on security perspectives of local communities in Lofoten.<sup>34</sup> In a similar manner to these two aforementioned studies, Rune D. Fitjar explores regional identities (based on newspapers) employing a discourse analysis framework.<sup>35</sup> His article shows how ownership is claimed to petroleum resources in the Finnmark, which justifies the need for production plans that maximize regional economic benefits from developments in the Barents Sea. Helene Amundsen's PhD-thesis on climate change and local resilience in two municipalities in Vesterålen and Senja identifies the need to broaden the understanding of the concept of climate adaptation to include subjective dimensions, such as place attachment and identity.<sup>36</sup> Also, Gisle Andersen's forthcoming PhD-thesis disentangles how processes of knowledge production and transformation are correlated with the formation of legitimate

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<sup>30</sup> Jensen, Leif, C., Norway on a High in the North: a discourse analysis of policy framing, PhD-thesis in political science, *University of Tromsø*. 2013, pp.3.

<sup>31</sup> Pedersen, Torbjørn, Conflict and order in Svalbard waters, PhD-thesis in Political Science, *University of Tromsø*, 2008.

<sup>32</sup> Offerdal, Kristine, The politics of energy in the European High North: Norway and the petroleum dialogue with the USA and the EU, PhD-thesis in Political Science, *University of Oslo*, 2010.

<sup>33</sup> Jensen, Leif. C. 2013. Op.cit.

<sup>34</sup> Dale, Brigit, Securing a Contingent Future: how threats, risks and identity matter in the debate over petroleum development in Lofoten, Norway, PhD-thesis in political science, *University of Tromsø*, 2012. Important aspects and findings of his analysis will be accounted for in the fourth article, where he is the co-author.

<sup>35</sup> Fitjar, Rune. D., "Region-buidling in the Arctic periphery: The discursive construction of a petroleum region," in *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 95(1) 2013, 71-88.

<sup>36</sup> Amundsen, Helene, Adapting to change—community resilience in Northern Norwegian municipalities, PhD-thesis in Human Geography, *University of Oslo*, 2014.

political alternatives, and maps the valuations used by political actors arguing for specific political actions or regulations.<sup>37</sup> This in turn relates to Maaïke Knol's PhD-thesis, who utilizes the Management Plan for the Lofoten-Barents Sea area to demonstrate the relevance of studying risk assessment and management as a part of a complex process that includes politics as much as science.<sup>38</sup> Her research then calls into question the need for a larger societal discussion on what activities are considered appropriate, considering the limits of science to provide the knowledge base for questions that transcend the environmental domain. Earlier relevant PhD-studies on policy formation between environmental and oil politics include struggles over the introduction of a CO<sub>2</sub>-tax offshore in Norway,<sup>39</sup> and the growing influence of the industry-based climate policy expert communities.<sup>40</sup> This is the Norwegian research community in which this study is situated. An objective for this study is that it can provide insights and understandings of how recent developments towards expanding oil and gas developments in the Norwegian North can be understood. In this, I work within a 'widened' and 'deepened' security perspective, thus reflective both a broad range of actors and issues against the backdrop in which these aforementioned studies are situated. In Chapter 4 I situate my approach and findings within a in a growing body of work within critical geopolitics focusing on the Polar regions under the umbrella of *critical polar geopolitics*.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> His forthcoming thesis is entitled 'The History of Future Nature: The Justification of Norwegian Environmental Policy 1945-2010'

<sup>38</sup> Knol, Maaïke, Marine Ecosystem Governance in the Making: Planning for petroleum activity in the Barents Sea-Lofoten area, PhD-thesis at the Faculty of Biosciences, Fisheries and Economics, *University of Tromsø*, 2011.

<sup>39</sup> Reitan, Marit, Interesser og Institusjoner i Miljøpolitikken, Department of Political Science, *University of Oslo*, 1998.

<sup>40</sup> Nilsen, Yngve, En felles plattform?: Norsk oljeindustri og klimadebatten i Norge fram til 1998. PhD-thesis at the Center of Technology, Innovation and Culture, *University of Oslo*, 2001.

<sup>41</sup> Dodds, Klaus, and Richard Powell, "Polar geopolitics: new researchers on the Polar Regions," in *The Polar Journal*, 3(1), 2013, 1-8.

## Chapter 2: BACKGROUND



*Image: 'Ekkofisk – the ride'. Artwork by Tomas Ramberg.*

Desiring a long-term perspective in the exploitation of resources, and after a comprehensive evaluation of the social needs, the Government has concluded that Norway should take a moderate pace in the extraction of petroleum resources.

Norwegian government, 1974<sup>42</sup>

The expectations generated by oil and its potential for socioeconomic and material transformation are key to understanding the politics of oil and economic developments.<sup>43</sup> Norwegian governments and politicians have encountered many political challenges during a 40-year period of growth and subsequent decline in Norwegian petroleum production. Throughout this period several dilemmas have become evident including how to deal with local and global environmental impacts of petroleum extraction and use; the state's attempt to secure *both* social and ecological contracts,<sup>44</sup> and the increasingly global economic activities and flows.<sup>45</sup> It is not hard to argue that it is important to look at the role of the state when it comes to researching petroleum politics in Norway. Despite the many changes that Norway has undergone during its 40-year long period of petroleum activities, the state has maintained a steady 'hand on the wheel'. The Norwegian state's involvement can be described as one of being both a landlord and an entrepreneur, and thus as an innovator it has been able to steer its oil and gas activities since the early 1970's.<sup>46</sup>

The quote that opens this chapter is from the 1974 White Paper, called [*t*]he *role of petroleum activities in Norwegian society*. The paper was the result of the second major negotiation in the Norwegian Parliament on petroleum in which petroleum was considered a limited resource and a challenge to be managed socioeconomically. The main rationale behind the paper then was the argument that the oil and gas benefits for Norway were best obtained through extracting the

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<sup>42</sup> Ministry of Industry 1974. St. meld. (White paper) #25 (1973–74), *Petroleumsvirksomhetens plass i det norske samfunnet*. [The role of petroleum activities in Norwegian society], pp. 6.

<sup>43</sup> Bridge Gavin and Phillippe Le Billon, *Oil*. John Wiley & Sons, 2013, pp. 126.

<sup>44</sup> As Paul Robbins points out, the state as an environmental actor is inherently more internally fractured than it is a provider of welfare. Robbins, Paul, "The state in political ecology: A postcard to political geography from the Field," in Kevin Cox, Murray Low, and Jennifer Robinson, (eds), *The Handbook for Political Geography*. Sage, London, p. 205.

<sup>45</sup> Anders Underthun and Berit Kristoffersen. 2011. Op.cit. 189.

<sup>46</sup> Austvik, Ole G., "Landlord and Entrepreneur: The Shifting Roles of the State in Norwegian Oil and Gas Policy," in *Governance* 25(2), 2012, 315-334.

petroleum resources over a long period of time. This management would ensure that Norway could also avoid experiencing the ‘Dutch disease’ and escaping the ‘oil curse’, and that this approach would ensure that Norway could withstand pressures from oil companies and other states. At the time of these discussions and negotiations, the OPEC embargo, usually referenced as the ‘oil crisis’ of 1973, was at its height. In the wake of this crisis, many international oil companies had turned their interests towards investing in the North Sea, where they urged for rapid developments.<sup>47</sup> In the words of an Exxon Executive, cited in Daniel Yergin’s classic *The Prize*; “After 1973 and nationalization, you had to go hunt your rabbits in a different field. And we went to places where we could still obtain equity interests, ownership, in oil”.<sup>48</sup> Western allies were looking for reliable energy supplies outside the Middle East following the OPEC embargo. Norwegian policymakers expected pressure to expand production for these countries’ ‘security of supply’.<sup>49</sup> The rationale was accordingly to aim for a moderate pace of extracting these newly discovered resources, which would ensure that the Norwegian government could address challenges within the petroleum sector in a systematic and controlled fashion. A proposal from the Ministry of Finance was accepted by the Parliament in 1973, - that 90 million tons of oil equivalents per year would be the upper limit for production on the Norwegian continental shelf. In the first part of the 1980s, this was modified to a cap on investments as suggested by the so-called ‘tempo-committee’ appointed by the government.<sup>50</sup> A quo-system for new projects was introduced in 1988 to deal with this issue, until limitations of both tempo and investments were abandoned all together in 1993.<sup>51</sup>

## **2.1 The tempo debate, 1970-1998**

The first negotiation that took place in the industrial committee in Parliament in 1971 reflects a historical compromise following political battles between all major parties in Norwegian politics at the time, especially relating to what an ‘active state’ would mean for policymaking. This White Paper of 1971 is still referenced in politics today in both policy-papers and political

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<sup>47</sup> Yergin, Daniel, *The Prize: the epic quest for oil, money and power*. New York, Simon and Schuster, 1991, pp. 665

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ryggvik, Helge and Berit Kristoffersen, op.cit.

<sup>50</sup> Helge Ryggvik, *Til siste dråpe: om oljens politiske økonomi* [To the last Drop: the political economy of oil], Aschehoug, Oslo, 2009, pp. 138.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, pp. 150.

debates.<sup>52</sup> The subsequent ‘moderate pace’ White paper (1974) is referenced much less often than the first negotiation in Parliament in 1971, the latter of which has been popularized as Norway’s ten ‘oil commandments’. The commandments made clear, among other things, that national ownership and control had to be secured for all operations (number one); that new onshore industrial activity would be developed on the basis of the petroleum sector (number three); that a state oil company would be established to safeguard the government’s commercial interests (number eight); and that activities north of the North Sea had to “satisfy the special socio-political considerations that applied in this region” (number nine).<sup>53</sup> In the early 1970s, this meant that approximately 2/3 of the Norwegian coast, extending from a 62<sup>nd</sup> geographical latitude frontier, was not to be opened for commercial for drilling activity, as suggested by the Norwegian Institute of Marine Research).<sup>54</sup> These commandments or guidelines provided some basic premises and principles towards managing the extraction of hydrocarbons on the Norwegian Continental Shelf.

In the initial phase, these premises played a decisive role for how the Norwegian society would come to benefit from control and ownership of the resources. Norway was considered one of the most egalitarian industrialized countries and when hydrocarbons were discovered, there was already a political foundation in place for a redistributive and generous welfare state. In other words, Norway benefited from favorable initial institutional and economic conditions compared to many other oil producing countries.<sup>55</sup> The Norwegian public trusted the political systems’ ability to ensure a strong ‘top-down’ management of the resources. Through an established so-called Keynesian welfare state and the politicians’ ability to steer political and economic developments during the oil crises, legitimacy was established as was support in society at large, based on the state’s adherence to the principles of the two aforementioned negotiations in parliament (moderate pace and the ten ‘commandments’). The principles were reflected in the development of strong state institutions; the establishment of the governmentally controlled oil company Statoil; the specific advantages accrued to Norwegian

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<sup>52</sup> St.meld. (white paper) 7-94. Innstillingen 94. 1970-1971. *Innstilling fra den forsterkede industrikomite om undersøkelse etter og utvinning av undersjøiske naturforekomster på den norske kontinentalsokkel m.m.* [Recommendation from the extended industrial committee about the exploration for and extraction of underwater natural deposits on the Norwegian Continental Shelf etc.]

<sup>53</sup> The first article, *Geographies of security and statehood* contains the full list and context, see Kristoffersen, Berit and Stephen Young, Op.cit. p. 579.

<sup>54</sup> Ryggvik Helge and Berit Kristoffersen, op cit.

<sup>55</sup> Bridge, Gavin and Phillipe Le Billon, Op.cit. p. 141.

onshore companies to develop into a ‘petroleum supply industry’; and not least, through the redistribution of the ‘resource rent’.<sup>56</sup> The discussion at the time reflected the belief that the oil policy had to be linked to “greater equality in living standards, equality between men and women, a broad involvement, safety, solidarity and opportunities for all”.<sup>57</sup> There were many disagreements and battles between the political left and right about how to balance the tensions within the international oil market through a government acting as a landlord and entrepreneur.<sup>58</sup> It was also very clear that this Norwegian governmental approach stood in stark contrast to the rationale of short-term profits and returns guiding the strategies of oil companies.<sup>59</sup> The state had taken up the role as “the leader of economic development”,<sup>60</sup> to ensure a protection against abrupt changes in world markets, of which the ongoing OPEC embargo was an important reminder.<sup>61</sup>

The first White Paper (1971) played a significant role in defining the terms of consensus around the guiding principles for Norway/Norwegian petroleum governance, which came to be popularized as the first steps in ‘the Norwegian oil fairy-tale’.<sup>62</sup> Accordingly, today’s political leaders tie the interests in the northern seas to these early developments. The former Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre (2005-2012) stated at a meeting organized by the public-private partnership Konkraft in 2006 that energy was the driving force behind a “new chapter in the North”.<sup>63</sup> This reflects a political-geographical ‘step-by-step’ perspective towards the incorporation of new seascapes. The image of consensus is presented as a static condition and *modus operandi*, in spite of the changing political, economic and environmental conditions. The figure below illustrates the developments in Norway’s trajectory in becoming an increasingly petroleum dependent state. The initial goal of the 1973 White Paper when it came to a moderate pace in production was abandoned in 1993. The path towards what is now

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<sup>56</sup> Ryggvik, Helge, 2009. Op.cit. In his book, Ryggvik extensively discusses how Norway was able to design optimal royalty and corporate tax systems that bring in a publicly acceptable share of revenues without discouraging private investment.

<sup>57</sup> Olsen, Johan, P., *Petroleum og politikk*, Oslo, Tano, 1989, pp. 12.

<sup>58</sup> Austvik, Ole. G., 2012. Op.cit. p. 315

<sup>59</sup> Ryggvik, Helge, 2009. Op.cit.

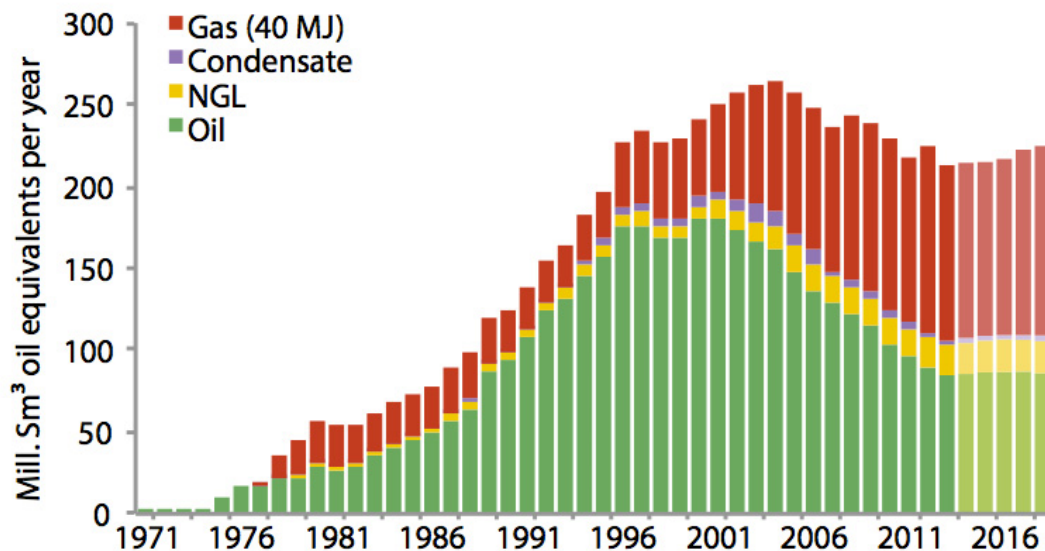
<sup>60</sup> Austvik, Ole G., 2012. Op cit. p. 315

<sup>61</sup> Ryggvik, Helge and Berit Kristoffersen, op.cit.

<sup>62</sup> In my master thesis, I discuss and analyze this at length in chapter five (based on interviews). Kristoffersen, B. 2007. Spaces of Competitive Power. Master thesis in Human Geography, *University of Oslo*. Available online: <http://www.duo.uio.no/sok/work.html?WORKID=53989>

<sup>63</sup> Cited in article one, Kristoffersen, Berit and Stephen Young, 2010. Op.cit. p. 581

discussed in politics as petroleum dependency took a different turn than what was agreed upon and envisioned in the first years of establishing a petroleum sector and policy in Norway.<sup>64</sup> The rate of extraction became much higher than initially agreed upon, leading to the petro-dependency of the Norwegian economy.



Actual and forecast sale of petroleum. Source: Norwegian Petroleum Directorate and Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, 2014<sup>65</sup>

## 2.2 Oil-fueled development: “a swift and uncontrolled growth”?

The above figure shows that oil production peaked in 2001, and that the overall petroleum production reached its height in 2004. By that time, production was nearly four times higher than the upper limit set in the 1970s (the previously mentioned 90 million tons oil equivalents). If a moderate pace was a major principle established in the 1970s, we can simply say that this objective has not been fulfilled. In fact, the opposite has actually happened. Officially, the objective of limiting production, and later investments, was dropped at roughly the same time as the initial production goal was passed.<sup>66</sup> Over the years, high exploration rates became the new reality, and this meant that new areas constantly needed to open for petroleum production

<sup>64</sup> Ryggvik Helge and Berit Kristoffersen, op. cit. This chapter discusses these policy targets and struggles at the time at length.

<sup>65</sup> Norwegian Petroleum Directorate and Ministry of Petroleum and Energy. *FACTS 2014*. Available online at [http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/OED/pdf%20filer/Faktaheftet/Fakta2014OG/Facts\\_2014\\_nettpdf](http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/OED/pdf%20filer/Faktaheftet/Fakta2014OG/Facts_2014_nettpdf) p. 13.

<sup>66</sup> Ryggvik, Helge, 2009. Op.cit. pp.150.



in order to find and produce sufficient amounts of oil and gas. This has furthermore affected the balance between the oil sector and other industries: 90 percent of investments in 2013 were made in the petroleum sector, and there is almost a doubling of people working in the petroleum industry compared to a decade ago, and over the past three years, oil and gas investments has increased by 67 percent.<sup>67</sup> That this amplified the dependency upon finding and extracting new reserves at a much higher rate than what was anticipated is important to understanding and explaining the current dynamics of consensus and contestation in Norwegian politics. It is not an exaggeration to state that the political economy, political debates, and perceptions around environmental and energy security would have been very different if Norwegian policymakers had maintained a lower production rate.

The strong consensus in Norwegian politics today on maintaining production levels is demonstrated within the most recent White Paper on petroleum policy from 2011, *An industry for the future – Norway's petroleum activities*.<sup>68</sup> This policy paper makes one reference to the White Paper from 1974. It states that the 1974 White Paper “set the objective that the petroleum resources should be used to develop a ‘qualitatively better society’”.<sup>69</sup> The second objective from 1974 that is highlighted in 2011 was to develop a petroleum expertise. There is no reference or reflection on the issue of a ‘moderate pace’. The anxieties expressed in 1974 on the dangers of becoming a petroleum-dependent state, and thus society, are no longer an issue. In 1974, the full quote read that not only should the wealth from oil be used to develop a “qualitatively better society”, but that such commitments were to take place without “swift and uncontrolled growth in the use of material resources.”<sup>70</sup> This tension with, or more accurately avoidance of, past policy goals plays a pivotal role in the analysis I provide here, and further supports the work of oil-historian Helge Ryggvik who claims that this is a key issue for understanding Norwegian oil history.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Statistics Norway, 2014. <https://www.ssb.no/energi-og-industri/statistikker/oljeinv>

<sup>68</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, *White Paper # 28 (2010-2011) An Industry for the future - Norway's petroleum activities*, 2011, Available online in English at [www.government.no](http://www.government.no) (retrieved February 5th)

<sup>69</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Petroleum and Energy. 2011. Op.cit. p. 5.

<sup>70</sup> Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, 2011, Op.cit. p. 5; Ministry of Industry, 1974. Op.cit. p. 6.

<sup>71</sup> Ryggvik, Helge, *Olje og Klima, En strategi for nedkjøling* [Oil and the Climate, A strategy for cooling down], Oslo, Gyldendal, 2013.

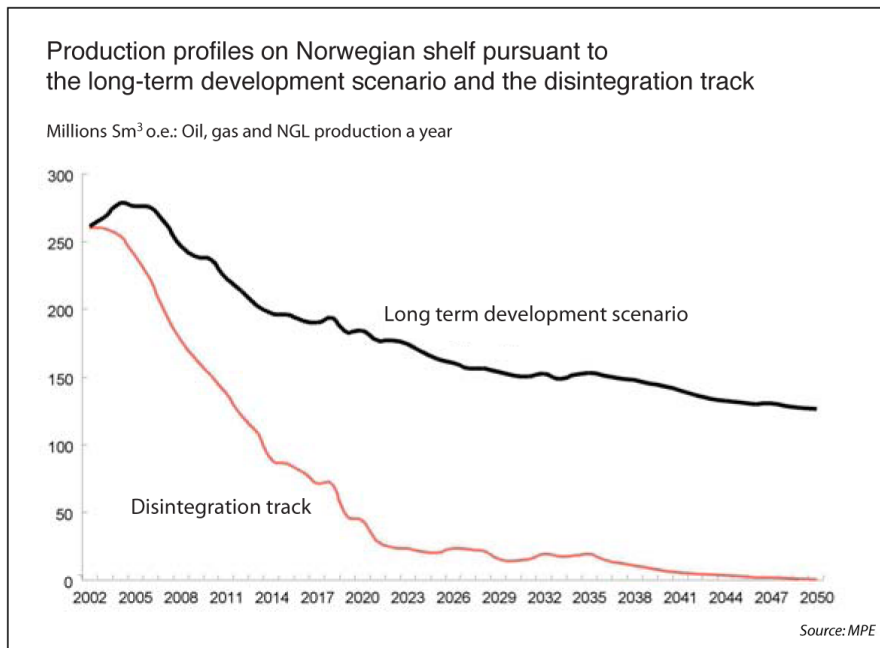
### 2.3 2000s: The disintegration track

New objectives were formalized in the early 2000s, following a period with low oil prices and concern over production rates and the peaking of oil production in 2001. As the above statistics of production shows, a substantial amount of oil and gas reserves were extracted in the 1990s. The major oil companies had obtained access to previously closed oil-producing countries with lower production costs than Norway, such as Venezuela and Russia. Investments and production were projected to decrease in Norway, and consequently, it was anticipated that there would be a significant loss in the petroleum-based workforce and exports from the Norwegian shelf. As the oil price dropped during the 1990s, there was pressure from the petroleum industry that Norway had to re-invent itself in order to ‘become competitive again’. This was the message of former Minister of Petroleum and Energy Einar Steensnæs’ (2001-2004) when I asked him about the conditions when he was a Minister: “...the impression was that the Norwegian Shelf was not that attractive anymore”.<sup>72</sup> There was a broad consensus in Parliament following discussion on the White Paper *On the Oil and Gas* that production was anticipated to be on the disintegration track.<sup>73</sup> The development scenarios below show how production could be managed in two ways. The two scenarios that the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy came up with included, first, the long-term development scenario (‘den langsiktige utviklingsbanen’) reflecting a gradual decrease in production; and second, the short-term disintegration track (‘forvitringsbanen’), where no initiatives are taken to strengthen the Norwegian Shelf and activity rapidly declines.

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<sup>72</sup> Cited in Kristoffersen, Berit, 2007. Op.cit. 39.

<sup>73</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, 2002. White Paper # 38 (2001-2002). *Om olje og gassvirksomheten* [On the oil and gas] (available in English at [http://www.regjeringen.no/pages/1968338/Stmeld\\_38\\_2003-2004\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.regjeringen.no/pages/1968338/Stmeld_38_2003-2004_Eng.pdf))



Development scenarios on the Norwegian Shelf (White Paper 38, 2001-2002)<sup>74</sup>. Source MPE/Konkraft and translation: Kristoffersen 2007.<sup>75</sup>

In Parliament, there was agreement on the long-term development scenario. According to Ryggvik,<sup>76</sup> the pressure from the industry at the time was characteristic of the dynamics of Norwegian petroleum politics: When the ‘tempo’ in production or investments are repeatedly driven up, it is due to the inner dynamics that are created by the great size and expansiveness of the industry. When the industry is faced with a temporal decrease or an obstacle to further expansion, there is strong pressure from various actors in the sector for policy changes.<sup>77</sup>

In the face of these pressures, a wide range of de-regulative moves were initiated to make the Norwegian shelf ‘competitive again’, a process Jamie Peck calls “neoliberal downloading”.<sup>78</sup> One example of this included cuts in the Co2-tax for oil companies in 1998, when the oil price hit a historically low price (discussed in article one). Another was the change in policy that allowed new companies to establish themselves in Norway to boost exploration levels

<sup>74</sup> The original figure looks slightly different and is found on page six in the White Paper whilst this figure is taken from the state-industry *Konkraft taxation summary report*, page seven, first time published in Kristoffersen 2007, op.cit. p. 39.

<sup>75</sup> Kristoffersen, Berit, 2007. Op.cit. p. 40

<sup>76</sup> Ryggvik, Helge, 2013. Op.cit. p. 59.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Peck, Jamie, “Neoliberalizing states: thin policies/hard outcomes” in *Progress in Human Geography* 25(3), 2001, p. 447

(discussed in article three). This is reflected in the new term, ‘oil mosquitos’ as many of the 50 new companies that were set up in the 2000s were merely exploration companies. The most prominent example however was the partial privatization of Statoil in 2001. Statoil was established as a wholly state-owned oil company in 1972 to ensure “the best possible government control over the development of Norway’s petroleum resources.” The company has played an “important role as an instrument in petroleum policy, in part with regard to the award of new licenses and decisions on field developments” according to the Norwegian government.<sup>79</sup> There was a fairly broad political consensus in the Parliament in 2001 when one-third of the company’s value was sold to new owners, that this would “strengthen the company’s competitive position”, thus reflecting a strategy where the company was to gain access to other parts of the world.<sup>80</sup> Today the company operates approximately seventy percent of all Norwegian oil and gas production, and about 1/3 of its production takes place abroad, where the company is engaged in petroleum activities in about 30 countries.

Additionally, and reflecting what Peck refer to as a ‘re-regulative move’ in which the state intervenes to strengthen the de-regulation of a sector, a coalition of petroleum industry representatives and related branches of government established the public-private partnership Konkraft in 2000.<sup>81</sup> The objective was to develop joint strategies between industry and state representatives to make the Norwegian shelf globally competitive.<sup>82</sup> This would change, increase and consolidate the interconnectedness of state and industry actors’ interests. This new political arena is taken as a case in point foreshadowing the rising trend that was noticeable in subsequent developments of how the state and industry joined forces in the early 2000s.

## **2.4 State and industry joining forces**

Norwegian oil politics was then increasingly dominated by a push for re-regulation and neoliberal downloading which significantly affected the interconnection of state authorities and industry. This did not mean that the state became ‘less powerful’. Rather, new forms of statehood and political interventions to de-and re-regulate the sector provide an example of how

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<sup>79</sup> This description of 'Statoil ASA', and other overviews of state ownership in the petroleum sector is found at the governmental page: [http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/oed/tema/statlig\\_engasjement\\_i\\_petroleumsvirksomh/](http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/oed/tema/statlig_engasjement_i_petroleumsvirksomh/)

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

<sup>81</sup> KonKraft is a combination of two Norwegian words of competition and strength/power.

<sup>82</sup> See Kristoffersen, Berit 2007, op.cit., especially chapter four and seven, for a thorough discussion of the role and organization of KonKraft.

the Norwegian state re-negotiated its strengths with the industry and thus can be argued to have become 'differently powerful'.<sup>83</sup> In addition, the emergence of public-private partnerships is an attribute that is characteristic of what David Harvey calls "differential and uneven neoliberal spaces".<sup>84</sup> This is an expression of how the state does not necessarily always have its own separate agency. Instead, it shows how states are also reshaped through the manifold geographies of capital, which will be taken up for discussion in Chapter 4.

The institutionalized space of state-industry interaction offered by Konkraft is particularly interesting. In the four annual meetings of the Konkraft-forum, Topplederforum (The Forum of Leaders), the CEO's of the big companies in the petroleum industry could talk freely as the petroleum industry actors were not identified by names in a short reference (from 2001-2008).<sup>85</sup> Konkraft was thus effectively an 'exclusive' policy arena closed off to the public. One key representative, the leader of Konkraft, expressed an important function of Topplederforum during an interview in 2006. Coming to terms with how to make Norway 'competitive again', he said that their policy-arena Topplederforum provided their members with a testing ground for policy-making; "...There is a lot of basis for a shared understanding and action if you have the same description of reality. So that is the starting point".<sup>86</sup>

The state and the petroleum industry created Konkraft as their own political space, both similarly institutionalized and representational, as it was important to agree on the 'description of reality'. This was an important move when understanding how a 'moderate pace' was replaced by the aforementioned 'long-term development scenario' in the early 2000s. Governmental and industry objectives of 'competitiveness' were made to operate side by side: The long-term perspective that characterized statehood in the 1970s (of a supportive welfare state) and the short (to medium) term perspective of oil companies who want to secure (and find new) reserves. We thus see that industry and political elites are not only preoccupied with finding common ground for policy through consensus and shared realities but are seeking to establish consensus between these two logics and (re)present them as coherent. They are thus

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<sup>83</sup> Peck, Jamie, 2001. Op.cit.p.447. Peck asks how analytically, the state can be examined in terms of being differently powerful instead of less powerful. Framing the state as 'differently powerful', then calls into attention the normalization of what Peck calls orthodox globalization narratives. These give license to a set of dominant strategies for state reorganization and reform, "rooted in the image of the hollowed out minimalist state"

<sup>84</sup> Harvey, David, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 76.

<sup>85</sup> Kristoffersen, Berit, 2007. Op.cit. p. 13.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. p. 94.

preoccupied with defining the preconditions of strategies that can materialize into large-scale petroleum developments in the Norwegian Arctic.

## **2.5 The petroleum sector in numbers**

The Norwegian government invests its oil revenues into a national pension fund, whilst maintaining heavy taxes on the oil companies. The first investments in the newly established ‘oil fund’ were made in 1996, and an innovative practice for managing the petroleum wealth was established. The policy tool was not predicated upon the tempo of extraction or investments, but on how much profit could be generated from this fund in order to simultaneously avoid overheating the economy and to foster intergenerational equality.<sup>87</sup> In 2012, Norway was the world’s third largest gas exporter and the tenth largest oil exporter. As a producer, Norway was ranked as number fifteen in oil and number six in gas. By 2014, Norway has developed a petroleum sector that constitutes approximately 22% of the national GDP, 29% of the state’s income, 49% of the exports and 21% of investments.<sup>88</sup> The Norwegian state holds a strong position in the petroleum sector today through collecting 78% in taxes from oil companies, whilst simultaneously reducing oil companies’ economic risk for investments, as oil companies can write off 78% of their operating investments costs when paying their taxes,<sup>89</sup> and through the 2/3 governmentally controlled oil company Statoil. Statoil operates half of the Norwegian petroleum fields. There is also the fully state-owned oil company Petoro, which does not operate oil fields, but acts as a licensee – normally termed a partner, sitting on a third of the commercial reserves. Statoil also sits on a third of the reserves, while the remaining third is split amongst the other oil companies that take part in commercial production in Norway. The additional surplus of state income that is not generated through the national GDP is invested in foreign bonds, stocks, properties, and equities in the aforementioned ‘oil fund’. It has more recently been renamed ‘Government Pension Fund Global’ due to an expected demographic change in the Norwegian workforce for which the petroleum money is expected to compensate (by spending more ‘oil money’ from 2030). It is currently holding \$810bn, and is today the world’s largest sovereign wealth fund.

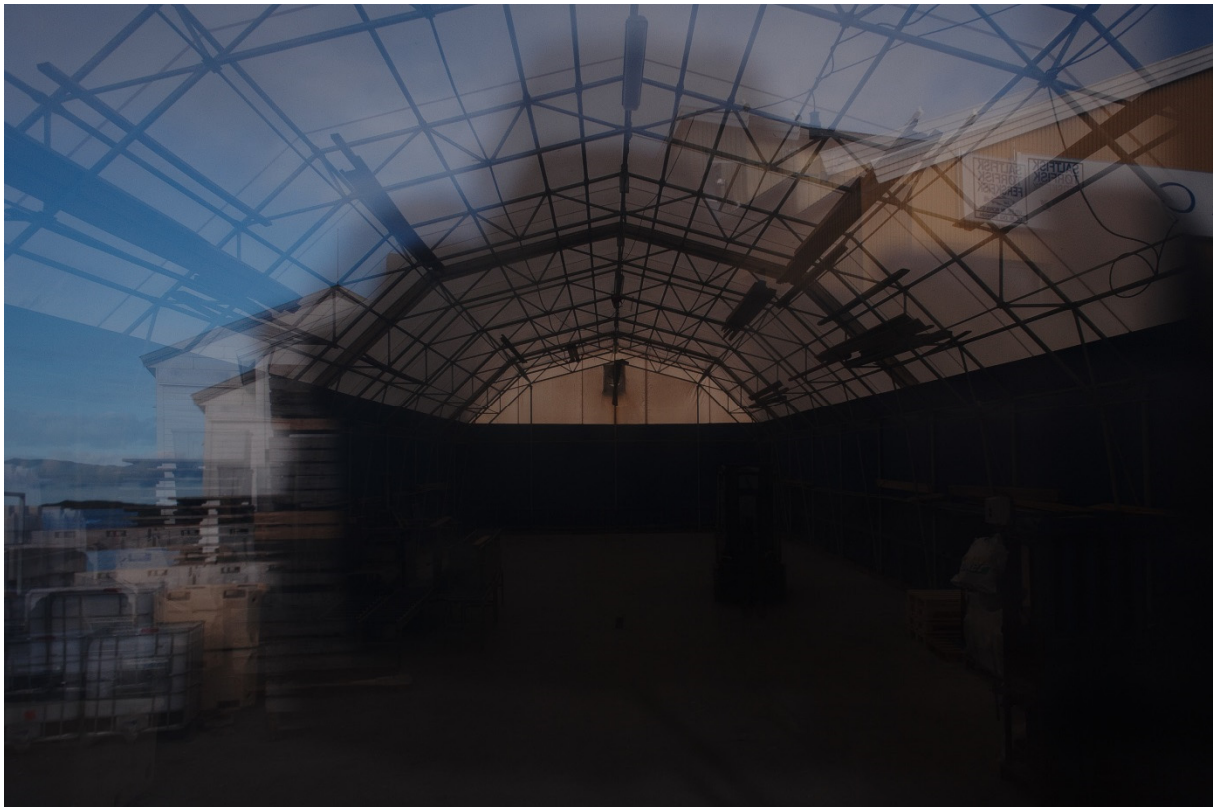
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<sup>87</sup> Bridge, Gavin and Phillipe Le Billon, 2013. Op. cit. pp. 141.

<sup>88</sup> Norwegian Petroleum Directorate and Ministry of Petroleum and Energy. Op.cit, p. 12-13.

<sup>89</sup> In relation to writing off exploration investments, if a company is not in a taxation position, 78% of the costs will be paid the same year.

## Chapter 3: METHODS AND RESEARCH STRATEGIES



*Image: Røst in Lofoten. Photo by Carsten Aniksdal.*

This chapter gives an outline of the methods applied in the research project and of how the research process has unfolded. I begin by introducing the types of empirical material I have collected, how I have conducted this work and where. The chapter's objective is to ensure transparency and to discuss how my choice of methods has influenced the thesis' analysis and hence also the research results.

The research that this thesis builds on is largely qualitative, in that I have sought to develop a more nuanced understanding of the different positions, interests and agencies involved in the northward moves of the oil and gas industry than what a quantitative approach could have provided. A principal characteristic of qualitative research is that both the process of generating data and analysis is conducted over a longer time-period (unlike, for example, surveys).<sup>90</sup> The topic of my research is a political process that stretches back in time to about the mid-2000s and is still ongoing. During this time, I have participated in a number of events that has been relevant for the research project as well as having followed the public debate around questions relating to oil and gas activities in northern Norway. A consequence of this is that I have been in and out of field research several times. While in the field I have particularly been interested in how stakeholders positioned within the formal political system, within the oil and gas industry and locally based actors in Lofoten and Vesterålen value oil and gas resources. I have also wanted to explore how they tie the potential exploration of these resources to notions of security, environmental concerns and societal development at large. When not conducting fieldwork, I have analyzed data and prepared the next field trip and interviews. Hence, the issues and questions I approached interviewees with have gradually become informed by previous fieldwork, both adding to and shifting the focus of my engagements in the field. Examples of how fieldwork events and conversations have led me to pursue different aspects of the process studied are included in the back of this chapter, together with photographs that for me have come to represent some of the more pivotal moments of fieldwork. The importance of such 'moments' reflects the inductive process in this research project, in that my approach to the issue has constantly developed and changed in relation to encounters with actors and by moving between different contexts. The study is further situated within an interpretative research practice, a tradition that emphasizes the disclosure of meaning-making practices and the capacity to move across the continuum between the descriptive and (critical) analysis. This

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<sup>90</sup> Ryen, Anne, *Det kvalitative intervjuet: fra vitenskapsteori til feltarbeid*, Bergen, Fagbokforlaget, 2002, pp. 158.



tradition also stresses the ability of the researcher to mediate between the analytical and the empirical,<sup>91</sup> which in this study has been sought ensured in moving between the field and the process of analysis.

As this dissertation is article based there have been numerous discussions and comments from editors, reviewers and others (for instance at conferences and research group and network workshops where I have presented papers). These processes have not determined or in any major way steered the research methods applied or what the major findings of the thesis are, but have clearly influenced how the empirical material of the thesis is presented in the articles. There are both benefits and drawbacks in writing an article-based dissertation. The most obvious of these benefits is that I have had the pleasure – and challenge – of working with the input from a number of scholars that I in all likelihood would not have had the opportunity to engage with otherwise. This is especially relevant to the reviewers who have provided important feedback underway. A potential problem with writing an article-based PhD, however, is that the amount of empirics one can bring into the one article is quite limited. The usual limit of eight thousand words in one article has thus at times feel restraining, especially when having to make choices on what material to present and argue for them in the peer-review process. For while the input from peer review has been highly valuable, it is also so that reviewers have not, nor can they, taken into consideration that the articles were being written as part of a broader research project; a PhD thesis.

Two of the articles for this PhD are co-authored, which has been rewarding in many ways. The first article, *Geographies of Security and Statehood*, was co-authored across the Atlantic Sea, and was based on a shared theoretical interest. I invited Stephen Young in as a co-author during the review process after fruitful discussions with him on how to tackle what the three reviewers suggested. *Post-Petroleum Security in Lofoten* grew out of a long-term collaboration with Brigit Dale. Dale and I have for years been part of the same research group at the University of Tromsø and have worked with similar themes and issues in Lofoten since 2008. I was the main author of both articles. An important focus for me was that the articles were part of my PhD research. I was therefore particularly concerned with ensuring that the articles were thematically linked

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<sup>91</sup> Yanow, Dvora, and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, "Introduction" in Yanow, Dvora, and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, eds., *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, New York and London. ME Sharpe, 2006, pp. xx.

and theoretically coherent, much because the process of writing together also involves the negotiation of analytical approaches. In sum, however, I find that this has added more than what was ‘lost’, as having different, but related entries into the same field, and to work with the aim of reaching a shared conclusion tests ideas in ways that sharpen the analysis.

### **3.1 The data collection process**

As part of the data collection in this research project, I have conducted interviews and observations (participant and nonparticipant). I have also reviewed a number of reports and policy documents, though these, together with speeches and media statements have primarily provided a background for the analysis. As I have been studying an ongoing process and given attention to how policies, positions, interests and so forth have emerged, as well as how they come across as relatively stable entities around which processes unfold, I have approached policy documents and industry reports as expressions of positions and ways of trying to establish policy consensus at a given time. This material has thus been considered as representative of strategic positioning and discourse formation. On the other hand, when studying ongoing processes, Kristine Offerdal notes, one has to bear in mind that much policy has yet to find its way into official documents.<sup>92</sup> Not only are documents expressive of ongoing processes, then, there are also often process underway that aim for the stabilization of particular knowledges and positions that are situated and particular to different actors. The 52 interviews I have conducted have provided important knowledge for the thesis’ understanding of such processes of policy ‘in the making’.

In Lofoten and Vesterålen (LoVe), I conducted 20 semi-structured interviews and participated in a number of local meetings, conferences and events between 2009 and 2012. The majority of respondents held political positions, as representatives for political parties, local interest organizations (such as pro- or against petroleum development) or local and national interest organizations (such as fishermen’s interest organizations). Notably, interviewees often held a combination of such positions, their agency thus being difficult to place within the one ‘camp’. The first fieldtrip to LoVe was in September 2008, the first interview was conducted in 2009 and the last interview in 2012. Between 2005 and 2006 I conducted, at the national level, 16 semi-structured interviews with elites, i.e. mainly respondents from the petroleum industry, the

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<sup>92</sup> Offerdal, Kristine, 2010. Op.cit. pp 63.

government and from Parliament. I also interviewed a representative from one labor union and two environmental NGOs. These interviews were conducted as part of my master thesis, and were particularly important to the first article presented in this thesis, *Geographies of security and statehood*. I will later discuss how and why this data was included. Between 2010 and 2012 I conducted another 16 interviews with national actors. Nine of these were connected to the oil and gas industry, two were high-ranking politicians, three represented management and/or research departments and two were from environmental NGOs. In addition to these formal interviews, I have logged about 40 conversations with different stakeholders in both LoVe and nationally where notes have been transcribed. Co-author of article four Brigit Dale and I also contributed with questions in a larger survey. Data from this survey are analysed in article four in this thesis, *Post-Petroleum security in Lofoten*. During the process of conducting interviews, I was also present at relevant settings as an observer, like at the so-called Forum of Leaders (*Topplederforum*) and the Lofoten Council meetings. These were arenas in which I often met with interviewees, but also settings wherein many unplanned encounters and informal conversations took place. The research strategy of going in and out of field has thus been important in terms of following the actors and processes over a longer time-period, and provided opportunities to evaluate what issues I wanted to explore further.<sup>93</sup>

That the interviews were conducted at various locations and over a relatively long time-span also meant that I could develop preliminary analyses to bring ‘back in’ to the field, meeting with the same or new interviewees with new reflections and questions. Through this work I gained an understanding of political dynamics, actors and processes at different stages and also of how certain events could shift the field in new directions.

As Anne Ryen points out, the major advantage with interviews as method is that it gives a depth that is hard to obtain in other research strategies, because it is based on an extended relationship between the two parties involved, where roles and statuses are understood and agreed upon, providing a clear framework within which discussions can evolve.<sup>94</sup> In this, the interviewer and interviewee actively construct a version of the world appropriate to what is taken to be self-evident about the actors involved and the context the questions refer to. Thus, every interview

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<sup>93</sup> Soss, Joe, “Talking our way to Meaningful Explanation. A Practice-Centered View of Interpretive Research”, in Yanow, Dvora, and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (eds), *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, New York and London, ME Sharpe, 2006, pp 137.

<sup>94</sup> Ryen, Anne, 2002. Op.cit. 141.

I conducted was characterized by its own dynamics. This means that the semi-structured and open-ended format of my interviews allowed for extended, actor-controlled probing.<sup>95</sup> I often opened the interview with a presentation of the research project and myself. I then spent a few minutes explaining two or three issues or perspectives that I was interested in addressing during this particular interview. For the most part, the interviewee would then spend a few minutes responding to what I had said in his or her own way. I would use these initial statements as the starting point for my follow-up questions. This approach worked well for the most part, and provided a large degree of flexibility, but also control when seeking to get the interviewees' point of view. During the interviews I was an active discussion partner, which allowed me to direct the conversation towards or back to issues that I wanted to address.

When I did my first interviews in November 2005, I did not know much about the petroleum sector, but wanted to do an analysis of how the state responds to pressure from the industry. I had chosen three examples of state-industry negotiations, and intended to map what I assumed would be discordant lines of arguments that had been decisive for the outcome of these three negotiations.<sup>96</sup> I started with four interviews and within one week I met with representatives from the government, the Parliament, the oil and gas industry and the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy. These interviewees had all been involved in one of my case studies – a Konkraft-tax reduction proposal in 2004.<sup>97</sup> What was striking during these interviews was that politicians and the industry representatives were not very eager to talk about conflicts or dividing lines. Rather, they would emphasize how there was a strong political consensus on petroleum policies that could be traced back to the 1970s. This 'consensus model' was characteristic of the relationship between the major parties in parliament, and between the politicians and the industry. What then became a topic for further analysis was the consensus-facilitating forum "Konkraft". Drawing from these observations, I adapted the interview guide to grapple with these issues. During the second round of interviews in spring 2006, many interviewees expressed that as much as establishing consensus on the kind of policy needed to boost interest

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<sup>95</sup> Baker, C. (1982) cited in Silverman, David, *Interpreting qualitative data (third edition)*, London, Sage, 2011, pp. 118.

<sup>96</sup> These three cases were in terms of decisions were: 1. The lowering of the offshore CO2-tax after intense lobbying from the industry in 1998. 2. The tax reductions that enabled the first petroleum extraction in the Barents Sea (Snow-white) in 2001. 3. The decision on not lowering the taxation with 25% for new oil and gas fields in 2004, which was suggested by a report from the public-private partnership Konkraft.

<sup>97</sup> These were conducted in late 2005 with a member of the Konkraft-board at the Ministry of Petroleum, the former Minister of Finance, the leader of the Konkraft working group that worked for the oil company Hydro, and a leading Labor party parliamentarian

and activities, it was just as important to have a shared understanding of the context. This issue is discussed in the background chapter, the point here being that the interviews were the key input for how I came to see and analyze this. It was crucial to my work, because I on this basis became concerned with the relevance of seeing material and discursive processes as equally important to political negotiations.

When I analyzed these interviews, I also realized how security had become a key term in the shared state-industry discourse, especially in relation to the expansion of oil and gas activities into Norway's northern seascapes. This therefore became key issues in the research design for the PhD. During the first two years of fieldwork, 2009-2010, I primarily focused on mapping and analyzing what was going on in LoVe. Simultaneously I was paying attention to debates *about* and *within* the industry, and had a number of conversations with industry representatives. For example, my colleague Brigit Dale and I travelled to Harstad, the 'oil capital' of northern Norway, for two days in the fall of 2009 to talk to representatives from the petroleum industry and the Petroleum Directorate. The premise of these conversations was that in order for us to have a broad, open discussion with them, addressing for example different kinds of power dynamics and political roles of companies and governmental institutions, we agreed to not quote them directly in our research. When I went to Stavanger and Oslo in 2011 to conduct interviews with the oil and gas industry, I chose a more formal approach. I wanted to follow up and generate two datasets – one from 2006 and the other from 2011 – for what became the third article of this thesis ('*Securing*' *geography*). In article number two (*Opportunistic Adaptation*), I found that it would be useful to discuss the thesis of opportunistic adaptation with actors involved in the processes I wanted to analyze. I therefore approached three leading politicians who agreed to be interviewed.<sup>98</sup> We then had long discussions on the major topic of research for article number two, but also on other issues of importance for this thesis, such as the aforementioned tempo debate, the High North strategy, and what role LoVeSe played in political debates concerning environmental issues and petroleum politics.

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<sup>98</sup> I were not granted permission to interview a leading minister at the time that I had used as an advocate of such an approach, but got two good interviews with the leader of the Parliament Committee on Energy and Environment, and the recently stepped down Minister of Environment and International Development.

### 3.2. Anonymity and validity

Whether to use open sources or to anonymize interviewees has been considered in each of the articles separately. For the second paper, on opportunistic adaptation, I found it useful to use two open sources, as I meant that it would be important to get their comments to my use of their statements. They read the accepted version after the peer-review process, and both accepted the way they were quoted. This was a rather interesting process as we entered into conversations over the phone and on e-mail about what they found interesting and relevant. The interviewees also got to add a quote on how I (re)presented them. For the interviews with the oil and gas industry for the first article (*Geographies of security and statehood*), all respondents were given the chance to read through each quote and the context they were written in. I asked for comments and corrections.<sup>99</sup> For the third paper (*'Securing' geography*), I did not find it necessary to openly quote the interviewees. This was mainly because I presented them as a group, and not as individuals. I used the interview material to give an overview of the different approaches within the industry and how these had developed from 2005 to 2011. This focus was useful, I believe, because I did not want to put the interviewees in a position where they had to defend their position publicly. For the last paper (*Post-Petroleum security in Lofoten*), the motivation was somewhat similar. Addressing the long-term developments in Lofoten, co-author Brigit Dale had conducted research in the same field. We had discussed and compared data many times before we wrote the article. Our assessments of developments and positions were in focus, and not the views of individuals in the local communities.

All respondents are, if not contacted directly and asked to be an open source, presented anonymously. Before each interview started the matter of anonymity and informed consent was discussed. I would inform the respondents that I wanted to talk to them and that if I was to quote them, they were given the option to be anonymous, to withdraw specific quotes or withdraw from the research project altogether, or to make changes in how I presented them. These ways of representing interviews are in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services, and correspond with the research method for this project.

An important part of the research process has been to be open and accountable in dialogue with those engaged in the project, especially those I have interviewed. Although I have not used

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<sup>99</sup> All the extracts were from the master thesis, I thus only used quotes that had already been checked and published in the master thesis.

triangulation as a method, the way I combine the analysis of written text, observation and interviews has been derived from an interpretative qualitative research practice. This I have made clear in terms of the steps I have taken in the research process, for example in terms of interview approach and ethics. As the research has been done over the course of many years, it would be difficult to repeat the exact same steps for others, but I have, as has been presented here, followed well-established procedures.

### 3.3 Examples of fieldwork ‘moments’



Image: Photo by Berit Kristoffersen, the Lofoten Council

This photo is taken at the first Lofoten Council meeting I attended. Statoil gave a presentation and discussed their approach to the consequences of seismic upon the fisheries and risks perspectives more broadly. They especially attacked the Norwegian Institute of Marine Sciences’ approach towards their calculations on consequences of potential oil spills. The picture is also illustrative of the consensus based and thus deliberative function of the council. In the fourth article Brigit Dale and I use the Lofoten Council as illustrative for developments in Lofoten over the past decade.





Image: Photo by Berit Kristoffersen, ONS in Stavanger

Lord Brown, who had just stepped down as the CEO of BP, discussed key challenges for the industry with journalist Todd Benjaminsen (CNN) in 2008, during an international industry conference in Stavanger (the conference is part of the Offshore Northern Seas (ONS) exhibition every second year. I attended ONS in 2006, 2008 and 2010). Here, I took notice of how climate change increasingly became an issue. From hardly being mentioned at all in 2006, the industry increasingly grappled with how climate change was linked to energy interdependencies, which was a major topic in 2010. In 2010, I also got the chance to talk to Lord Brown informally, who expressed that the role of the Arctic as ‘resource frontier’ was overrated. This is an issue in article number three, which addresses how the industry engages with a resource geopolitics of the Barents Sea and how it is linked to the Arctic as a resource frontier.



Image: Photo by Tone Huse, flying over Svalbard

Colleague Tone Huse took the second picture when we went to a conference on climate adaptation on Svalbard in October 2008 (referenced in article two). This was the first out of many political-scientific conferences I have attended where links were made between geophysical changes in the Arctic and (geo)politics. During this conference, the ‘opportunities’ scenario caught my attention. The picture was accordingly edited as an ‘oil sea’ where we also see the many layers in the mountains around the fjord, reflecting the long time scale for (non-human produced) environmental change. I have used this picture during presentations to illustrate what I term ‘opportunistic adaption’ as this conference provided the analytical curiosity for article number two.



Image: Photo by Carsten Aniksdal, Bjørnøya

This is at the Bear Island (Bjørnøya), halfway between the Norwegian mainland and Svalbard. How I ended up there is illustrative of how fieldwork has taken different turns than planned. I had then tried to get onboard one of the Petroleum Directorate's seismic vessels outside Vesterålen in the summer of 2009, to study the interaction between them and the fishers, but they did not grant me permission. Instead I ended up on a coastguard ship, which had the mediating role. The ten days I spent on the ship added new perspectives, not only in terms of activities related to the collection of seismic data. Photographer Aniksdal and I were invited to go to the Bear Island, where the coastguard was trying to figure out what to do with a Russian ship that a few months before had stranded in the midst of this strictly protected bird reservation. The stranded ship was also debated in terms of LoVeSe, as the accident was unlikely to happen and the consequences could have been severe. Whilst we were on the ship, an oil spill unfolded in Southern Norway, which then also became a national topic in relation to LoVeSe.



Image: Screenshot of Twitter conversation 28/11/2013

This screenshot is from a Twitter conversation with the Minister of Petroleum of Energy Tord Lien, just a few weeks after he came into office in 2013. In 140 signs he sums up, what to me is the mainstream political perspective relating to the prospect for Norwegian oil and gas developments over the past decade, and the role of Norway's northern region in the maintenance of production levels: "... there is no cause for concern for the coming year and that success in the Barents Sea will be important in the long term." Lien represents *Fremskrittpartiet*, the party furthest to the right in Norwegian politics, which then is illustrative of the broad political consensus on petroleum policy in Norway. The Twitter conversation is also descriptive of the wide range of sites, actors, events and mediums that have been important for exploring the research question.

## Chapter 4: GEOPOLITICS, STATE SPACE AND SECURITY IN THE ARCTIC

Is not the secret of the State [...] to be found in space?<sup>100</sup>



*Image: "Norschach". Artwork by Tomas Ramberg.*

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<sup>100</sup> Lefebvre, Henri (2002 [1978]) quoted in Brenner, Neil, "Urban governance and new state space in Western Europe, 1996-2000" in *Review of International Political Economy*, 11(3), 2004a, p. 450.

In this chapter I engage with the critical geopolitics approach that is further informed and strengthened by some core elements found within security studies and critical political economy. In doing this, I situate geopolitics within political geography and situate myself within this field, contributing to a new and developing research focus within critical geopolitics on the Polar regions. One important aspect and a starting point for political geographers is what John Agnew terms the ‘territorial trap’; the analysis of the political as tied in with the state, the state being a bounded spatial entity and a container of the political. I will make use of the territorial trap to explain how critical geopolitics, critical political economy and critical security studies provide theoretical underpinnings for understanding space in political geography. Based on this, I will briefly account for what I consider to my main analytical contributions derived from my empirical enquiry relating to how state and non-state actors approach security using spatial representations of oil and gas developments.

#### **4.1 Critical geopolitics**

Political geography, especially relating to what was coined by Rudolf Kjéllen in 1905 as ‘geopolitics’, developed as a field of research that supported colonial expansion, reproducing environmental determinism by examining what effect physical environments have on human activities. As an intellectual field, political geography developed during territorial inter-imperial rivalries (1875-1945) to serve the interests of the expansive territorial state.<sup>101</sup> The preoccupation of geopolitics was on mastering territorial strategies for expansion, an aim that was reflected in early political thought after the treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Most of the conceptualizations of political geography were predicated upon state centrality and were therefore “spiced with naturalism, nationalism and imperialism”. This historical baggage of political geography is continually expressed in mainstream political theory today in analytical exercises where politics is situated and reified as bounded within specific territories. An increasing recognition of the dynamic characteristics of geopolitics, however, has pushed the boundaries of mainstream approaches: “as the geopolitical context changes, so will what we do and how we do it.”<sup>102</sup> Political geography has evolved since the 1970s, and presents politics as not determined but rather conditioned by “the external geopolitical order”.<sup>103</sup> What political

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<sup>101</sup> Moisiso, Sami, “Book review: Making Political Geography” in *Progress in Human Geography* 38 (1), 2014, p. 173.

<sup>102</sup> Agnew, John, and Luca Muscarà. *Making political geography*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012, pp. 181, cited in Moisiso, Sami, 2014. Op.cit173.

<sup>103</sup> Moisiso, Sami, 2014. Op.cit173.

geographers bring to the table now is how politics comes into being in different historical circumstances. How does the uneven geographical distribution of power come about? What are the human and environmental consequences of such concentration? And how do distributions of power shifts between places over time?<sup>104</sup>

Scholars of the loosely defined subfield of political geography called critical geopolitics – or ‘progressive geopolitics’, as John Agnew prefers calling it – insist that we grapple with the above questions in ways that recognize the changing and constructed nature of space.<sup>105</sup> They pay special attention to how international politics is spatialized when policymakers and traditional geopolitical thinkers seek to explain the structure and actions of political actors,<sup>106</sup> the ideas of space as a bounded entity and a container of political rights and practices potentially becoming “self-fulfilling prophecies”.<sup>107</sup> Instead of thinking of geopolitics as the effects geography has on politics, or forecasting international behavior by echoing the aforementioned determinism, critical geopolitics urge that they are approached as spatially diverse practices. Or as Agnew recently described the research agenda in the field:

Critical geopolitics can be defined in a broad way as the critical sense that world politics is underpinned by a myriad of assumptions and schemas about the ways in which geographical divisions of the world, strategic plans, global images and the disposition of the continents and oceans enter into the making of foreign policy and into the popular legitimation of those policies. Rather than accepted as natural facts, though, these assumptions and schemas are seen as socially constructed by particular people in different historical-geographical circumstances and as thereby providing the basis for geopolitical rationales to social and political purposes that are anything but simple reflections of a natural political order.<sup>108</sup>

A question for empirical enquiry is then how different historical-geographical circumstances create ‘logics’ of in/security for states and other actors. One central question that arises is how

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<sup>104</sup> Agnew, John, and Luca Muscarà, 2012. Op.cit.pp. vii.

<sup>105</sup> Agnew, John, “The Origins of Critical Geopolitics,” in Dodds, K., Kuus, M., & Sharp, J. P. (eds.), *The Ashgate research companion to critical geopolitics*, Burlington, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013, pp. 28.

<sup>106</sup> Agnew, John, and Stuart Crobridge, *Mastering space: hegemony, territory and international political economy*, London and New York, Routledge, 2002, pp. 192.

<sup>107</sup> Kuehls, Tom, *Beyond sovereign territory: the space of ecopolitics*, U of Minnesota Press, 1996, pp. 27.

<sup>108</sup> Agnew John, 2013. Op.cit. pp. 19-20.

the traditional geopolitical approach fails to come to terms with what is involved in ecopolitics,<sup>109</sup> or climate change in the Anthropocene.<sup>110</sup> A reified state-based geopolitical approach was mainstreamed during the Cold War, becoming established (if not entrenched) *prior* to the time when the effects of the burning of fossil fuels on the biosphere and climate system were widely understood. State-based geopolitics has been found incapable of addressing changes and the attendant concerns that were outlined in the AR5 chapters on human security and the Polar Regions, where climate change becomes prevalent in terms of the insecurity for people living in the Arctic region.<sup>111</sup>

The challenge to incorporate the drivers and effects of climate change into contemporary theories of power is now being addressed in a growing body of work within critical geopolitics. Under the umbrella of *critical polar geopolitics* this ‘sub-field’ of critical geopolitics both challenges and analyzes how national governments are usually determined as the privileged vantage point for political and intellectual enquiry in the Arctic. As outlined by Klaus Dodds and Richard Powell, it is important to examine national imperatives *as part of* imagining and understanding various resource-led futures<sup>112</sup> where one entrance to analysis of discourses and logics of how the future is anticipated.<sup>113</sup> Taking ‘Arctic futures’ seriously then *inter alia* means better understanding the role of anticipation and how it is reflected within the politics of liberal-democratic states and other actors that prepare for and attempt to pre-empt uncertainties and even threats to life in general.<sup>114</sup> As Dodds underscores: “the uncertainty of the future, and the manner in which it is made present, is brought to the fore by a series of practices including calculation, imagination and performance and once these are appreciated it is arguably easier to tease out the underlying logics of preemption, preparedness and the like.”<sup>115</sup> A question for research then focuses on how elites spatialize international politics in the Arctic, and represent politics as characterized by particular types of places – assumptions about these places that are

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<sup>109</sup> Kuehls, Tom, 1996. Op.cit.

<sup>110</sup> Dalby, Simon, “Realism and Geopolitics,” in Dodds, Klaus, Merje Kuus and Joanne P. Sharp, eds., *The Ashgate research companion to critical geopolitics*, Burlington, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013. pp. 33-47.

<sup>111</sup> Agder, Neil, et al. 2014. Op.cit.; Larsen, Joan N., et al., Polar regions. Chapter 28 in IPCC WGII AR5, 2014. Available online at [http://ipcc-wg2.gov/AR5/images/uploads/WGIIAR5-Chap28\\_FGDall.pdf](http://ipcc-wg2.gov/AR5/images/uploads/WGIIAR5-Chap28_FGDall.pdf), see also Hoogensen Gjorv, Gunhild, et al., *Environmental and Human Security in the Arctic*, Routledge, London, 2014.

<sup>112</sup> Dodds, Klaus, and Richard Powell, 2013. Op.cit.

<sup>113</sup> Dodds, Klaus, “Anticipating the Arctic and the Arctic Council: pre-emption, precaution and preparedness,” *Polar Record* 49(02), 2013, 193-203.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. Pp. 194 (author’s italics).

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. Pp. 197.



not abstract images just floating above political interest, but that form an integral part of how interests and identities come into being.<sup>116</sup> The aim of critical polar geopolitics is therefore to engage in research that addresses the “contextual, conflictual, consensual and indeed, messy spatialities of polar geopolitics”.<sup>117</sup>

Engaging with research that reflects a broader set of actors when exploring Arctic futures replicates a move previously conducted within critical geopolitics, acknowledging that research should not just focus on elite actors, their networks and representations. Critical geopolitics critiques mainstream geopolitics as being too concerned with the geopolitical views put forward by political elites, and this pre-occupation also reflects back on how scholars in critical geopolitics direct their research. In the words of Sara Koopman, also scholars of critical geopolitics (not just mainstream or ‘traditional’) focus too much on those making and looking at the maps and, in the process, they fail to see the people on the map, and much less their agency.<sup>118</sup> She emphasizes that whether geopolitics is understood to be moving “things on the map, or seeing and painting the map in different colors”, it is generally understood to be done ‘from above’, thus by elites, and through the viewpoint of states.<sup>119</sup> This critique of an elite focus is also underscored in the work of Klaus Dodds, Marje Kuus and Joanna Sharp. In their reader on critical geopolitics they emphasize that by examining “geopolitical practices of those located outside the top echelons of the state apparatus, it [critical geopolitics] brings into focus the institutional structure through which the illusionary division between political and ‘non-political’ spheres, or the realm of ‘international’ and ‘domestic’ politics is constructed”.<sup>120</sup> Thus, through questioning how politics is defined and analyzed, the research focus within critical geopolitics has accordingly shifted towards an inclusion of non-elite security concerns whilst paying attention how representations of conventional demarcations come into play in various contexts.

How, then, are we to distinguish the political from the non-political, between state and non-state, foreign and domestic? And how may we assess the geopolitical imaginations implicit in relational and representational practices? To address these questions, I turn my attention to what

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<sup>116</sup> Powell, Richard and Klaus Dodds, 2014. Op.cit. pp. 9.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Koopman, Sara, “Alter-geopolitics: Other securities are happening” *Geoforum* 42, 2011, p. 275.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Dodds, Klaus, and Joanne Sharp, eds., *The Ashgate research companion to critical geopolitics*, Ashgate Publishing, Burlington, 2013, pp.7.

constitutes ‘the state’, or to use the term that critical political geographers apply to underscore the geographical blindness associated classical definitions of the nation-state – ‘state space’.

## 4.2 State space

A commonly used definition of the modern state is drawn from the work of Max Weber: “a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territory.”<sup>121</sup> This image of the state as a given and relatively unchanging feature of modernity, relates to the importance of including all spatial dynamics of the state (as the introduction made clear).<sup>122</sup> It is not analytically sufficient to approach space as a territorial backdrop and as relational and/or structural. It is also important to include the representational and discursive aspects of producing state-space. Particularly in relation to the representational and discursive dimensions, it is possible to consider the ways in which the state is not just a governed territory with a monopoly of force, but also a symbolic-spatial entity. This positions researchers to more effectively examine how the state is more than simply a set of institutions, as it is dependent upon narratives the state “tells about itself” and where its emergence has been contingent upon certain processes that have turned space into ‘state space’.<sup>123</sup>

This notion of state space exposes three key assumptions that, as Agnew points out, underpin mainstream approaches to political-economic analysis, insofar as they have conceived state territoriality as a static background structure for regulatory processes rather than as one of their constitutive dimensions. The first assumption is that the modern nation state is a clearly bounded territorial space. This implies a relation of similarity among all states where differences in political and economic practices are defined and demarcated by the boundaries around them.<sup>124</sup> This relation-structural approach to space consequently makes a sharp distinction, generating the second assumption, on ‘domestic’ and ‘foreign’ affairs as two entirely different and separate spaces of and for politics. This domestic-foreign opposition mean that the state resolves the problem of order within its boundaries with the contrast of a foreign

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<sup>121</sup> Weber, Max, *Essays from Max Weber*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1946, pp. 46.

<sup>122</sup> ; Brenner, Neil, Jessop, Bob, Jones, Martin and Gordon Macleod, eds. *State/Space: A Reader*. Blackwell, Oxford 2003, pp. 1.

<sup>123</sup> Painter, Joe, *Politics, Geography and Political Geography*. London: Arnold, 1995, pp 47, quoted at the online overview article “bordering space – An archeology into the concept of the state and its borders”, quoted and derived from the bordersproject (author not cited): <http://thebordersproject.wordpress.com/theory/bordering-space/>

<sup>124</sup> Agnew, John, 1994. Op.cit. pp. 71.

anarchy beyond them.<sup>125</sup> As such, and finally then, the third assumption is that the boundaries of the state are the boundaries of society (people within the territory of states).

Acknowledging that these uninterrogated assumptions have played a dominant role in most postwar political theory, and in international relations theories in particular, political scientist Robert Walker challenges the imaginaries of state space. The central target in Walker's work is the imagined separation of an 'inside' of the state that equals politics, and an 'outside' that equals the use of force.<sup>126</sup> In this perspective – with a clear divide between the two spaces – security is limited to the defense of a particular spatial sovereignty and the politics *within* it.<sup>127</sup> Walker's exposure of this distinction reflects (and reveals) that the conceptualization of security has been closely associated with, and limited to, defending the integrity of the state's territorial space, having little to no relevance to the relationships between the state and civil society.<sup>128</sup> Michael Oakeshott raised related critiques already in the 1970s.<sup>129</sup> He, like Walker, questions how the state is approached as a free-standing entity, separated and as opposed to the entity(ies) of society: The state as an 'enterprise association' imposes abstract and universalized characteristics that are detached from the 'civil association', over which the state governs. Internally, and as a consequence, the division is not only between the state and civil society but also between the state and (economic) markets. From this 'static' condition, the state is reified as a bounded actor that exists separate from civil society and the economy.

The constructed divides between state, civil society and economy also call for the inclusion of critical political economy perspectives into these debates, where the state is alternatively approached as an institutional mediator of uneven geographical development, under contemporary capitalism and intensifying globalization processes.<sup>130</sup> In the words of Neil Brenner:

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Walker, Robert B. J., *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

<sup>127</sup> Agnew, John, 1994. Op.cit. Pp. 62 (author's italics).

<sup>128</sup> Agnew, John and Stuart Crobridge. 2002. Op.cit. Pp. 84.

<sup>129</sup> Oakeshott, Michael, The vocabulary of a modern European state. *Political Studies*, 23(2-3), 1975, 319-341.

<sup>130</sup> These include Brenner et al. 2003, op.cit; Jessop, Bob, *The Future of the Capitalist State*. Cambridge, Polity, 2002; Brenner, Neil, New state spaces: Urban governance and the rescaling of statehood. New York, Oxford University Press, 2004b; Peck, Jamie and Adam Tickell, "Neoliberalizing Space," *Antipode*, 34 (3) 2002, 380-403.

The spaces of state power are not simply ‘filled’ as if they were pre-given territorial containers. Instead, state spatiality is actively produced and transformed through socio-political struggles at various geographical scales. The geography of statehood must therefore be viewed as a presupposition, arena and outcome of evolving social relations.<sup>131</sup>

Arguing that states are being qualitatively transformed, not dismantled, scholars within critical political economy assess how “diverse arenas of national state power, policy formation and sociospatial struggles are being redefined in response to both global and domestic pressures”.<sup>132</sup> Manuel Castells terminology of *spaces of flow* – technological and organizational possibility of practicing simultaneity without contiguity – is useful here, as these lie *beyond* the territorial national economic systems.<sup>133</sup> Thus, following Brenner, it is not just capital that is increasingly being “molded into” the spaces of the state. One should also analyze how state space is “molded into the (territorially differentiated) geography of capital.”<sup>134</sup> Hence, the relationship is multidirectional: capital intrudes upon spaces of the state, state space is formed through the manifold geographies of capital. From a critical political economy perspective, then, the continual production and transformation of state space occurs not only through “material-institutional practices”, but also in “a range of representational and discursive strategies through which the terrain of sociospatial struggle is mapped and remapped by actors who are directly involved in such struggles”.<sup>135</sup> This is what Brenner et al. claim as the “representational sense of state space” which has the potential to “shape and reshape subjectivities and spatial horizons in everyday life”.<sup>136</sup> As such, also the critical political economy perspective is increasingly taking into consideration how the representational dynamics of state space is important for analytical enquires.

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<sup>131</sup> Brenner, Neil, 2004a. Op.cit. Pp. 451

<sup>132</sup> Brenner, Neil, 2004b. Op.cit. Pp. 1.

<sup>133</sup> Castells, Manuel, *The rise of the network society: The information age: Economy, society, and culture*, John Wiley & Sons, 2011. On page 146 he defines this in terms of how to "reconceptualize new forms of spatial arrangements under the new technological paradigm", thus a new type of space that allows distant synchronous, real-time interaction

<sup>134</sup> Brenner, Neil, 2004b. Op.cit. Pp 16.

<sup>135</sup> Brenner, Neil, et al. 2003. Op.cit 11.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, pp. 10.

### 4.3 Critical security studies

Within security studies, similar moves to deconstruct, unpack, expand and deepen the understanding of security, in theory and in practice, have been taking place since the 1980s and in particular since the end of the Cold War. The discourse of the all-powerful militarized state was challenged by the realities of insecurities caused by state neglect (weak and failed states), poverty, gross human rights violations, societal rivalries, depleting resources, and environmental change.<sup>137</sup> Critical security studies (commonly abbreviated as CCS) are thus closely aligned with both critical geopolitics and critical political economy, in that they focus on practices, actors and issues against the backdrop of contemporary political challenges, such as climate change and the ‘war on terror’.<sup>138</sup> Recognizing and including the security concerns of multiple actors ranging from individuals and sub-state groups to states is often described as a way of ‘deepening’ security studies. Questions of threats beyond state and military security concerns, such as global concerns for the environment, are in turn described as the ‘widening’ or ‘broadening’ of the security concept.<sup>139</sup> Human security is an important strand of critical security studies, reflecting an acknowledgement that the security of the ‘everyday’ of local communities is tightly interconnected with the possibilities and restraints of state-based security. The notion of human security has withstood, and evolved from, the challenges it faced from scholars in the security and geopolitics research communities, who have argued for retaining the reified, universalized and abstract constructs of state power that justified an argument that security could only mean the use of military might to protect a pre-determined state space.<sup>140</sup>

Since the late 1990s the concept of human security has been reflected in policy on global environmental change.<sup>141</sup> After the turn of the century, geographers such as Simon Dalby and John Barnett have become important contributors within this field, where environmental- and

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<sup>137</sup> Hoogensen Gjørnv, Gunhild, “Security by any other name: negative security, positive security, and a multi-actor security approach,” in *Review of International Studies*, 38(04), 2012, 835-859.

<sup>138</sup> Peoples, Columba and Nick Vaughan-Williams, *Critical Security Studies - An Introduction*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2010; Krause, Keith, and Michael Charles Williams, eds. *Critical security studies: concepts and cases*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

<sup>139</sup> Williams, Michael C., “Words, images, enemies: securitization and international politics,” *International studies quarterly*, 47(4), 2003, p. 513.

<sup>140</sup> Hoogensen Gjørnv, Gunhild (forthcoming). “Human Security,” in Myriam Dunn Cavelty and Theiry Balzacq (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook on Security Studies*, London, Routledge.

<sup>141</sup> O'Brien, Karen and Jon Barnett, “Global Environmental Change and Human Security,” in *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 38, 2013, 373-391.

human security are increasingly considered as interconnected. A much-cited definition from Barnett that is illustrative of the gravitational pull between human and environmental security is how he defines environmental security as a “process of peacefully reducing human vulnerability to human-induced environmental degradation by addressing the root causes of environmental degradation and human insecurity”.<sup>142</sup> The field of critical security studies has thus increasingly been broadened, to include analyses of security practices and perspectives of non-state actors as well as the ways in which these perspectives both interact with the state and exceed state constructs. As such, advances in security studies have mirrored the insights occurring in both critical geopolitics and political economy, which in turn has enabled scholars to weave the analytical advantages of these insights together in analyses of the power dynamics between local communities, civil society (including NGOs), industries and states.

Advances made in critical security studies has not meant the ‘death’ of the narrow but still relatively dominant state-based security perspectives however, and thus we are constantly having to grapple with the tensions between complex, more people-centric critical security approaches and state-based approaches, the latter of which in the past decade has embraced energy security as a part of its state security rhetoric. Energy security, or securing reliable and predictable sources of energy resources (not least oil and gas) at reasonable prices, has become a central guiding tool for the state when negotiating its relationships with other actors like industry as well as local communities. In some respects, and as we will see further on in the articles, state/energy security embraces reified notions of borders and economy and becomes pitted against human/environmental security that try to break past static statist assumptions so as to better expose the “interconnectedness of the human condition in all its variety and different but connected places, rather than one humanity facing common threats”.<sup>143</sup>

#### **4.4 Contribution from the articles**

The four submitted articles that make up this thesis have applied, to varying degrees and as warranted by the demands for each article, the perspectives of critical geopolitics, critical political economy and critical security studies, and have thus contributed to informing this

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<sup>142</sup> Barnett, John, *The Meaning of Environmental Security: Ecological Politics and Policy in the New Security Era*, St. Martins Press, New York, 2001, pp. 129

<sup>143</sup> Dalby, Simon, “Geographies of environmental security,” in Kofman, Eleonore, and Gillian Young (eds.), *Globalization: Theory and Practices*, London and New York, Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, 2008, pp. 37. Dalby in this paragraph/chapter discusses this as a global environmental security approach, which I also draw on in article two.

combined conceptual approach empirically. This analytical approach has also led to the development of concepts that have specifically arisen out of this research, providing two particular and distinctive insights to our understanding of the relationships between state, industry and society in the context of oil and gas development: ‘post-petroleum’ and ‘opportunistic adaptation’.

The concept of ‘post-petroleum’ is introduced in the fourth article co-authored with Dale, and its purpose is to bring attention to the relationships between resources and their temporalities. The employment of the post-petroleum concept helps reveal the ways in which resources are relevant prior, during but also after their depletion, in that time shapes the ways in which both state and local communities seek to capitalize on resources, will in turn shape the potentials of future trajectories. Different from peak-oil, which frames the depletion of oil resources as problematic in their absence, post-petroleum speaks to the continued presence of the resource long after its depletion; although the resource is depleted, and thus ‘gone’, its effects will still be significant in terms of the continued presence of social, cultural and economic relations built around it. Admittedly, this could be true for any industry, the fisheries included (as for instance, by the passing down over generations of both knowledges and gendered divisions of labor), however the dynamic is considerably more acute in relation to non-renewable resource industries. Taking into consideration how powerful the oil industry has become in Norway since its advent in the 1970s, its increased eagerness towards a northern expansion and the intimate ties between the state and the industry (as demonstrated in the first and third articles in particular), the notion of post-petroleum also signals that the magnitude of potential activities will by far exceed those of other industries currently present in northern Norway. The concept may thus also be of relevance to the analysis of other situations and localities in which extractive industries are pushing for access to new areas: The concept calls into question the relative power of industries and alerts analysts to the fact that not only do the extractive industries have environmental effects, but also social, political and cultural effects which time-scale exceeds that of the extraction period. The extraction of non-renewable resources may secure populations, economically as well as politically, but as the peak-oil term also reminds us, there needs to be a recognition of the need for local and regional communities to build a robust social and political framework that can withstand, if not anticipate, the transitions that must necessarily follow the depletion of a non-renewable resource.

The second term that the thesis introduces and which may be further developed and applied in critical geopolitics, critical political economy and critical security studies is *opportunistic adaptation* – a process in which proposed economic benefits associated with climate change are prioritized over mitigation of risks. The term is in itself not novel, in that it has been applied in other contexts not related to climate change. As it is defined and applied here, however, it exposes the tensions and contradictions embedded within political responses to climate change that so far has received little attention. Thus far, studies on adaptation have largely focused on the involuntary adaption of communities and institutions to the ‘threats’ posed by climate change – extreme weather events, rising sea levels, the migration and extinction of species, and so forth. The notion of opportunistic adaptation highlights how the changes brought by climate change may also create opportunities (or perceptions of opportunity) that societies may benefit from. This is highly relevant to the Arctic, as one here expects access to oil, gas and minerals that have been and to a great extent still are covered by ice, or simply that some areas will have less ice, or be more accessible due to higher temperatures. But as the effects of climate change continue to unfold, this may also give rise to other, unforeseen opportunities. In the Arctic, however, the potential advantages of climate change are inextricably tied in with the paradox that to make use of them may well contribute to further climate change. This brings into question the responsibilities of Arctic states towards climate mitigation, and also what responsibilities they should have for the uneven distributions of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ effects of climate change; increased ice melting and thus also extractive opportunities in the Arctic may well entail increased desertification, drought and flooding in other parts of the world.

The articles *Opportunistic Adaptation* (number two) and ‘*Securing*’ *Geography* (number three) illustrate the power of the Norwegian state in framing territorial and energy security interests through representational and discursive practices that express concern for climate change and environmental sustainability, while constructing the Norwegian Arctic as a petroleum accessible and economically valuable seascape. On a final note, both the concepts of post-petroleum and opportunistic adaptation highlight that the theoretical frameworks scholars work within are also not without their effects. Post-petroleum reveals that the time-scale of the peak-oil concept does not fully capture the relational effects of an industry’s relative power, thus complicating if not eradicating the distinct separations traditionally made between the economic and the political. The concept of opportunistic adaptation shows that the separation of state space as having an inside and an outside enables the construction of climate change and



oil and gas developments as two separate issues to be dealt with, but are happening in in the same context. Opportunistic adaptation problematizes this distinct construction, exposing the linkages between the processes of adaptation and the task of mitigation, insisting that their risks and outcomes are shared.

## Chapter 5: CONCLUDING REMARKS

“The High North politics is being filled with meaning primarily as a nation-state industrialization project, which does not allow for assessments of Norway's challenges and commitments related to for example climate change.”

I open my conclusion with quoting myself and my co-author of article four, Brigit Dale, from a commentary in a northern Norwegian newspaper *Nordlys*. The reason for this is primarily the response we got from the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time (2010), Jonas Gahr Støre.<sup>144</sup> Our commentary was based on an analysis of Prime Minister Stoltenberg's (2005-2013) opening speech at the FRAM-centre (also quoted in article three).<sup>145</sup> Støre first stated that he disagreed with our analysis, and emphasized that the government was making solid efforts to set the global challenge of climate change on the international agenda, and that Arctic developments provided insights on the Norwegian input. Governmental efforts also ensured a broader knowledge base for understanding such developments, he argued. As an example he held up the newly established governmental-funded Fram Centre in Tromsø.<sup>146</sup> “With that said”, he went on; “I live well with the idea that the High North efforts are perceived as a nation-state industrialization project, although I would have chosen other words”. In this conclusion, I will evaluate these state-based or government efforts in terms of whether they – as the primary drivers for a large-scale industrialization project – have succeeded in its own terms, followed by a concluding discussion about the impacts of the decision whether or not to drill in LoVeSe.

### 5.1 Drilling oil into Arctic minds?

The government and the industry have invested considerable capital into investments to develop a new oil and gas province in the north. The stakes are thus high, financially and in regard to political prestige. In the area defined as the Barents Sea, over a hundred high-cost exploration

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<sup>144</sup> The commentary was called, “When High North scientists are addressed” (Når Nordomårdenforskere tiltales), in print on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2010. Støre's response was entitled “The High North initiative is more than industry politics” (Nordområdepolitikken er mer enn industripolitikk). Both printed in the newspaper *Nordlys*.

<sup>145</sup> I transcribed and quote this speech in article two, *Opportunistic Adaptation*, the opening of the FRAM-center in Tromsø is quoted in paper

<sup>146</sup> The centre's foremost objective is to contribute to Norway's being an outstanding manager of the environment and natural resources.

wells have been drilled, with modest results (at best, three fields will be productive). One aspect of these developments, reflected in the title of this thesis, is whether the objective of large-scale petroleum developments resonates in the northern communities. Have the High North efforts been successful in terms of creating legitimacy and support for new oil and gas projects? Recent developments seem to suggest that the Norwegian government, in cooperation with the oil and gas industry over the past decade, have not fulfilled the expectations that they themselves created.

Where and when should it be allowed to drill in the north, or, for that matter, the rest of the Continental Shelf (as it is usually referred to in Norway)? This is what ‘the state’ decides and expresses in colors and new grids on offshore maps, after negotiations in Parliament. An important foundation for policy-making over the past decade has been the generation of ‘new’ knowledge, whether it being mapping of oil equivalents under the seabed by Jan Mayen island, or counting birds at Røst in Lofoten. Increasingly, ‘fresh knowledge’ has included calculations on socioeconomic effects of potential oil and gas developments in the north. The preconditions for extensive mapping are often set in Parliament while processes and battles continue within governmental bodies, or *between* Ministries to be more specific (see article two). A major change in the early 2000s was the decision to start making Management Plans and that these were to be organized by the Ministry of Environment instead of the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy. For almost a decade the Ministry of Environment had the significant control over how new knowledge was generated and characterized. In 2011, the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy regained control over these processes, as part of a compromise of not allowing for commercial oil and gas activities in LoVeSe until the next election in 2013. In 2013, LoVeSe got a new moratorium, this time extending until 2017, pending that the collaboration agreement between the government and two smaller parties in Parliament is maintained.

The three Ministries within the government reflecting fisheries, environmental and petroleum interests have consistently fought for each of their interests, within the same region. How this as an ‘region’ comes into being on maps and in political imaginaries has not been extensively explored in this thesis. As noted in articles one and four, LoVeSe is connected to a variety of seascapes. The point I am making is that as part of setting up Management Plans for the *Lofoten-Barents Sea area*, LoVeSe was being connected to the Barents Sea, and not the Norwegian Sea. This spatial maneuvering by the state in providing a specific framework in the north is important

when considering it as a reconfiguration to enable developments (or not) in these areas. The state institutions as such decided that the oil located outside Røst in Lofoten belongs to the same area as where Norway borders with Russia. There are no good geological reasons for this (as the two regions differ) but this has been justified on the basis that the Arctic cod transcends these seascapes, although this is not set out to be the intention in the other Management Plans (for the North Sea and the Norwegian Sea). By including LoVeSe in this enormous area, the best prospects are identified at each 'end' of the region. As such, the oil and gas resources of LoVeSe are locked into the negotiation of the Barents Sea. And LoVeSe has been the key contestation in all negotiations of this Management plan, and the main environmental issue in every national election since 2001.

How has this negotiation unfolded? The movement northward has been strategically negotiated between the industry and the state, but has not included local political institutions and actors (article three and four gives details on this). The government allowed for drilling in the least controversial areas first, and followed these moves by a politicized focus on the implementation of the highest possible environmental standards. For example (and as discussed in article four) a new regime called 'zero emissions' was introduced in the Barents Sea a decade ago. This was later abandoned as part of the compromise in 2011, when new areas in the Barents Sea were opened up for commercial drilling. The government demanded that the Barents Sea had to be thoroughly explored: "...before the jewel of Lofoten and Vesterålen comes to the table in the other end" as expressed by the Minister of Petroleum and industry in 2006.<sup>147</sup> A spokesperson on behalf of the oil industry suggested in 2010 that they had now successfully established themselves with the highest standards in the Barents Sea which meant that they were prepared for LoVeSe: "...the road to Nordland VI and VII [Lofoten and Vesterålen on the petroleum map] goes through Finnmark".<sup>148</sup> Exploration in the Barents Sea was defined as a crucial stepping stone to reach LoVeSe. Finally, as part of this strategic negotiation between the industry and the state is to bring oil and gas to the shore. This is the premise to ensure that new projects provide extensive ripple-effects beyond unconditioned trickle down effects. The

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<sup>147</sup> Rosenberg, Ulf 2006, "Gigantene må satse i Nord" [The giants need to make an effort in the North], Stavanger Aftenblad April 5, 2006. <http://www.aftenbladet.no/nyheter/okonomi/--Gigantene-ma-satse-i-nord-2117352.html#.U2E9bE2KBaQ>, also quoted in article three and four.

<sup>148</sup> Torkil Emberland, 2010, "Får Norges beste oljevern" [Gets the best oil preparedness measures in Norway]. Nordlys May 5th, only available on paper (retrieved from Retriver).

industry and the government have put themselves in a position of creating high expectations towards stimulating local economies in northern communities by bringing oil and gas to shore (landing sites). Thus far, the effects have not been promising, as the industry – for economic reasons – have resisted onshore installations in the two subsequent developments after the first installation entitled ‘Snowwhite’. This in part explains some of the troubles that the oil industry encounters when it comes to legitimacy in the north. Establishing support for drilling is conducted by initial – but not binding – promises, which local politicians in the north argue are a prerequisite for petroleum developments. The government clearly expresses a desire for extensive infrastructure and ripple effects in the north, also because the oil companies will then have to split the bill for creating offshore infrastructure that can facilitate further developments in the north.

What we are seeing in Lofoten at least (as discussed in article four) is that the oil industry, and as essentially the primary power in the negotiation with the state, does not have the capacity to gain credibility on its promises of extending the offshore oil and gas benefits to developments onshore. These are not decided until long after the decision has been taken, and the oil companies won’t make unconditional promises. In Lofoten we also see another important dynamic come into play: The fisheries. As a minimum claimed by local politicians, benefits must be extensive to compensate for the risks. What we thus address in article four is the importance of the coastal identity and the cultural capital of the fisheries. Article four elucidate how interdependencies in Lofoten, between nature, individuals and communities are considered as a primary basis for securing a meaningful future that extends beyond ‘the petroleum age’ in Norway. In this picture, the fisheries needs to be maintained as part of the practices and knowledges about what local actors have done and thus will continue to do to secure the future. The oil industry doesn’t have a similar cultural capital to create such a hold within the community. Thus, in the case of Lofoten, it may be safe to say that though oil and gas development has taken the centre stage in discussion on the future of local communities, the state-industry nexus has not been successful in ‘drilling oil’ into their minds.

## **5.2 To drill or not to drill**

When I started this research project in the fall of 2008, it was my intention to take the expected decision on whether to allow for drilling in LoVeSe in 2009 as a starting point for my analysis. What sort of mind set and value base would the decision reflect? As outlined in the methods

chapter, the context shifted, and so did the research focus. The question was broadened into how the north is negotiated between the industry, the state and local communities in the processes that followed. But this original question remains hanging in the air. Why were there new moratoriums for periods stretching from two to four years (based on national elections and Management Plans)? Minor political parties of governmental coalitions have blocked commercial developments on the basis that opening LoVeSe is the ultimate environmental threshold in Norwegian politics. In the process of unpacking local debates pitted against the national ‘frontstage’, an (anonymous) reviewer asked whether co-author Brigit Dale and I could establish a more clear ‘causality’ between opposition in Lofoten and the political decisions to postpone new steps. This we could not do (as it is extremely difficult to make such a direct causal link in such a complex context), but that was not our intention. What we bring forward in the article, is that a major concern locally, is whether a decision on the matter, leaves the region adequately prepared for a post-petroleum era, with or without petroleum developments. In national debates, Lofoten stands as a symbol of the fisheries, and environmental organizations has made this region their most important fight, in coalition with the smaller ‘green’ colored parties in Parliament who ensure these time-limited moratoriums. This wheeling and dealing has turned LoVeSe into the most value-laden question in Norwegian environmental politics where a decision on not to drill is just as important as the decision to finally open up LoVeSe for the oil companies. As much as the strong ties between the state and the industry remain, so are the ties between local opposition and environmental groups tightening.

This thesis’ insights into how this has evolved as a process, shows the predominant role of the state. This relates to establishing consensus with the industry and in accordance with a step-by-step strategic approach made to ensure that the industry does not ‘take it all’. However, as much as the state is not ‘static’, so is it conflicted, ‘internally’ and politically. One important aspect to this, as exposed in this thesis, is the ways in which these conflicts are fashionably if not conveniently not addressed by the majority of politicians. For, in the end, the pretense of consensus equals the economic gains for the state and the industry while the ethical dilemmas relating to environmental issues are packaged into the image of a ‘green’ petro state. I have gone in depth into these debates, where a major conclusion is that when expanding oil and gas development into Norway’s northern seascapes, the process and arguments forwarded by the industry and the state are opportunistic, making it difficult to address the bigger questions. How

we utilize resources are important for developing communities, whether the reference is local, national or a global cosmopolitanism 'we'. Taking into consideration the target of limiting global warming to a temperature increase of two degrees, the weighing of economic gains up against environmental risks cannot be limited to questions on how to drill in the most 'sustainable' way. We – that is the global commons – are on a path to between three to six degrees of warming by 2100. To stay on target requires a rapid reduction in the use of fossil fuels, which the wealthy Norwegian state is in a unique position to do. Today political elites seek to reconcile the country's aspirations to be a leader in climate governance with the continued expansion of Norwegian petroleum activities and industries. Increasingly strong messages from the climate research communities, the IPCC in particular, indicate that they must soon make a choice.

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# Appendix

## 1. Themes Interview Guide 2005-2006

### **KonKraft and Topplerforum**

1. Evaluations of the KonKraft taxation project
  - The necessity
  - How it was carried out
  - How it was received
  - The cost
  
2. Evaluations of the Topplerforum
  - Its function before and at present
  - Its function for the organization interviewed
  - Who it is important for and why
  - Its relationship to other arenas/organizations
  
3. KonKraft as organization
  - Function
  - If KonKraft and the Forum could be separate organizations
  - Present and future activities
  - If KonKraft's objective is fulfilled

### **The competitive strength of the Norwegian Shelf**

4. Comparative advantages (the petroleum industry)
  - The level of oil prices and the Norwegian Shelf
  - Taxation and globalization
  - The predictability or clarity in governmental objectives
  - Geopolitics and prospectivity
  
5. Governmental objectives (politicians)
  - Former and present political objectives
  - Future objectives
  - Taxation policies and globalization

### **The political economy in Norway**

6. The influence of the petroleum sector
  - How the petroleum sector can become more environmental, which tools and objectives
  - The relationship and ties between the petroleum industry and the authorities
  - can we make the general claim, both from the politicians, but especially from the oil companies' side, that it is necessary to increase oil extraction to ensure the welfare

state? In other words, “what is good for petroleum industry is good for Norway”? What different layers do you see in such a thesis?

Who were interviewed?

2 environmental organizations, one Labour union and

## **Interview guide 2009-2012**

Debates in/about Lofoten og Vesterålen

- **Relations regional og national politics**
  - This question about oil in relation/compared to other political questions
  - Local actors perspectives in relation the question about oil development
- How do you (as a party member, organization etc) relate to the national level in this case?
- **Processes in Lofoten og Vesterålen**
  - County/community level (procedure, participation)
  - Regional level (i.e. Lofoten/Vesterålen councils)
  - → role in relationship to premises, disagreement, and processes
    - The Management Plan (i.e. contribution in formal process)
    - World Heritage (objective, local-national dynamics, local perspectives and debates)
- **Regional development**
  - Environmental considerations, economic development- what is being discussed?
  - What developments?
  - Debates on risks versus development?
    - The basis for regional economic growth
    - I.e. ”Conservation versus use ” (at sea and on land)
    - I.e. Societal and nature-related vulnerabilities
    - The role of the fisheries
    - The Gulf of Mexico
    - Climate change

## Regional *and* national actors

- **Lofoten and Vesterålen – the question about oil drilling**
  - How and in which ways are you engaged (if particular role)
  - Perspectives on reports from regional/national actors / authorities
  - I.e. Konkraft
  - I.e Management Plan
  - I.e Lo-Ve 2025
  - I.e. White Papers

## National actors

### **Understanding of oil and environmental issues over time. Mainly politicians and ENGOs**

- The role of different environmental problems
- State processes – participation
- Role Climate Change especially
  - (development of) sectors in relation to one another in how to handle climate change and risks
  - Can petroleum policy become 'opportunistic'? In terms of economic adaptation in relation to mitigation in the Norwegian North?

### **Lofoten and Vesterålen as an environmental issue (ENGOs & politicians)**

- How do you approach this?
- Which debates are you part of?
- In/visible debates?
- As an environmental issue in relation to other environmental issues
- Role of conservation and/or climate change
- Understanding and leveling of risks
  - Nature
  - Society

- As part of the management plan
- As part of the High North strategy/politics
- New themes as part of the oil industry's interest in the area
- The gulf of Mexico – influence Norwegian policy

### **Understandings of oil and energy problematic over time (politicians)**

- The current extraction policy
  - How does it link to history and peak oil
- Energy security as a phenomenon, concept and politics
  - What does it mean in the Norwegian context
  - National, international, global perspectives – (how) do they link?
- Development of the petroleum sector in relation to environmental policy
- The establishment of High North policy in relation to petroleum extraction
- Importance of consensus strategies between the different actors (as state-industry, locals-interests organizations, The regional councils)
- Consensus practices in the oil and gas industry (i.e. rol of Norwegian oil and gas association (NOG), Konkraft) and industry –state

### **Political and management processes related to Lofoten and Vesterålen (politicians/authorities)**

- The role and relationship between parliament and government
  - Weight and consideration of roles and importance
  - Fra ULB in 2002 to the Management Plan in 2011
  - →development of understandings of risks over time
  - →Influence on policy
- Knowledge production as policy objective
  - Management Plan
  - Different political levels
  - Different political parties/actors

Oil and gas industry

Purpose (As introduced to interviewees)

Mapping of the oil and gas industry perspectives in relation to:



1. Stoltenberg compromise: evaluation of the recent decision in relation to opportunities for oil and gas in northern Norway
2. The Norwegian North (High North) in relation to strategy: Evaluation of development of state oil policy weighed against the industry's wishes and development strategies
3. Relevant/accompanying environmental/climate debates relating to these above issues

## **Theme**

- 1. The opening of Northern territories as a prerequisite for maintaining interest for the Norwegian continental shelf?**
  - a. Strategic (global/national)
  - b. What areas (Is for exmaple Lo-Ve-Se necessary )
  - c. The updated Management plan (sufficient)
  
- 2. Reviews of national policies/politics**
  - a. The current oil policy in the light historical projection
  - b. Assessment of management today in relation to five years ago (areas that are/will be opened)
  - c. Governmental strategy in relation to responsible management in the North in relation so sustainability – what do these entail/involve?
  - d. Agreements/conflicts in relation to official policy and oil companies strategies
  - e. Own strategy in relation to (what) activity (level) in northern Norway and how it differs from other companies
  - f. How to understand the management plan – a compromise, premise and/or continuation of national policies towards the petroleum industry?
  
  - g. Energy security - as a phenomenon, concept and politics. What does it mean in the Norwegian context? National, international, global perspectives – (how) do they link?
  - h. Importance for economic growth and development in northern Norway
  
- 3. Importance various environmental perspectives related to oil and gas exploration in northern Norway**Fare for utslipp (Deepwaters betydning, risikovurderinger)

- a. Zero discharge – the new policy (2011) that allows for higher levels of pollution.  
How important was that? Agree with policy?
  - Climate change and the climate debate
  - (What) significance?
  - What impact?
  - Can petroleum policy become 'opportunistic'? In terms of economic adaptation in relation to mitigation?
- b. Assessment of ENGOs role
- c. Lo-Ve-Se as a 'symbol' in national political debates – what does this tell us about the relationship between the two areas of policy/sectors?
- d. Your companies involvement in, and the importance of umbrella organizations and consensus forums? (i.e. Konkraft and NOG).