

Journal of Rural and Community Development

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Citation:

Kvidal-Røvik, T. (2017). Gendered issues and voices in public discourses on industrial development in Northern Norway. *The Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 12(2), 256-277.

Publisher: Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.



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Editor: Dr. Doug Ramsey

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Gendered Issues and Voices in Public Discourses on Industrial Development in Northern Norway

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Abstract

This article deals with gender and industrial developments in the northernmost part of Norway, where there are growing opportunities within the mining, oil and gas industries. Large companies move into the region for shorter or longer periods of time, leading to restructuring and change in these rural areas. These industries are typically male-dominated, and many of the workers coming to the region as part of such developments are men. The purpose of the study is to examine local public discourses on industry development in Northern Norway during a time of industrial restructuring. Using approaches from media studies and discourse analysis, I examine local public discourses to see to what extent they are ‘gender conscious’ in that they present concerns regarding gendered consequences of industrial restructuring processes, and also to see who speaks—in terms of gender—on the issues brought forth. I find that gendered issues linked to industrial restructurings in Northern Norway are not addressed in the public discourses and also that men, to a higher degree than women, speak on issues of industry development. Overall, gender does not seem to be a relevant topic, and with this, issues of gender are symbolically defined as irrelevant to understandings of industry development. I claim the invisibility of gender issues and the imbalance of men’s and women’s voices (re)produces a lack of awareness of gender in industry development and is part of creating an understanding of Northern Norway as a place where men are a better fit for industry developments than women.

Keywords: industry development; newspapers; public discourses; gender; Northern Norway

1.0 Introduction

This article deals with gender and industrial developments in the northernmost part of Norway, where industry projects are on the rise in in mining, oil and gas industries. Large companies move into the region for shorter or longer periods of time, leading to industrial restructuring and change in these rural areas. These industries are typically male-dominated, and many of the industry workers coming to the region as part of such developments are men (Aure & Munkejord, 2016; Kramvig, Stien, & Berglund, 2005). As a sustainable development of place requires that places are seen as attractive for both women and men (Kvidal-Røvik, 2015), it is important to address gendered aspects of such industry developments. Norway is considered one of the most gender equal countries in the world (Egge-Hoveid, 2013), but some are concerned that industry developments will lead to growing gender differences in Northern Norway (Bråthen, 2014). This paper addresses the need to reflect on how gender issues are preset in local public discourses during a time of industrial restructuring in rural peripheries in Northern Norway. In line with this, Finnmark County, the northernmost part of Norway, is especially interesting. Finnmark is the largest county in Norway in terms of size. Covering 48,637 square kilometers, the

county is larger than all of Denmark. Despite its size, Finnmark County has only about 1.5 percent of total Norwegian inhabitants and is the least populated county in Norway. The region suffered from a small, but steady population decline for a long time, but since around 2007, the rates stabilized and started growing slightly, mainly due to immigration. Today, 75,758 people live in Finnmark (Statistics Norway, 2016a). The population density in the region is low, but most coastal settlements are highly concentrated. Close to 77 percent of people living in Finnmark reside in towns or small cities. In the last 15 years, Finnmark has experienced considerable changes related to industry development, particularly when the petroleum industry entered the region, especially in the town of Hammerfest, where Statoil's Snow White gas field was established in 2002. Since then, the industry and its associated supply chains' need for skilled and educated workers has led to in-commuting and national as well as international in-migration into Hammerfest [and because] this industry is so male-dominated, many of these newcomers are men. (Aure & Munkejord, 2016, p. 533)

Some critics warn about the gendered consequences of these developments, saying that the new jobs created are mainly for men, and that the jobs created for women in the wake of oil and gas industry growth are not in areas requiring higher education (Kramvig et al., 2005). In light of such developments, some argue that these industry developments will lead to decreasing numbers of women in the region's population (Bråthen, 2014). Although there has been some criticism regarding gendered aspects of industry developments in Northern Norway (Aasjord, 2012), gender has not been a particular focus in research related to industrial restructurings in the region. This is problematic, as a lack of attention to gender in research is part of legitimating and perpetuating the status quo, allowing gender bias and sexism to remain unquestioned (Katila & Meriläinen, 1999; Martin, 2006).

The purpose of this study was to examine local public discourses on industry development during a time of industrial restructuring, focusing specifically on gender. I examined local public discourses to see to what extent they are 'gender conscious' in that they present concerns regarding gendered consequences of industrial restructuring processes, and to see who speaks—in terms of gender—on the issues brought forth. Following this, an overarching question for this project is: How gender conscious and gender balanced are local public discourses on industrial development in Northern Norway during a time of industrial restructuring?

To address this question, I did discourse analyses of newspaper articles on industry development published in Northern Norwegian newspapers between 2002 and 2012, a time of great industrial restructuring in the region. I asked the following sub-questions: (a) To what extent are gendered issues part of public discourses on industry development in Northern Norway? (b) To what extent are public discourses on industry development in Northern Norway gender balanced in terms of the voices that are visible?

In the next section, I present some central perspectives on gender and place that undergird my research, then briefly discuss relevant research on restructuring in resource peripheries before moving to a discussion of gender equality in Norway. After this, I describe the critical cultural landscape in which I position myself, including an alignment with mass media scholarship. I provide my methodological steps and briefly reflect on research limitations, before presenting the research findings. I end with a discussion of my findings, and offer some suggestions for future research.

2.0 Gender and Place

Gender is a basic organizing principle in social life, speaking to allocation of duties, rights, rewards and power in society (Acker, 2004). It also plays a significant role in “the shaping and changing of settlements in peripheral regions” (Harbo & Roto, 2016, p. 98) and is an important aspect of developments in such regions. Furthermore, places are themselves gendered and in being so, “they both reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood” (Massey, 1994, p. 179). In line with feminist human geographical perspectives, I argue that place and gender can be seen as interconnected and linked, and that gender is dynamic and multiple; and it varies from region to region (Forsberg, 2001; Munkejord, 2015; Stenbacka & Forsberg, 2012). Following Forsberg (2001), I note that what is constructed as female or male is both a social and spatial process. This means that it is important to look at gendered aspects of developments locally, because even though gender equality is shaped by national gender equality policy, it is to a large extent created in local efforts and enablings (Egge-Hoveid, 2013). Following Massey (1994), I agree that places are gendered through and through, and that gendering of place “both reflects and has effects back on the ways in which gender is constructed and understood in the societies in which we live” (Massey, 1994, p. 186, emphasis in original).

Several scholars have discussed how gender is a central element in cultural perceptions of the North, specifically how areas associated with snow and cold are perceived as masculine (Hansson & Norberg, 2009, p. 7), and an arena for the “ultimate test for manhood” (Keskitalo, 2009, p. 26). Some have discussed how the rural often gets discursively connected to a backwards and primitive masculinity (Eriksson, Nielsen, & Paulgaard, 2015; Stenbacka, 2011). In terms of Northern Norway, critics have voiced concerns about the lack of women in the current discourses on the North (Aasjord, 2012), as well as in the overlapping discourses of the Northern areas (Nordområdene) (Selle, 2010) and the Barents region (Kvidal-Røvik, 2015). In light of this, it becomes especially relevant to take a discursive approach to industrial restructuring in rural areas in the northernmost part of Norway.

Massey explains that “not just in the past but also today and not just across major cultural differences but also between quite closely related ‘local cultures’, gender relations can vary quite systematically” (Massey, 1994, p. 178). The concept of power geometry is relevant for addressing such inequality in places, for, as Massey (1994) says, “different social groups, and different individuals, are placed in very distinct ways in relation to [global] flows and interconnections” (p. 149), which is a point that concerns “not merely the issue of who moves and who doesn’t ... it is also about power in relation to the flows and the movement” (Massey, 1994, p. 149). This means that when industrial restructuring takes place in Northern Norway, men and women are placed in relation to—and may themselves relate to—these developments in distinct ways. I am not saying that women and men have an essence that make each and every one of them actively relate to a development in a specific way, but rather that cultural aspects make for gendered differences in terms of how men and women become placed.

3.0 Restructurings in Resource Peripheries in a Gender Perspective

According to the World Bank, a “central element of good governance is the responsiveness of policies and public institutions to the needs of all citizens.

Policies and institutions must represent the interests of women and men and promote equal access to resources, rights, and voice". (World Bank, 2006, p. 1)

This means that, in terms of regions' development processes, for instance those tied to industrial restructuring like we are seeing in Northern Norway, attention to the gendered consequences of such developments is important. Taking gender seriously produces a "more nuanced evaluation of regional policy" (Massey, 1994, p. 189). Still, the attention to feminist theorizing in the area of industrialized restructurings in resource peripheries has been relatively marginal, especially in a Western context. Much of the work on gender is emanating from disciplines such as cultural studies, feminist labor studies, and women's studies and within these disciplines, industrial restructuring is rarely met with as much attention (O'Shaughnessy & Krogman, 2011).

Some scholars have, however, produced valuable knowledge on work and restructuring in resource peripheries, and even if much of this research has been conducted in other contexts than in Northern Norway, the points brought forth are important as they make visible some gendered sites of tension relevant to industry developments. Such scholars, in different ways, show that with industrial restructuring and new demands for workers in male dominated resource extractive industries, gender relations can change. For instance, Egan and Klausen (1998) show how re-industrialization processes in many resource-dependent communities have a negative impact on women's position in the local economy as well as in the formal economy in general. Also, researching remote resource-dependent peripheries, Bates (2006) finds that industrial restructuring has led to a reordering of gender relations within heterosexual coupling, noting that industrial changes propel a renegotiation of gender identities and social relations as "women are more likely than men to have been pulled into home-based work" and that "often women's burden of domestic labour is increased leading to an intensification of the highly traditional gender division of labour" (p. 135). For instance, the responsibility to adapt childcare and housework responsibilities to men's shift work rotations has almost entirely fallen upon women (O'Shaughnessy & Krogman, 2011).

Several scholars note the importance of including gender perspectives in scholarship on rural restructurings (Faber & Nielsen, 2015; Kenway, Kraack, & Hickey-Moody, 2006; Pini & Leach, 2011). For instance, Scott, Dakin, Heller, and Eftimie (2013), who research gendered impacts of oil and gas production, point to how the arrival of such industry actors is associated with gendered patterns of unequal exposure to risks and opportunities. Specifically, if industry projects are implemented, "without explicit recognition of the different needs and roles that women and men have within a community, the implications for the sustainability and operational efficiency of the oil sector are likely to be less than optimal". (Scott et al., 2013, p. 20)

Similarly, based on research on gendered effects from oil and gas project construction, Taylor and Carson (2014), call for public discussions on the impacts of such projects and say it is critical to keep a particular eye on ways to ensure women are valued and included actively as part of the industry-related restructurings.

A slightly different perspective, though still relevant in terms of labor practices, comes from the work of Rasmussen (2009). Discussing gender-related aspects of restructurings in the Northern resource peripheries, Rasmussen (2009) says that women are more socially and geographically flexible than men, as they "tend to be socialized into situations in which adjustment and change are required, leaving them prepared to move between job categories and job

options” (p. 529). This form of adjustability is useful during changes in the labor market, for instance as relevant to industry-related labor market restructurings. Males “are socialized into maintaining traditional work activities that no longer enable them to ensure the proper investments needed in order to modernize and expand their activities,” (Rasmussen, 2009, p. 529), and lack the kind of flexibility viewed as important to be successful in the post-industrial labor market (Berglund, Johansson, Molina, Gíslason, & Ólafsson, 2005). Men are thus less able to adapt and adjust, according to Rasmussen (2009), leaving them “in situations in which increased alcohol and drug consumption, violence, and other desperate measures seem to be alternatives” (p. 529).

Another issue of concern when focusing on gender relations, is the trend toward fly-in/fly-out labor operation in mining, oil, gas and other resource-based industries (O’Shaughnessy & Krogman, 2011). Such points are interesting in terms of developments in Northern Norway, as the majority of commuters here are men (Angell, Aure, Lie, Ringholm, & Nygaard, 2013). Ellem (2015) explains how the fly-in/fly-out work arrangement fragments the workforce and divides the community from the place of work, undermining the community so it becomes reduced to a “globally determined resource site” (p. 334). Similarly, Storey (2010) says that the largely male-dominated fly-in/fly-out work can be disruptive for communities if workers continue to live elsewhere, as the absences of these workers may mean that they can participate less in volunteer, sports or other political, cultural and social activities, while those left at home—often women—may also find that their ability to participate in community affairs is reduced.

4.0 Gender Equality and the Northern Norwegian Context

Based on statistical information, Egge-Hoveid (2013, p. 10) says that Norway is a relatively gender equal country, compared to many other countries in the world; in Norway, both men and women to a large extent participate in work life, and men and women share the responsibilities in the family. By law, men and women are to have the same rights and opportunities, and no one is to be discriminated against due to their gender. Importantly, gender equality is a key value in contemporary Norwegian cultural identity (Egge-Hoveid, 2013; Kristensen, 2010). State feminism (Hernes, 1987) and expressions such as the Femocrat—feminist and bureaucrat—(van der Ros, 1996) illustrate the embeddedness of the gender equality discourse in society and especially within policies and state affairs. The law on gender quotas in boards—implemented in 2006—is another example. The Nordic social welfare model has been based on a shared political goal of securing social equality, and gender equality receives a lot of political and societal attention as part of this focus (Harbo & Roto, 2016). Also, the gender-equality discourse manifests itself by appearing in different Norwegian policy documents relevant to regional development (Kvidal & Ljunggren, 2014).

Even so, there are many aspects of the Norwegian context that do not reflect a fully gender equal culture. Orgeret (2015) says that even if Norway is “one of the world’s most gender equal countries, ...children’s lives appear remarkably gender segregated when we look at how girls and boys dress, which toys they have, and what they do in their spare time” (p. 36, my translation).

Along similar lines, Aure (as cited in Mæland, 2015) says that in the Norwegian context, there is a gender equality rhetoric, but that this rhetoric is stronger than the gender equality practices. That is, Norwegians “talk as if we are more gender equal than closer examinations reveal that we actually are,” says Aure (as cited in Mæland, 2015, my translation). For instance, even though gender equality is a

key value in contemporary Norwegian cultural identity, the Norwegian labor market is characterized by significant differences between men and women, for instance a strong gender division of labor (Gullikstad & Håpnes, 2005). Specifically, there is an imbalanced proportion of men and women in the public and private sectors; the share of women among employees in the public sector is 70 percent, while the share of men among employees in the private sector is more than 60 percent, and the share of men among leaders is more than 65 percent. There are gender disparities in income as well, with a man's average annual income being close to 200,000 Norwegian kroner more than the average income of a woman. Also, the share of men among municipal county members is more than 60 percent. Many of these gender differences have remained relatively stable over time (Statistics Norway, 2016b).

5.0 A Critical Cultural Perspective on Mediated Discourses

In order to explore industrial development issues in local discourses in rural areas in Northern Norway, I look toward mediated public discourses. Public discourses are the most immediate sources of the flow of social meanings, and all persons, as social beings, are destined to live in the world through meaning (Condit, 1994). Discourses can be seen as systems of representation that fuse language and practice, and 'the state of knowledge' on a certain topic at any one time (Foucault, 1996). Discourses are significant because they influence how we understand and make the world around us meaningful (Grossberg, Wartella, & Whitney, 1998; Hall, 1997; Schroeder, 2006). They thus do not reflect or represent social entities and relations, but constitute them. The power of discourses is productive, as they construct the frame of understanding and a perception of reality—our knowledge—(Foucault, 1996). Discourses regulate what can be said under certain social and cultural conditions, regulating who can speak, when and where, as "space and place get called up in the discursive and representational aspects of power, the legitimating and meaningful dimensions which underpin power" (Radcliffe, 1999, p. 236).

When discourses are hegemonic, social consensus is achieved without recourse to violence or coercion and the social practices they structure appear so natural that members of a society fail to see that they are the result of political hegemony. Discourses then reach the level of 'common sense' as their origins and intrinsic contingencies are forgotten (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Gramsci, 1971). As such, discourses have the power to define, describe, exclude, include, and create differences and similarities (Pietikäinen & Hujanen, 2003) and discursive omissions are also important, as discourses are always incomplete and always leave out something. In terms of mediated discourse, it can be said that "in the same way that views can be shaped by what is made available in mass media, views can be swayed by what is not seen in mass media" (Armstrong, 2004, p. 140). This means that if something or someone is systematically absent from representations relating to a theme, it can have an impact on how the topic is understood, as has been pointed out, for instance, in research on gender and innovation and gender and entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2004; Blake & Hanson, 2005; Hamilton, 2013; Kvidal & Ljunggren, 2014).

Public discourses are important when it comes to understanding developments in place, and it matters what circulates as part of public discourses. Furthermore, processes of regional restructurings are influenced by imaginations of places—"what they are and should be, by norms of spatial justice and representations of different actors, their capabilities, rights and obligations" (Eriksson, 2008, p. 369). Place-based power relations are constructed through and in discourses (Eriksson, Nielsen, & Paulgaard, 2015). As Stenbacka (2011) says in a

discussion of media representation of the rural, “We bring the messages into our own everyday lives and they are part of our frames of reference in interpreting what is going on around us” (Stenbacka, 2011, p. 236).

Furthermore “the discursive constructions of gender will also affect how we look upon ourselves and each other” (Stenbacka, 2011, p. 236). This means that discourses as cultural and political processes contribute to the construction of individual and collective identities, but also have an impact on whether we get to speak from within discourses or if we are marginalized (Briggs, 2005; Woodard, 1997). Also, as Eriksson (2008) says, discursive representations “have real material consequences and may, for instance, influence employment rates, financial investments, population flows and industrial reforms” (p. 369). More specifically, we can talk about how discourses call different people to ‘step into’ discursive subject positions. The subject positioning concept revolves around a person's position or location in different discourses. Where someone positions themselves, and what position he or she is assigned by others, for example, has implications for how important others conceive their opinions to be. Some groups have more narrow rooms of opportunities than others; they are to a limited degree—or perhaps not at all—incorporated into the dominant narratives in the discourses. Gendered opportunities are thus very much linked to place as “the disciplining of subjects around and through space is an integral component of the power exerted over people” (Radcliffe, 1999, p. 236). From this perspective, Northern Norwegian industry development discourses construct understandings of industry development—what it is about, for whom it is important, what issues are important for the development of the industry and so on. When an industry is positioned as central in Northern Norway, and Finnmark in particular, values and issues of importance to the industry become values and issues of importance to the region in which it is positioned.

5.1 Gender and Media

In order to address the overarching question of how gender conscious and gender balanced local Northern Norwegian public discourses on industrial development are, I am interested in the appearance of men's and women's voices. When it comes to gender and representation in the media, there is a relatively long tradition of media research taking a gender approach in examinations of media, in particular within an agenda setting perspective. It has been shown that historically women have been underrepresented in media coverage (Armstrong, 2004). Also, Norwegian-based media research has shown that men are more than four times as visible as women in media discourses (Eide, 1991; Gjørven, Grønn, & Vaagland, 2000). The gender imbalance comes through in analyses of a variety of media texts and formats. For example, in an analysis of Norwegian debate programs and talk shows in 2013 and 2014, Grymer and Roksrud (2015) find that men make up close to two thirds of the participants in such programs. Similarly, in an analysis of the Norwegian radio program P3 Dokumentar—which deals with contemporary aspects of daily life and realities for youth in Norway today—Brønseth (2015) shows that the program foregrounds men's lives and experiences. Brønseth (2015) says that, “When P3 Dokumentar allows mostly men the space to speak—as experts and cases—they create the impression that men to a larger extent [than women] own the truth or the power to define” (p. 136).

While media representations of gender in general are important and relevant, it is the public discourses reflected in newspapers that are particularly interesting to this article. Regarding newspapers, research shows that males have a higher public status in newspaper coverage than females (Armstrong, 2004), that male

sources outnumber female sources (Zoch & VanSlyke Turk, 1998), and that female sources are not quoted in the same manner as their male counterparts (Rakow & Kranich, 1991; Viorela & Iorgoveanu, 2013). Overall, newspaper coverage has been found to "convey a more negative public status for women than men in the form of less frequent mentions and less prominent positions in the story" (Armstrong, 2004, p. 148). Researchers have also found that Norwegian newspapers' representation of men and women is imbalanced. For instance, an analysis of Norwegian newspapers' use of sources, shows that journalists interview three men for each woman who is interviewed (Save & Hagen, 2015). Representation of women in Norwegian newspapers is much lower than that of men (Eide, 1991; Save & Hagen, 2015). Even though the representation of women has improved somewhat, as pointed out by Bjørnstad (2010), the move toward balanced representation happens very slowly. Women's representations in local and national newspapers have only increased from 9 percent in 1979, to 20 percent in 2014. Interestingly, during the same period, representations of men have been relatively stable, and have only dropped 2 percent—from 62 percent in 1979 to 60 percent in 2014. The increased representation of women, then, comes largely at the 'expense' of the neutral representations category (Save & Hagen, 2015). All in all, Gjørven, Grønn & Vaagland (2000) are right to claim that women's increased physical representation in different arenas of Norwegian society are not reflected in newspapers.

In this article, where I address how gender conscious and gender balanced the local public discourses on industrial development in Northern Norway are during a time of industrial restructuring, I follow the work of the above-mentioned media studies scholars who examine representations of gender. At the same time, I also build on research on gender inequality that take a discursive approach, more in line with critical cultural theories (i.e., Donaghue, 2015; Fenwick, 2004; Katila & Meriläinen, 1999; Kelan, 2007; Moore, Griffiths, Richardson, & Adam, 2008; Öhman, Giritli Nygren, & Olofsson, 2016).

6.0 Methods for Data Production

In this paper, I wanted to examine the local public discourses on industrial development in Northern Norway during a time of industrial restructuring. In order to get at these discourses, I chose to examine newspapers. News media representations have a particular impact when it comes to contributing to perceptions of reality (Grossberg et al., 1998; Neuman, Just, & Crigler, 1992) and influence political debates and decision making (Allern, 2001; Moy & Tewksbury, 2016). They play a particularly important role in shaping what Neuman et al (1992) call 'common knowledge', which refers to what people think and how they structure their ideas, feelings and thoughts on political issues. News is also particularly influential through for instance framing and inclusion–exclusion of issues (Grossberg et al., 1998; Zelizer, 1997) or, as Larson (2005) argues, via its ability to 'neutralize' critique of dominant ideologies. Furthermore, scholars claim newspapers play an important role in forming attachments to place (Jeffreys, Lee, Neuendorf, & Atkin, 2007; Rothenbuhler, Mullen, Delaurell, & Ryu, 1996).

As I was particularly interested in public discourses on industrial developments in Northern Norway, and in particular Finnmark, during the time of industrial restructuring, I examined local newspaper articles over a period of ten years—starting with 2002—the year Statoil's Snow-White gas field was established in Finnmark. Using the search engine Atekst Retriever, I searched with the string "Development* [Utvikling*]" AND "Industry* [Industri*]" from 1.1.2002

through the end of 2012, limiting my search to articles—both print and online—in the newspapers Nordlys, Altaposten, Finnmark Dagblad, Finnmarken, Finnmarksposten and Hammerfestingen. The newspapers were chosen because of the focus area they represented. Together, these newspapers direct attention toward Northern Norway, in particular Finnmark, with a slight emphasis on the western part of the county. The database Atekst Retriever has a relatively advanced and sophisticated search engine, making it possible to achieve high levels of precision and relevance in the results as long as the search terms and their combinations are appropriate. The examined newspapers are published in Norwegian, and so all categorizations and references to topics have been translated to English. Importantly, the term ‘industry’—‘industri’ in Norwegian—has somewhat different use than the English term, and is generally connected to industry development based on natural resources. In translation, words such as culture industry and tourism industry would most likely come up without the term ‘industry’.

6.1 Limitations

This study examines to what extent gendered issues are part of the public discourses on industry development in Northern Norway and to what extent the public discourses on industry development in Northern Norway are gender balanced in terms of the voices that are visible. This allows for a rich, in-depth understanding of cultural processes associated with this locale, but it also represents a weakness in that the findings are necessarily closely linked to the specific (northern) Norwegian case. Norway’s situation, culturally, historically, socially, and politically is unique and my findings cannot be automatically extrapolated to other cultures. Patterns, practices, tensions and negotiations may look very different for other cultures.

There is a limitation associated with the fact that men’s and women’s voices in the discourses are coded based on names, and not how the actual persons behind the names self-identify, in terms of gender. Furthermore, unisex names, which can be used for both males and females, do exist. Unisex naming practices have not been common in the Norwegian context, particularly due to the Personal Names Act of Norway, although unisex names have become a bit more common in recent years (Utne, 2012). No unisex names were, however, recognized in the data.

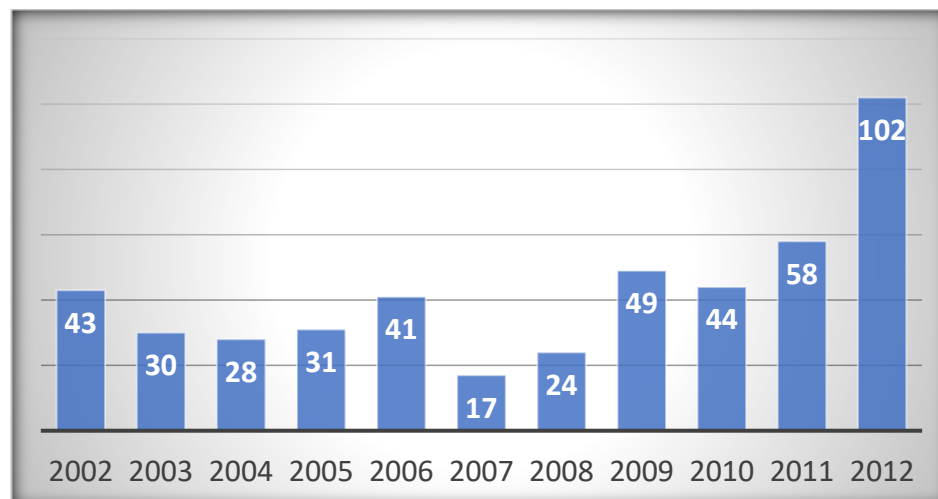
Finally, there is always a textual bias in a study like this. The specific texts included in this project are newspaper articles published in certain Norwegian newspapers during a specific time period. It is possible that another approach to data production might have brought forth other issues in light of industry development, even though it could be that women are more represented in other parts of the news discourses. It will always be impossible to fully describe certain discourses, and the critic can always only address a selected number of cultural tensions (McGee, as cited in Corbin, 1989). Also, all the examined newspapers are published in Norwegian, and so all categorizations and referencing to topics were translated to English later, and this could also be considered a limitation.

7.0 Analysis and Findings

After the initial article search, I received 527 hits total. This number included editorials, regular content, as well as letters to the editor. I went through the list manually, removing material that was irrelevant to the research, such as certain short notices and announcements and articles that were clearly unrelated to a Northern Norwegian context, for instance neither dealing with developments

taking place in Northern Norway, nor focusing on Northern Norway-based actors. After this, 467 articles remained, with a higher number of articles toward the last part of this period (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Number of Articles on ‘Industry’ + ‘Development’, 2002–2012 (Nordlys, Altaposten, Finnmark Dagblad, Finnmarken, Finnmarksposten and Hammerfestingen).



As a first step in my analysis, I did close qualitative readings of the 467 articles (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Schreier, 2015), with the intent of getting an overview of the issues or ‘problems’ explicitly made visible or addressed in the discourses. In my qualitative analysis, I was inspired by Bacchi’s (2005) ‘what’s the problem’ approach, because it follows from this that all solutions are embedded understandings of what constitutes the problem. By looking at the issues or ‘problems’ associated with a topic, one can seek to expose what is taken for granted. In the analysis of the discourses on industry development, I specifically examined to what extent issues pertaining to gender equality and gender roles were represented in these discourses, and if there were discussions on issues like gender divided work force, gendered differences in accessibility to new jobs, gendered community development issues, or gendered consequences of fly in/fly out employment options.

As seen in Figure 1, the number of articles on industry and development increased considerably from 2002 (43 articles) to 2012 (102 articles), indicating that the industry development topic became increasingly important in the local public discourses during this time of great industrial change in the northernmost part of Norway. In terms of the issues addressed in the local public discourses on industry and development, a few issues stand out as particularly dominant. I address these below.

7.1 We Need Jobs

In the first years of my study, the topics that emerged dealt with everything from local and national fisheries, oil and gas industry, to environmental issues, place development, demographic changes, and biotechnology. In the early years, there were several discussions of how to make a Northern Norwegian context attractive to industry actors or general discussions on how to get industry developments up and running across the region. There was a repeated concern related to the question of how to create more jobs in Northern Norway. That is,

there were many articles that brought up a regional need for jobs and how to ensure that more jobs are established in the region.

In terms of issues related to gender, there were few, if any, discussions visible. Even though the topic of jobs appeared quite frequently, there were no stories that brought up questions regarding what type of jobs would be created, and for whom these jobs would be attractive—in terms of gender—during a time of industrial restructuring. One of the few articles that actually did bring up gender during this period, is a story from December 29, 2012 in *Nordlys* with the title ‘Siste natt med gjengen [last night with the bunch]’. The article discusses future regional development in terms of power and influence in Northern Norway. Linda Randal, a local politician, expresses concern regarding the region’s future labor market. The article ends by sharing one of Randal’s concerns about gender, saying she is “ashamed over the lacking gender balance on the list of people with power. Many men, few women. This is most obvious in private industry. Is Northern Norway particularly conservative when it comes to women?” (Jaklin & Sæbbe, 2012, p. 11, my translation). This is one of the few times gender is explicitly mentioned in the discourses, yet the concern is not followed or picked up on in the other stories in the data.

7.2 Taking Part in the Industry Development

In the later years of my search, the numbers of articles, and hence topics, increases. The discourses include a lot of articles related to petroleum industry, mining industry, power industry, fisheries, jobs, and recruitment processes. There is an increasing attention to discussions pertaining to oil, gas, and petroleum industry compared to the early years of this study.

In terms of issues or potential problems discussed in the second part of the period, it has moved from how to get actors and jobs established in the north, to dealing with different technological solutions to a specific problem, different potential locations for oil and gas development projects, oil and gas' importance for the future development of the region, or education and skills required to be able to work in the oil and gas industry. Creating jobs is no longer of concern, but getting Northern Norwegian workers to qualify for the industry jobs that exist is. Additional concerns include how to ensure Northern Norwegian businesses can sell their products and services to large industry actors in the region, and how to ensure that the infrastructure is developed in order to allow for industry relevant activities and businesses.

Other issues related to the oil and gas theme in the discourses are logistics and spacing conflicts or processes in the North. There are also a few examples of articles addressing tensions associated with land use—for instance in relation to reindeer herding, or environment and climatic issues. Consequences for society—besides those that relate to environment and climate—following industry development are not addressed. Again, gender is a non-issue in the discourses. There is no mention of how the types of jobs that are generated along with gas and oil or other industry developments may impact gender relations in the host communities. Also, issues dealing with contract workers are generally absent in the discourses, and there are no discussions of the societal ‘costs’ of contract workers’ absences from ‘home’. That is, there are no discussions of the gender role-related consequences such developments may have, following the fact that most contract workers in Northern Norwegian industry projects are male. All in all, there is an overwhelming silence in the discourses around gendered consequences of industry development.

7.3 Discourses Dominated by Men's Voices

In addition to analyzing for gendered issues in the discourses, I was interested in who speaks on issues of industry-relevant restructurings in local public discourses. Table 1 shows the distribution of women's and men's voices in discourses on industry and development. According to Armstrong (2004), sources in newspaper coverage, can affect perceptions of public status. That is, if males are continually used as knowledgeable sources and women are repeatedly underrepresented or misrepresented in news coverage, this will reinforce a lower public status for women relative to men. As part of addressing the question of how gender balanced the local public discourses on industrial development in Northern Norway is during a time of industrial restructuring, I examined the discourses for voices to see who speaks—in terms of gender—on the issues brought forth. As a second step in my analysis I then counted the voices in the discourses, or 'counting what you (think) you see,' as G. Rose (2001) says. I counted everyone directly quoted in an article, and I also counted authors of letters to the editor. As I was interested in examining 'who speaks' in the discourses, I did not count reporters and journalists. Table 1 provides an overview of the voices visible in the 467 articles examined. Next, all voices were coded for gender based on their names.

Table 1: *Number of Voices, Coded for Gender (Men–Women) in Articles on 'Industry' + 'Development', 2002–2012 (Nordlys, Altaposten, Finnmark Dagblad, Finnmarken, Finnmarksposten and Hammerfestingen)*

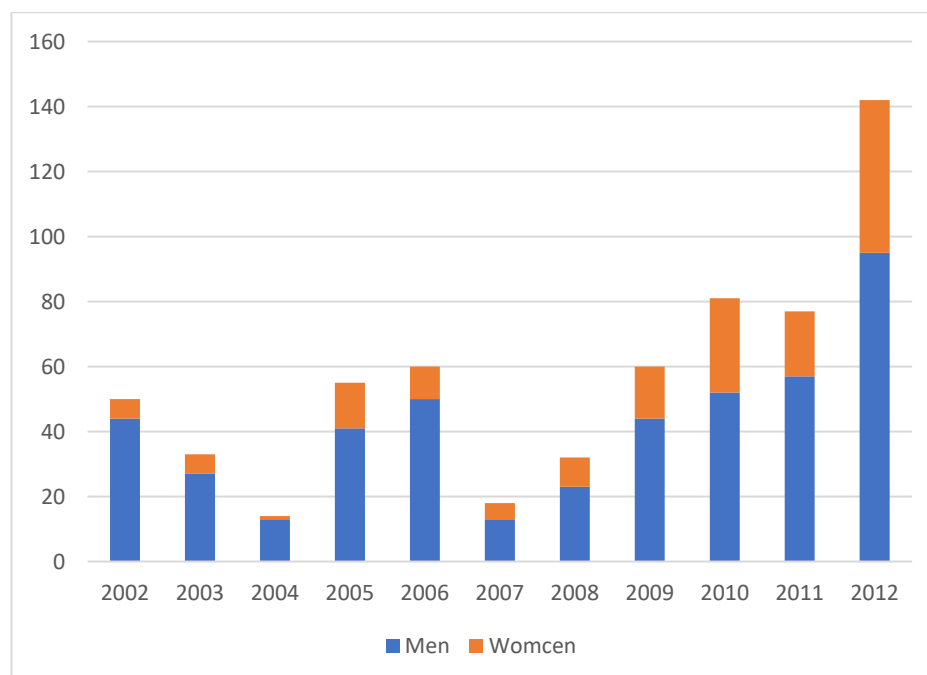
Year	Articles	Number of voices	Men	Women
2012	102	142	95 (67%)	47 (33%)
2011	58	77	57 (74%)	20 (26%)
2010	44	81	52 (64%)	29 (36%)
2009	49	60	44 (73%)	16 (27%)
2008	24	32	23 (72%)	9 (28%)
2007	17	18	13 (72%)	5 (28%)
2006	41	60	50 (83%)	10 (17%)
2005	31	55	41 (75%)	14 (15%)
2004	28	14	13 (93%)	1 (7%)
2003	30	33	27 (82%)	6 (18%)
2002	43	50	44 (88%)	6 (12%)
Total	467	622	459 (74%)	163 (26%)

As seen in Table 1, there is a gender imbalance in discourses on industry development across the data set. Specifically, there are more men's voices than women's voices in the discourses. All in all, men make up 74 percent of the voices, while women only make up 26 percent. In the first year of my

examination, men made up 88 percent of the voices in the discourses, while in 2012 it was at 67 percent.

As Figure 2 shows, the years 2012 and 2010 were the ones with the highest number of articles on industry development, and these were also the years with the highest number of voices and the years when the percentage of women's voices were highest. In 2012 women made up 33 percent of the voices, whereas in 2010 they made up 36 percent of the voices in the discourses on industry development.

Figure 2. Voices, Coded for Gender in Articles on 'Industry' + 'Development', 2002–2012 (Nordlys, Altaposten, Finnmark Dagblad, Finnmarken, Finnmarksposten and Hammerfestingen).



It is not possible to do an exact comparison of these numbers with other findings on gender balance in the media, but in light of other research on sources and gender, the representation of women's voices does not seem particularly low in the local newspaper discourse on industry development in Northern Norway. Also, while my analysis shows that the voices represented in the discourses are overwhelmingly male, the imbalance is slightly reduced in the last years of my examination.

8.0 Discussion

Sustainability of resource-based societies requires a certain gender balance in terms of women and men's abilities and opportunities to take part in, and influence, development processes. Gender equality is a key value in contemporary Norwegian cultural identity, but the Norwegian labor market is gender divided, and many ongoing developments in the North are linked to masculine industries' project developments. Following this, I explored how gender conscious and gender balanced local public discourses on industrial development in Northern Norway are during a time of industrial restructuring. Media create dominant understandings of development, for instance, reinforcing ideas of which actors are important and which challenges should be discussed and addressed. Inspired by Bacchi (2005), I looked for the issues or 'problems' explicitly made visible or addressed in the discourses, in particular regarding

gender. My findings indicate that gendered issues linked to industrial restructurings in Northern Norway remain unaddressed in the public discourses. Overall, gender does not seem to be a relevant topic, and, with this, issues of gender are symbolically defined as irrelevant to understandings of industry development. I also analyzed the discourses in terms of how many men and women spoke on industry development and find that men to a higher degree than women speak on these issues of development.

There are a few points I would like to discuss further in light of these findings. First, this (re)produces a lack of awareness of gender in industry development discourses and is part of creating an understanding of Northern Norway where men are more important than women when it comes to dealing with industry development. It is an example of how the practices of power “operate uneven over space,” due to “the engagement of social relations with the spatial and located nature of power relations” (Radcliffe, 1999, p. 236). The status of newspapers strengthens the silence surrounding gender and contributes to an understanding of a non-existing relationship between industry development issues and gender. The silence contributes to understandings of gender issues as irrelevant to industry development and has implications for sustainable regional development, as you cannot address something not rendered addressable. This is problematic, as a lack of gender consciousness allows gender bias to go unchallenged, legitimises and perpetuates a gender imbalance in terms of participation in community development, and undermines discussions of diversification efforts related to work and education that would be key to a sustainable development in Northern Norway.

Second, the absence of gender issues has implications for gendered possibilities. As places are always gendered, my findings are relevant in terms of a concern voiced in contemporary discussions on how the Northern Norwegian region is presented as a masculine place in public discourses (Aasjord, 2012). Issues pertaining to gender equality are invisible in the discourses on industry development, and women are less visible in the discourses than are men—they seem almost ‘out of place’ when it comes to industry development in this region. This can be said to support—or at the very least fail to challenge—the central role of a hegemonic masculinity—the stereotypical ‘manly man’—in the North, thus reinforcing existing gender imbalances pointed out in public debate (Bråthen, 2014). The imbalance undermines gender equality interests, as the gender-silenced discourses on industry development might offer subject positions alienating women; that is, if men are the ones participating in the discourses on industrial development more so than the women, it is men who define who and what is important to discuss when it comes to industry development in the area. Men are thus more visible as role models than are women. Departing from an understanding of a close relationship between discourses and practice, it is reason to believe that such a silence would affect the industry development practices in Northern Norway. The newspaper discourses impact actions and choices, as it is seen as producing certain objects and obscuring and hiding others in ways that make possible some actions and practices over others. This might play a part in explaining the lack of women working in the industry.

Over time, women have been underrepresented in Norwegian media compared to men. Even if this is slowly improving, the underrepresentation generates an imbalanced image of the world (Grymer & Roksrud, 2015, p. 65). Eide and von der Lippe (2006) put it like this: “Men have a great influence over the media and dominate in the news media. This influence is so clear that we can talk about men directing a very important part of public discourses” (p. 278, my

translation). Public discourses on industry developments are important in terms of who gets to be included in influencing how such developments are to be understood and addressed, but in terms of issues and problems associated with industry developments in the North, I find that there is no attention paid to gendered tensions related to industry development in the public discourses. In short, gender is a non-issue in the discourses, even though the region is seeing the rise of many industry projects in typically male-dominated industries.

9.0 Future Research

My research shows that media studies and discourse analysis offer value to scholars interested in regional development. Such perspectives may be especially helpful in understanding how certain understandings of a region, or developmental aspects of a region, become taken for granted, as public discourses represent a valuable source of the flow of social meanings. Furthermore, using such approaches to examine public discourses may also be beneficial when it comes to understanding processes of change—or sometimes even the lack of desired change—which is important since “understanding compositions and change in sparsely settled areas and their settlements is instrumental for facilitating sanguine policy in relation to the distinctive northern developed economies and environments” (Taylor, 2016, p. xxix). I also find an inspiring potential for critique in the critical strategies offered by a critical cultural perspective, which allow for a questioning of our present certainties about what we know and the implicit social assumptions inherent in this knowledge (Bacchi & Rönnblom, 2014; Rose, 1990). We can explore the taken-for-granted-ness of regional development, and thus take part in producing potential change. As Bacchi and Rönnblom (2014) say, “the goal of Foucauldian poststructural political analysis is to make visible the processes by which such creations assume the status of ‘the real’, providing support for a feminist change agenda” (p.179).

Like Taylor (2016), I am interested in contributing with knowledge of relevance to “settlements located within sparsely populated areas of developed nations in order to add depth and granularity around our shared and expanded knowledge” (p. xxix), and given the power of mediated public discourses, I suggest further research should monitor and report on gender representation in discourses more systematically, for example as a way of examining gender equality. I also encourage research that analyzes changes in public discourses in terms of gender issues and representation of gender over time. Furthermore, comparative discourse analyses related to regional development processes and gender in different contexts would be beneficial.

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