

Whose stories? Whose place?

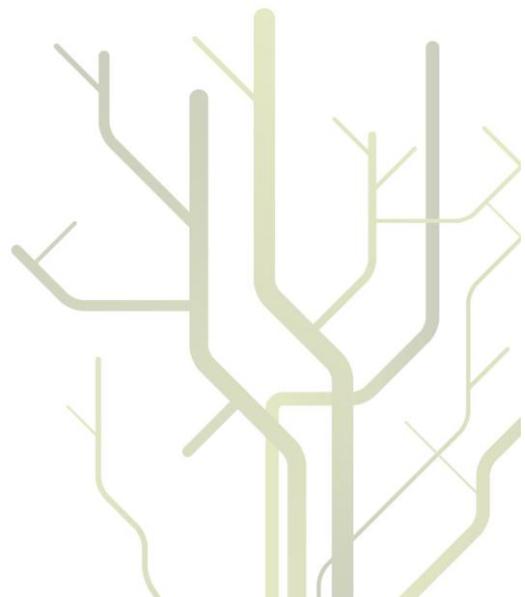
Place politics and the politics of place stories in Tromsø's Olympic debate



Ingrid Marie Kielland

A dissertation for the degree of
Philosophiae Doctor

August 2012



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Abstract

The dissertation explores the relevance and potential of approaching place politics through personal and collective stories about place. It is based on a case study of a local debate over a controversial project to bid for the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in Tromsø, Northern Norway. The dissertation contributes to developing Doreen Massey's work on the politics of a relational sense of place by looking at how interests and identities, propinquities and connectivities are negotiated and co-constructed through discursive practices.

Four arguments are drawn from the case study: Place stories are mobile, and enable knowledge and experiences to travel across space and time. Place stories are also versatile, and can be used in different ways to do different kinds of discursive work. The political relevance of place stories is based on their function as discursive resources for political action. Approaching place politics through place stories is particularly useful because place stories combine interests, identities, propinquities and connectivities.

The dissertation states that ambivalent stories about exclusion and inclusion, relevance and irrelevance, the near and the far away, contribute to producing power and to producing place. It emphasises the important role of personal stories about identities and belonging in negotiating place politics, and concludes that politics of identities should to a greater extent be included in academic and political discussions of interests, development and economics.

Sammendrag

Avhandlingen drøfter relevansen av og potensialet i stedsfortellinger som en empirisk og analytisk tilnærming til stedspolitikk. Utgangspunktet for avhandlingen er en casestudie av den lokale debatten i Tromsø knyttet til søknaden om å arrangere vinter-OL i 2018. Avhandlingen bidrar til å videreutvikle Doreen Masseys relasjonelle og politiske stedsperspektiver ved å utforske hvordan interesser og identiteter, nærhet og forbindelser forhandles og konstrueres gjensidig gjennom diskursive praksiser.

På grunnlag av casestudien fremsettes følgende fire hovedargumenter: Stedsfortellinger er mobile, og bidrar til at kunnskaper og erfaringer beveger seg i tid og rom. Stedsfortellinger er fleksible, og kan brukes på ulike måter til å utføre ulike typer diskursivt arbeid. Den politiske relevansen av stedsfortellinger bygger på den funksjon fortellingene har som diskursive ressurser for politisk praksis. Og stedsfortellinger er en nyttig tilnærming til stedspolitikk ettersom stedsfortellinger kombinerer interesser, identiteter, nærhet og forbindelser.

Avhandlingen slår fast at flertydige fortellinger om eksklusjon og inkludering, relevans og irrelevans, det nære og det fjerne, bidrar til å produsere makt og til å produsere steder. Videre understrekes den viktige rollen som personlige fortellinger om identitet og tilhørighet spiller i politisk meningsforhandling om sted. Avhandlingen konkluderer med at identitetspolitikk i større grad bør inkluderes i akademiske og politiske drøftinger som omhandler interesser, utvikling og økonomi.

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Tromsø, august 2012

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1 Once upon a place...

Once upon a time there was a fishing village on the coast of Northern Norway where there was a harbour and a church. In 1794 the Danish-Norwegian King decreed that this village called Tromsø should be named a town and be given trading rights. Life along the Northern Norwegian coast was not easy. The climate was cold, the soil was poor and for two months every winter the region was cloaked in the Polar Night. People lived from fishing and farming, usually at subsistence level conditions. For the fishermen, the weather was a constant challenge and threat not only to their livelihoods but also to their lives. But they were not perturbed. "We'll stand through it" (Vi står han av) was the motto they lived by, according to latter day novelists. This motto is now engraved in the floor of Tromsø's modern Town Hall.

Or, once upon a time there was a small trading town in Northern Norway where the ladies were so well dressed and fashionable that an impressed visitor from the South wrote home to say that Tromsø was the "Paris of the North". The well-dressed ladies and their beaux would promenade on the western side of the Main Street on Saturdays and Sundays. The eastern side of the street was for the not-so-well-dressed fishwives and fishermen, workers and "common people". Today Tromsø is branded "Paris of the North" by the hotels and conference industry who attempt to attract visitors to the town with reference to the town's numerous pubs, bars and nightclubs.

Or, once upon a time there was a medium-sized town with numerous suburbs in Northern Norway. The regional hospital, the university and the municipality were the largest employers in this town. There was less industry than local politicians preferred, and very little fishing or farming. People lived from services, as academics, bureaucrats, doctors, nurses, hairdressers or salesmen. The climatic conditions in the town were harsh, but with cars, underground parking and large shopping malls the inhabitants were far less dependent on the weather than they used to be.

These are three stories about Tromsø, the town where I was born and raised, and where I have lived half my adult life. In a way, they are my stories, as they are part of the interpretative repertoire that I may draw upon when talking or writing about my hometown and my everyday life. But of course they are not mine exclusively, nor are they necessarily the most important or most influential stories that have been told about Tromsø. Some stories are omitted, on purpose or by habit. I could for example have included a story about Tromsø as a campsite for Sami reindeer-herders, but I didn't. Stories about Tromsø and other places are used in various ways by different actors, to various purposes and with various effects. The non-telling of stories is also effective.

In 2003, a group of local politicians and entrepreneurs launched the idea that Tromsø should make a bid to host the Winter Olympic Games. Reactions varied, and included derision, enthusiasm and angry rejection. In the debate that followed, proponents and opponents of the Olympic bid have told and retold old stories about Tromsø in new ways, aspects of different stories have been combined and new stories have been introduced. This dissertation is about the place stories that were made use of, produced and reproduced as part of the Olympic debate in Tromsø, and aims at showing the role and impact of personal and collective place stories on place politics.

Place stories are political because telling stories about the past, present and future of a place contributes to the ongoing construction and reconstruction of power, borders and identities. Through stories about belonging and attachment to place, claims of ownership are made and rules of citizenship negotiated. Based on a narrative-discursive analysis of the use of personal and collective place stories in a specific political debate, this dissertation argues for the usefulness of approaching place politics and the ongoing construction of place (Massey 2005) through the discursive practices of local actors and the stories they produce and reproduce as part of these practices (Potter and Wetherell 1987, Taylor 2010).

The proposed Olympic bid from Tromsø was pursued by the town council and various private proponents for 5 years. The project was controversial, but did at one point gain fairly substantial local and national support. The bid was finally abandoned in 2008, following a very critical external evaluation of the proposed budget and the subsequent withdrawal of support from the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NOC)¹. The discussion in this dissertation focuses on the final stage of the local debate about the Olympic bid, and on the stories that were told about Tromsø's would-be Olympics by involved actors after the bid had been abandoned. Qualitative interviews with involved actors are analysed together with newspaper articles and observations from public meetings in an investigation of how different established stories about the town and about the Olympic bid were told in various ways, and how these stories contribute to negotiating place politics in Tromsø.

¹ The Norwegian name of NOC is Norges Idrettsforbund (NIF). In this dissertation I will refer to NOC by the direct translation of this shorter name, namely the Norwegian Confederation of Sports, or in brief the Confederation.

I begin this introduction to the dissertation with a discussion of place stories and place politics, why they are important and how they can be studied. Following this I will touch on place (re)constructions through mega-events in order to explain my choice of Tromsø's Olympic debate as a case for researching place politics. I will also present the main research questions and how these are approached empirically, and finally go through the overall structure of the dissertation.

1.1 Place politics and place stories

Place politics concern negotiations of interests and influence within and between places. My approach to place politics builds on the work of Doreen Massey (1991, 1993, 2004, 2005) who has argued for an understanding of places as open, multiple and always under construction. Her term “global sense of place” emphasises the fact that places are and always have been connected to the world around them in different ways, and that places are not unitary or closed spaces. The borders and identities of places must be understood as a progressive and relational project, something which is constructed in different ways and which is a product of negotiations. One place may be told in many different ways by different actors and at different times. To Massey, understanding place as process is an important requirement for making change, and thus politics, possible.

In her early work Massey focused mostly on economic and material constructions of place (Massey 1979/1996), but in her later writing she emphasizes that places are both materially and discursively constructed (Massey 2005). Discursive constructions of place can be approached in many different ways. To give just a few examples: Gillian Rose (1994) discusses the cultural politics of place through films produced by two local groups in London's East End. Tariq Jazeel (2005) explores the ethnic and sexual politics of Sri Lanka through the diasporic novel *Funny Boy*. Laurie Yung, Wayne Freimund and Jill Belsky (2003) focuses on the politics of place names on the Rocky Mountain Front, and Jeffrey Masuda and Theresa Gavin (2008) shows how “parallel, yet contested definitions of the ‘Heartland’ underpinned a ‘politics of place’ of land use change at the rural-urban interface (Masuda & Gavin 2008: 112) of Alberta, Canada.

In my exploration of to the ongoing construction and relational place politics of the Tromsø Olympics, I have chosen to focus on the discursive practices of involved actors and the discursive work performed by these actors as they negotiate between many different possible

stories about the past, present and future of the place. Following discourse psychologists Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell (1987, 1992), I understand actors' discursive practices as both structured by and constructive of discourse. By discursive practices I mean the flexible use of available discursive resources or interpretative repertoires in order to create meaningful talk or texts (Potter and Wetherell 1987). *Stories* or established narratives are one type of resource for discursive practice. Stories set out a loose plot, linking together descriptions, "facts" or ways of speaking that tend to be taken for granted by actors who share a common discursive system or culture (Taylor 2010). Stories are always intersubjective, in the sense that they derive their meaning from a discursive framework of shared symbols and signs. However, some stories are more personal, drawing on subjective experiences and emotional accounts, while other stories have a more collective character in that they are known and familiar to a wider public. In this dissertation I am particularly interested in how actors use stories about place.

Place stories are important cognitive maps for the decisions we make about the geographies of our lives. Place stories inform actors' assessments of which material and emotional investments are possible in a place, in what ways and by what kind of actors. They establish understandings of what kind of place a place is, what activities are possible and desirable in this place, who belong there and what rights they have (Lee and Smith 2004). Through the discursive practice of telling stories about a place, places are produced and reproduced in certain ways. Place stories have implications for place democracy. They can be used as intersubjective cultural frameworks for political mobilisation and acts of resistance (Routledge 1992). Through place stories some actors are recognized as legitimate participants in place politics, whereas other actors by the same token are excluded or made invisible (Lister 2003, Mouffe 1992). Place stories influence where economic investments are made, and how public services are distributed. They also contribute to the everyday choices people make about where to live, work, send their children to school or go on a holiday. When we draw on established place stories in our discursive practices, we are also constructing and reconstructing stories about ourselves, our sense of ourselves, and about where we belong or don't belong. Stories about feelings and identities attached to place are therefore important to place politics. How places are understood today impacts on what they might be like tomorrow.

In analysing place politics I have been inspired by Ash Amin (2004), who has suggested that a relational place politics must address two distinct aspects of place politics; *politics of*

propinquity and *politics of connectivity*. The politics of propinquity may be explained as the place politics of the local or the close-at-hand. It involves the negotiation of those questions that arise from people living in relative proximity sharing a “common turf”. Politics of propinquity is concerned with distribution of public goods and bads within a particular place, as well as the negotiation of borders and identities related to that place. The politics of connectivity on the other hand concerns the negotiation of relations between places, and are about the kind of connections (or disconnections) that may be established, maintained or discontinued between a place and other places. These connections and disconnections may be related to both economic relationships, political influences or dominations and cultural or identity-based relationships. An example of the latter may be Anderson’s (1983) imagined communities that bind together different places in a sense of national community while others are excluded. One of the points that I will be arguing in this dissertation is that in practice the politics of propinquity and connectivity are often constructed, negotiated and implicated in each other in more complicated ways than the conceptual separation of the local and non-local may suggest. I will also be drawing on Stephanie Taylor’s (2010) work on how identity is constructed through narratives about place and belonging, Linda McDowell’s (2004) discussion of the relationship between economic interests and cultural identities, and Lynn Staeheli’s (2008) discussion of political identity-movements, to argue that place politics can be understood as a reciprocal negotiation of *interests* and *identities*. Staeheli emphasises that identity-based political movements also reflect wider social, political and economic relationships, and notes that property plays an important role in political struggles for recognition. In relation to place stories it is worth underlining that existing stories and discursive frameworks always structure which stories can be plausibly told, and that actors are differently positioned as storytellers, both in terms of discursive and economic resources. In this dissertation I will be looking at how place stories contribute to the co-production of politics of interests and identities, propinquities and connectivities.

1.2 Place (re)constructions and Tromsø’s Olympic bid

“Reinventing place” (Nyseth and Granås 2007) through altering the place stories or discursive connotations of a place is a popular strategy for those who wish to change the economic prospects or challenge the political status quo of a place. As described by Childs (2008), stories and storytelling play an important role in urban design. Jessop and Sum (2000) note that place marketing through culture, entertainments, gentrification and new city-scapes

should be understood as part of an entrepreneurial strategy through which cities may boost their innovative capacity. The hosting of large regional or global mega-events, such as the World Expos, European Cultural Capital, World Cups or Olympic Games, has been described as one way of reinventing or (re)constructing place (Garcia 2004, Urry 2003, Gold and Gold 2007). Cities and nations compete fiercely, spending both money and human resources to woo the decision-makers into granting them the event in question, despite the fact that many evaluations find dubious economic profits and huge expenses for the winners of these bids. An often-mentioned example of event-based place promotion is that of Glasgow during its reign as European City of Culture in 1990. The hosting of this year-long cultural event was expected to bring several benefits to Glasgow: a city arguably struggling with the image of being a ‘grim’ northern town in the grip of industrial decline. The City of Culture brand was heralded as a catalyst for both economic restructuring and increased tourism (Garcia 2005). However, the re-branding of Glasgow was also met with resistance from “cultural and labor activist who saw the various plans for the Year of Culture as part of a concerted effort to erase the militant workers’ history of the city” (Mitchell 2000: 7). The struggle over how Glasgow should be represented is thus also a relevant example of the politics of place stories. Whose stories were told through the Year of Culture branding, to whom were they told and to what effect? Whose interests were served, and whose identities were recognized in the telling? And how was the geography of Glasgow and Scotland produced and reproduced as part of the branding? Similar questions have been asked in relation to many other event-based place promotion projects, for example Trieste’s failed bid for the 2008 World Expo (Colombino 2009) and Liverpool’s award of European City of Culture 2008 (Mooney 2004).

The perceived need for a reconstruction of place and struggle over how the place should be understood was present right from the beginning in the local debate over the would-be Tromsø Olympics. The bid was first launched in May 2003 by a group of local politicians and entrepreneurs at a surprise press conference on top of a small mountain overlooking the town, the fjord and the snow-clad mountains surrounding it. At the press conference, the Mayor of Tromsø presented five main pillars in an Olympic proposal from Tromsø: The arctic location (Tromsø being positioned north of the Arctic Circle), peace (based on the University’s Centre for Peace Studies), the indigenous Sami people co-hosting the games, culture, and the environment. The slogan of the project was “Arctic Magic”, and the natural surroundings of Tromsø were underlined, especially the combination of the tall mountains rising up from blue fjords. (*Nordlys* 13.05.03, *Aftenposten* 13.05.03, *VG* 13.05.03). Reactions to the proposal were

varied. One of the first enthusiasts was the editor of *Nordlys*, a regional newspaper based in Tromsø. The day after the press conference he called the idea “wild and wonderful”, and in his editorial column he stated that the project was:

*Madness, yes certainly, but nevertheless. The idea is so wild that it is impossible not be caught by it. And the core rings true: A Winter Olympic Game in Tromsø would mean bringing the Olympic idea home. (...) Just the fact that somebody has had such a wild thought, created a project and then launched the idea in such a professional manner like Tromsø did yesterday, is a victory for Northern Norway. It proves that we're capable, and that we don't need any help from outside to succeed.*²

The proposal was supported by a majority of the political parties in the municipal council. A project organization called Tromsø 2014 was set up to prepare a bid and negotiate with the Norwegian Confederation of Sports who would be the official bidder, and with the Government who were supposed to provide the bulk of the necessary investments and a financial guarantee. The project organization was later renamed Tromsø Romsa 2018³, as the first attempt of securing state support failed. The proponents of the Olympic project claimed that not only would hosting the games bring massive state investments in infrastructure and sports facilities to the region. Just as important were the projected effects which a successful bid would have on Tromsø's and Northern Norway's image, and on the way people in the region understood themselves. The Olympic project was hailed as a way of producing and marketing a “new Northern Norway”, one that was modern, self-reliant and rich in both natural and human resources. Comparing the economic potential of marketing Northern Norway's mountains and fjords with the successful Finnish producer of tyres and cellular phones, the Tromsø Olympics was described as a “blue Nokia” for the future.

Despite massive support from most political parties, editors and entrepreneurs, popular opinion in Tromsø was divided and opinion polls swung between 30 percent and 70 percent of the inhabitants in favour of the bid. In January 2004, an activist network named Yes to the Coast, No to the Olympics was launched. The network, which was later renamed No to the

² Galskap, ja visst, men likevel. Ideen er så vill at det er umulig ikke å la seg fenge av den. Dessuten er kjernen sann; Et vinter-OL i Tromsø er å bringe den olympiske ideen hjem. (...) Alene det at noen har tenkt en så vill tanke, formet et prosjekt og så lansert ideen så profesjonelt som Tromsø gjorde i går, er en seier for Nord-Norge. Det beviser at vi kan, og at vi ikke trenger hjelp utenfra for å lykkes. (*Nordlys*, 13.05.03: 2)

³ The official name of the Olympic project organization changed several times, from the initial Company for the Olympic Games in Tromsø 2014 AS, to Tromsø 2014 AS, and later Tromsø 2018 AS. The name Tromsø Romsa 2018 was adopted by the General Meeting in April 2008 (Final report, Tromsø Romsa 2018, november 2008).

Olympics, consisted of a handful of activist with a mixture of academic, political and social movements experience. One of the initiators argued that the Olympic project was madness, given that Tromsø municipality was deeply indebted and had problems financing services to the population such as nursing homes, swimming pools and lighted ski trails. He also criticized the idea of using the popular mountain Tromsdalstinden as an alpine ski track.

*The steering committee are in the wrong when they propose to build an alpine ski facility on Tromsdalstinden without asking anyone. What they have done is like lashing out at everyone who love nature and who live in Tromsø.*⁴

The network argued that Northern Norway would not get any lasting infrastructural developments from hosting the Olympics in Tromsø, that there were no documented long-term effects, that the proposal was unrealistic and expensive and that a compact Olympic game in Tromsø would damage the arctic nature and environment and cause centralization in Northern Norway. They also chastised the Olympic Games for not being about healthy competition but rather extreme commercialism and gigantic sponsor power (*Nordlys* web 11.04.04). The network produced three counter-statements to the proposal documents from Tromsø 2014 and Tromsø Romsa 2018, in which they questioned the facts and reasoning behind the proposal and criticized various aspects of the planned venues and organization of an Olympic hosting.

Since its first launch in 2003 and throughout the project's different phases of rejection, optimism and final dismissal in October 2008, the proposal was controversial, with dedicated opponents and proponents amongst both local politicians and the town's population more generally. An important reason for me for choosing the debate about the Olympic bid as a case for researching place stories and place politics was the "discursive gravitational force" of the project. The debate included and added on to other contemporary debates, for example the national and international debates about climatic changes, the so-called High North strategy of the present government coalition, and especially after the proposal failed, the national and regional debates about relationships between the North and South or the centre and the peripheries in Norway. I see the local debate over Tromsø's would-be Olympic bid as an arena for and a window into the wider place politics of Tromsø. To a certain extent the Olympic bid created an opportunity for place politics by making tacit assumptions and

⁴ Styringsgruppa har tatt seg til rette når de foreslår alpinanlegg fra Tromsdalstinden uten å spørre noen. Det de har gjort er et spark til alle som er glad i naturen og som bor i Tromsø (*Nordlys* 09.01 04:9).

understandings of the town visible and open for opposition. The Olympic debate and the Olympic bid also functioned as a vehicle for different interests and projects, a way of communicating needs and demands. By combining otherwise invisible or hidden narratives with the Olympic story the former became more effective and visible.

The debate about the Olympics was not only a struggle between different stories about Tromsø, in which the stories contributed to producing and reproducing Tromsø as an arena for future developments. The stories about Tromsø and the Olympics also produced understandings of who the people who live and work in Tromsø are, their sense of belonging, interest, rights and obligations. In making sense of the Olympic proposal, the involved actors have been drawing upon a wide array of understandings or stories about what kind of place Tromsø is today, what it has been in the past and what it should become in the future. The dreams and debates concerning the Tromsø Olympics live on in the representations and imaginations of the town. It is therefore pertinent also to ask what implications these representations and imaginations may have for place politics in Tromsø. Through my case-study of this concrete local debate I aim to contribute to developing Massey's work on the politics of place, by looking at how interests and identities, propinquities and connectivities are negotiated and co-constructed through discursive practices drawing on personal as well as collective place stories.

1.3 Research questions and empirical approaches

The aim of the dissertation is to examine the place stories that have been produced and reproduced about Tromsø through the Olympic debate, and to discuss how these place stories contribute to place politics in Tromsø. The main research question is:

How was place politics negotiated through place stories in the context of Tromsø's Olympic debate?

The research question aims at exploring how different actors used and reproduced personal and collective place stories in their accounts of the Olympic debate, and what kinds of place politics these stories may contribute to. The intention of the case study is also to provide some conceptual answers with a more general relevance to the following questions:

- 1. How are politics of identities and interests produced, co-produced and negotiated in place stories?*

2. *How are politics of propinquities and (dis)connectivities produced, co-produced and negotiated in place stories?*
3. *How are the politics of place politics produced and negotiated in place stories?*

The research has focused on the discursive practices of actors who were involved in the Olympic debate. I have looked at how the bid and the controversy were understood by the actors, and how different place stories were translated and assembled in different ways. While newspaper articles, websites, public meetings and official documents provide contextual background and have informed the research, the main empirical basis for answering the research questions is qualitative research interviews with Tromsø inhabitants who in different ways and in varying degrees had been involved in the debate about the bid. A guiding question in both the interviews and the analysis of them has been what personal and collective place stories actors were drawing upon in relation to the Olympic debate and their own involvement in it. I have also looked at how actors used place stories to do different kinds of discursive work, and tried to determine the extent to which stories were shared by proponents and opponents, and to what extent were they contested.

It is important to note that the interviews were conducted after the project had been abandoned. The stories told in the interviews are different from the public debate both because of the time that had passed since the Olympic bid had been abandoned, and because of the difference in context between the public debate and the research interview. The interviews should be understood as reflections on and stories about the public debate, not the public debate as such. Although some of the actors were public figures, their discursive practice as participants in a research interviews may differ from their practices in the Olympic debate, both because of the context (an anonymous research interview as opposed to a public media or event), and because the interviews explicitly focused on the actors backgrounds, personal opinions and engagements, inviting the use of personal stories. This does not mean that the interviews were detached from the public stories of the debate. The interviewees used different stories or arguments from the public debate as interpretative resources in the stories they told me, and likewise I used the contents of the public debate as resources for my questions.

1.4 Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation begins with a presentation and discussion of the different theoretical perspectives and concepts that I will be using for my analysis. Chapter 2 will explore and expand upon Massey's claim that place is open, multiple and always under construction, and combine this with a perspective on politics as a cognitive struggle to impose particular understandings or viewpoints on the social world. Amin's proposition of analysing place politics through the concepts of propinquity and connectivity will be presented and discussed, as will the relationship between politics as interests and the politics of identity, place and belonging. Inspired by the critical discursive psychology of Potter, Wetherell and Taylor, and in keeping with Massey's focus on the ongoing construction of place, the chapter will then argue for a narrative-discursive approach to studying place politics that focuses on the flexible use of personal and collective stories in actors' discursive practices.

Chapter 3 will describe research as a relational and constructive social practice, and discuss the methodological implications of a commitment to understanding place and politics as a relational product that is always under construction. The chapter explains the choice of the Olympic debate as a case for analysing place politics, and describes how I went about producing the empirical material that the dissertation is based on. This is followed by reflections on how to understand qualitative research interviews, and a discussion of the emotional politics of doing qualitative research. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the analytical strategies I have followed.

Chapter 4 presents the contextual background of the dissertation. After a brief factual representation of Tromsø, and an overview of some of the main actors and important events of the Olympic debate, I will give an introduction to the Olympic bid as a political project in which different stories about interests, identities, propinquiries and connectivities were assembled, and describe the Olympic debate as a struggle over this assemblage. The opposition against the bid is explained in accordance with this as partly a rejection of and an attempt at disassemblage of the Olympic project. The chapter will build on and review existing analyses of the proposed bid and the Olympic debate.

Chapters 5 through 7 engage with the place stories used by involved actors in the Olympic debate. I have argued that politics of identities, interests, propinquiries and connectivities intersect and are co-constituted. In analysing the different aspects of place politics and the relationships between them I have chosen to explore politics of identities and politics of

interests in two separate analytical chapters, keeping in mind the ways in which the two different aspects influence on each other in the discussion of each. The production and negotiation of propinquities and connectivities are seen as implicated and integrated in both the politics of identities and the politics of interests, and therefore discussed in both of these chapters as well as in the third analytical chapter which focuses on the politics of place politics, that is the rules, norms and (im)possibilities of place-based politics. This means that research question 1 is answered in chapters 5 and 6, research question 2 is answered in chapters 5 – 7 and research question 3 is answered in chapter 7.

Chapter 5 focuses on the politics of identity, engaging with stories about belonging and not belonging in Tromsø. In this chapter I explore how a “born and bred” and an “elective belonging” story were used by different actors, both in reference to a sense of belonging in Tromsø, and in reference to a sense of belonging in the Northern Norwegian region. Stories about Tromsø’s Sami heritage and an ambivalent sense of indigenous belonging will be discussed, as will stories about belonging based on a love of nature and stories about Tromsø as a cosmopolitan or international city. I will argue that personal stories about belonging and emotional attachment played an important role in negotiating local identities, inclusions/exclusions and future trajectories for Tromsø, and discuss how these stories also contribute to negotiating politics of propinquity and connectivity.

Chapter 6 is concerned with the politics of interests that were produced and negotiated through the stories used in the Olympic debate. The chapter explores stories about the Olympic bid that centres on development and resources in relation to different geographies, ranging from the local via the regional to the global. The chapter begins with the claim that the Olympic bid would create regional development, and looks at how different stories about the region and development were used to justify or reject this claim. The chapter looks at how actors negotiate between stories about regional and local interests, and also explores how actors make sense of and use stories about Tromsø as a material place, and the possible and desirable developments of the town. Finally, the chapter looks at arguments about the environmental impacts of the proposed Olympic hosting and the use of different environmental stories, ranging from a story about global warming to a story about local nature as holy or sacrosanct. The chapter shows how stories about interests are always also stories about identities, and argues that through the negotiation of interests actors also draw on and (re)produce geographies of propinquities and connectivities.

Chapter 7 engages with actors' accounts of the Olympic debate and its outcome, and can be described as being concerned with the politics of place politics, meaning that the chapter explores negotiations of the norms or playing rules of place politics, as well as the possibilities and limitations of place politics. This chapter explores the ways in which democracy and democratic values were represented and contested by the interviewees in reference to the Olympic debate. Stories about democracy, and representations of actors and processes as living up to or being in discrepancy with established stories and democratic discourses, worked both as a legitimization of the actors' role in the debate and as a means to discredit their opponents. I will argue that these accounts must be understood as part of the debate itself, where both parties tried to position themselves as legitimate and the other side as illegitimate or not playing by the rules, but they also point back to stories about identity, exclusion and inclusion in Tromsø. The chapter also looks at stories about the role played by national media, the Norwegian Confirmation of Sports and the central government in determining the fate of the Olympic bid. These draw on stories about regional disempowerment, and can be seen as producing and reproducing politics of (dis)connectivities in different ways.

While stories are transient, often ambivalent and contextual, they draw on established discursive structures, and in their flexible production of meaning in the moment they also contribute to reproducing and creating new structures of meaning for the future. Chapter 8 asks what contributions the stories about the Olympic debate in Tromsø can give to understandings of place politics in general, and to possible future stories of Tromsø. My argument is that ambivalent stories about exclusion and inclusion, relevance and irrelevance, the near and the far away, contribute to producing power and to producing place. The dissertation also emphasises the important role of personal stories about identities and belonging in negotiating place politics of interests, propinquities and connectivities, and concludes that politics of identities should to a greater extent be included in academic and political discussions of interests, development and economics.

2 Theoretical framework for approaching the politics of place stories

As stated in the introduction, this dissertation is concerned with the politics of place stories as a process in which power and interests are negotiated and defined in and through stories about place. The chapter will combine different theories about place, politics and discourse in an effort towards a coherent theoretical framework for approaching the politics of place stories. While the theories that are drawn upon have been used in different areas of study, a common feature is that they all see these concepts and the social realities they refer to as open, multiple and continually constructed and reconstructed through social practices. In this chapter I will take Doreen Massey's concept of a relational and progressive sense of place as a starting point, and explore the potentials of this concept for studying place politics through four questions. How should the politics of a relational sense of place be conceived? What are the particular political challenges posed by a relational sense of place? How can the relationship between a relational sense of place, belonging and identity be conceived of in place politics? And finally, how can relational place politics be studied through stories about place? Through answering these questions I aim to contribute to discussions of the relationships between place, interests and identities in political geography and expand upon Massey's discussions of the politics of place.

In the first section of this chapter I will introduce Doreen Massey's perspectives on place as relational, multiple and always under construction through a review of some of her work. In the next section I will explore the political implications of these perspectives by reflecting on the first three questions referred to above. The question about how to conceive a relational politics of place is approached through John Allen's work on power as a relational effect, focusing on his discussion of Henri Lefebvre and the power of place. The question about the political challenges of a relational sense of place will be addressed through Ash Amin's perspectives on place politics as politics of propinquity and connectivity. Finally the question about relational place, belonging and identity will be examined by drawing on Stephanie Taylor's work on how women construct a sense of identity through stories about place, and expanded on through a discussion of Linda McDowell's discussion of the relationship between politics of identification and interests. The third section of this chapter will deal with the question of how to approach place politics through place stories. It includes an ontological discussion drawing on Pierre Bourdieu, Henri Lefebvre and Mikhail Bakhtin, and a

presentation of Margaret Wetherell and Jonathan Potter's critical discourse psychology. In the fourth and final section I summarize the different elements of place politics that I will be using in my study of the place stories used in Tromsø's Olympic debate.

2.1 Introduction: Place as open, multiple and always under construction

The starting point of this dissertation is Doreen Massey's concept of place as open, multiple and always under construction. This sense of place has been dubbed by Massey as global (1991), progressive (1993) and relational (2004). But what does it mean? In this section I will introduce Massey's relational sense of place, which is based on the understanding of place and space as socially constructed or produced. This is an understanding that has developed within Human Geography during the last four decades. It has been paralleled and in various ways influenced by related developments in other social sciences, especially theories about everyday social practices and structure/actor relationships, such as those of Henri Lefebvre (1973/1991), Pierre Bourdieu (1980) and Anthony Giddens (1984). Especially Lefebvre's approach to everyday life, the city and the production of space was an important source of inspiration for what became known as Marxist geography in the 1980s. This is a tradition which has also been, and continues to be, close to the core of Massey's work. Developments in postcolonial and cultural studies and feminist geographies have also played an important role in the establishments of a relational understanding of space and place within geography. Today, the term Critical geography is often used to describe writers who share a commitment to analysing and criticizing existing political and economic relations of power. While Critical geography encompasses many different theoretical inspirations, in the case of Massey's work it can be seen as an extension on, and in some areas a constructive critique of, Marxist geography.

The production of space was a central concern within Marxist geography. In *The Limits to Capital* from 1982, David Harvey argued that spatial organization is a fundamental part of the workings of capitalism. Capital accumulation produces space and spatial patterns, which once produced in a solid form, for example in the form of railway lines, will affect the future organization of capital. "A perpetual struggle ensues in which physical landscapes appropriate to capitalism's requirements are produced at a particular moment in time only to be disrupted and destroyed, usually in the course of a crisis, at a subsequent point in time" (Harvey 1985/1998: 611). Harvey introduced the term "spatial fix" to describe the attempt by capital to

overcome its inherent crises of over-accumulation of capital by moving production to new places. Neil Smith also argued that capital tends to “jump” between developed and less-developed geographical areas in order to maximize output (Peet 1998).

While Harvey and Smith focused on the large-scale patterns of spatial production and destruction by capital, Massey in her early work tended to take a more specific perspective to the production of regional inequality. In the article “In what sense a regional problem?” from 1979, Massey criticizes regional policies designed at alleviating “regional problems” for conceptualising these “not as problems *experienced* by regions, but as problems for which, somehow, those regions are to blame” (Massey 1979/1996: 410). Massey describes how an inter-sectorial spatial division of labour profits on regional inequalities by moving low-skilled production to regions where there is a surplus of workers without previous labour experiences and thus little tradition for union organization, while more skilled research and development jobs and headquarter functions are kept in regions with higher incomes. In this way existing regional inequalities are reproduced and exacerbated. In “A woman’s place” (1984) Massey together with Linda McDowell follows up on the framework she established in the 1979-article by showing how old regional divisions of labour have created specific historical patterns of male and female participation in the labour market in four different English regions. Through historical and current examples they show how “the present gender division of labour in particular places is the outcome of the combination over time of successive phases” (McDowell and Massey 1984/1996: 468). One of the conclusions to be drawn from these examples is that although economic restructuring and industrial decline was affecting England as a whole, spatial inequalities are still produced in specific ways in specific places. “Space and location still matter” (McDowell and Massey 1984/1996: 468).

The specificity of concrete locations and the lessons to be learned from studying these, including the specific links beyond the boundaries of that location, is a point that Massey has repeated in several publications (e.g. Massey 1994, 1995). She has also continued to insist on the political potential of doing so. In a response to Harvey’s *The Condition of Postmodernity* from 1989, Massey argues that a focus on location or place does not imply fetishizing or reifying place. Harvey’s claim was that time-space compression and an increasingly mobile capital has led to more competition between places, and that the result of such competition is a reactionary or exclusive sense of place based on the established elite’s attempt at holding on to its own position. Although Massey recognizes the risk that place-based political mobilisation may “slide into parochialism, myopia, and self-referentiality in the face of the

universalising force of capital circulation” (Harvey 1989: 351, in Massey 1994: 142), Massey contends that there are multiple meanings of places and that any version of traditions and history are open for social negotiation. “*It is people, not places in themselves, which are reactionary or progressive*” (Massey 1994: 141, italics in original). She concludes that the political potential of place-based mobilisation must be determined post priori. “If people *are* beginning to turn to localities in reactionary ways, then it may precisely be important to study them” (Massey 1994: 142).

In the article “A Global Sense of Place” from 1991, Massey questions the extent of globalization or time-space compression (another Harvey-term), and asks whether this in fact “represent very much a western, colonizer’s view” (Massey 1991/1994: 147). After contrasting the mobility of airplanes, e-mails, financial flows and high-speed trains, Massey reminds the reader that there are still, at the same time, women spending hours a day on foot, collecting water, and concludes that there is a “*power-geometry of time-space compression*” (Massey 1991/1994: 149, italics added). While some groups are highly mobile, and becoming more so, others are increasingly confined to very constrained localities with little resources or possibilities for mobility. And there is a politics to this. “For it does seem that mobility, and control over mobility, both reflects and reinforces power. (...) The time-space compression of some groups can undermine the power of others” (Massey 1991/1994: 150). Having described this power-geometry, Massey continues by asking how places then can be conceptualised. Her discussion focuses on the need to get away from the “reactionary” notion of place, which was previously discussed with reference to Harvey’s rejection of place-based studies.

Massey’s starting point for talking about a global sense of place is her own neighbourhood of Kilburn in North London. By describing the local medley of Irish newspapers, Bollywood movie commercials, overhead air flights and heavy traffic, Massey evokes a place which is marked by porosity and openness to outside influences rather than stability and rootedness. Based on this discussion she argues that places should be conceptualized in terms of social interactions and understood as processes. Further, that boundaries should not be understood as defining a place, rather it is the linkages between places that help to produce them. Neither should places be thought of as having single, unique identities, instead Massey claims that places are full of internal conflicts over past, present and future identities. All of this does not however mean that places are not unique. On the contrary, the social interaction that produces place continues to reproduce the specificity of place, “but it is not a specificity which results from some long, internalized history” (Massey 1991/1994:155).

While the concept of a “global sense of place” has been widely influential in contemporary social sciences, it has also been criticized. Cresswell (2004) notes that it may render the idea of place too loose and unspecific, and asks: “What is the ‘place’ component of Massey’s Kilburn? Is it no more than an accidental coming together of many different flows in one location?” (Cresswell 2004: 74) He also claims that Massey’s conceptualisation of place as open and progressive (and Harvey’s depiction of place as reactionary) may be premised on the specific qualities of two different cases, so that “a great deal, it seems to me, depends on what particular instance of place we choose to look at” (Cresswell 2004: 75). As an alternative perspective, which he claims goes “beyond reactionary and progressive senses of place”, he proposes an article by Jon May (1996) on “Globalization and the Politics of Place” which is based on an ethnographic fieldwork on the recently gentrified London neighbourhood of Stoke Newington. May’s discussion is based on interviews with long-term residents from traditional working-class backgrounds and more recently settled residents from the so-called cultural classes. He argues that although the interviewees shared a white English majority position, their construction of Englishness and of the local area in which they lived differed.

According to May, working-class residents express sentiments of loss and disenfranchisement, feeling “their sense of place to be under threat from recent changes in the area and especially the arrival of other ethnic groups in the neighbourhood” (May 1996: 197). In contrast, the cultural class residents are said to being engaged in a re-imagining of the area “as the quintessential English village” in a way which, according to May, is “working to destroy working class understandings of the neighbourhood” (May 1996: 197). As an example of these re-imaginings, May quotes two different narratives about a local pub. While Alex, a graphic designer who moved to Stoke Newington 10 years ago describes the recent changes in the pub’s interior and its change of name from *Red Lion* to *Magpie and Stump* as “a good job inside, made it more traditional”, Paul, who has lived in the neighbourhood all his life bemoans these changes. “It used to be a nice pub, and I mean the *Red Lion*, it’s a nice name for a pub. The *Magpie and Stump*! Why bring in the yuppy names, why not keep the traditional thing?!” (May 1996: 203). Both Alex and Paul invoke tradition, but their respective ideas about the traditional English pub are clearly at odds. According to May, Alex’s relationship to the local pub is one of ironic enjoyment and aesthetic pleasure, a pleasure which in effect is working to destroy Paul’s sense of place. The working class and cultural class interviewees’ narratives about cultural difference and the presence of various ethnic

minority groups in the neighbourhood are also dissimilar. While Paul tends to describe the minority residents as an annoyance and a source of problems, Alex and other cultural class residents refer to the presence of ethnic minorities as a positive element of mixture and exotic recreation. May however argues that these more positive narratives of difference are marked by a taste for the exotic and represents the same kind of aestheticized experience of the neighbourhood as that which drives the cultural class's romance with an imagined traditional English village.

I find May's treatment of the interviewees' statements, and especially his dismissal of the cultural class residents' accounts about their own sense of the place as aestheticized and inauthentic, somewhat problematic. He seems to read expressions about sense of place as a direct expression of and result of a fixed class position. While I agree with May that class conflicts are an important part of the battle for place (as would obviously Massey), I believe issues of class, ethnicity, power and identity to be more complex and potentially ambiguous than May's analysis reflects. In my opinion the examples that May provide are not at odds with Massey's arguments for seeing place as open, processual and constructed through its links with other places rather than through its perceived boundaries. On the contrary I think his discussion of how different residents make sense of Stoke Newington's relationships and past and present connections to England, the former British Empire and today's migratory practices is a good example of why place should be conceived of in terms of global rather than strictly local influences. May's article also underlines Massey's point that places more often than not are marked by internal conflicts over past, present and future identities. That there is a politics to this is obvious, and the outcome of that politics can be both reactionary, progressive or as in May's analysis of Stoke Newington, aestheticizing of the exotic.

In *For Space* (2005) Doreen Massey restates her perspectives on place through a discussion of space. In the book, she argues against the tendency to view space as a surface or expanse, and the implicit distinction so often made between place as a closed but meaningful site of everyday living and space as something else. Massey insists that we conceive of both place and space as contingent and flexible social constructs, and claims that this has important consequences for our understanding of spatial and place-based phenomena. Her approach to space (and place) is based on three propositions. The first of these propositions is that *space should be recognized as the product of interrelations*. Rather than an already established abstract surface on which social relations take place, spatiality should be seen as co-constitutive of identities/entities and the relations between them. This means for example that

the spatial relationship between a regional centre such as Tromsø and a small fishing village in a neighbouring municipality, or between a university teacher in that regional centre and a student living part-time in the fishing village, is not simply a matter of physical distance. Spatial relations depend on infrastructural possibilities, perceptions of proximity and remoteness, identities and dissociations. Spatial entities, such as places or nations, are similarly products of interrelations. So too are the spatial identities of these entities. A focus on the interrelationality of space and place opens up a number of political questions about power, distance, proximity and connectivity. Some of these have been explored by John Allen (2003) and I will turn to his work in section 2.2.1, which focuses on the question about how to conceptualise a relational politics of place. The particular challenges of an interrelationally produced place have also been discussed by Ash Amin (2004), whose work I will focus on in section 2.2.2.

Massey's second proposition, that *space should be understood as a sphere of multiplicity or contemporary plurality*, builds on the first. The interrelations that produce space are not uniform or singular. For Massey it is important that differences between places today should be accepted as truly different trajectories and not simply as differences in time. In using the term trajectories, Massey accentuates that social relationships today are based on traces of the past, and that these traces are spatial as well as a temporal. In other words, the social relationships that make up a given contemporary place are always connected to relations in other places and in other times. In Tromsø for example there was in 2011 a heated debate about what status the Sami language should have in municipal bureaucracy and on official signs. While the debate over this is a unique political and social issue in Tromsø, it is also connected to the general situation of the Sami minority in Norway and in the Barents region, to indigenous policies in other countries, and to the repressive treatment of the Sami and Sami language in Norway's past. Each place consists of a specific mix of trajectories and "stories-so-far" (Massey 2005: 12). This recognition of space as a sphere of multiplicity is important in imagining places as sites in which the potentials of contemporary plurality are realized. It also poses the question of how we live together in our difference. According to Massey 'no space/place is a coherent seamless authenticity' (Massey 2005:10), and one important implication following from this is the necessity of internal negotiation. Massey argues that the focus on space as the sphere of multiplicity resonates with a political emphasis on difference and heterogeneity. I will explore the politics of negotiating different identities of place and the relationship between politics of interest and politics of identities in section 2.2.3.

Massey's third proposition, that *space is always under construction*, emphasizes the open and ongoing character of these internal negotiations. Seeing the production of spaces and places as a continual process is vital to Massey's insistence upon the genuine openness of the future. She believes that it is this genuine openness that makes politics possible. 'In this open interactional space there are always connections yet to be made, juxtapositions yet to flower into interaction [...] relations which may or may not be accomplished' (Massey 2005:11). A valid follow-up question may be how such continual construction is envisaged to take place. While Massey refers to discourse theorists Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's (1985/2001) notions of radical democracy in explaining this proposition in *For Space*, much of her own empirical discussions both in this book and in previous work seem to implicate a structuration/practice ontology like those of Anthony Giddens (1984) and Pierre Bourdieu (1980). Although combining historical descriptions, literary examples, political economy studies and more philosophical discussions, there is a persistent tendency in her work towards focusing on social practice and on social relationships as the driving force in place politics. In considering public spaces for example, she argues that "the tendency to romanticise public space as an emptiness which enables free and equal speech does not take on board the need to theorise space and place as the product of social relations which are most likely conflicting and unequal (...) From the greatest square to the smallest public park these places are a product of, and internally dislocated by, heterogeneous and sometimes conflicting social identities/relations" (Massey 2005: 152). However, the material conditions of place are frequently drawn into the discussion in different ways (for example her 2006 article on landscape and moving mountains), and in *For Space* she also mentions the trajectories of the non-human as playing a part in constituting and constructing place. In her later work there is also an increasing focus on how social identities are produced and negotiated. Her discussion in *For Space* of how a public immigration official tried to intervene in the imaginations and image of Hamburg as a city that is not only cosmopolitan and open to the world, but also welcoming towards immigrants, is an example of this. Here Massey refers to a poster that was made depicting a famous Hamburg landmark, a huge rock, cut through with an open gate and a statement that this rock was Hamburg's oldest immigrant. Although Massey focused on the interventional *practice* of the immigration official, this example also shows the potential of analysing the use of *stories* in the production and negotiation of place. I will explore this potential further in section 2.3, which focuses on the question of how place politics can be approached through an analysis of discursive practices and place stories.

2.2 Explorations: Politics of a relational sense of place

In this section I will explore and expand upon Massey's relational perspectives on place through the first three questions formulated in the introduction to this chapter. I start by looking at the relationship between power and politics and the question of how to understand politics in relation to an open and constructivist understanding of place, drawing especially on Allen's (2003) discussion of Lefebvre as well as Colombino's (2009) use of this discussion. Next I will discuss the question of the political challenges of place through Amin's (2004) definition of place politics as involving a politics of propinquity and a politics of connectivity, as well as Massey's (2004) calls for a politics of place beyond place, which she has also termed a politics of responsibility. Finally I will examine questions related to belonging and having a sense of place, and the relationship between politics of interests and politics of identities in place, using perspectives from Tuan (1974/1996), Taylor (2010), McDowell (2004) and Staeheli (2008) among others.

2.2.1 Place, power, politics

According to Held (1989, in Stokke 1999) politics is about power relations and the transformative capacity of social agents, agencies and institutions. Different theoretical perspectives understand power in different ways, and focus on different kinds of political processes. This dissertation does not engage with pluralist theories of power based on representational democracy, governance or local elections. Politics as discussed here is about the definitional or cognitive aspects of power, described in terms of symbolic capital by Pierre Bourdieu (1991) and in terms of discursive power by Michel Foucault (1969). Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital, Louis Wacquant (2005) defines political struggle as "a cognitive struggle (practical and theoretical) for the power to impose the legitimate vision of the social world" (Wacquant, 2005). Following Wacquant and Massey, the place politics that will be explored here can be understood as a struggle over relational, multiple and always-ongoing place constructions.

As discussed in the previous section, Massey has argued that both space and place should be conceived of as an interrelational product. I will start to examine the political significance of this proposition through the work of Massey's colleague of many years, John Allen. In *Lost Geographies of Power* (2003) Allen argues for an understanding of power as "a relational

effect of social interaction” (Allen 2003: 2). He rejects understandings of power based on metaphors of power as a “thing” which can be possessed or stored in particular institutions or “held” as a potential force by certain actors. Allen distinguishes between resources and power, and emphasizes that while organizations or actors may control large amounts of resources, this does not automatically translate into power. The utilization of resources to bring about certain results is dependent on social interaction, which means that the results that can be achieved are contingent on how the interaction goes. Power is in other words an effect, not a potential. Allen argues against perceptions of power as flowing unconstrained across space and time through the kind of networks described by Manuel Castells. He is also critical of Foucault’s notions of power as immanent, and of Hardt and Negri’s idea of power as an omnipresent Empire, stating that “neither a centred nor a decentred view of power is particularly helpful in terms of understanding the spatial trappings of power” (Allen 2004: 19). To Allen, power must be understood as a mediated relational effect that is always constituted in space and time. This means that social interaction will produce different kinds of effects depending on whether the interaction takes place through face-to-face contact or at a distance. Allen stresses that power is experienced “at first hand through the rhythms and relationships of particular places” (Allen 2003: 2). He builds on Max Weber in stating that there are many different modalities of power, and the different modalities have different spatial reach. Authority for example depends on proximity in a way that domination through spatial representations do not. To Allen, considering the different modalities of power and their spatial constitution are important in order to avoid an approach to power as being “anywhere and nowhere”. Such an approach not only makes it difficult to analyse power (what to include and exclude if everything is to be understood as a technique or relation of power?), but it would also leave little space for politics or resistance. Like Massey’s insistence on the importance of a genuine openness of space, understanding power as based on social relations, a contingent effect which may or not be realized, means that the future is open and change is possible.

Among the theorists discussed by Allen is Henri Lefebvre, and I will focus on Lefebvre and on Allen’s discussion of him because I find it instructive both in understanding the power of place and the potential room for politics. I have already noted that Lefebvre’s work was an important inspiration for Marxist geography. His theories continue to inspire current geographers working on for example urban diversity (Simonsen 2005) and banal orientalism (Koefoed and Simonsen 2010). As Lefebvre combines practice and discourse in his discussion

of spatial production his perspective is also helpful in discussing power and politics in relation to place stories, and I will return to this later in section 2.3. Lefebvre's work can be described as a post-Marxist approach in that it is not only a critique but also an expansion on some of the key questions of Marxist theory. To Karl Marx, the relationship between those who owned the means of production and those who supplied the workforce formed the economic basis, determining the political and cultural superstructure. Relations of production were thus also relations of power (Peet 1998). While Lefebvre modifies both the structural determinism and the prominence of material factors over cultural factors like language and ideology, the stress on power relations as constitutive of society and of space has been retained. In *The Production of Space* (1991, first published in French in 1974) Lefebvre argues that space plays an instrumental role in the existing mode of capitalist production. He claims that space "serves as a tool of thought and of action; that in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power" (Lefebvre 1991: 26). Lefebvre conceives space as produced through the intersection and interrelationship between three different ways of relating to space which he calls spatial practice, representations of space and representational space. This relationship is often illustrated by a pyramid (Figure 1):

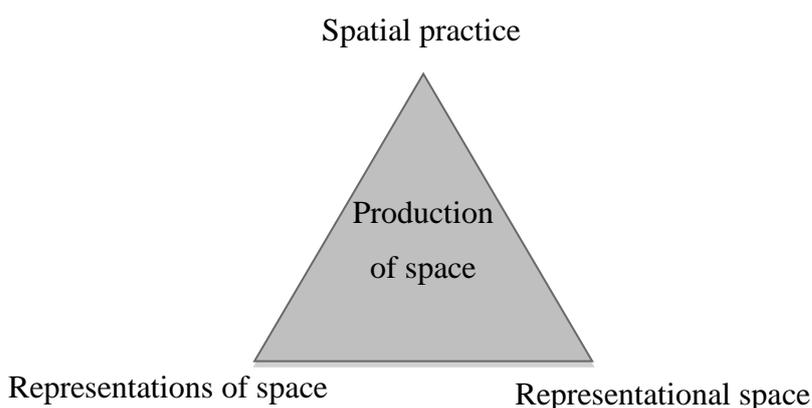


Figure 1 Lefebvre's spatial triad

Spatial practice can be defined as the social production and reproduction of daily life in a given society. It incorporates the daily routines and routes through which actors live their lives. *Representations of space* are the conceptual or ordered space of urban planners, cartographers and architects. These representations can be both discursive (language) and material (buildings, roads). Representations of space “[are] the dominant space in any society” (Lefebvre 1991: 39). Finally, *representational space* can perhaps be summed up as symbolic or imagined space. According to Lefebvre “this is the dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate” (Lefebvre 1991: 39).

Allen’s (2003) discussion of Lefebvre focuses on the distinction between the *formal* representations of space through urban planning, architecture and law, and the *informal* or lived representational space. According to Allen, Lefebvre tends to portray spatial power as an uneven battle between the domination of space through representation and the resistance against this through representational space. Taking the City of London as an example, Allen uses Lefebvre’s concepts to show how this is a place which is marked by the domination of financial capital and bankers. Allen argues that domination of space can be understood as “principally about the ability to represent space in a particular way, to code it in a manner that suggests that only certain groups are present” (Allen 2003: 162). Representations are not only text or architecture, such as the imposing monuments and buildings that house the City’s financial institutions. They are also made real through spatial practices that underpin the representations, for example the practices surrounding the selling and buying of financial assets. Allen emphasizes that domination of space is about the closing down of possibilities, where those who are formally free to do otherwise have no choice but to fall in line. The coding of space to make it a space for some and not for others takes the effect of a smothering, a smoothing out of differences and an “Othering” of those groups who do not fit in with the given code. In the case of the City, these groups include various service providers such as janitors, waiters and technical staff who work alongside the bankers and brokers but whose presence is not acknowledged in the coding of the place. They are still able to inhabit the space, and may through various informal spatial practices form a kind of silent or invisible “resistance”. Thus the power of abstract spatial representation to erase the traces of others, to reduce difference, is never entirely effective, but nor can the resistance inherent in Lefebvre’s spatial representations actually take on and challenge the representations of space.

Allen's main argument with Lefebvre's spatial triad is that there is more to spatial power than simple domination. He insists that there is a need to discuss in more detail the different kinds of power that are in play in a place like the City of London, to look at the different spatial practices that together produce a sense of ownership and Othering. These practices draw on different modalities of power that each has their own logic and mechanisms. In the case of London's financial district, Allen suggests that authority, manipulation and seduction all play a part in producing the powerful representation that is the City. Like all modes of power, authority is not an asset that is held but rather a relational effect that has to be produced. "Those who act as *an* authority in the City draw upon wider networks of expertise to bolster their credibility in the eyes of others and, in so doing, draw upon the trappings of past and present resources to confer legitimacy" (Allen 2003:169). While authority has to do with recognition, the power of manipulation is in misrecognition and indirectness, "where the concealment of intent serves to bring about the desired outcome" (Allen 2003: 31). Allen indicates that global capital and commerce have been able to dominate the cultural codes of conduct in the City by "mislead[ing] people into imagining that they are all part of one cultural space, when in fact their own particular attachments have been selectively erased" (Allen 2003: 170). Such manipulation makes cultural resistance impossible because those who are being written out of the spatial script are not even aware of it. Finally, seduction as a modality of power works by keeping options open. This may best be understood in contrast to domination, which leaves no room for choice. Allen explains seduction with reference to Lipovetsky's work on advertising. "Advertising influences, but it does not threaten; it suggests, but it does not seek doctrinal domination." (Lipovetsky 1994: 164, in Allen 2003: 31). With reference to the City, Allen argues that through representations of "fast money", buzz and excitement, the financial activities of the City are associated with something attractive and "jazzy", and that these seductive representations "capitalizes upon those tendencies which already appeal and seeks to proliferate them. 'Membership', in this instance, is all about imposing a pace and a rhythm on to the City's economic life that is suggestive of a fast tempo and a mood of spontaneity" (Allen 2003: 171). While actors are free to reject the seductive pull of these representations, Allen reminds the reader that such rejection may also imply that one is seen by oneself and by others as "slow" and therefore "out of place" in the City.

Annalisa Colombino (2009), drawing on Allen's discussion of Lefebvre, argues that the latter's understanding of representations of space as produced exclusively by "powerful"

social actors such as urban elites” (Colombino 2009: 285) is problematic because the focus on domination creates a blind spot with regards to how other social actors produce their own representations of space. In relation to her study of how Trieste residents responded to the multicultural image used for marketing the city in its bid for the 2008 World Expo, Colombino argues that “interviewees articulated their own representations of their city by drawing on their everyday concrete experiences, their ways of thinking, imagining and feeling about their city” (Colombino 2009: 285). These articulations can be seen as representations of space through which spatial representations are conceived and articulated in abstract form by ordinary people, and as Colombino shows, her interviewees’ representations were in various degrees different from and independent of the official representations of space as seen in the marketing material for Trieste. She explains this with reference to Allen’s view of power as the mobilisation of resources, saying that “ordinary people, according to their different social positions, for example, may employ a wide range of intellectual resources (e.g. ideological discourses, scholastic knowledge, understanding of history) to produce representations of space” (Colombino 2009: 286), and depending on the available resources they may draw on authority, manipulation or seduction to empower their representations. I find Colombino’s approach to the Trieste bid very interesting and relevant to this dissertation, and will return to her perspectives on how residents produce representations of space in section 2.3 where I will discuss Lefebvre’s categories in relation to discursive theories.

In my opinion, the important thing about Allen’s discussion of the different modalities of power that together produce the financial elites “right to the City” is that it contributes to a more flexible and nuanced understanding of place politics. Allen makes visible a space for contestation and claim beyond the more tacit forms of resistance that Lefebvre refers to as representational space. The implications of this can be explicated with reference to Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift’s (2002) stress on the importance of enabling alternative imaginations in urban politics, as well as Chantal Mouffe’s (2000) concept of radical democracy based on agonistic pluralism. Mouffe argues that politics is always concerned with the creation of an ‘us’ and a ‘them’, underlining that “the aim of democratic politics is to construct the ‘them’ in such a way that it is no longer perceived as an enemy to be destroyed, but as an ‘adversary’, that is, somebody whose ideas we combat but whose right to defend those ideas we do not put into question” (Mouffe 2000: 102). This kind of agonistic pluralism is vital for opening up the possibility of alternative futures in urban policy, and also an important prerequisite for a relational approach to place politics.

2.2.2 Politics of propinquities and connectivities

What are the political challenges raised by a relational sense of place? In this section I will explore the geographies of place constructions and how place politics are negotiated through notions of proximity, distance and (dis)connectivities. I will start with Ash Amin (2004), who argues that the way in which cities and regions are imagined as territorial or relational has important political implications, related "to what is taken to count as being political at the local level" (Amin 2004: 34). Amin notes that a territorial or bounded understanding of the regional leads to untenable political expectations. In discussing various calls for greater regional autonomy in several European countries, Amin argues that the ambitions of this new regionalism to create a greater local control over economic development and to build stronger regional identities are both premised on an idea of a bounded territory called the region. While he supports the ideal of building regional voice and representation, he warns "against the assumption that there is a defined geographical territory out there over which local actors can have effective control and can manage as a social and political space" (Amin 2004: 36). He also "questions[s] a politics of place based on the idea of a territorial commons or a cohesive culture" (Amin 2004: 37), saying that the idea of a strictly local public sphere and a unitary local culture are untenable in today's trans-territorial media and public culture. In place of a territorial regionalism, Amin insists on a relational understanding of cities and regions as sites of heterogeneity and multiple geographies of proximity, linkages and flows. As I have already discussed in the introduction, Amin argues that there are two political aspects or challenges that need to be addressed by relational place politics, namely the politics of propinquity and the politics of connectivity.

The *politics of propinquity* addresses the political "issues thrown up by living with diversity and sharing a common territorial space" (Amin 2004:39). According to Amin many of these issues are connected to the production and negotiation of everyday life. Local goods and services, housing and schooling are as he describes it the bread and butter of local politics everywhere. But, he continues, the politics of the everyday effectively transcends the local level, as national and international regulations, trade circuits, imports and exports, as well as travel networks and diaspora communities all have a role to play in these productions. In Massey's terms, the politics of propinquity can be described as the negotiation of multiplicity and multiple trajectories that meet up with each other within concrete places. What distinguishes the politics of propinquity is the fact that this meeting *takes place*, on a common

turf where differences need to be somehow managed and resolved. As noted by Valentine (2008), the fact of everyday encounters does not necessarily make the accommodation of difference easier. Amin calls for a politics of propinquity that takes the spatial juxtaposition of diverse economic interests, overlapping communities and different cultural practices seriously as a *field of agonistic engagement*. The challenge of the politics of propinquity is to negotiate ways of accommodating different interests and identities as legitimate adversaries sharing the same turf. This includes the important negotiations about how to define the borders of that place, and who may be regarded as rightful inhabitants and stakeholders of that negotiation. As discussed by Alexander (2008) with regards to youths' fragile sense of safety and civic identity in Newcastle (UK), and by Buciek, Bærenholdt and Juul (2006) with regards to the invisibility of long-term immigrants in the discourses of cultural heritage in Frederiksværk (Denmark), there are potentially many different groups of inhabitants whose rights as stakeholders are contested or goes unrecognized. Amin notes:

The politics of propinquity must be as much about what is struggled over (turf, difference, and the forcings of spatial juxtaposition), as it must be about the conduct of local politics, in allowing agonistic engagement (contra the politics of governmentality) and about who or what counts as political, through its recognition of the acts of expression and organization across local society (contra the powers of designated institutions) (Amin 2004: 39).

What this means, according to Amin, is that place politics should be thought of as a process which works with and through difference, accepting the common turf rather than any concepts of indigeneity as the basis of negotiation. Further, that this negotiation should take seriously the need for an antagonistic and plural democracy in which differences can be voiced. And finally that the politics of propinquity should accept questions of local economy and local culture as always also implicated in a set of non-local connectivities, meaning that no local cultural or economic coherence should be assumed.

The last argument points towards Amin's second aspect of relational place politics, which is a *politics of connectivity (or transitivity)*. This term captures the political implications of the multiple connections between any place and the so-called outside world. Amin asserts that place politics has to "work with the varied geographies of relational connectivity and transitivity that make up public life and the local political realm in general in a city or region" (Amin 2004:40). Places, or rather, various actors or citizens in a place, has to negotiate not only the nature of their co-inhabitation of a common ground, but also the nature of a place's connections to economic, political and cultural actors in other places. Amin mentions as a

concrete example the need to discuss or negotiate a region's economic model of practice, positing a "growth-before-equity" model based on transnational corporations, migrant labour and minimum regulation against a "growth-for-equity" model based on social needs, fair trade, redistribution and international co-operation with other regions to show what the politics of connectivity may involve. While admitting that these two models are to some extent a caricature, Amin says that his point is that different conceptualisations of how to participate in a globalized economy and what amounts to local returns may create different logics and different political rationalities.

The politics of connectivity is not about the balance between localism and globalism. It is a matter of making explicit, and of choosing between, different senses of place and place attachment on the basis of agonistic engagement between different coalitions of cultural and geographical attachment. (Amin 2004: 42)

Massey (2004) also discusses the political demands of a relational understanding of place, emphasizing that "'a global sense of place' means that any nation, region, city, as well as being internally multiple, is also a product of relations which spread out way beyond it" (Massey 2004: 6). While the challenge of internal multiplicity can be understood as a question of dealing with 'the stranger within the gates', the challenge raised by external relations is formulated by Massey as a "question of the stranger *without*" (Massey 2004: 6, italics in original). Based on a case study of London under Ken Livingstone's mayoralship, Massey argues that while the challenge of negotiating internal multiplicity within place has to some extent been taken up, there is a tendency for the questions of external relations to be understood as out-of-reach for local politics. Massey explains this as a result of a conceptual counterpositioning between place and space, through which space is posited as "the abstract outside of place as lived" (Massey 2004: 7). What follows from this is a tendency to view globalization as an abstract process which happens somewhere "outside". Such abstraction could be described as a "politics of disconnectivity". By using London as a particularly vivid example, Massey makes it clear that the economic transactions and international political decisions usually thought of as "globalization" always must take place somewhere, and that the global is therefore always also local. Massey calls for a relational "politics of responsibility" in which places are required to take responsibility for their economic and political connections to other places, including connections between the capital and other regions within the same country (Massey 2007). Cities or regions may be very different with regards to the possibility of making such choices, being differently positioned in the global

power-geometry. However, simply taking the current position of connectivity as a given is to surrender agency and deriving place politics of a very important aspect, namely the “politics of place beyond place”.

To sum up the discussion, the politics of propinquity may be explained as a politics of closeness. It relates to the negotiation of political issues that although not necessarily arising locally need to be resolved locally by people sharing the same turf, who have to find ways of living and working together. The politics of connectivity on the other hand is a politics of distances and connections, and relates to the negotiation and management of relations between places. A possible outcome of such negotiations may also be the disconnection of some external relations. What is at stake in negotiating politics of propinquities and connectivities? While Amin includes the negotiation of borders and identities in his discussion of the politics of propinquity, his examples of place politics are largely economic and has to do with the production and distribution of resources. In the next section I will explore how to understand place politics as a reciprocal negotiation of identities and interests.

2.2.3 Politics of identities, interests and place

This section takes as its starting point the question about how to conceive the relationship between a relational sense of place, belonging and identity in place politics. It responds to the challenges raised by recognizing places as sites of multiplicity and difference and the political negotiation that recognizing this multiplicity demands and enables. I will explore this challenge through different theories about the links between identities and place, underlining the connections between politics of identities and politics of interests by drawing on theories about citizenship. I start, however, with the question of place and belonging.

The importance of belonging and place was emphasised by humanistic geographers such as Relph and Tuan in the 1970s in a reaction to positivistic geography’s more instrumentalist orientation towards place as a location for economic investments. Their approach was a phenomenological one, and focused upon emotion and the personal experience of place which was described as “sense of place”. Yi-Fu Tuan (1974/1996) distinguished between sense of place as ‘public symbols’ and sense of place as ‘fields of care’. The former notion was related to a visual experience of place whilst the latter was related to other sensual experiences of being in a place. Whereas place as a public symbol can be appreciated and acknowledged ‘at a glance’ so-to-speak, to know a place as a field of care requires a longer attachment and may

not be acknowledged by 'outsiders'. It is this understanding of sense of place which is most common in contemporary uses of the term. Sense of place as a field of care is a subjective and personal experience of, involvement in, or identification with, a place, and through it place is conceptualized as stable and rooted. The rootedness of place was also a central topic for Edward Relph (Cresswell 2004, Simonsen 2008). Drawing on Heidegger's concept of dwelling, Relph argued that to have a lasting attachment to a place, or a sense of place, is a fundamental human need. Relph was concerned with the authenticity of place as an important condition for personal involvement, and feared that this authenticity would be lost as a result of modern 'placeless' living.

Cresswell (2004) notes that Relph and Tuan's emphasis on subjective and rooted experiences of place has been met by criticism from Marxist geographers who found that the focus on individual experience was unhelpful in efforts to understand social disparity and unequal distribution of resources, and from feminist geographers who disapprove of the implicitly masculine perspectives on home and dwelling that both authors perpetuate in their works. Harvey (1996) has engaged critically with Heidegger's work on 'dwelling', describing Heidegger's withdrawal to a pre-modern cottage in the Black Forest as quite unproductive when it comes to facing the challenges of living in modern places that are under threat from 'footloose' capital. Tuan's embodied and pre-cognitive perspectives on place have however been influential in contemporary efforts towards emotional and affective geographies, for example Nigel Thrift's calls for non-representational theory (1999, 2004) and John Wylie's (2002) walking of Glastonbury Tor.

Amin and Thrift (2005) insist that "there is a dimension of objective reality that is too much its own thing ever to be framed as a mere construction" (Amin & Thrift 2005: 224). In relation to place politics, this dimension beyond construction can perhaps be explained in terms of Tuan's embodied and affective sense of place. While I would not reject the existence of such embodied identifications, the problem with focusing on emotional or affective senses of place is that non-representational senses of belonging may become a double-edged idea in place politics. On the one hand, stories about non-representational objective realities, about affective senses of belonging and feelings attached to place are constantly drawn upon, both in everyday talk, political debate and academic discourse. On the other hand, such stories are difficult to debate or contest, because senses of place are supposed to be beyond representation and articulation. Amin and Thrift somewhat superciliously describes representational approaches as "the idea of explaining the social by means of the social"

(Amin & Thrift 2005: 224). If representations are merely social, non-representations in my opinion run a real risk of being non-social and non-political. I would therefore argue for conceptualizing sense of place in a different way than the strictly non-representational and affective path. Gillian Rose (1995) emphasizes that place-based identities, although subjective, are embedded in wider sets of social relations. “Although senses of place may be very personal, they are not entirely the result of one individual’s feelings and meanings; rather, such feelings and meanings are shaped in large part by the social, cultural and economic circumstances in which individuals find themselves (Rose 1995:89).” A visually argued example of this point can be found in Ingrid Pollard’s photographs and poetry depicting a black woman hiking through an archetypical English landscape. As argued by Mitchell (2000) “Pollard’s work asks what it means to belong, what it means to be excluded – often violently – from the England that is her home. (...) Much of Pollard’s work, in fact, is designed explicitly to ask *who* has the right to the land, who can call the land home.” (Mitchell 2000: 259) According to Tuan, to know a place as a field of care requires a longer attachment and may not be acknowledged by ‘outsiders’. Against an individual and experience-based field of care, Pollard’s work demonstrates that social relations and economic and symbolic resources play a prominent role in determining which senses of place are possible and permissible for whom. It is this relational and constructed sense of place that I aim to explore in this dissertation by focusing on the politics of the stories that individuals tell about themselves and about their place in the world.

In her book *Narratives of Identity and Place* (2010), Stephanie Taylor explores how middle-class women in England use established narratives or stories about place to construct narratives about their own identity and sense of belonging or not belonging in their places of residence. Taylor describes her work as critical discursive psychology, and argues that “people’s identities are constructed in their talk” (Taylor 2010:8). Furthermore, as people are dependent on using existing discourses and stories as resources to construct accounts about themselves in their narratives, “personal and social identity are inseparable” (Taylor 2010:3). This means that in constructing identity, actors draw on the discursive resources that are available to them.⁵ The question of belonging is a vital element of the narratives about identity and place discussed by Taylor. She says that the idea of a long-term relationship to

⁵ Taylor’s discursive approach will be further examined in section 2.3.

place is an ideal which is frequently drawn upon, and that actors who cannot draw on any long-term family or personal residence tend to construct attachment to or identification with place through other discursive resources such as stories about class, landscape or lifestyle. While there are many different stories potentially available for constructing belonging, Taylor reminds the reader that these stories are also stories about exclusion, and may therefore represent discursive “trouble” for actors who cannot take on the subject position required for successfully using the story in their narratives. Taylor notes that this project of constructing identity through narrative is not a question of free invention. A given actor has different subject positions available to her, for example as a woman or as middle-aged, and “the assumptions and values attached to these positions and the ways in which she is seen by others all limit or constrain her identity work. Also, as noted by Bronwyn Davies and Rom Harré (1990/2001), positioning through narrative is not necessarily intentional or voluntary, but can be a result of other actors’ narrative positionings. A discursive identity project is therefore an ongoing, unresolved negotiation (even juggling) of possibilities” (Taylor 2010: 8). Taylor contends that stories about place are used as discursive resources for identity construction, and that because any place “has multiple meanings and associations attached to it, and, potentially, multiple identities” (Taylor 2010: 10), place becomes a very flexible resource which can be used in a number of different ways by different actors, or even by the same actor in different discursive contexts. She refers to Benwell and Stokoe (2006) who has argued that the identities of places are not fixed but are constructed as good or bad through people’s narratives. Taylor notes that the identities of people who live in a place influences on the identity of that place, and that this relationship is reciprocal so that the identity of the place also reflects on the identity of the people living there. If an area is recognized by others as high-class or posh, actors may choose to use this reputation of the place to construct a narrative about themselves as successful. Or if an area is constructed as poor or ghetto this may pose a potential problem for residents in their narratives about themselves and their sense of belonging, as discussed by Bülent Diken (1998) with regards to third generation Turkish immigrants in Aarhus, Denmark. There is in other words a need for actors to negotiate between their self-identification and the construction of their identities by others.

This negotiation of possible identities has also been described by Richard Jenkins (2000) in relation to group identities. Jenkins notes that groups and individuals have both a self-defined identity and an ascribed identity based on categorization by others. He refers to Goffman, and argues that the relationship between self-defined and ascribed identities can be understood as

an “internal-external dialectic of *self-image* and *public image*” (Jenkins 2000: 8, italics in original). This dialectic is never straight-forward. While a social group may change its self-image in different ways through positive or negative external categorization, categorization may also strengthen existing self-images as a result of resistance and reaction towards the external categorization, as Jenkins shows with reference to how in-migrating settlers in different states in the USA in the early 20th century adopted or rejected group-names given to them by the resident population. He notes that resources and collective organization is important in determining how groups are able to shape the public image of themselves. Lasse Koefoed and Kirsten Simonsen (2010) draw on Jenkins in their study of how members of the Pakistani ethnic minority in Denmark construct their identities through narratives of sameness and difference. They emphasise that “social identification is thus a *relational* process and can be understood as an ongoing *coming into existence*” (Koefoed & Simonsen 2010: 138, my translation, emphasis in original). However, in their discussion of the banal or “practical orientalism” that members of this group face in their everyday relations with the white majority population of Denmark, Haldrup, Koefoed and Simonsen (2006) demonstrate that externally categorized group identities are not easily negotiated or changed.

Linda McDowell (2004) argues that the recognition of identities as well as economic and gender divisions of labour as relational, and the links between these relational constructions and place, have important implications for theories and practices of participatory democracy. Through a case study of young white working-class men in two different locations in Britain, McDowell shows that “the social construction of gender identities are connected to inequalities of both status and income”, and argues that “it is important, then, to try and hold together the dual focus on the cultural construction of multiple identities and the continued dominance of the old structures of inequality” (McDowell 2004: 46). Although McDowell’s subject area is somewhat different from my focus on the use of place stories in struggling over a town’s future development, I will go through her study in some detail because it shows something important about the reciprocal relationship between interests and identities. McDowell describes the changes in the British low-skilled labour market from a dominance of industrial work that required tough physical labour towards what she describes as a “high-touch” labour market. While the industrial type low-skilled labour favoured constructions of masculinity that focused on being tough and risk-taking, a majority of the jobs now available for low-skilled workers are “dependent on a subservient, often routinized exchange between service providers and costumers in which the embodied performance of the former is part of

the exchange” (McDowell 2004: 50). Typical examples of such jobs are found in the retail sector, the fast food industry, the hospitality sector and the care-giving sector. The problem for the young white men in McDowell’s study was that their gendered identities and images of themselves as masculine did not easily fit in with the requirements of the jobs that were available for them. They are finding themselves disadvantaged not only as a result of their class, but also, in comparison to working-class women, as a result of their appearance and attitudes. McDowell notes that the white working class is increasingly constructed in media and political discourse as racist and backwards-looking, and that as a result they are also socially excluded from a political culture that celebrates multiculturalism and cosmopolitan attitudes. Through this exclusion the economic problems and interests of the white working-class are reimagined as a result of their identity and cultural lacks. Referring to her two case areas, McDowell claims that “the white working-class occupants are represented as impoverished not only by their economic circumstances but also because of their cultural attitudes (...) they are constructed as out of place in the new dominant discourse of ‘multicultural modernisation’” (McDowell 2004: 52). McDowell concludes with a call for a more inclusive form of participatory democracy and work-place politics, but also with the need for “a more materialist analysis of inequalities and differences” (McDowell 2004: 54). While this study focuses on narrative and discourse, I would like to take McDowell’s challenge as a reminder of how politics of identities are interlocked with politics of interests, not least in the negotiations over place. A related point has been made by Massey (2004) in stating that she would understand identity “along with the practices of its constitution, to be both material and discursive”, noting that this “implies a different spatiality, a different ‘geography’ of identities in general” (Massey 2004: 5).

Starting from the other angle by looking at social movements focusing on identity-politics, Lynn A. Staeheli (2008) argues that political claims for the recognition of identity and difference are also reflections of “broader social, political, and economic relationships that operate in society” (Staeheli 2008: 562). She draws on political theories about citizenship in her discussion of demands for recognition and affirmation of identities, and notes that “expressions of identity and difference in public realm have implications for the quality of democracy and citizenship, and are not simple expressions of individual characteristics, values and experiences” (Staeheli 2008: 562-563). According to Staeheli, struggles for recognition often take the form of struggles over boundaries, and especially the boundary between public and private, as groups strive to have their rights recognized by the state.

Barbara Hobson (2003) refers to how in Sweden feminist mobilization in the 1930s succeeded in obtaining a number of rights for working mothers, including “a paid maternal leave for women in public sector employment, and an income maintenance law in which the state paid benefits to unmarried and divorced mothers when fathers failed to pay their support” (Hobson 2003: 69). These rights that were attained through a gender-based identity movement may be described as shifting the questions of financial security for pregnant and child-rearing women from a private concern to a public right. Hobson argues that “when we analyse recognition struggles in specific institutional contexts, we can see the interplay of recognition and redistribution in the framing of claims and the making of collective identities” (Hobson 2003: 65).

Janet Newman and John Clarke argue that in the context of neo-liberal politics, “struggles have intensified around the remaking of the relationships between public, private and personal. These struggles are shadowed by a sense of uncertainty about who forms the public – and where it is to be found” (Newman and Clarke 2009: 1). Newman and Clarke note that “many of the processes of remaking publicness work on, and through, citizenship, changing its character, conditions and consequences” (Newman and Clarke 2009: 154). They argue for an understanding of citizenship as neither static nor solid, but rather a multiple and changeable figure that can be put to use in different ways in different political projects. This perspective on citizenship can be compared to that of Sallie Marston and Katharyne Mitchell, who “advocate an approach to citizenship that recognises it, not as a stable and evolving conceptual category, but as a non-static, non-linear, social, political, cultural, economic, and legal construction” (Marston and Mitchell 2004: 95). This means that they understand citizenship as a process, and they note that this process can be both enabling and constraining. As argued by Dickinson et al (2008), the processes of citizenship formation can be understood as an accumulation of everyday acts of regulation, contestation and categorization.

In relation to my perspective on place politics, I would argue that the politics of citizenship is one of the things that are at stake in different actors’ stories about identity and belonging in a place. Citizenship is a contextualised concept (Siim 2000, in Lister 2001), which is expressed in spaces and places. Symbolic constructions or images of concrete places are very often about establishing stories about who belongs to this place and what their rights are, and place and citizenship can therefore be understood as co-constructive concepts. In terms of formal rights and recognition, citizenship is of course a status that is granted by the nation state, although Holston and Appadurai (2003) note that there might be substantial discrepancies

between formal and substantive citizenship at different scales. Marston and Mitchell emphasise that “geographical scale is centrally implicated in producing and sustaining citizenship formations” and that “the discourses and practices of citizenship can derive from one scale and be effective at another” (Marston and Mitchell 2004: 110). This means that negotiations about rights and belonging in relation to places at the local level can also have implications for processes of citizenship formation at the national level – and vice versa. As an example, Koefoed and Simonsen (2010) report that many minority actors find it easier to construct a sense of belonging in the city of Copenhagen than in the nation of Denmark. While the city is constructed through stories about acceptance of difference, diversity and an increasingly cosmopolitan everyday life, established stories about the Danish nation tend to create more “trouble” for minority actors because they cannot easily take on the required subject position that these stories offer. Another example is Dorthe Passing’s (2010) study of how young Muslims in Denmark made sense of the so-called cartoon controversy, which erupted after the Danish newspaper *Jyllands Posten* published a series of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammad. Passing argues that the young women participating in her study interpreted the issue as primarily a national political question regarding democracy and freedom of speech within Denmark, and they expressed frustration at the way the issue had been used by actors outside Denmark as an example of global discrimination against Muslims. What both these examples show is that politics of identities can take place at many different scales and influence on each other in a variety of ways.

2.3 Approaches: Discursive practices, stories and place

This section will attempt to answer the question of how relational place politics can be studied through stories about place. As stated in the introduction the dissertation aims at investigating the potential of expanding on Massey’s notions of place politics through a focus on discursive practices. I will start by discussing the ontological standpoints of different discourse theories vis-à-vis the kind of practice or structure-actor ontology that I have argued are implicated in Massey’s perspectives on the social construction of place. I will also return to Lefebvre’s spatial triad and discuss the role of discourse in spatial production, drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1981) concepts of centripetality and centrifugality. Following this I will outline a narrative-discursive approach to place politics based on critical discursive psychology, focusing on the works of Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell (1987, 1992) and Stephanie Taylor (2010).

2.3.1 Social practice versus discourse

I have argued that Massey's work on space and place is based on a practice-oriented ontology, meaning an ontology that sees social practices as the primary force in producing social realities (Simonsen 2001). While there are some differences between different practice-theories, for example those of Giddens (1984) and Bourdieu (1980, 1991, Bourdieu and Wacquant 1993), a common trait is the attempt to overcome both the social determinism of structuralistic ontologies and the individualism of actor-oriented ontologies. By seeing social practice as both structuring and structured by social realities, meaning that social practices both produce and are dependent on social realities, practice-ontologies place agency at the forefront of analysis. It is important to note that this does not mean that social actors are generally thought to be intentionally producing structures, nor that actors are not constrained by structures. Giddens emphasises "the unintended consequences of intentional conduct" (Giddens 1984: 12), and Bourdieu (1980) describes social actors as differentially positioned in social fields with different access to economic, cultural and social capital, which conditions their practices. Bourdieu also emphasizes the role of embodied social expectations (*habitus*) and practical knowledge of the field (*sens pratique*) in structuring practice (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1993).

Discourse theory is generally premised on Michel Foucault's (1969) focus on the definitional power of discourse, which tends to privilege the ontological importance of discourse over social practice and material resources. When wanting to use a discursive approach together with a practice-oriented theory on place construction, some discussion of ontological commensurability seems to be in order. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985/2001) argue that discourse permeates the social to the extent that everything, not only language usage but also embodied practices and material objects, are mediated through discourse. Discourses, although contingent, are put forward as predominantly structuring actors, as hegemonic or established systems of meaning largely constitute the limits of possible practices. Agency is thus limited by the discursive framework. In contrast, Norman Fairclough (1999, 2003) differentiates between the discursive and the non-discursive, and holds that some practices are more or less independent of discourse. He sees discourses as both structuring and structured by social practices. Fairclough's critical discourse analysis has developed from a traditional Marxist ontology, and in his analyses, economic power structures are generally seen as having a strong influence on actors' actual discursive practices. The problem with Fairclough's distinction between the economy and discourse

seems to me that discourse becomes a superstructure with limited productive capacity vis-à-vis the economic base. There is also the problem of determining which practices that are independent of discourse and which that are not.

The discursive approach of social psychologists Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell can be seen as occupying an ontological middle-position between Fairclough and Laclau and Mouffe. While explicitly acknowledging that social and material practices and structures exist outside of discourse, discourse psychology tends to focus on how the great variety of human practices and non-human phenomena are made knowledgeable and meaningful through discourse. One example is Potter and Wetherell's (1987) discussion about the self in traditional psychology and sociology. The authors show how theories of the self that are based upon the notions of stable traits, social roles or autonomous emotions depend, in turn, upon a notion of the self as 'real' and somehow separate from the outside world. This can be seen as a parallel to Massey's discussion about how the conception of place has been based on notions about close-knit communities, stable boundaries and single identities. Potter and Wetherell continue by arguing that images of the self are dependent on the language we use to make sense of our own actions and those of others. Potter and Wetherell therefore want to "displace attention from the self-as-entity and focus it on the methods of constructing the self. That is, the question becomes not what is the true nature of the self, but how is the self talked about, how is it theorized in discourse?" (Potter and Wetherell 1987: 102) Following this, the focus in this dissertation is to look at the ways and means through which a place like Tromsø is constructed. How is Tromsø talked about and how is the place understood through the established stories that are used to make political projects meaningful?

In the next subsection I will explicate my focus on discursive practice and narrative, which builds on Potter and Wetherell's ontological approach. First however, I will discuss the position of Henri Lefebvre (1991) on social practice and discourse. While I find Lefebvre's inclusion of both social practices, materiality, dominance and resistance in the production of space to be both logical and fertile, his perspective on discourse is somewhat problematic for my project. In his exposition of space as a social product, Lefebvre criticizes the dichotomy between (discursive) representation and materiality, a dichotomy that he calls a double illusion when it comes to understanding space (Simonsen, 2010). While a focus on the discursive representation of space through language, mathematics and literature works as an illusion of transparency which misses out on space as materiality and practice, an approach to space that is based only on materiality becomes a realistic illusion, "which rests on the naive

attitude that “things” have a more real existence than subjects and their thoughts” (Simonsen 2010: 38, my translation). Lefebvre’s spatial triad was proposed as an alternative to both these two illusions. As described in section 2.2.1, this triad consists of spatial practice, representations of space and representational space. Lefebvre argues that while the formal and dominant representations of space tend “towards a system of verbal (and therefore intellectually worked out) signs”, the informal and repressed representational space “tend[s] towards more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs” (Lefebvre 1973/1991: 39). It seems to me that Lefebvre takes the perspective that verbal discourse is always the tool of hegemonic power, and that resistance can only come from outside discourse, through lived experiences of space. Lefebvre is also sceptical of the “fetishism of the spoken word” and calls it an illusion of transparency when “the spoken and written word are taken for (social) practice; it is assumed that absurdity and obscurity, which are treated as aspects of the same thing, may be dissipated without any corresponding disappearance of the ‘object’” (Lefebvre 1973/1991: 28).

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1981) offers an alternative to Lefebvre’s strict separation of formal representation of space through verbal discourse and informal representational space as non-verbal symbols. Bakhtin understood “language as essentially social and rooted in the struggle and ambiguities of everyday life” (Maybin 2001:65). The implication of this is that there is always struggle over meaning in discourse, and meaning may change as a result of social struggle. With the phrase the “multivoicedness of meaning” James Wertch (2001) builds upon the work of Bakhtin, and implies that meaning is always a collective product, which is based in group life. Bakhtin suggested that users of language only ‘rent’ meaning since it is already established in the words and phrases that they use. This multivoicedness of meaning points towards the concept of *dialogicality*: the notion that language use is inherently dependent upon explicit or implicit dialogue with others. This is true not only of the political or public discourses that constitute Lefebvre’s representations of space. Our everyday language is also filled with meanings that have been established through previous use.

The production of meaning in discourse takes place within the dynamic tension between what Bakhtin calls *centripetal* and *centrifugal* forces. Centripetal discourse refers to discourses of authority, be they those of religion, the state or an authoritarian parent. According to Wertch, “authoritative discourse is based on the assumption that utterances and their meanings are fixed” (Wertch 2001: 226). Centrifugal discourse on the other hand is associated with what Bakhtin calls inwardly persuasive discourse, which is expressed in everyday informal

conversations and people's reflections on their experiences. This kind of discourse is flexible, open to persuasion and change. The dynamic tension between centripetal and centrifugal forces are seen by Bakhtin as operating at every level of language use, and it is this tension which ensures that discourses may remain relatively stable whilst simultaneously amenable to change. If all discourses were of an authoritative or centripetal nature, then meaning would be something frozen and concrete. If all discourses were of the informal and centrifugal type, meaning would disappear because common understanding could not be established. It is the tension between the formal and the informal discourses in and through discursive practice that keeps producing and reproducing social language. I think it would be fruitful to think of representations of space as centripetal discourse and representational space as centrifugal discourse, and this would also fit in with Colombino's (2009) argument that representations of space should not only be thought of as the domain of a closed urban elite.

As a way of approaching discourse from a practice-ontological perspective I would argue that discourse should be understood as both a *structure* for understanding social and material phenomena and a *practice* through which this understanding is constructed. This does not mean that all things social, let alone all things material, are constituted through discourse alone, nor that verbal discourse is all there is to spatial production or to the social construction of place. It is rather that our knowledge and our social practices are structured through discourse while also being productive and thus structuring of discourse. In light of this my choice of exploring place politics through discursive practices and the use of place stories should be understood as an epistemological rather than an ontological position.

2.3.2 A narrative-discursive approach to place politics

This dissertation is informed by the perspectives of Potter and Wetherell, as well as by those of other social psychologist whose work is sometimes referred to as critical discourse psychology (Taylor 2010). In this section I will expand on Potter and Wetherell's perspective on discourse as practice and explain their term interpretative repertoire. I will also give an account of Stephanie Taylor's concept of established narrative, and show how I have adopted and adapted it for my own analysis. By reference to Kirsten Simonsen (2005) I will then show the role of narrative in co-constructing identity and place, and thereby explain my interest in the discursive practices involved in producing and reproducing stories about place.

As stated previously, the use of discourse should be understood and analysed as a social practice. Potter and Wetherell follow Wittgenstein and Austin in understanding all utterances as simultaneously statement and action. They are concerned with “the action orientation of discourse” and focus upon “the role of discourse in interaction and sense making” (Potter and Wetherell 1987: 184). Language and discourse are considered to be social practices in which people use their language to construct versions of the social world. Compared to Laclau and Mouffe, Potter and Wetherell’s branch of discourse analysis is less structuralistic. They explicitly reject what they call the “tectonic” assumptions of discourse: the image of abstract discourses grinding against each other and clashing like tectonic plates. Against this metaphor they advocate a much closer focus on discourse as a social practice, and urge analysts to look at how discourses are put into use in different contexts. Potter and Wetherell are concerned with function and with asking how certain ‘images are used and to what end, and thus what they achieve for the speaker immediately, interpersonally, and then in terms of wider social implications’ (Potter and Wetherell 1987: 110). Their first co-authored work focused on how the self and subjectivity are constructed through the discourses which people use to talk about and make sense of themselves and others. In *Mapping the language of racism* from 1992 they used the same approach to look at how New Zealanders talk about race, culture and immigration and how this talk constructs and reconstruct different stereotypes about Maoris, white New Zealanders and more recent Asian immigrants (Wetherell and Potter 1992). In terms of my own project of exploring the stories about the Tromsø Olympics, this approach means that I am interested in looking at inhabitants’ *use* of the stories about place, considering what they *do* with them, and investigating how such stories contribute to constructing their narratives about identity and place politics.

A recurring theme in Wetherell and Potter’s writing about discourse is the way in which people’s actual discourse is marked by a great deal of variation. Analysis reveals inconsistent and even incoherent attitudes or points of view, articulated by the very same actors, depending on the circumstances they are articulated in – the context of discursive instantiation. Actors are thus portrayed as flexible and creative users of discursive systems of meaning; this is a flexibility that is reflected in Potter and Wetherell’s choice of the term ‘interpretative repertoire’ to describe the systematic features of discourse. As they put it:

By interpretative repertoire we mean broadly discernible clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images. In more structuralist language we can talk of these things as systems

of signification and as the building blocks used for manufacturing versions of actions, self and social structures in talk. They are some of the resources for making evaluations, constructing factual versions and performing particular actions (Wetherell and Potter 1992:90).

Because discourses are flexible and contextual, meaning that they are oriented towards specific purposes, actors may make use of many different and potentially conflicting interpretative repertoires. Potter and Wetherell specifically state that “discourse analysis does not take for granted that accounts reflect underlying attitudes or dispositions and therefore we do not expect that an individual’s discourse will be consistent and coherent” (Potter and Wetherell 1987: 49). This also means that discourse analysis is not suitable for revealing any “true” inner states about the actors. This point can be seen as a parallel to Massey’s discussion about the “true” identity of places, and as with place, the construction of identity through discourse is also a political project. Referring to a study by Rosalind Coward about the production of pleasure and the feminine, Potter and Wetherell argue that “the grammatical perspective on the self reminds us of the contingency of self-construction and its multifariousness, while this kind of ideological analysis reminds us that it is not a game which is being played here. Research into discourse concerns crucial elements of people’s lives, not only pleasure and desire but suffering and enslavement, and the possibilities for any kind of life in this society” (Potter and Wetherell 1987: 110).

In this dissertation I will use Potter and Wetherell’s *interpretative repertoire* more or less synonymously with the term *discourse* as it is used by Laclau and Mouffe (1985/2001). I understand interpretative repertoires as *systems of meaning*, in which signs or symbols are defined through their interrelationship, and through their differentiation from other signs or symbols. Incorporation of signs into a discursive system is done through articulation, and it is this discursive practise that binds the different elements together by naming them as similar or different from other elements in the discursive system. Like Potter and Wetherell I hold that actors can make flexible use of different signs of symbols although the discursive system constitutes a frame of meaning which is at the same time enabling and restraining. Discursive structures or interpretative repertoires are thus a necessary enabling frame and resource for discursive practice.

One important type of interpretative repertoire are the established plots or stories that actors use in different ways to construct sequence and consequence in their talk or writing. Taylor (2010) refers to these as established narratives, and she notes that other writers have described

them as canonical narratives or master narratives. I have chosen to use the term story to describe established narratives, mainly because story is closer to the Norwegian term “forteller” which I have used in explaining my research objectives to interviewees and other actors in Tromsø. The term narrative will sometimes be used to describe specific instances of story-telling or articulations of established stories as a discursive practice, for example in discussing interview excerpts. Following Taylor’s definition of established narratives, I define *story* as an *established articulation or way to speak about a particular event or phenomena* that “[is] held in common by the (loosely defined) group of people who share a culture and used by them to construct meanings for the world and themselves” (Taylor 2010: 32). Stories consists of clusters of terms, descriptions, “facts” and ways of speaking that are linked together, often through particular metaphors or images, and will usually follow a plot, but this may be partially or incompletely articulated. Stories and their accounts of properties and causalities tend to be taken for granted by actors who share a common discursive system or culture, and they can therefore be referred to without being told in full. One relevant example in terms of the Tromsø Olympic debate may be the story about the Winter Olympic Games of 1994 that were hosted in Lillehammer. Lillehammer’s successful bid and hosting of “the best Games ever” (in the closing speech of IOC President Samaranch) was often used as a point of reference by actors involved in the Olympic debate in Tromsø.

Established stories are by definition collective, meaning that they are known and shared by a larger group of people who may nevertheless use them in many different ways in their discursive practices. Taylor emphasises that actors may use established stories as discursive resources both by identifying with the story, and by distancing themselves from it. Individual actors may also draw on personal stories relating to life events. Taylor calls these kinds of stories local resources, and explains that “in constructing a life narrative, a speaker will not be starting anew but presenting a version of what has been said before, albeit one shaped to do work in the particular circumstances of the telling. (...) Like other resources, they both enable and constrain a speaker’s identity work (Taylor 2010: 69).

I have already referred to Taylor’s exploration of how women use established narratives or stories about place to construct their identity and sense of belonging or not belonging in their places of residence in section 2.2.2. As an example of how the production and negotiation of propinquities and connections in a concrete place may be studied I will now turn to Kirsten Simonsen’s (2005) study of how actors from three different professions use and make sense of the inner city of Copenhagen. Simonsen conceptualises the city as produced simultaneously

through embodied experiences of material meetings between people and the urban landscape and through narrative expressions and explanations of these meetings. I will focus on her discussion of narrative here, as this is most relevant for my own study. Simonsen use the term narrative to describe how “we organize our experiences and our memories in relation to both personal events and in relation to our social and material surroundings” (Simonsen 2005: 68, my translation). She draws on Michel de Certeau to argue that narratives are always a spatial practice, as every story depends on a cognitive map to contextualise and make sense of the different elements it draws together. Narratives construct “places into spaces and spaces into places” (de Certeau 1984: 118 in Simonsen 2005: 74, my translation) through stories about the journey and the map. Places are also constructed through narrative as inhabitable and knowable. Further, the relationship between places is constructed through stories about borders and bridges, and territoriality is constructed through the definition of “others” and the practice of naming places in narrative. Simonsen’s point is that “‘the narrative city’ is thus constituted through a diversity of stories about urban life, told by a number of narrators, that create different social, temporal and spatial contexts” (Simonsen 2005: 78, my translation). Based on her study, Simonsen argues that the Copenhagen that is constructed through different actors’ narratives can be described as a constellation of fragments, of multiple places with a collage of identities. Although noting that the ideal of local community is often drawn upon in actors’ narratives, Simonsen contends that the construction of place does not take the form of the homogenous unity implicated in the community ideal. She concludes that “the city appears as place or an articulation of multiple rhythms, created through daily meetings and multiple experiences of time and space” (Simonsen 2005: 215, my translation). The multiplicity and many faces of the everyday life of the city are thus demonstrated, although Simonsen does not discuss the political implications of this.

2.4 Summary: The politics of place stories

In this chapter I have introduced and explored Doreen Massey’s progressive sense of place through relational and constructionist concepts of power, identities, interests, proximity and distance. I have also argued for the usefulness of studying place politics through the discursive practice of story-telling. In this dissertation I will approach place politics through the following four concepts: Interests, identities, propinquities and connectivities. Based on

these I define place politics as the ongoing negotiation of interests and identities, and of proximity and distance, in and through place.

Place politics of interests can be understood as the politics of distribution and redistribution of public and private goods, for example issues related to property taxation, the financing and organization of health care but also economic development strategies and discussions over public and private investments in different projects. By place politics of identities I mean the politics of naming and framing, through which some practices, identities and cultural expressions are recognized as in place, whereas others are rejected as unsuitable or out of place. Examples of such politics may be the struggle of gay people to be recognized and accepted through for example love parades, or the debate in Tromsø over whether or not a Muslim congregation should be allowed to build a large mosque in a prominent location. Place politics of interests and identities are linked and are often co-constituted. One example of such co-constitution may be discussions about urban development where the symbolic expressions of different kinds of buildings and the economic interests they will serve are often discussed as two sides of the same coin, as seen most recently in Tromsø in a debate about a planned high-rise hotel in downtown Tromsø.

Place politics of propinquities and connectivities can be explained as the politics of defining and negotiating closeness and distance. Relevant examples of questions relating to politics of propinquities may be discussions about whether municipalities should be involved in producing services like kindergartens and public transport, and if they do if they should own and run such services themselves or pay private actors to provide them. The latter situation may also involve politics of connectivities, if for example the private actor running public transportation is a transnational company whose policies are determined and profits are allocated outside the municipality. As the example shows, the politics of propinquities and connectivities are often co-constituted in actual politics, as well as negotiated together with and through politics of interests and identities. This co-constitution can be summarized as a four-way relationship as shown in the following figure:

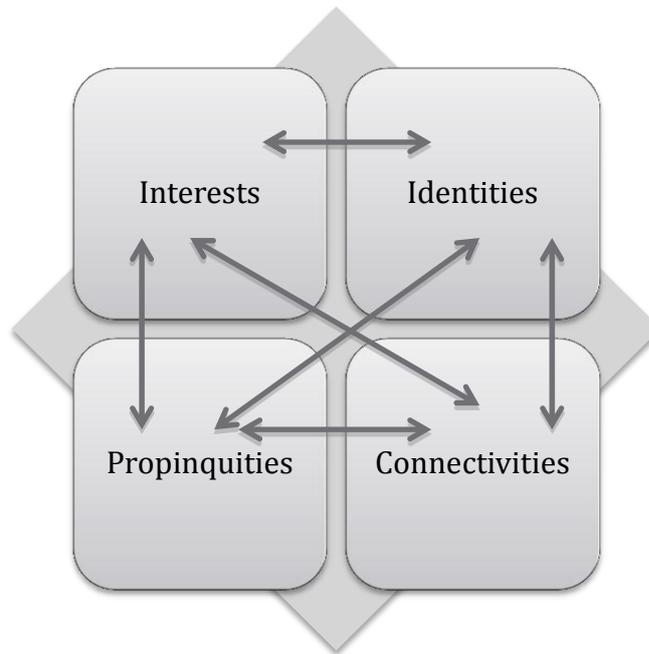


Figure 2 Elements of place politics

Struggling over stories about place history, place image and desired future of a place clearly has to do with different groups of inhabitants vying for respect and recognition of their collective identities. However, it is also a competition over municipal attention and spending. Mitchell (2000) notes that in Glasgow spending was diverted from suburban housing and infrastructure to high profile urban regeneration in central parts of the city in preparation for its year as European City of Culture. The controversies over Glasgow's reign as City of Culture is a good example of how place politics involve a mix of economic, social and cultural power struggles, and how public place branding and inhabitants' place-related identities may carry political import in different ways. Tromsø's proposed bid to host the Winter Olympics contains the same mix of economic, social and cultural aspects. My study of place politics and the stories about the Olympic project in Tromsø will make use of the theoretical perspectives that this chapter has pulled together. Through the analysis in chapters 5 - 7 of how actors used different place stories in their accounts of the bid and the debate about it, I will show how different representations of space and different articulations of place contributed to the particular place politics of Tromsø's Olympic debate. The Olympic debate was one specific meeting of and struggle between trajectories so far. My intention is that my discussion of this meeting can also be useful as an example of how other meetings can be studied as a politics of place stories.

3 Research as a relational and constructive social practice

In the previous chapter I have argued that both places and politics should be understood as ongoing processes that are socially constructed through relational social practices. I have also explained my choice of studying place politics through discursive practices, focusing especially on how actors use stories about place to do different things. An ontological and epistemological commitment to social construction and discursive practice should of course have methodological implications (Järvinen & Mik-Meyer 2005). In this chapter I will start by discussing these implications, and argue for an understanding of research as a constructive and relational social practice. Following this methodological discussion, I will tell a story about my research process. I will explain my choice of the Tromsø Olympic debate as a case for researching place politics, and describe how I approached the empirical field through observation and documents. Subsequently I will explain my choice of using qualitative interviews as the main empirical basis for a narrative-discursive analysis, and describe the interview process. I will also briefly discuss some of the implications of doing geography “at home”. Having done this, I will use Alvesson’s (2011) eight metaphors about the interview situation as an aid in reflecting upon how the interviews may be understood, and I will discuss the importance of reflecting on emotional reactions in research (Bondi 2005). The chapter concludes with a discussion of how plausibility and pragmatism can guide the analysis of a potentially polyvalent empirical material.

3.1 A constructionist and relational approach to qualitative research

Sociologists Margaretha Järvinen and Nanna Mik-Meyer (2005) argue that while both the social constructionist and the poststructural turns in social sciences are by now well established, many students and researchers, although committed to constructionism in their theoretical and analytical writing, still tend to exempt their own research practice from constructionist considerations. To a certain extent, the norms and expectations guiding research practice are still those of objectivist or naturalist science, and empirical material still tends to be understood as a “collected”, stable and objective entity. John Law (2003) claims that social reality is “messy” and that therefore it is difficult (or rather impossible) to turn an empirical mess into coherent and unambiguous “data”. Law argues that while he “buys into” what he calls “primitive out-thereeness” or the understanding “that there is indeed a reality out

there and beyond ourselves” (Law 2003: 5), this kind of common-sense realism does not necessarily imply that the reality “out there” is independent of our actions, precedes any attempt to know it, is definite or singular. This means, according to Law, that it is possible to be a primitive realist without accepting a research methodology that is based on a quest for independent, definite or singular realities. Law suggests that most methodological advice seems to be about hygiene, a way of finding clean data, and argues that the conventional realist methodology tends to repress any findings that “don’t quite fit”. The conventions of academic writing further works to “Other” mess and “push us into reproducing versions of common-sense realism” (Law 2003: 9). The question that this poses is related to the question posed by Spivak (1988) about the ability of the subaltern or the Othered to speak meaningfully within a given discursive system. Law asks whether it is possible to do research and academic writing in a way that allows for and acknowledges the things that have been Othered. He suggests different styles of writing, and particularly the use of allegories, in order to create texts that enable and express “multiplicities, indefinitenesses, undecidabilities” (Law 2003: 10). While this may be productive in some circumstances, I would argue that any style of writing depends on some forms of exclusion and Othering to make sense to its readers. “Mess” may not be a very helpful metaphor in this regard, as it may work to hide patterns and structural differences between those with more or less resources and more or less ability to speak within the system.

In an attempt to bridge the gap between constructionist epistemologies and naturalistic methodologies, Järvinen and Mik-Meyer have edited a volume about methodological approaches to qualitative research which they have coined “constructionist-interactionist”. They explain that by interactionist methodologies they mean methodologies that take meaning as something that is created through interaction:

(...) The meaning of an action or a phenomenon is created through the interaction between humans or between human and things. (...) Meaning thus, is not an independent entity, for the researcher to discover. On the contrary, meaning is a relational phenomenon, which can only be determined situationally, taking into account the context (which may include other “actors”, whether these are humans or things).” (Mik-Meyer & Järvinen 2005: 10. My translation.)⁶

⁶ ...betydning af en handling eller et fænomen skabes i interaktionen mellem mennesker eller mellem mennesker og ting. (...) Betydning er således ikke en uafhængig størrelse, man som forsker kan afdække. Betydning er

As shown in the quote, which includes references to non-human actors, interactionist methodologies may span from classical social constructionism to poststructural and actor-network theories. Mik-Meyer and Järvinen refer to various theoretical inspirations in explaining the interactionist approach, which they trace back to the Classical American Constructivism of Berger and Luckmann (1966). In their book “The Social Construction of Reality”, Berger and Luckmann demonstrated how society is being created socially through a dialectical process of externalization, objectification and internalization. Through a few vivid examples, the authors showed that the meaning and interpretation of the world around us is constantly being developed, reconstructed and passed on through social interaction. Mik-Mayer and Järvinen also mention Bourdieu as a source of inspiration, and refer to his work as Structural Constructionism. They particularly emphasise his methodological deliberations and his warning to researchers against understanding an object of research as “naturally delimited” or available for empathical understanding independent of the researcher’s theoretical perspective.

To Bourdieu, the “construction of the object” is the most fundamental part of the research process. We cannot approach an empirical field without having a theoretical prejudgement and certain beliefs and expectations, or what he calls “construction instruments”. (Mik-Meyer and Järvinen 2005: 13 My translation⁷)

The central question for Mik-Meyer and Järvinen is how qualitative research practices can engage seriously with the multiplicity and variability of possible meaning in a socially constructed world. Rather than seeking to “enter” the life world of different actors, as a conventional phenomenologist or ethnographer may put it, a constructionist approach must take as its starting point the ontological assumption that the object of analysis is in flux, unstable and ambiguous. This implies that an interview should not be understood as a method for “discovering” something that is already established, but rather be seen as an approach in which the interviewer herself plays an active part in influencing the story that is created. “The researcher’s task is not to “uncover” diverse life worlds, but to examine the production of meaning, through which the social world is being created” (Mik-Meyer & Järvinen 2005:16

derimod et relationelt fænomen, som kun kan bestemmes situationelt med inddragelse af konteksten (et begreb, som også indfatter andre “aktører”, som både kan være mennesker og ting).

⁷ “Objektkonstruktionen” er for Bourdieu den mest fundamentale del af forskningsprocessen. Vi kan ikke nærme oss et empirisk felt uden at have en teoretisk forforståelse og bestemte antagelser og forventinger, eller “konstruktionsinstrumenter”, som han skriver.

My translation⁸). Observations in a field should likewise be imagined as a chance to grasp ambiguity and instability in the object of research, and a window on how meaning is produced in the field, including how the researcher contributes to this production. With documents, meanings should not be expected to be found locked in the actual text but rather read in relation to the social context through which the document may be given – and gives – meaning. How this is done in actual research practice may differ depending on which “construction instruments” the researcher is using, but according to Mik-Meyer and Järvinen, the researchers that they have grouped together under the umbrella of interactionism share a focus on the “ambiguity, contextuality and productivity” (Mik-Meyer & Järvinen 2005: 15 My translation⁹) of their empirical material.

I find Järvinen and Mik-Meyers focus on interaction more relevant and helpful for thinking about my own research practice than Law’s “mess”. I prefer however to use the term relational instead of interactionist, in order to highlight the point that the interaction through which meaning is constructed is always also a construction and reconstruction of social relationships. Research itself is of course also a relational social practice. As discussed in Chapter 2, power is a relational effect of social action, and should be considered when research practice is reflected on. This is not to say that research is always a relationship of power, nor that power necessarily works to favour the researcher’s position. Still the possible relational effects of research should be discussed, even though it may neither be possible nor ultimately productive to attempt to render everything transparent. As Rose (1997) argues, “we cannot know everything, nor can we survey power as if we can fully understand, control or redistribute it” (Rose 1997: 319). Instead of attempting what she calls a transparent reflexivity that ultimately depends on an all-seeing position from which to know, Rose argues for an approach that acknowledges some of the absences and uncertainties of our research. The question posed by Spivak is perhaps ultimately an unsolvable problem, but this does not exempt the researcher from reflecting critically on how her own position and theoretical prejudgments may work to Other different aspects of her empirical field. In other words, while the socially constructed reality is indeed unstable, multifaceted and ultimately undecidable, the idea that it is all a mess may in my opinion render the researcher more

⁸ Opgaven for forskeren [er ikke] at “afdække” diverse livsverdner, men at undersøge den meningsproduction, gennem hvilken den sociale verden bliver skabt.

⁹ ...flertydighed, kontekstafhængighed og produktivitet...

helpless (or innocent) than necessary. While I have tried to reflect upon power and structures, and to describe some sources of uncertainty in the following discussion about my research processes, the reader and the writer should always keep in mind that some absences, although having had effects on what is presented, cannot be known or articulated.

3.2 A story about the research process

This section can be read as a story about my research process, an account with sequence and consequence that draws on various discursive resources and established stories about research. It has a beginning and an end, which are of course constructions, and includes a subject position, the researcher, which is a way for me to represent myself and the way I have proceeded to do my research as reasonable and reflected.

3.2.1 Choosing a case and a method

A case study is an empirical examination of a current phenomenon within its realistic context (Yin 1994). Case studies can be designed to do different things. The principal aim of this project was to explore how place stories contribute to place politics. In order to do this I wanted to do a case study of an empirical situation in which place politics were likely to be poignant and expressive, or what Flyvbjerg (2001) would call an extreme case. Tromsø was chosen as a site for the case study because it has some interesting demographic and geographical features. Tromsø has a young and growing population, a relatively large proportion of foreign immigrants, inwards mobility from surrounding municipalities and at the same time an increasing outwards mobility towards Southern Norway. This means that there are many potentially conflicting and shifting interests to negotiate in terms of Amin's politics of propinquity. Tromsø is also the largest town and de-facto regional capital in a region which is rich in natural resources but which has a declining population. The newly opened oil- and gas-fields in the Barents Sea, strife over indigenous Sami rights to land and water and the proximity to neighbouring Russia are all factors that contribute to potential politics of connectivity. My original plan was to do a case study of the 2007 local elections in Tromsø, as I expected this to be a situation in which some of the otherwise taken-for-granted or silent stories and discursive understandings of interests, belonging and place were more likely to be articulated and available for discussion with interviewees. As it happened, a pregnancy and subsequent maternity leave made this plan untenable. I started looking for a

new case, still wanting to base the research in Tromsø. The Olympic project had been on the local agenda more or less continually since it was launched in May 2003. The project's potential for realization had seemed rather limited to me for the first years of the debate, but as it continued to develop and had passed some important milestones, the "Olympic question" had become ever more pressing. Given that the Norwegian Confederation of Sports had chosen Tromsø as the national candidate in March 2007, and based on many positive political signals from several ministers in the governing coalition, a national bid for Tromsø 2018 was starting to seem as something that could actually happen. At the same time, the increased momentum of the project had been accompanied by an insistent resistance from the counter-network No to the Olympics and various other individuals and organizations. Expressions of support and resistance for and against the Olympic bid were presented daily in the two local newspapers, in various other media debates and there were also sporadic public meetings, demonstrations and other events taking place. I found that like a local election, the debate about the Olympic bid could be seen as a situation in which stories about place, belonging and interests were being articulated and put to work in various ways by a variety of actors. Sometime in the autumn of 2007 I therefore made the decision to do a case study of the Olympic debate in Tromsø. At the time the life span of the project was not yet determined. After the project was abandoned by the Norwegian Confederation of Sports I decided to focus on the final stage of the debate and its aftermath.

Having chosen a case, what would be the best approach to studying the politics of place stories in Tromsø's Olympic debate? I had already decided that I wanted to do a discourse analysis of how identities, interests and geographies of closeness and distance were constructed through the debate. Given this methodological commitment, one possibility was of course to focus on printed documents and the public media. Even after the project was cancelled and the debate slowly became less prominent in the daily newspapers, I would be able to access most of the relevant documents and even some of the television and radio debates through digital archives and the public library. Through these I could get an overall view of the main arguments and stories drawn upon in the public debate, and I could have chosen the necessary number of text extracts to do a closer analysis discourse analysis. Similar approaches have been used by planners and political geographers studying related themes, for example Jørn Cruickshank's (2009) study of the construction of rurality in Norwegian policy documents and Elin Sæther's (2008) doctoral study of the critical press in China. These studies were however based on Foucault and Laclau and Mouffe's more

structural-oriented discourse theory. My interest, as discussed in chapter 2, was not so much the discursive structures or limits for place constructions, but rather how actors *used* stories about identity and belonging together with stories about interests as part of a flexible interpretative repertoire. In order to study the discursive practices of different actors I wanted broader and more diverse narratives. In the printed public debate, discourse practices are typically brief and sharpened, whether the discourses are performed by the actors themselves to fit into a format (short comments from readers, an audience comment in a public meeting) or retold by a journalist in a way that will make them fit into a comprehensive news item. Letters to the editor or longer talks in meetings by involved actors have scope for longer narratives, but in these kinds of well-prepared and sometimes professional performances of discourse many ambiguities and leaps of imagination may easily be groomed out. While professional discursive practices are of course interesting in their own right as a source of the kind of representation an actor or representative of an organization would give in this format, I was more interested in finding out how established stories about Tromsø and the Olympics were combined with personal experiences and stories about identity, belonging and sense of place. To access these kinds of discursive practices I decided to use qualitative interviews as the main empirical source of the study, whereas the media debate would form an important source of background information and point of departure for doing and analysing interviews.

Another motivation for doing interviews was that I wanted to widen the scope of actors whose discursive practices I would analyse. In the early stages of planning my research strategy, I had wanted to interview not only actors who had taken an active role in involving themselves in the debate, but also actors who had not taken part in the public debate. This would in my opinion have been interesting because I might access discourses that were not represented in the public debate and which had perhaps been marginalized by the involved actors. I ended up deciding against this for several reasons. To look for potentially marginalized stories would demand a very broad scope of actors. Although I could form some kind of hypotheses about what type of perspectives that were missing based on the public debate, I would have to try and access many different groups of people in Tromsø to explore this and might still miss out on some perspectives precisely because they were marginalized and silenced. While I still think it would have been interesting to try to do this, I also wanted to have time for doing a more comprehensive study of the stories that were used by the actors who were involved in the debate, and by trying to cover everything I might have ended up with too little material of each kind to say anything very substantial about neither the involved nor the non-involved

actors. There was also a question about how to recruit interviewees for such a study. With such a wide group of potential interviewees, what criteria would be relevant for selection, and how would I approach possible interviewees? Using a principle of self-selection by advertising for interested interviewees would probably not be a fruitful way of recruiting actors whose perspectives had been marginalized in the debate, because these would probably be less likely to consider themselves relevant interviewees. Accessing names and information from which to approach and recruit a very loosely defined group of interviewees would also be difficult, and might meet with problems connected to privacy. By focusing on actors that had been involved in the debate, I was able to define more clearly a group of actors from which to recruit potential interviewees, and since these were actors whose names had been published or whom I had met in meetings it was easier to access them. Another factor was that even if I had recruited non-involved interviewees I was uncertain whether actors who were not involved and possibly marginalized from the public debate actually had any interest in the topic and would be willing or able to participate in long interviews about a debate which they had not taken part in. This question became more pressing after the whole process was brought to a sudden halt by the Norwegian Confederation of Sports' scrapping of the bid. I had planned to do my interviews while the state guarantee was being debated in parliament, because I expected this to be a period in which the Olympic bid would be high on the agenda both in the media and in informal discussions in workplaces, social settings etc. I figured that in such a situation most people in Tromsø would be more or less interested in talking about the Olympic question and that even those who were not interested in it would be able to say something about why they thought it was irrelevant. In the immediate aftermath of the bid being scrapped there was a lot of debate both in the media and informally, but once this died down my impression from informal discussions with acquaintances was that a lot of people had tired of the subject. For actors who had been involved in the debate I expected the issue to be still salient and relevant to discuss with a researcher, and this was another reason to focus my efforts on this group.

3.2.2 Approaching the empirical field

Since I was still on maternity leave when I chose the case, I was not ready to “start researching” immediately. I had been following the media discussion as a generally interested member of the public in Tromsø, and I now started to watch the debate more closely, but still from the sideline. When I returned to the University in April 2008 I tried to get a more

organized overview of the debate as it had been conducted through media. For practical reasons, I used the online national newspaper database “Retriever” to do this review. Most of the relevant newspapers for me were represented in this database, with two notable exceptions: *Klassekampen*, a left-wing national daily newspaper, and *Bladet Tromsø*, the second local newspaper in Tromsø whose articles are only included on Retriever from 2006 onwards. Since I was going to focus on the local debate, and on the final years of the process, I considered both these exceptions acceptable. I did read *Klassekampen* sporadically both “before” and during research, and noted that letters to the editor from members of the oppositional network often were given more space and more prominent positions there than they got in other newspapers.

A lot of my general and research-minded information about the development of the project was based on articles from Tromsø’s largest local newspaper, *Nordlys*. This was partly because I had been subscribing to this paper during the entire Olympic debate, and partly because *Nordlys* wrote a lot about the project and its articles were included in Retriever from 2003. *Nordlys* is an interesting source. Although its headquarter is in Tromsø, it aspires to be a regional newspaper and its editorials are often given much weight in the national public debate as the “Northern Norwegian” opinion. During the Olympic debate, *Nordlys* editor Hans Kristian Amundsen took an active role in supporting the project both in his own editorials and in national media debates. *Nordlys* thus played a role both an arena for the local and regional debate about the Olympic project, and as an actor in the debate. *Nordlys* has been accused of running a campaign for the Olympic project and thus not being a reliable source of information for the public. This highlights a general question about the use of newspaper archives in research. I have read the newspapers both as a source for information about the development of the project, and as an empirical field for the production of meaning about the project. When reading newspapers this way, some things are accepted as “facts” or information, for example reports about a survey, board compositions, meeting decisions. Other things, sometimes other features of the same article, may be read for clues about the political opinions and discursive positions of the journalist and/or newspaper. Examples of the latter may be the way a survey result is presented as for example very positive or irrelevant, choices of words to describe board members etc. I also found it interesting to look at the length of articles to see how much space is given to different kinds of news. This could of course have been done quantitatively by counting number of words and number of articles, but since my focus was on getting an overview of the newspaper debate rather than analysing

it in detail I have not done that. My impression from my less systematic reading was that *Nordlys* tended to give very little feature space to news items about the oppositional network, both compared to *Bladet Tromsø* and compared to the national newspapers.

During the initial research period I also read the webpages of Tromsø 2018 (www.tromso2018.no) and No to the Olympics (www.neitilol.no), in order to get an impression of how these two central actors in the debate chose to represent themselves and their arguments. Webpages are an interesting source for researching the production of meaning. Like newspapers (whether in paper or online) public webpages are accessible for anyone in the general public who can access the Internet. This means that the authors of such webpages know that what they put online may potentially be read by anyone, and would probably adjust their communication accordingly. But to a greater extent than newspapers, webpages are ephemeral data. Anything published one day may be gone the next, and at the time when I am writing this dissertation neither of the two webpages in question are online anymore. While it would still be possible to access some or most of the content which has been published, either by getting permission to use Tromsø Romsa 2018's archive (which is not open for the public in general) or by approaching members of No to the Olympics, the webpages as such are no longer public. My purpose in reading the two webpages was to get a general impression of the self-representation and stories used by the two organizations and thereby learn more about the themes and issues that were being put forward in the debate. In addition to reading the texts that were published, I was interested in the visual material that was used to represent the organizations and their views. Rather than doing a textual or visual analysis of this material in its own right, I have chosen to pursue themes that were represented on the webpages in interviews with the involved actors. Reading the webpages thus formed part of the background for the questions I prepared for interviews and the dialogues I later had with interviewees. From the webpages and documents of the involved actors I also chose four images that I used as visual prompts in the interviews. My choice of images and my phrasing of questions can be seen as a preliminary analysis. I chose images that I thought exemplified different perspectives of the debate, and asked questions to follow up themes that I had found poignant.

While the local and national media was an important arena for the Olympic debate, public meetings arranged in Tromsø during and after the project period formed another and somewhat different arena for debate. In terms of numbers, the public meetings did not attract a lot of people, but in addition to providing an arena for face-to-face debate the meetings were

also included in the general public debate through newspaper reports and references by involved actors to what had been said previously at the meetings. The first public meeting about the Olympic bid was arranged by the municipality on the same day as the project was first launched, and later there were perhaps a few dozen public and semi-public meetings arranged by different organisations.

I had planned to observe a number of public meetings once I started my research. I ended up with only three meetings, because the project was cancelled earlier than I had expected. One of these meetings took place while the project was still on, while the other two were arranged after the bidding process had been cancelled. In addition to the difference in timing, the three meetings also differed in terms of who organized them, who were invited, the topics that were discussed and how the meetings were structured. The first meeting was arranged by Tromsø's municipal planning department in April 2008. It was held in the Town Hall, and was announced through ads in the local newspapers and via media coverage. Approximately 60 people attended the beginning of the meeting, but many left during the two hours it lasted. After a few brief introductions by the Mayor and two municipal planners, there was a group session and finally a roundtable discussion with an organizer raising a question and inviting people to comment. The second meeting was arranged by Tromsø Romsa 2018 in November 2008, shortly after the Norwegian Confederation of Sports had decided to cancel the project. The event was semi-public, having been announced via an invitation on e-mail to a number of people as an end-of-project-meeting for "supporters of Tromsø 2018". Tromsø 2018 hosted the event together with some of its owners, and the venue was the grand banquet hall of Tromsø's oldest bank. There were approximately 100 people attending, and the program consisted of speeches from the director, the Tromsø Mayor, the leader of the local Confederation of Sports branch and the president of the national ice hockey federation. There were also some entertainment items. During the breaks in the program people mingled and helped themselves to complementary food and drinks. The third meeting about the Olympic project that I attended was an academic evening discussion, a so-called Red Wine Seminar, organized by Tromsø Historical Society. This meeting was held in December 2008 and was announced by e-mail to University employees and members of the society as well as through ads in the local newspapers. The title in the announcement was "The Olympics 2018: A

North-South conflict?¹⁰” The meeting was held in a restaurant in town, and was attended by approximately 40-50 people. The program consisted of introductions by three invited speakers who commented on the debate. After a break in which the audience was invited to buy drinks, there was a session with questions and comments from the audience before the speakers gave short closing comments.

I have used my experiences from these meetings in different ways. Partly I found it informative and helpful to see how the Olympic debate was conducted by the municipality, and how the demise of the Olympic project was described by involved actors in the immediate aftermath. My impressions from the meetings have informed the dialogues I had with interviewees and influenced my analysis. I have also used some statements from the meetings in my analysis. In addition the meetings provided an arena where I was able to introduce myself to some of the prospective interviewees. The municipal planning meeting in particular was used as a starting point for recruiting interviewees who could fit the description of “interested members of the general public”.

3.2.3 Recruiting and interviewing actors in the debate

As discussed in section 3.1 I had decided to focus the research on qualitative interviews with actors who in some way had been involved in the public debate, and who lived in Tromsø. The last criteria means that employees and board members of Tromsø Romsa 2018 who lived elsewhere were not included in the list of potential interviewees. The reason for this was that I wanted to focus on how the Olympic debate influenced on local politics in place within Tromsø, rather than on how Tromsø was perceived and constructed by actors who although they were involved in the process could also be described as external. The principal aim when recruiting interviewees was to achieve what Jette Fog (1994) calls “qualitative representationality”, that is a selection of interviewees who represent as many as possible of the different kinds of actors that are relevant within a given field. This means that I wanted to speak to both the most visible actors and some of the less visible ones, I wanted to speak to both men and women, young and old participants, people from different political backgrounds, people who had been born and raised in Tromsø, people who had moved to

¹⁰ North-South in this context refers to Northern and Southern Norway.

Tromsø a long time ago and people who had moved there more recently. Striving for qualitative representationality does not imply that I expected “women” or “recent arrivals” to represent a special kind of people whose discursive practices are necessarily very different from those of “men” or “past arrivals”. However some subject positions and some established stories are more readily available to some actors than others, and actors with different experiences may have different perspectives, draw on different stories and combine stories in different ways. By selecting for as much variation among the interviewees as possible I was hoping to access many different kinds of perspectives, and potentially find out if there were some established stories that were drawn upon by a large number of different actors. Among the visible actors interviewed were some of the central members of No to the Olympics and spokespersons of Tromsø 2018, but other members and employees of these two organizations whose public role had been somewhat less visible were also included in the group of interviewees. Although I did not pursue actors who could be described as “marginalized”, I did want to include interviewees who did not have positions within either Tromsø 2018 or No to the Olympics. To achieve this I decided to recruit some of my interviewees from those who had been present at the public meeting arranged by Tromsø municipality in April 2008. At this meeting there were several participants who could be described as “independent” of the two main factions in the debate but who had chosen to involve themselves by going to the meeting and expressing their opinion there. Finally I also recruited interviewees from local non-governmental organizations, from political parties, from municipal employees who were involved with the process and other individual actors who had been active in the public debate.

After three pilot interviews with eight personal acquaintances, I interviewed 24 Tromsø inhabitants who had been involved in the public debate to a greater or a lesser extent. Of these there were nine who were in favour of the Olympic bid, eleven who were against it and four who were ambivalent. There were four interviewees recruited as Tromsø Romsa 2018 employees, six interviewees recruited as No to the Olympics members, six interviewees recruited as participants at the public planning meeting and eight interviewees from among the other types of actors described above. Note that some interviewees fit more than one description, for example some of the members of No to the Olympics also participated in the public planning meeting. There were ten women and fourteen men, ranging from 26 to 72 years old. Nine of the interviewees were between 40-49 years old, while three were younger, eight were older and there are four interviewees whose ages are not recorded. Nine

interviewees had been born and raised in Tromsø, ten had moved to Tromsø as adults from municipalities within Northern Norway (Nordland, Troms and Finnmark counties) while five had moved to Tromsø from Norwegian municipalities south of Nordland County. I had not selected for ethnic identities. As it happened, 3 interviewees identified themselves as Sami, and one identified as having Kven¹¹ background. There were no recent immigrants or anyone with ethnic backgrounds other than Norwegian, Sami and Kven. This is a reflection of the composition of the local debate. A set of tables that describe the interviewees are included in Appendix 1.

Prospective interviewees were usually first contacted by me in writing, either through e-mail or through individual messages sent to their Facebook-accounts. Some interviewees were first contacted on SMS or by phone because I had not been able to find any other contact information for them, in which case I offered to send them an e-mail with written information before they committed themselves to being interviewed. There was one prospective interviewee that I could not reach at all. Almost all the people who were asked agreed to be interviewed, but a few first agreed and then did not reply to confirm a date for the interview. After a few gentle reminders I considered this a decline and stopped pursuing the persons in question. The interviews were conducted in the period from November 2008 to July 2009. The time and venue for the interviews were decided by the interviewees. Most interviews were conducted in the interviewees' workplace or in cafés. One was conducted at an interviewee's home and two were conducted at the University. One interview was conducted via telephone. All the interviews were digitally recorded with permission from the interviewees, and transcribed by me. The research project has been registered at NSD (Norwegian Social Science Database) and all information has been stored according to the norms set out by NSD.

The interviews were semi-structured, meaning that I had prepared a list of open-ended questions that covered themes that I would like to discuss with the interviewees. The degree to which this list structured the discussion varied from interview to interview. In some interviews the conversation started quickly and "took off" in different directions. In that case I would follow up with questions and comments as seemed fit and use the list of questions as a check-list in the end to see if all the different themes had been pursued. Other interviews were

¹¹ The Kven are descendants of Finnish immigrants from the 19th century.

to a greater degree structured by my list of questions with the interviewee answering each question subsequently. As noted, the choice of themes and phrasing of questions could be viewed as a result of my preliminary analysis or general understanding of the public debate. As a result, although I was aiming for “broader narratives” and an open approach, the interviews were already structured by my theoretical viewpoints and perspectives on the debate. Some questions were specifically intended for some interviewees, for example I had questions about the design of their webpages that I only posed to relevant actors from No to the Olympics and Tromsø Romsa 2018. This means that the list of questions was not identical in all the interviews, nor was the phrasing of questions in actual interviews always the same as in the list of questions. Some questions were also phrased in somewhat different ways depending on who the interviewee was, for example if the interviewee was someone who represented an organization I would add some questions about the organization’s official views in addition to the personal views of the interviewee. (I will discuss the implication of mixing personal and key informant accounts in section 3.3). A “typical example” of the questions asked is included as Appendix 2.

One of the questions took the form of photo elicitation, where I used four photographic prompts, asking interviewees to comment on what they saw. I used photos selected from web pages and documents that were published in connection to the Olympic debate, i.e. photos from a researcher-produced archive (Harper 2002). Like the other research questions, my choice of which photos to use as prompts must be understood as a result of my preliminary analysis or understanding of the different established stories that were drawn upon in the public debate. I chose photo-images that I thought were used to represent different established stories about Tromsø. The purpose of doing photo elicitation was to use the images as a medium of communication between researcher and interviewee (Clark-Ibáñez 2004), as an entrance-point for talking about different stories that had been part of the public debate. The photos used were all images of winter scenes depicting the natural and built environment in and around Tromsø, with and without human subjects. I initially presented the photos to interviewees without any identifying information other than to say that they had all been used as part of the public debate. Where relevant I would sometimes follow up with describing where the photos had been used and asking questions related to this. Three of the four photo-

images are reproduced in Appendix 3. For ethical reasons the fourth is not included, nor are comments on this photo discussed in the dissertation¹².

My aim in the interviews was to produce empirical data of how the interviewees used place stories in talking about the Olympic bid. Ideally I wanted the interviews to take the form of a dialogue, where interviewees would associate freely and make creative use of different discursive resources, both collective stories and personal stories about their life. Of course a research interview is a special kind of setting. The discursive practice of participating in a research interview has a specific purpose and this purpose will be different from that of an informal talk between friends or a political debate between opponents. The semi-structured form of the research question also places some restrictions on this dialogue. My questions would inevitably draw on some established stories and particular discursive resources, and I would thereby invite interviewees to speak within a certain discursive frame. However, as Taylor argues, “what is said in an interview, like any talk, is not a wholly original, unique production for that occasion. Speakers draw on the ideas and language that, in the terms of my approach, are part of the ‘discursive resources’ shared by members of society. They are also likely to be saying again things that they had said before, in other contexts.” (Taylor 2010:6)

Spoken discourse is different from text. In the interviews actors would use intonation, facial expressions, gestures and other non-verbal means of expression as a way of adding meaning to the words that they were using to express themselves. Sometimes shifts in dialect was also used, for example in one actor’s story about feeling more like a Northern Norwegian than an Oslo boy the actor at the same time changed from an Oslo dialect to a Northern Norwegian one. These kind of non-verbal expressions have influenced the way I have understood and interpreted the interviews, but are difficult to include in transcripts. Even if I did include them, what would have been written down would always be my interpretations and not the actual discursive practices. The transcripts that are used in the dissertation are therefore strictly verbal, and written out in standardized Norwegian. Where I am aware that my interpretation of an interview extract is clearly influenced by non-verbal expressions I have accounted for that in my discussion of it. Turning spoken discourse into transcribed text is of

¹² The photo depicts a group of unnamed children. It was used on the front page of Tromsø municipality’s planning program. As noted by Rose (2008) the reproduction of photos showing children may be particularly sensitive. During the research process I learned that the guardian of one of the children had objected to the municipality’s use of the photo. I have therefore chosen not to reproduce it here.

course always an interpretation and a translation. In this dissertation I have added another layer of interpretation and translation by translating the transcribed interviews into English. I have tried to do this faithfully and to the best of my abilities, but such a double translation does necessarily increase the risks of misinterpretation and loss of important meaning. I have chosen to keep the Norwegian transcript in footnotes in order to keep some track of this translation and not least make the interview extracts more easily recognizable for the actors who are quoted.

3.2.4 Geography at home

As I said earlier, telling the story about the research as a clearly defined process with a start and a finish is necessarily a construction. Long before I decided to use the Olympic debate as a case study for my PhD I was in many ways emerged in the research field, as someone living in Tromsø, taking part in informal discussions with friends, families and colleagues, reading newspapers and watching/listening to debates in the media. Likewise, although I have termed certain activities research and described in detail how these activities contributed to my production of knowledge about the Olympic debate, I have also been engaged in many other activities during and after the research period, some of which have played a part in producing my knowledge about the field. Researching a topic that engages people is of course both practical and rewarding. Sometimes however I have wondered if I should actually carry my recorder around with me at all time, because “everything” that people say about the Olympic bid could potentially be a narrative for my analysis. This situation has actually been most significant at the university, where several of my colleagues have been involved actors in the debate and one of the leading figures in No to the Olympics actually was my boss when I started the project. Both internal and external seminars in which I have presented my work have sometimes felt more like fieldwork than like collegial discussions and tutoring. Brambilla (2012) notes that the relational space between theory and activism can be productive as a “zone of plural cultural production and meaning-making” (Brambilla 2012: 216). By focusing my analysis on the research interviews I have been able to create a kind of “closure” which I have felt was necessary in order to stop researching and start analysing, but the informal discussions that I still have with people around me have of course influenced my understandings and perceptions of the material which I am analysing. I feel it is important to be aware of this and realize that although the formal research process is over, the empirical field is still surrounding me even as I am writing up this dissertation and presenting parts of it

to my colleagues and supervisors for feedback. One implication of this is that my analysis of discourses produced in the first eight months after the project was cancelled is constantly being confronted with current informal and media discussions about what the Olympic debate was about and what it all meant. The accounts produced in these discussions represent an analysis in their own right, and while they may be helpful for me they may also be misleading in terms of understanding an empirical material that was produced earlier in a different context.

Doing social science research “at home” has been discussed extensively, especially within anthropology (Jackson 1987, Rugkåsa & Thorsen 2003). Paulgaard (1997) notes that doing research in one’s hometown requires the researcher to reposition herself and reflect upon how her preconceptions may frame the knowledge produced. While prior knowledge can be helpful, it may also be misleading and cause the researcher to overlook things or to misinterpret the empirical situation she is facing. In discussing interviews, Valentine (2002) warns that there is a risk of both overinterpreting and underinterpreting similarities between researcher and interviewee. I found that I sometimes would assume that I knew which established story an interviewee was referring to without having enough talk to build my assumption on. I also sometimes “completed” a narrative by putting words into the interviewee’s mouth. This is something I later tried to avoid by asking interviewees to elaborate even on stories that I thought I knew.

Apart from the repositioning involved in researching, my position as a citizen of Tromsø has also changed since I started the research project. In September 2011 I was elected as a member of Tromsø’s municipal council, representing the Socialist Left Party. In principle, this does not change my theoretical perspectives or my analysis of the debate. It could be argued however that representing a political party that experienced substantial internal strife over the Olympic bid could cause a split of loyalty for me as a researcher, so that stories or information that are unfavourable for the party may be overlooked or undercommunicated, by intention or by default. As far as I am consciously aware, I have not been guided by party loyalty in my research or analysis. However, the theoretical perspectives that have informed my choice of research topic and my understanding of the debate are in various ways both influenced by and influence on my political perspectives. I think this would be true of any social scientist whose interest for and knowledge of society is both theoretical and political (Kramsch 2012).

3.3 Reflections on the research interviews

Alvesson (2011) advocates a “reflexivity approach” (Alvesson 2011: 5) to interview research. He argues that “the interview, as a complex social event, calls for a theoretical understanding, or rather a reflexive approach, in which a set of various theoretical viewpoints can be considered” (Alvesson 2011: 4), and warns researchers against naïve uses of interview material. Following Rose’s scepticism against the possibility of transparent reflexivity, the aim of a reflexive approach should not be to turn a myopic view on the researcher herself, but to reflect on relevant frames for her knowledge production. Alvesson suggests eight different metaphors for reflecting on how a given interview material and its frames of production may be understood and interpreted, and I will use these as a starting point.

Alvesson’s first metaphor is that of the interview as a social situation, in which the interviewees’ discursive practice can best be understood as a way of trying to accomplish a well-functioning social interaction with an often unknown researcher. Alvesson argues that “the significance of the interview as local accomplishment makes it more reasonable to see interview accounts as contingent upon the specific situation and too local to be able to treat as reflections of how the interviewee thinks, feels, talks and acts in other situations that are totally different from the interview situation” (Alvesson 2011: 81). I have argued above that the narratives produced in research interviews, although unique and tailored to the concrete situation, can be expected to draw on some of the same discursive resources as the interviewee would have used and will use in other discursive situations. Still, the concrete situation of the interview is also relevant to understanding the narratives that were produced. Alvesson’s focus on the interview as a social relationship also points to the importance of who the researcher is and who she is perceived as by the interviewee. In the case of my interviews I can think of a number of possible identities beyond “researcher and student” that may have been relevant for how interviewees related to me. Tromsø is a relatively small city, which means that social relationships between inhabitants tend to overlap. Having been politically active in local politics some years prior to the research period, some interviewees would know me as a member of the same or a different political party from their own. Other interviewees had studied in the same university department as me or knew some of my colleagues there, and yet others were friends or acquaintances of my family members or friends. My assessment is that the various social identities that may have been attached to the interview situation may have caused some interviewees to see the interview as a social favour, and that knowing my background may have had some influence on what prior knowledge the

interviewees expected me to have. In a few cases, particularly with fellow party members, the interviewees may have talked more openly about internal party issues than they would have done had the interviewer been from a different party or unknown. Conversely, interviewees from other parties may have been more reluctant to discuss internal issues with me than they would have been if the interviewer was a known member of their party or assumed to be politically neutral. Understanding the interview situation as a social situation also points to how the researcher is influenced by his or her relationships to the interviewees, and how this may affect the empirical material that is produced. I will discuss this aspect with reference to Bondi's (2005) argument about emotional intelligence later in this section.

Alvesson's second metaphor is that of the interview as an attempt to establish and perpetuate a storyline. Alvesson argues that the interviewee in order to participate in the interview will develop some assumptions about what the researcher is up to and what the interview is all about. These assumptions may be different from those of the researcher, and may influence on how the interviewee understands and responds to the interview questions. One assumed storyline that did sometimes become apparent in the interviews was that the aim of the research project was to establish "what really happened" with the Olympic bidding process. Why was the project abandoned by the Norwegian Confederation of Sports, and who had worked behind the scenes? Since I was aware of this assumption, I sometimes tried to contradict it or work with it in interviews by saying that although I was not trying to give an answer to these questions I was interested in stories about what had caused the project to fail. Whether this contradiction actually changed the assumed story line or helped to reinforce it is difficult to say. Similarly, it is difficult for me to assess the impact of any unspoken assumptions or storyline that the interviewees may have worked with in the interview situation. The possibility that interviewee's discourses are framed towards alternative storylines should therefore be kept in mind when analysing the empirical material.

The third metaphor suggested by Alvesson is the interview as identity work. He argues that the identities which are called upon in an interview frame the situation and guide the responses given by interviewees. It is important to note that my request for interview participation and my questions in the actual interviews actually invited the interviewees to draw upon several different social identities. The interviewees were usually told that they were recruited both as a Tromsø-inhabitant and as a member or employee of a particular organization, and they were asked to give both factual information and personal accounts of the Olympic debate. This means that at least two different interviewee identities were offered,

as key informant and as “portrait interviewee”. The reason for this was that I was interested both in how interviewees used established and “official” stories about the town and the project, and in how they combined these with personal stories about their own motivation, identity and position. The term “interested resident” was also sometimes used by me to describe how I perceived the interviewee, especially those who had participated in the public planning meeting but who did not “represent” anyone other than themselves. Given this, it is not surprising that interviewees did draw upon different identities in their discursive practices. While I am aware of some of the possible identities at play, there may also be other identity work going on that have framed the discursive practice. This can be seen as an intentional effect, since I wanted to look at how actors made sense of the debate and their involvement in it through different kinds of stories that could draw on different social identities. It is still useful to remember that discursive practices can be understood differently depending on the social identity work they are assumed to perform.

Fourthly, Alvesson argues that interviews may be thought of as the application of cultural scripts. He argues that in a relatively brief encounter between two strangers, the conversation will tend to rely on “available vocabularies, metaphors, genres and conventions for talking about issues” (Alvesson 2011: 88). Producing examples of how such discursive resources were used in narratives about the Olympic bid, and how they were combined, can in many ways be said to sum up my aim for the interviews. In the same way as in the case of the interview as social identity work, the assumptions of this metaphor should therefore not be thought of as a problem but rather an intentional effect of the research design.

Alvesson’s fifth and sixth metaphor point to the interviewee as a strategical or political actor who may frame her discourse as a moral storytelling in order to give a good impression of herself, or in order to produce a favourable political effect. I expect these two metaphors to be relevant in varying degrees in all the interviews I have done. When asking actors who have been involved in a debate about a particular issue to explain and expand on their views, part of what I am asking them to do is exactly to justify their own opinions and actions, which would amount to a moral storytelling. Also, although the interview was part of a PhD research project, the interviewees would probably expect the results from the research to be published in some form that might influence on the public debate in Tromsø. Their discursive practices in interacting with me were thus also targeted toward the public debate. Many of the actors I interviewed for this research project were “professional interviewees”, in the sense that they were used to being interviewed by journalists about their political views. My impression was

that these actors responded to my research questions in the same way that they would respond to a journalist, that is, as a chance to convey their accounts to the public. This impression was underlined by them saying that they had spoken “on record” and could be quoted as such if I wished. For several reasons, which will be discussed further in section 3.5, I have decided to keep all interview excerpts anonymous. This may in some instances have reduced the political effectiveness of the actors’ accounts, but not necessarily. In either case, the metaphors of interview accounts as moral storytelling and political action are useful perspectives both for writing the analysis and for reading it.

Alvesson’s seventh metaphor builds on Potter and Wetherell’s perspectives of language as constructive, and describes the interview as an arena for constructing or crafting an account. Given that the constructive use of discursive resources is the epistemological basis for this research problem, the idea of the interview as constructive is of course not problematic, but it is important to bear in mind that “crafting an account is similar to authorship. (...) People’s verbal skills will differ” (Alvesson 2011: 96). I would say that this was certainly the case with the actors I interviewed. Some interviewees were very skilful “authors”. Their use of discursive resources and established stories was inventive, impressive and very persuasive. They produced narratives that transcribed as carefully edited text. Other actors used discursive resources more haltingly, and their narratives would appear more stumbling and as a result less “plausible”. As Alvesson points out, “well articulated people capable of giving a good impression are not necessarily the same as those eager to carefully try to express impressions and experiences in a precise and nuanced way” (Alvesson 2011: 97). When the aim of the interview is to find out how actors *use* discursive resources this may not be a big problem. The discourses are not supposed to be analysed or understood as more or less precise renderings of authentic impressions and experiences. It is however worth noting that the “well-authored” narratives are also the narratives that are easiest to quote and use as examples of the different established stories that were used, and that this may influence on the “qualitative representativity” of the empirical material in the dissertation.

The eighth and final metaphor suggested by Alvesson is that of the interviewees as constituted by language or discourse. This metaphor is based on an understanding of discourse as structuring meaning to the extent that individual actors are always “caught” by the language they are using, and interviews can therefore not be used as a source of anything beyond the structure of the discourses in play. As discussed in chapter 2, one of the things that distinguish the discourse psychological perspectives which I am using from discourse theories like those

of Laclau and Mouffe is that the actors are understood as flexible users of discursive resources rather than constituted by discourse. I still think this metaphor is a useful reminder that meaning is always structured by the discursive framework within which it is placed. In the case of my interviews, the actors' discursive practices and their use of discursive resources would in various ways be bound by existing stories and discourses about Tromsø, and by being interviewed for a research project on the public debate about the Olympic project.

3.4 Emotional and ethical reflections

Liz Bondi (2005) argues that emotional experiences of research are important to attend to. Not only are emotions and emotional work an integral part of the research process, but how we are feeling may also be an important clue to understanding the topic we are researching.

“Thinking is never emotion-free: rather, our feeling states and our thinking are closely intertwined” (Bondi 2005: 236). In the following I will reflect on some of the emotional politics involved in qualitative research. First however, there is a need for a brief explanation of what I mean by feelings and emotions, and how a discussion of these phenomena sits within a narrative-discursive analysis. There is a growing body of work on affect, feelings and emotions in contemporary geography. According to Pile (2010) the term feelings are generally understood as embodied experiences, related to the term affect but unlike affect in that feelings are conscious or available to consciousness. Emotions on the other hand are discursive expressions of feelings, feelings with a name so to speak, like hate, jealousy or nostalgia. I find this distinction difficult to apply within a narrative-discursive analytical framework, as I find it problematic to write or speak about feelings as non-discursive phenomena. This does not mean that I think that feelings are not “real”, but that once I try to describe them I necessarily have to do that within the interpretative repertoires that discourse offers. For example, when I say that the feelings I describe are mine, I do so on the basis of a discourse about feelings as personal experiences that belongs to the one who feels them. Reflecting on feelings and emotions should therefore also be a reflection on the emotional discourses used to describe them. Using the term politics to describe research dilemmas related to emotions highlights the fact that feelings and emotions are also related to power. How we feel and how we make sense of these feelings through emotional discourses is not coincidental. Feelings and emotions are both products of and co-producers of power relations.

Emotional reactions are often left out of the writing up of doctoral dissertations, for several reasons. Despite the critique from Law (2003) and many others, the traditional scientific ideals of objectivity and rationality still hold considerable influence on the norms of social science. Emotional testimonies may be embarrassing, and they may compromise the researcher's credibility. A strong focus on personal experiences and feelings may also be read as narcissistic and uninteresting, although Hatch emphasises that there is an important difference between self-reflexivity and self-consciousness (Hatch 1996: 372). Leaving emotional accounts out of the academic discussion may thus seem prudent, especially for a novice researcher. Through a discussion of her own doctoral research, Bondi (2005) makes the case that examining personal feelings in relation to the fieldwork experience is important in order to attend to the lessons that might be learnt from them. Personal feelings are clues to what the interviewees are feeling and to the overall structures of the issue at hand. In discussing her doctoral research on local campaigns to protest the closing of primary schools, Bondi describes herself as having a "neutral" position towards the issues at stake, but says that the actors she interviewed persistently would try to "recruit" her to their side of what they described as a moral divide between right and wrong. This was also my situation in researching the debate about the Olympic bid. Throughout the research process I remained "neutral" in the sense that I never actually made up my mind or took a firm stand for or against the project. But this does not mean that I did not engage with the stories about the Olympic project. When interviewing actors who often had strong views and feelings about the issues, I did feel involved in the arguments that were set forth. For example, after the "end-of-project event" organized by Tromsø 2018, in which many of the speakers had proposed a renewed project for Tromsø 2022, I was surprised to find myself feeling excited and suddenly hopeful that something "more" might evolve out of the crashed project. I think that this experience of sudden emotional involvement with the bidding project contributed to a different kind of understanding of some of the arguments that were being put forward in favour of the Olympic bid. Rather than just analysing the stories in terms of a political agenda, my own excitement made me more interested in understanding how the proponents made sense of the project and why they would engage in it. In the same way, my interviews with opponents who expressed strong emotional engagement in alternative scenarios for Tromsø would sometimes also inspire my own feelings about the project and I remember being excited about these stories as well. Again, this influenced my interpretations of the arguments that were used to oppose the Olympic bid. Overall I would argue that the emotional involvement I experienced was part of the learning process of my research.

Reflecting on my own feelings helped me in my attempts to understand some of the appeal and the structure of the discourses that the actors used.

Reflecting on the researcher's feelings may also be important when considering a research project's ethical dimensions. Of course, taking an emotional approach to qualitative research will not in itself make it more ethically sound. On the contrary, Brinkmann and Kvale (2005) questions what they call qualitative ethicism or the qualitative progressivity myth. They argue that qualitative interviewing has a number of moral problems relating to "its softer, seductive forms of power through dialogue, empathy and intimacy" (Brinkmann and Kvale 2005: 162). According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2005) the power characteristics of the interview situation are often neglected when considering the ethical implications of qualitative interviews¹³. They emphasize that there is an asymmetrical power relation between interviewer and interviewee, as the interviewer has the scientific competence and defines the interview situation. The interview is an instrumental dialogue set up to serve the researcher's ends, and the actual agenda may be more or less hidden from the interviewee in order to obtain information. Calvey (2008) claims that the differences between open, consent-based interviews and covert research are not always as clear-cut as they may seem. One of the reasons for this is that it is not always practically possible to give full information about the aim of the research as this may change over time. Calvey calls this 'the consent to what' problem. Brinkmann and Kvale are particularly critical of the manipulative character of some qualitative interviews, and what they call the commoditization of personal skills such as "doing rapport", managing self-representation and "faking friendships". They also refer to Jette Fog (1994), who has described the qualitative interviews as a potential Trojan horse, where interviewees may sometimes be misled by the personal and intimate atmosphere of a one-to-one talk, causing them to reveal more than they might want to.

While I agree with what seems to be a healthy scepticism against the empowering potentials of the qualitative interview, I think that depending on the research projects in question, Brinkmann and Kvale sometimes overstate the power of the interviewer. Ethics rules and guidelines for qualitative research often seem to assume that the interviewees are the "weaker" party in an interview situation. Among my interviewees there were many academics

¹³ While this may be true of some research, Bondi (2003) emphasizes that relations of power and questions of positionality have been widely discussed by feminist geographers.

who had had conducted their own research or even supervised doctoral students of their own. Other interviewees could be referred to as political elites. They were experienced politicians and activists, who had a lot of public exposure and who were used to being interviewed in different kinds of contexts, including by journalists. Some of these were very charismatic, and some were rather authoritarian in their discourses. My feelings towards these interviewees included awe, fear and a sense of being seduced by their arguments and personalities. In this kind of interview context the question of power balance is in my opinion a more complex one than Brinkmann and Kvale describes it.

My own role and conduct as an interviewer was not constant in the different interviews. While Brinkmann and Kvale describe the researcher as controlling the interview situation, my sense was often far from that of being in control. I was generally nervous, apologetic and eager to please, although I felt more at ease and confident in some interview situations than others. The difference is noticeable when listening to the interview recordings. The sound of my voice, the fluency with which I speak and my ability to frame the standardized questions to the current conversation seem to change according to my sense of ease in the different interviews. Time and learning may be a factor, with me getting more confident and familiar with the different discourses throughout the course of interviewing. Setting is also an issue, as I would feel more relaxed in a familiar café than I would as a guest in somebody's workplace or home. The most important reason for my changing sense of ease was however the interaction with the interviewee. When I felt to be somehow on the same wavelength as the interviewee, the interview felt easier and more relaxed, and the conversation flew better. In general, I felt more relaxed and comfortable with female than male interviewees. Age and occupation may also have some bearing, for example I felt more at ease with male interviewees who were close to my own age than with older men. Being questioned about my project by senior academics usually made me a little tense and diffident. However, if I felt that my answers to their questions went down well I became more relaxed and probably more positively inclined towards the interviewee.

This difference in my feelings about the different interviews is quite natural, and I find it difficult to say how and whether feelings connected interview situation and the interviewees should be taken into account. However, I think it is relevant to reflect upon what impacts my feelings about myself and the situation may have had on the actual interview and on my interpretations of it. In situations where I felt ill at ease and seemed unsure of myself, the interviewees may have interpreted this in different ways. Some may have thought that I was

ill-prepared and become irritated, others may have become uneasy themselves because of what felt like bad chemistry, while others again may have felt more confident and in charge of the situation because of my uncertainty. All these different reactions will have influenced what they said in the interview, how much they wanted to explain and what discursive resources and established stories they would draw on. Furthermore, my feelings toward the interview situation may spill over into feelings of sympathy or antipathy towards the interview itself and its contents, causing me to interpret stories and discourses in different ways.

3.5 Analytical strategies: Plausibility, work and pragmatism

Having described the research process as a relational and constructive social practice through which empirical material is co-produced by a researcher and the researched, and after reflecting on some of the many different aspects that may influence on and complicate this production, I am still left with the need to use a potentially polyvalent empirical material to say something that will qualify as useful and relevant knowledge about my research topic. In this section I will discuss the analytical strategies I have used in working with the interview material and other empirical sources. I start by discussing the notion of negotiating plausibility as a key to doing and analysing research interviews. Following this I will explain how I approached the interviews by asking what *work* the different stories they draw on do. I will also comment on the analytical effect of keeping all interview excerpts anonymous, before concluding with a short discussion of plausibility as an abductive analytical strategy, and the need for pragmatic closure.

Järvinen (2005) describes the interactionist interview as a meeting between different interests, perspectives and attitudes, and the empirical material that is the outcome of such an interview as a product of this meeting. This would mean that the interviewer and the interviewee should be understood as co-producers of meaning, or “plausible conceptions of the world” (Silverman 2003: 343, quoted in Järvinen 2005: 29). *Plausibility* is in my opinion an important key to what is at stake both in doing and analysing research interviews. Saying that meaning is produced in the interview (as opposed to “collected”) does not imply that *any* story or discourse can be used as resources for interviewees’ discourses. In order to communicate meaningfully with others, actors’ discursive practices are restrained in different ways. The norm of plausibility is one of these restrictions. An interviewee can generally not

expect to be understood or be taken seriously if he draws on a story or assumes a subject position that is not supported by other discursive resources in his account. Negotiating plausible narratives are thus an important element of the relational research interview, and part of the role of the interviewer is to continue to ask questions and follow-up comments that may establish plausibility. In my opinion, this is what Dorte Søndergaard (2000) does through her description of her interview with the transsexual student Kim. Søndergaard describes Kim as someone who is bodily signified as a male, but who says he/she has a female soul. In addition, as a self-identified female who is sexually attracted to males, Kim talks about him/herself as a lesbian man, and supports this by using an established story about butch as a lesbian subcategory, saying that “he/she is butch, but that is primarily in terms of physical presentation” (Søndergaard 2000: 97). Through her rendition of Kim’s descriptions about him/herself that were produced in the research interview, Søndergaard co-produces the plausibility of what most readers would consider a highly unusual identification as a lesbian man. This interview material is then analysed by Søndergaard based on a poststructural approach to gender identification and behaviour. Søndergaard’s theoretical perspectives, in which she describes gender as a sign, adds plausibility to Kim’s self-presentation. At the same time, if Kim had not used plausible discursive resources to support this self-presentation, the interview material would be interpreted differently, or the analysis may not have been acceptable for the reader. As argued by Karen Golden-Biddle and Karen Locke (1993), plausibility is also at stake in the writing of research accounts, as “ethnographic texts make claims on readers to accept that the findings make a distinctive contribution to issues of common concern” (Golden-Biddle & Locke 1993: 595).

In analysing the empirical material that was produced through my research practice, I have tried to find plausible ways of understanding and making sense of the actors’ accounts. This analysis started in the research interviews, and continued in transcription and presentation of the material. The theoretical framework from chapter 2 has of course guided the analysis, and in addition I have used different concepts and “low theories” to help support and add plausibility to the analysis in each of the following analytical chapters. When trying to make sense of the interviews I started by focusing on the content and themes of the transcribed interview. I aimed at identifying the subject matters of the different kinds of place stories that were used as discursive resources in the actors’ accounts, to explicate what these stories referred to and to explain how they were used in the context of the Olympic debate and the

politics of Tromsø in general. By doing this I ended up with six different themes or types of stories that were drawn upon in the interviews.

- Stories about being born and raised in Tromsø and about having moved to Tromsø as an adult
- Stories about Tromsø as a Sami town
- Stories about the specificity of Tromsø as being an urban place yet very close to nature
- Stories about the environment and environmental implications of the bid
- Stories about the Northern Norwegian region and Tromsø
- Stories about the Olympic debate and the bidding process

Following this thematic categorization of the stories, I asked what discursive and political *work* these stories do. This approach is inspired by Sarah Ahmed's (2004) approach in her book on the cultural politics of emotions. Ahmed explains that she does not attempt to describe the psychological content of emotions but to focus on how emotions perform different kinds of work in relation to political issues: "So rather than asking 'What are emotions?', I will ask, 'What do emotions do?'" (Ahmed 2004: 4) In doing this, Ahmed looks at how emotions are named in texts, and asks what *effect* the naming of emotions and the attributing of causality and orientation of emotions has. As an example, Ahmed argues that emotional discourse helps to produce the nation not only as an imagined community but as a feeling subject: "To say 'the nation mourns' is to generate the nation, *as if it were a mourning subject*. The 'nation' becomes a shared 'object of feeling' through the 'orientation' that is taken towards it" (Ahmed 2004: 13, emphasis in original). In my analysis I will show that stories drawn upon in the interviews performed political work by making claims about ownership and rights, by justifying or rationalizing positions for or against the bid as the only sensible or possible alternative, by legitimizing the positions of the speaker and by discrediting other positions. My argument is further that through these claims, justifications and legitimizations, the stories used in the interviews contributed to negotiating identities, interests, propinquities and connectivities.

As noted in section 3.3 I have decided to keep all interview excerpts quoted in this dissertation anonymous, and furthermore tried to avoid tying excerpts too much to personal information like age, gender, occupation etc. beyond what is necessary to make sense of the given quote. This should be understood as part of the analytical strategy rather than as an

ethical precaution. The main reason for using anonymous quotes is not to protect the interviewees' privacy, although that is of course also an effect of anonymity. Rather, the reason for avoiding biographical information in connection to the quotes is that I wanted to focus on the different kinds of *stories* that were used and what *work* these stories do, rather than on *who* used them. I have also avoided the use of pseudonyms. Not only because "pseudonyms inevitably carry specific associations, including of age, class and ethnicity" (Taylor 2010: 7), but also because ascribing a pseudonym to each interviewee would not be helpful in focusing on the stories rather than on the speaker. An important analytical point in Taylor's approach to the construction of identity through narratives about place is that interviewees are not assumed to have a fixed and constant identity, which is simply transmitted or expressed through talk. Rather, Taylor emphasises that she views identity as an ongoing construction and negotiation, and as such interviewees are not expected to present stories about themselves that are always coherent or consistent. Different stories or discursive resources can be used to do different kinds of discursive work, and the subject position of the interviewee may vary across an interview. An interviewee may for example draw on a story of Tromsø as being a Sami town at one point in the interview but describe himself as different and out-of-place because of his Sami identity at another.¹⁴ This kind of inconsistency should not be understood as a sign of the speaker being dishonest or irrational, but rather shows something about the inherent logic and subject positions of different stories. By using interview extracts without an attached pseudonym I have aimed at avoiding a focus on the possible inconsistencies across a given interview where these inconsistencies are not relevant for understanding the work performed by the stories.

I find that a search for plausibility often works as a kind of abductive reasoning (Alvesson and Sköldbäck 1994). Abduction is different from deduction (in which you start with a theoretical proposition which is then tested empirically) and from induction (where a large number of empirical observation leads to description), in that abduction starts with empirical observations that are analysed by proposing theory that would explain the observation. Abduction can be formally described by the following formula:

b

If a then b

¹⁴ The interview excerpts which this example is taken from will be discussed further in chapter 6.

Thus a (Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994: 47, my translation)

In this example, b is the empirical material or the discursive practice which is to be analysed, whereas a is the theoretical pattern or the discursive structure which can be drawn upon to explain or rather make sense of b.

Note that unlike deduction, abduction is not logically necessary. Other theories or other discursive structures can also explain b, which means that other analytical understandings of the empirical material are also possible. There may in other words be more than one plausible way of interpreting a statement. As Alvesson argues, “often there are good reasons for seeing the world in more than one way” (Alvesson 2011: 108). When choosing how to understand the narratives that were produced in the research interviews I have tried to look for these good reasons, while at the same time tried to accept and enable other ways of understanding the material I am working with. At the same time, I also had to be willing to make some choices.

Alvesson recommends a coupling of reflection with *pragmatism*. By pragmatism he means “a willingness to postpone some doubt and still use the material for the best possible purpose(s)” (Alvesson 2011: 107). What does this mean? James Bohman (2002) notes that pragmatic theories of knowledge posit that a truth claim is “to be judged in the light of its practical consequences” (Bohman 2002: 499). Bohman argues that a pragmatist approach to methodological pluralism can contribute to making critical theories more practical. This bid towards practicality may be a clue to what a pragmatic approach to analysis may entail. While a given empirical material is always principally open for different explanations, the practical solution is not to say that “anything goes”. In order to make any meaningful use of a research material one has to be able to choose the interpretations that seem most plausible given the sum of the available knowledge one has about the situation. In analysing a principally open empirical material, pragmatism could be seen as the construction of necessary closure. In the analysis that follows I have thus pragmatically chosen to pursue the explanations and patterns for understanding the interviewees’ accounts that I found plausible.

4 Tromsø and the Olympic debate

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a contextual background to the analysis that will follow. The chapter starts with a presentation of Tromsø, which includes brief descriptions of the town's demographics, political organization, climatic conditions, historical development and economic base. This is followed by a chronological presentation of the Olympic process and the public debate from the launch of the bid in May 2003 until it was finally abandoned in November 2008. This presentation aims at describing important milestones of the project and introducing some of the major actors in the local and national debate. Having gone through the process chronologically, I will then move on to an introductory discussion of the Olympic proposal as a political project. This discussion draws on documents, media sources and academic articles about the planned bid, and presents some of the stories that influenced the public debate about the proposal.

4.1 Setting the scene: Tromsø, Northern Norway

Tromsø is a coastal town in Northern Norway (see map of Norway, figure 3).



Figure 3 Map of Norway.
(Copyright: colourbox.no)

With 66,513 inhabitants¹⁵ at the end of 2008, Tromsø is the largest town of the region, and the 7th largest in Norway. The population is young. The age group from 20-50 constitutes a substantial part of Tromsø's population, in addition to the approximately 10,000 university students who live in Tromsø but are not registered as inhabitants. From 2001 to 2010, Tromsø's population increased with an average of 815 persons per year. This was mainly due to a surplus of births, but there was also a small surplus of inwards migration over outwards migration most years.¹⁶

Tromsø is governed by a municipal council, which is elected every 4 years. Throughout the Olympic process, a coalition of Labour and the Socialist Left Party along with various smaller parties held the majority in the council. Tromsø is also the seat of the regional level of government in Troms County, which is one of the three counties that are usually referred to as Northern Norway. Tromsø municipality covers an area of 2480.3 km², great parts of which are sparsely populated. The municipality is made up of several islands as well as mainland. The actual town is located on a small island called Tromsøya, and the majority of the inhabitants live on this island and in adjacent areas on the mainland and on a larger neighbouring island. There are also some smaller rural settlements in the outskirts of the municipality (see figure 4, next page, for map of Tromsø and neighbouring municipalities).

Tromsø is located on 69.4° North, above the Arctic Circle. Because of the Gulf Stream, which heats up the oceans outside the coast of Norway, the climate is relatively mild compared to other places at the same altitude. Winters are long, but not particularly severe with temperatures usually around 0 - -5 ° Celsius from November to April. For two months from November 21 to January 21 the sun stays below the horizon and there is no proper daylight, although there is a dusk-like light for a few hours in the middle of the day. Once the sun returns at the end of January the days quickly grow longer, and by May 21 the sun doesn't set and there is Midnight Sun for two months. Temperatures in summer are usually not very high, with the average for July at around 11° Celsius. Because of the constant sunlight, plants grow quickly once the snow melts away during May. Agricultural production of potatoes, carrots

¹⁵ 01.01.2009. SSB Kommunefakta, <http://www.ssb.no/kommuner/region.cgi?nr=19>.

¹⁶ Tromsøstatistikk: Statistical information from Tromsø municipality's planning department, <http://img8.custompublish.com/getfile.php/1679550.1308.uuvbqdfppw/befolkning.pdf?return=www.tromso.kommune.no>, downloaded 06.02.2011.

and some berries are possible, as is the keeping of grazing livestock, but wheat or other types of grain cannot be grown in this climate, which is classified as coastal sub-arctic.

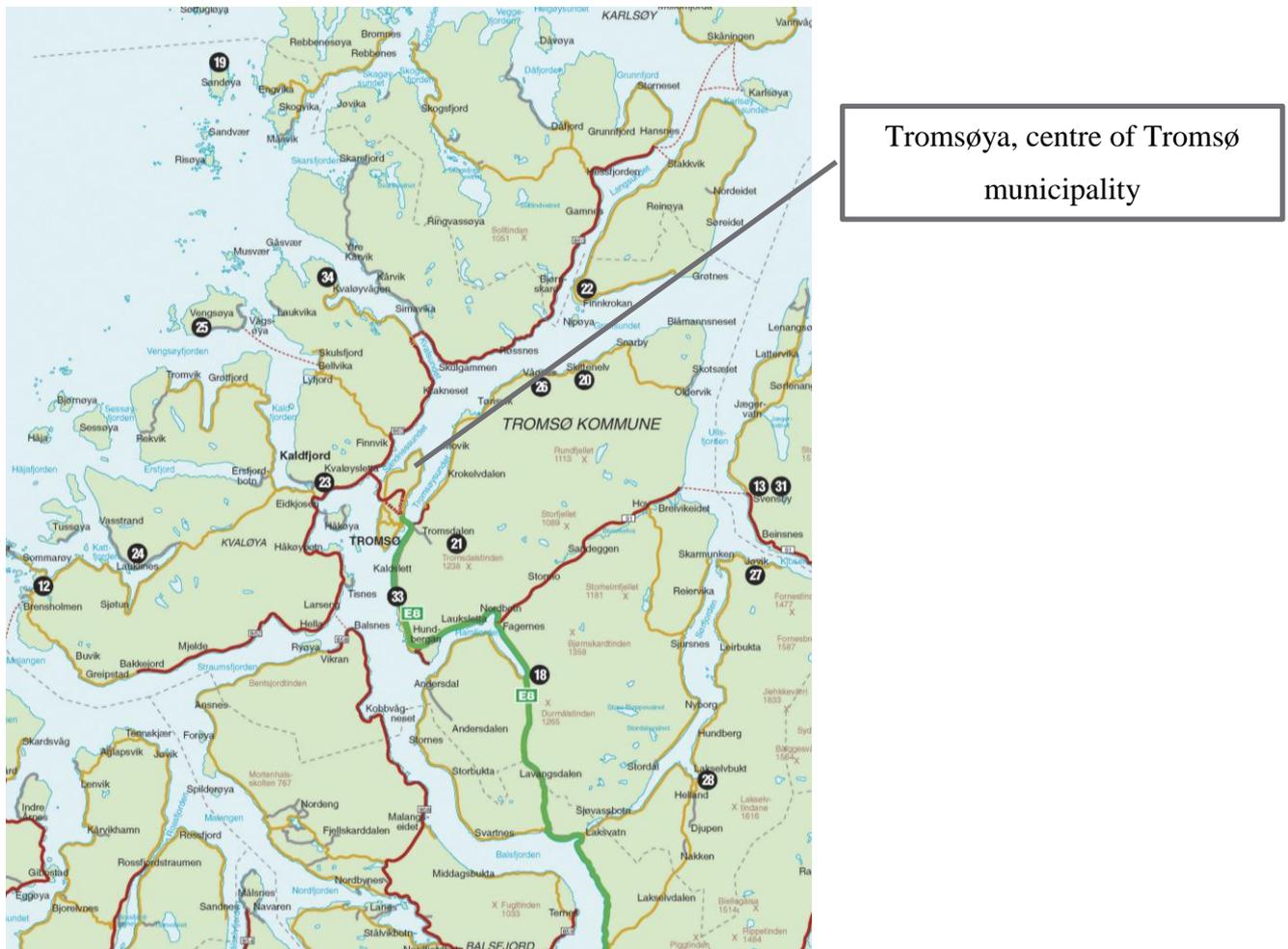


Figure 4 Tromsø and neighbouring municipalities
(Copyright: UiT/Destination Tromsø. The image has been cropped.)

Archaeological evidence dates early settlement on the Tromsø Island to 10.000 BC. The first inhabitants were probably nomadic reindeer-herders, ancestors of the contemporary Sami people, who are the indigenous people of the Northern European region. Tromsø was given town status by the Danish-Norwegian King Christian VII in 1794. At that time only 80 people lived permanently in Tromsø, which was one of several small trading ports in the region. For the next 150 years, although some important institutions were located there, such as the regional Teacher's College, Tromsø was not a central town in the region, being rivalled in size and status by for example Harstad and Narvik. In 1964 Tromsø municipality was merged with three neighbouring rural municipalities to form a new, larger municipality totalling

32,664 inhabitants. The establishment of the University of Tromsø (UiT) in 1968, which was the first university in Northern Norway, may be one of the reasons why Tromsø in recent decades have become the largest town in the region.

Fishing has traditionally been a very important source of self-sufficiency and monetary income for the people of this region. Today only a small proportion of Tromsø's population is engaged in the fishing industry (including fish-farming)¹⁷, but the export of fish and fish products is still an important factor in the regional economy. Tromsø hosts the regional seat of several institutions and companies involved with the fishing trade, among these are the Norwegian Seafood Council (Norges sjømatråd – tidligere Eksportutvalget for fisk) and the Fisheries College (part of the University). The University and the University Hospital of Northern Norway (UNN) are important institutions, both in terms of employment and services. Tertiary industries account for approximately 85 percent of the employment in Tromsø. Of these, the public sector, including municipal, county and state services and bureaucracy account for around half the employees, whereas trade, commerce, transportation and cultural services make up the other half.¹⁸

As noted by Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst (2005), a lot of contemporary research on urban life is focused on a few very large global cities, whereas less attention has been paid to “the numerically more significant middle ranking urban spaces” like Manchester (Savage, Bagnall & Longhurst 2005: 12). Tromsø in comparison is of course a very small and sparsely populated urban space. My interviewees used the Norwegian word *by* to describe Tromsø, a term which can be translated both as *town* (*småby* – small by) and as *city* (*storby* – large by). The difference is not insignificant, as *småby* and *storby* or *town* and *city* potentially can be understood as two rather different stories about place. So far in this dissertation I have used the word *town* to describe Tromsø, which in an international context and based on a quantitative definition would be the expected term for a place of less than 70.000 inhabitants. One could however argue that based on its relative position in Northern Norway Tromsø contains some of the urban functions, services and qualities that are usually associated with much larger places in city-literatures (e.g. Amin & Thrift 2002). Tromsø is the administrative, educational and commercial centre of the region, and also has a reputation as a cultural centre,

¹⁷ Statistics for only fishing was not available, but 1,7 % of Tromsø's population is employed in the primary sector and 12,1 % in the secondary sector.

¹⁸ All statistics from Reiersen and Jakobsen, 2009.

with a high number of cafés and nightclubs as well as cultural events such as Tromsø International Film Festival and several large music festivals taking place throughout the year. Tromsø's position as a relatively small town, yet the largest centre in a peripheral region is in many ways a paradoxical situation which may not be easily captured by the way that the words town and city are most commonly used in Anglophone urban research. Bearing this in mind, I have sometimes translated by as city when I believed this is the term that best fits the context in which the interviewee used it.

4.2 The Olympic process 2003 to 2008

Tromsø 2014

The proposal that Tromsø should make a bid to host the Winter Olympic Games was first presented to the public in a press conference in May 2003. Prior to the presentation only a small group of municipal employees and a few local politicians had been informed about the idea. The launch of the idea was met with surprise but also a great deal of enthusiasm locally, and following the press conference Tromsø municipal council set down a steering committee and a working group to start preparing a proposal. This would be addressed to the steering committee of the Norwegian Confederation of Sports, which is also Norway's Olympic Committee. The Confederation would be the official sponsor of an eventual Norwegian Olympic bid. The working group was later transformed to a joint partnership company called Tromsø 2014 AS. The proposal was backed by most of the political parties within the municipal county. Political opposition came from the small left-wing party Red Voters' Alliance (RV)¹⁹ and from the much larger right-wing populist Progress Party (FrP).

It is difficult to say exactly how big the popular support for the proposal was in Tromsø during the autumn of 2003. National newspaper *VG* had a small feature in July 2003, claiming a survey showed 57 percent of people in Tromsø were opposed to the proposal whereas 39 percent supported it²⁰. In September 2003, *Nordlys* referred to a survey in which 53 percent of the population supported the proposal and 32 percent opposed it²¹. The Olympic proposal did

¹⁹ The Red Voters' Alliance changed their name to the Red Party in March 2007. I will use the old name here as I am referring to the period before the name was changed.

²⁰ *VG*, 08.07.03:34

²¹ *Nordlys* 11.09.03: 14

not seem to have been a very important topic in the local elections that took place the same autumn. There were for example few letters to the editor that discussed the Olympic proposal in its own right, although it was sometimes referred to in a mocking way. In the election, the governing Labour Party did badly, but kept the majority together with their coalition partner the Socialist Left Party (SV) who did well. The results for all the parties seemed to more or less have followed national trends, and it doesn't seem like the Olympic project had much influence on voters in Tromsø.

The first sign of public opposition against the proposed bid came in the late autumn of 2003. Tromsø 2014 had planned to use a mountain called Tromsdalstinden as a venue for the alpine skiing events. A group called "Tromsdalstindens venner" (the friends of Tromsdalstind) opposed this proposal on the account that the mountain was holy according to traditional Sami religion, and would be ruined by the building of the necessary facilities for an alpine ski event²². The claim was investigated by the Sami Parliament of Norway, who had already endorsed the bid. After an elderly Swedish Sami who had been herding reindeer in the area in his youth confirmed practices of reverence in relation to the mountain, both the Sami Parliament and Tromsø's Sami Society were adamant that the mountain could not be used as an Olympic venue, and the plans for the site was subsequently moved to another mountain outside Tromsø.

The Norwegian Confederation of Sports had decided in the autumn of 2003 that Norway should make a bid to host the 2014 Winter Olympic Games, following the selection of Vancouver as the host of the 2010 Games. Tromsø and Lillehammer had both come forward as potential host cities, and an evaluation committee was organized to compare the two potential bidders. At the beginning of January 2004, the Confederation's steering committee made a unanimous decision to choose Tromsø as the national candidate, pending satisfactory responses from Tromsø 2014 to a number of critical questions regarding logistics, timing of the games and post-game usage of facilities. In May 2004 Tromsø 2014 presented the Confederation with a revised proposal for the Olympic bid, and a new meeting of the steering committee confirmed that Tromsø would be the national candidate for a bid to host the 2014 Winter Olympic Games. However, this vote was made with a majority of only 7 to 5 votes, showing that there was a substantial minority within the Confederation who did not want the

²² *Nordlys* 10.11.03

bidding process to continue. Nevertheless, in June 2004 Tromsø 2014 and the Norwegian Confederation of Sports put forward an application to the Norwegian Government to give the financial guarantee that was required to actually make a bid to the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

The Confederation's decision to make Tromsø the preferred national candidate for a bid became the starting point for an organized oppositional network against the Olympics in Tromsø. In April 2004, a well-known local activist from the Red Voters' alliance launched the network Yes to the coast, no to the Olympics. The launch was marked by a newspaper advertisement with a list of 40 people from Northern Norway who said that they opposed the proposal for Tromsø to host the Olympics. Ten activists also participated in an inaugural march through the centre of Tromsø²³. In September the network published a report or counter-statement to the Olympic proposal. The counter-statement was presented to the Vice Mayor of Tromsø and to the Minister of Culture, who was going to make the decision about whether to grant the state financial guarantee.

In August a report by the consultancy firm Econ, commissioned by Tromsø 2014, was made public. According to *Nordlys*²⁴ the report was good news for Tromsø 2014. The potential for winter tourism based on a successful Olympic hosting was emphasized in the report, although the responsible researcher was also quoted on saying that the costs of building up all the necessary facilities from scratch would be substantial. A month later, another consultancy report, from Transportøkonomisk Institutt (Institute of Infrastructural Economy), was published. This report, which had been commissioned by the Department of Municipalities and Regions, stated that the total benefits for the regional economy from a Tromsø Olympics were uncertain, and that better results could be expected if the required amount of money were invested in other projects for regional development²⁵.

In October, the Minister of Culture had a last meeting with Tromsø 2014. By then the signals were rather clear. In an interview with *Aftenposten*, the minister stated that the price was high and perhaps too high²⁶. It came as no surprise when Royal Proposition 7 (2004-2005) was presented on the 12th of November, concluding that the Government did not recommend

²³ *Nordlys* 11.04.04

²⁴ *Nordlys* 19.08.04: 16

²⁵ *Nordlys* 25.09.04: 4

²⁶ *Aftenposten* 12.10.04: 31

giving a financial guarantee from the State. During the parliamentary debate the following year, a minority proposition was put forward by the Centre Party and Labour in favour of the Olympic bid. Nevertheless, in April 2005, the Parliament passed the final decision, confirming the Royal Proposition and refusing to provide a state financial guarantee for Tromsø 2014. In June, the Norwegian Confederation of Sports refused a petition from Tromsø 2014 to reopen the project. Following this decision, the general assembly of Tromsø 2014 changed the name of the organization to Tromsø 2018 AS, and decided to start working on a new proposal to host the Winter Olympic Games of 2018. Shortly after this, the oppositional network was renamed No to the Olympics and vowed to continue their protests.

Tromsø 2018

In September 2005 the general election in Norway led to a change in government. A minority coalition, consisting of the Conservative Party and two smaller parties, was replaced by a majority coalition made up by the Labour Party, the Socialist Left Party and the Centre Party. The new Minister of Culture was Labour's Trond Giske, who had on several occasions pronounced that he was an enthusiastic supporter of a Tromsø Olympics. During the election campaign Giske had even guaranteed a positive decision from Labour should the proposal come up again²⁷. Labour was the largest partner in the new coalition government. The Centre Party had also supported Tromsø 2014, while the Socialist Left had not taken a stand on the issue. In October 2005 Tromsø municipality confirmed their commitment to make a bid for the Winter Olympic Games of 2018. The municipality also granted continued economic support to Tromsø 2018.

In November 2005 the President of the Norwegian Confederation of Sports announced that he wanted Norway to make a bid for the 2018 Games. In addition to Tromsø, Oslo, which had been the first Norwegian host of the Winter Olympic Games in 1952, had signalled that they wanted to make a bid, possibly together with Lillehammer. A little later, Trondheim in Central Norway came forward as the third potential candidate. Trondheim had arranged the Skiing World Championship in 1997. With three candidates from three different parts of Norway, there was from the start a strong regional element to the competition, also within the

²⁷ *Aftenposten* 14.07.05: 10.

Confederation. In December 2005, the regional boards from Nordland, Troms and Finnmark together with the Sami Confederation of Sports put forward a petition for Tromsø to be the chosen candidate. In May 2006 a leader's meeting of all the branches connected to the Norwegian Confederation of Sports opinioned that Norway should make a proposal for 2018, and that an evaluation committee would be established and make preparations to choose a national candidate by February 2007.

At a general assembly of Tromsø 2018 AS in July 2006, a new leadership was presented, which included Petter Jansen, former director of the Norwegian branch of Scandinavian Airlines (SAS/Braathens) and Bjørge Stensbøl, former leader of Norway's elite athletic centre and team leader of 10 Norwegian Olympic teams. Only three out of nine board members were local. When Bjørge Stensbøl was put in charge of preparing Tromsø's 2018 proposal in September 2006, the impression of a national rather than a local organisation was reinforced.

In September 2007 *Aftenposten* published a new survey, under the headline "Wants Tromsø - The majority are excited about a Northern Olympics"²⁸. According to a survey done by Synovate MMI 31 percent of the population wanted Tromsø to be the national candidate, compared to 21 percent who preferred Lillehammer, 18 percent in favour of Oslo and 14 percent preferring Trondheim. 14 percent did not want Norway to bid for the 2018 Winter Olympics. A week later, *Nordlys* presented a survey in which 71 percent of people in Nordland and Finnmark, and 65 percent of people in Troms, had said that they supported Tromsø's bid²⁹. During the autumn and winter of 2006-2007 Tromsø did seem to be getting a lot of positive support, most notably from *VG*, Norway's largest newspaper, which stated in a 2-page column that "the answer is easy. The answer is Tromsø"³⁰. Three days later Home Secretary Åslaug Haga, leader of the Centre Party announced on national television that she wanted Tromsø to be the national candidate for the 2018 Winter Olympics.

In February 2007 Tromsø, Trondheim and Oslo/Lillehammer presented their proposals to the Norwegian Confederation of Sports. An evaluation committee had been set down to assess all aspects of the three concepts and make their recommendations to the Confederation. On the 30th of March the board convened to choose a national Olympic candidate. According to an

²⁸ Vil ha Tromsø - Flertallet brenner for OL nordpå (*Aftenposten* 09.09.06: 32)

²⁹ *Nordlys*, 16.09.06: 34

³⁰ Svaret er lett. Og svaret er Tromsø. (*VG Sportsbilag*, 13.01.07: 2)

NRK documentary, the evaluation committee condemned Tromsø's proposal on account of logistics and accommodation, and recommended Oslo with Trondheim as the runner up (NRK *Bak lukkede dører*, broadcasted 19.02.2008³¹). However, the board did not agree with the committee's assessment. After a first round of voting in which Trondheim got only one vote, the second round resulted in a tie between Oslo and Tromsø who each got six votes. The double vote of the President decided the matter in favour of Tromsø.

During the autumn and early winter of 2007-2008 the project was apparently developing at half-speed while Tromsø 2018 were awaiting the decision from the Government about whether or not a state guarantee would be granted. In November 2007 a large group of contemporary and former Norwegian Athletes were presented as Olympic Ambassadors who were going to help promote Tromsø's candidature. However, IOC rules prevented Tromsø from acting as an Olympic candidate internationally until the bid had been endorsed by a state guarantee. Norwegian IOC-member Gerhard Heiberg was impatient, saying that as Tromsø was practically unknown on the international stage, promotion had to start immediately³². But the Minister of Finance Kristin Halvorsen of the Socialist Left party signalled that she was not going to rush things. After a meeting with Tromsø 2018 in January 2008 she emphasized that the project was expensive and that the proposal would have to go through an external evaluation before she would make any decisions³³.

Some commentators saw the launching of Tromsø 2018's Environmental Platform in February 2008 as an attempt to win the support of the Socialist Left. Unfortunately for Tromsø 2018, any positive impression made by the platform seemed to a large degree to have drowned in the noise following the screening of NRK's documentary film "Behind Closed Doors – The Game of the Olympics" the same month. The documentary, in which Tromsø 2018 and especially Bjørge Stensbøl were portrayed as master lobbyists, seemed to imply that the Confederation's choice of Tromsø had not been based on fair play, and sparked a lot of protest from Oslo and Trondheim. In the following months Bjørge Stensbøl and Petter Jansen were arguing publicly about who was to be in control of the organization, with Stensbøl first seeming to have resigned in March and then actually resigning at the end of April. Stensbøl was replaced as director by another Olympic veteran, Petter Rønningen who had been a

³¹ <http://www1.nrk.no/nett-tv/klipp/340069> Viewed 06.02.12.

³² *Aftenposten* 13.09.07:22

³³ *Aftenposten* 31.01.08: 25

leading figure in Lillehammer 1994. A few months later Jansen also left the organization and was replaced as executive director by Tromsø banker Hans Olav Karde. The new leadership worked hard to restore a positive momentum, but it had become apparent that many actors within the Confederation were now becoming more and more sceptical. The economic burden of building Olympic facilities was being debated. Minister of Culture Giske argued that the Confederation should contribute with 22.3 percent of the facilities cost, which was the proportion paid by the Confederation for Lillehammer facilities in 1994. He also demanded that the Confederation should give a clear answer as to whether they really wanted a Norwegian Olympic bid before he and the Government could endorse this³⁴. There had been many signs that the Confederation's enthusiasm for the Olympic bid had been reduced. At the general assembly of the organization in 2007, all the members who had voted for Tromsø's candidature were replaced from the board, whereas those who had voted for Oslo were re-elected. The new Sports' President was Tove Paule, who had voted for Oslo. In the NRK documentary Paule expressed great surprise when Tromsø was chosen in spite of the recommendations from the evaluation committee.

The oppositional network No to the Olympics presented the third version of their counter statement to local and national politicians in February 2008. The statement was translated into English, French and German in addition to Norwegian, and it was mailed to all the IOC members as well as to all members of the Norwegian Parliament. The network had a website where they published news related to their position and where people could sign a petition against the state guarantee. No to the Olympics was a visible stakeholder, and were included in some but not all of the articles and features that were written about Tromsø's Olympic project. The network members were also active in writing letters to the editor of both the local and national newspapers, which contributed to keeping their opposition against the proposed bid visible on the agenda throughout the Olympic process. Since the group was not organized as a membership organization it is difficult to gauge how strong their support was in Tromsø. In a letter to the editor published in *Nordlys* in January 2006, three members stated that the network included people from different political parties, with several kinds of professional and academic knowledge, and with connections to the town's athletes, cultural scene and

³⁴ *Aftenposten* 10.06.08: 26

outdoor enthusiasts. In the letter they claim to have the support of approximately 50 percent of Tromsø's population, based on different surveys that were done earlier in the process.³⁵

On the 30th of September 2008 the external evaluation report was presented. Media had been speculating beforehand that the total costs stipulated by Tromsø 2018, 15.6 billion NOK, would be found to be too low. In fact the evaluators had found that the actual costs were likely to be almost twice as high as stipulated, at 28.6 billion NOK. The total amount to be paid by the state was changed from 9.5 billion NOK to 19.1 billion NOK. Among the reasons for the increased costs were the need for improving back-up airports in Alta and Bardufoss and the inclusion of security expenses that had been kept outside the original budget. The immediate responses to the report were overwhelmingly negative for Tromsø 2018. *Aftenposten* wrote about it the next day as “the Olympic funeral”. In the days that followed Tromsø 2018 and their proponents tried desperately to save the project. A group of local businesses from Tromsø offered to cover the extra amount in order to keep down expenses for the Confederation. However, on the 6th of October, in an extraordinary board meeting, the Norwegian Confederation of Sports decided to abandon the Olympic proposal and withdraw their application for a state guarantee. The issue was thus never actually debated by the Government or put to a parliamentary vote. The general opinion among media commentators seemed to be that Trond Giske had let Tove Paule do his own dirty work by withdrawing the proposal without him or the coalition Government having to be responsible for turning it down. In Tromsø both media and local politicians were of course very angry about the outcome of the process. Tove Paule and the Confederation were accused of regional chauvinism, and a front-page editorial in *Nordlys* claimed that there was growing fury in Northern Norway about the way the political leadership in Southern Norway had handled the issue. The oppositional network on the other hand were delighted that the proposal had been abandoned, and argued that the critique from the external evaluators was both correct and timely.

³⁵ *Nordlys* 21.01.06: 54

4.3 The Olympic project

In this section I will introduce some of the stories that were articulated through the Olympic proposal and public debate about it. The introduction is based on some central documents and media sources, and also builds on academic articles about the Olympic proposal. I will base the discussion on Janet Newman and John Clark's (2009) concept of political projects and articulation. Newman and Clark argue that while everything is potentially political, in the sense that all areas of social life are open to contestation, to divergent or conflicting perspectives, a key question is how things become seen or recognized as political, in a manner that makes them relevant topics for political programs, discussions and policy. They use the term articulation to describe the formation and mobilisation of discursive political and cultural work needed to mobilise meanings and people around political projects: Efforts to bring ideas, interests, people and power together. One important point to be held in mind when discussing the articulation of political projects is the inherent ambiguity of such articulation. Newman and Clarke emphasize that the necessary assemblages of different discourses, interests and perspectives that together articulate a political project are always contingent and to different extents fragile, which means that a given assemblage cannot be taken for granted in varying circumstances. Social actors are understood as mediators and translators of change, who engage in processes of working with the ambiguities of new and emerging assemblages. This further underlines the relationality and dynamic nature of political struggles.

I understand the Olympic proposal as a political project in which different stories about identities and interests in and outside Tromsø were articulated together. Newman and Clark (2009) note that there are different conjunctural possibilities embedded in any given political project, and different actors or interests can thus use a project in different ways towards different means. The actors who supported and worked for the Olympic project in Tromsø can to some extent be described as competing members of the local economic, cultural and political elite. They included two different Mayors from the Labour Party and several other Labour politicians, but also members of the Conservative Party who were in opposition in the municipal council. Other actors who supported the project were local businessmen, financiers and a newspaper editor, in addition to local sports leaders and leaders of local and national Sami organizations. The most visible public opposition against the project came from actors who while less influential were also somehow part of the political and cultural elite. They were opposition members of the municipal and county councils, as well as academics and other professionals. Both proponents and opponents made claims of representing "people in

general”, not only symbolically but also in some actors’ case formally through their electoral mandate. As I have not attempted to determine whether the stories used by involved actors in the public debate differed from the perspectives of non-involved residents it is difficult to have any opinion as to whether the Olympic debate altogether was dominated by any shared elite perspectives. Based on the media and document studies and my own interviews I would argue that both the proponents and the opponents should be understood as a heterogeneous group of actors with conflicting (and sometimes shared) interests and identities that were articulated, contested and negotiated through the public debate.

The initial and as such formative stories of the Olympic project can be described on the basis of the proposal for Tromsø 2014. The title page of the first proposal document read: “Tromsø 2014 – Romsa 2014: The Winter Games to the Winter City”³⁶. The vision for the games, which was presented in the proposal, was: “Together we will create a groundbreaking sports celebration and give the world a moment of arctic magic.”³⁷ Groundbreaking is the best English translation for the Norwegian term “grensesprengende”, but the term has a double meaning, which is lost in translation, where *grense* means border and *grensesprengende* literally means borderbreaking. The document explains that hosting the games in Tromsø would be borderbreaking in the sense that the Olympics would cross the Arctic Circle for the first time, and claims that the arctic natural surroundings of Tromsø will provide the background for spectacular television footage. However, the term borderbreaking also seems to be an implicit reference to the crossing of national and ethnic borders, with the proposal document presenting Tromsø’s self pronounced status as an anti-racist zone, the peace studies centre at the university, Tromsø’s historic relationship with travellers and traders from neighbouring countries Finland and Russia, and the idea that Tromsø is an indigenous town where the Sami have a prominent position.

The story of Tromsø and the Arctic region as magical was an important element in the presentation of the project. The political consequences of using a discourse of magic and drawing on a story about Tromsø as an indigenous town where the Sami would be co-hosting the games has been discussed by Historian of Religion Siv Ellen Kraft (2004) in relation to the dispute over Tromsdalstind’ s possible holiness. Kraft emphasizes that the discourse of

³⁶ Tromsø 2014 – Romsa 2014 – vinterlekene til vinterbyen (Tromsø 2014 søknadsdokument, side 1)

³⁷ ”Sammen skal vi skape en grensesprengende idrettsfest og gi verden et øyeblikk arktisk magi” Tromsø 2014 søknadsdokument, side 8.

holiness was particularly useful for confronting the Olympic proposal because the bidding committee themselves had framed the proposal in a slogan of Arctic Magic, and argues that the combination of religious and environmental symbols have proved to be a very powerful discourse for indigenous people's campaigns for rights. The idea that indigenous people have a privileged understanding of ecological cycles through their reverence for "Mother Earth" is more or less taken for granted, to the extent that Sami politicians hardly had any choice in the matter of Tromsdalstind – if the mountain was holy they had to demand for it to be protected. Kraft also shows how versatile the idea of holiness is as a political discourse. The holiness of Tromsdalstind was quickly established as an interpretative repertoire also for inhabitants who were not Sami. The mountain was described as "holy" in an indirect sense in local newspapers' reader's columns, referring to its popular usage as a site for recreational hiking and skiing. Readers claimed that the recreational value of the mountain would be destroyed if it was developed as a professional ski slope, and both proponents and opponents of the proposal were united in calls for conservation of the "unspoilt" and "wild" qualities of Tromsdalstind. As will be shown in the following chapters the story about Tromsdalstind and the mountains of Tromsø as somehow holy or sacrosanct continued to be used as part of actors interpretative repertoires also after the plans to use this particular mountain had been changed.

Sociologist Willy Guneriussen (2008) argues that the Olympic project was characterised by an overarching discourse around visions and values. He calls this a "secular re-enchantment of culture and nature". The descriptions of Northern Norwegian nature play an important part in this re-enchantment. Guneriussen claims that the Olympic project was based on an image of a beautiful and friendly arctic wilderness, and argues that this is a kind of aesthetic perspective on the landscape rather than a practical and lived perspective. His analysis was based on the proposal document and the discursive practices of some of the Olympic proponents. However, I would argue that No to the Olympics also drew on an interpretative repertoire of aesthetic landscape imagery in their argumentation. As an example, No to the Olympics' counter-statement had a photograph on the front-page depicting a snow-covered gently sloping mountainside, with some other mountains in the background. The sky is blue and the sun is shining straight at the center motif. A few ski-tracks and a track from some animal can be seen in the foreground. There is a caption underneath the picture which reads: "A Winter Day on Lille Blåmann, Kvaløya, Tromsø municipality, February 2007: Virginal and untouched nature, stillness, animal life, clean air and spectacular experiences – all for

free!” (No to the Olympics, 2008).³⁸ The beautiful snow-clad mountain image and the statement that this is indeed a venue for spectacular experiences works to reinforce the story about Tromsø as an aesthetic and spectacular venue for winter sports, but by adding the words “all for free!” the story is re-articulated as a point of resistance against any commercialization of this landscape and an attempt at disassemblage of the Olympic project. The information about exactly where and when the photo is taken also works as a re-articulation. The landscape is given specificity in a way which implies use and familiarity, and I would argue that this makes the aesthetic landscape less detached and closer to the practical and lived perspective which Guneriussen found missing.

The story about a Tromsø Olympic hosting as borderbraking and magical was used in documents and presentations that were directed towards the Norwegian public and especially the actors that would decide the fate of the proposed bid. The story was supposed to convince the Norwegian Confederation of Sports and the Norwegian Government that an Olympic bid from Tromsø would have a fair chance in an international competition with other towns for the IOC’s favour. Sociologist Jon Helge Lesjø (2007) has compared Tromsø’s proposed bid to host the Olympic Winter Games of 2014 to the Lillehammer Olympic Games of 1994 and to international Olympic stories. According to Lesjø the challenges in planning and conducting the Olympic arrangements can be tied to different discourses, connected to the material and the symbolic aspects of the projects. Especially the Olympic discourse of “faster, bigger and better” and the expectation that the event should be spectacular pose a challenge to those who are supposed to control the project in terms of expenses and outputs. Lesjø argues that while Tromsø’s concept was very well adjusted to the symbolic Olympic discourses of spectacle and entertainment, the material discourses of facilities and economic consequences were not equally well developed. He claims that the lessons learned from Lillehammer’s hosting of the Olympic Games in 1994 was that expenses had accumulated far beyond the expectation and control of the local actors, and that the Norwegian state had to go in and take a much firmer control of the project than had been anticipated. Stories focusing on the risks involved in Olympic hostings, uncontrollable expenses and the uncertainties around possible benefits were widely used by Olympic opponents as an argument against the Olympic project. At the launch of No to the Olympics, Yes to the Coast, the network’s spokesperson argued

³⁸ I used this image without the caption as a photographic prompt in the interviews I did. It is reproduced as Image 3 in Appendix 3.

that Northern Norway would not get any lasting infrastructural developments from hosting the Olympics in Tromsø, there were no documented long-term effects and the proposal was unrealistic and expensive³⁹. The notion of economic risk was also drawn upon in municipal council debates by both the Progress Party and the Red Voters' Alliance. While this argument did not have any impact on the council majority's support of the project in Tromsø, Lesjø speculates that the experiences that the Norwegian state made with regards to Lillehammer may have been one reason why the responsible ministries were sceptical of Tromsø's application for the 2014 Games. And as shown in the former section the increased expense calculations that were put forward by the external evaluation committee determined the fate of Tromsø 2018.

The proposal document for the 2014 bid also established the Olympic bid as a regional project. Presentations emphasised that an Olympic hosting in Tromsø was supposed to include and benefit the entire Northern Norwegian region. Practice sessions and some of the introductory tournament rounds were to take place in Finnmark and Nordland, and some of the facilities were also to be distributed to these counties. In the proposal document for Tromsø 2018, the focus was on compact games. The 2006 Winter Games in Turin, Italy had been criticised as being far too dispersed and lacking a common Olympic village. The ability to accommodate all athletes and support teams as well as arrange practically all the events on and immediately around Tromsøya was therefore assumed to be a huge competitive advantage in relation to IOC's demands. Despite the ambivalences that this created, the regional story continued to be important to the Olympic proponents. In the run-up to the Norwegian Confederation of Sports' decision about which town that should be the national bidder, the leader of Troms Confederation of Sports stated that it was of utmost importance that the region was unified and would act jointly to succeed. "The vision of an Olympic Game in Tromsø reinforces the importance of the Northern-Norwegian region, and will contribute to the nation's cultural and economic development"⁴⁰.

The so-called "High North Initiative" championed by Foreign Secretary Jonas Gahr Støre interacted with and reinforced the regional story. Soon after taking up his post as Foreign

³⁹ *Nordlys* 11.04.04

⁴⁰ Vi ser det som viktig at landsdelen står samlet bak et arbeid for å lykkes. Visjonen om et OL i Tromsø forsterker viktigheten av den nordlige landsdelen, og vil bidra til nasjonens kulturelle og næringsmessige utvikling. (*Nordlys* 08.12.05 : 39)

Secretary in 2005, Støre had signalled a strong interest in and focus on the North, emphasizing that the Northern areas would be of great importance in the future development of the nation. Political leaders and community actors in the region had greeted this interest with great enthusiasm. The connection between the Government's High North Initiative and a possible Tromsø Olympics was reinforced by the former Tromsø 2014 director in a letter to the editor published in *Nordlys* in January 2006: "In order for the investments in the North to include more than petroleum and fisheries, we who live here must contribute in promoting important and different projects. Through an Olympic initiative (...) we can open a window to the world, which will give the world the possibility of seeing us: With a focus on tourism, culture, export, knowledge exchange and the many qualities of the northern region in general."⁴¹ The Olympic opponents also tried to use the regional story and the High North Initiative to argue for their views. In a letter published in *Nordlys* in January 2006, three members from No to the Olympics stated that both Tromsø and the region would be better off without the Olympics. They took the High North Initiative as evidence of this, saying that the Government's focus on the region had created a new optimism and enthusiasm, and that this might not have been possible if 10 billion NOK had been bound up in Olympic investments.

To sum up, the Olympic project can be understood as a political project where different ideas, interests and actors were assembled. The articulation of different place stories formed part of this assemblage, and attempts at re-articulation of these stories by Olympic opponents worked as an attempt at disassemblage of the Olympic project. In this introductory discussion of the public debate I have shown how stories about Tromsø and the proposed Olympic hosting as border-braking, magical and spectacular were used to promote the bid, and how the opponents rearticulated these stories to oppose the project. I have described how opponents used stories about economic risk, and finally I have discussed the role of regional stories and the High North Initiative in supporting the Olympic project. The public debate formed the contextual background for the interviews I did with involved actors, and the stories I have discussed in this chapter were drawn upon in the interviews in different ways.

⁴¹ Skal satsingen i nord omfatte noe mer enn petroleumsvirksomhet og fiskeri, må vi som bor her være med å løfte fram de viktige og annerledes prosjektene. Gjennom en OL-satsing kan (...) [vi] åpne et vindu ut mot verden som ikke minst gir verden mulighet til å se oss - med fokus på reiseliv, kultur, eksportnæringer, kunnskapsutveksling og den nordlige landsdelens mange kvaliteter generelt. (Letter to the editor, *Nordlys* 24.01.06: 44)

4.4 Summary and the road ahead

In this chapter I have described Tromsø by focusing on “factual information” such as demographics, climate and economic statistic. I have provided a chronological outline of the Olympic process from 2003 to 2008 and introduced some of the main actors in the public debate, and finally I have given an introductory analysis of some of the stories that were articulated as part of the Olympic project and the opposition against it. Altogether, the chapter aimed at providing necessary contextual background for reading the following chapters that focus on analysing stories about place used by involved actors in research interviews about the Olympic debate.

The analysis in the next three chapters focuses on different aspects of place politics that were negotiated through the Olympic debate. I start by focusing on stories about belonging and not belonging in Tromsø, and the politics of identities, propinquities and dis(connectivities) related to this. The next chapter looks at stories about development in terms of both regional and local economic development, material infrastructure development and stories of development and environmental consequences. These stories are related to a politics of interests, but also to politics of propinquities and connectivities. The third analytical question deals with stories about the Olympic debate and the Olympic process, and discusses the rules, norm and limits related to place politics, which I have called the politics of place politics. Readers are reminded again that the analysis of the debate is of course also a construction of sequence and consequence.

5 Stories about belonging, politics of identities

This chapter is about how actors in the Olympic debate used different stories about belonging and not belonging in Tromsø, and the politics of identities, propinquities and connectivities connected to this. I begin however by quoting someone who was not an actor in the Olympic debate:

*I feel like I can't say yes or no. The ones who have grown up here and have all their identity linked up to the town, they're the ones who must...*⁴²

The interview excerpt above is taken from one of my pilot interviews. The interviewee quoted had moved to Tromsø as a student and had now lived in the town for several years. Unlike the interviewees who were recruited on the basis of having been involved in the public debate, this woman had not involved herself in the Olympic debate in any way, and she was hesitant to being interviewed about the issue. She claimed that she couldn't speak for the future of the town because she wasn't really a local. Her diffidence can perhaps be explained by the next quote, taken from an interview with a member of No to the Olympics.

*When that unbelievable guy, what's his name, [...] Petter Jansen, when he comes up here to lecture us... And none of them even moved here. They were commuting.*⁴³

Like the former interviewee, the actor quoted here had moved to Tromsø as a grown up, but unlike the former interviewee this had not stopped him from involving himself in the Olympic debate. The interviewee was protesting against the fact that one of the former leaders of Tromsø Romsa 2018 did not actually live in Tromsø but was commuting. The implication was that Jansen could not be taken seriously as a stakeholder in the debate because he wasn't a local. But what does it take to be a local?

All my interviewees lived in Tromsø, and with the exception of the pilot interviewees, they had all involved themselves, albeit in varying degrees, in the public debate. As such they had all in some way defined themselves as local stakeholders in relation to the question about Tromsø's Olympic bid, but the way they constructed this sense of local attachment in the

⁴² ”jeg føler ikke jeg kan si for eller mot. De som har vokst opp her, som har hele sin identitet i byen, de... Jeg som er innflytter, jeg kan ikke...

⁴³ Altså når han der utrolige fyren, hva var det nå han heter, altså ikke Myrvold men han som var før Myrvold, han Petter Jansen, når han kommer opp her og skal belære oss... Og det var ingen av dem som flyttet hit. De pendlet jo.

interviews differed. In the introduction and theoretical framework I have argued that politics of identities, interests, propinquities and connectivities intersect and are co-constituted. One implication of this co-constitution is that stories about belonging, identity and having a sense of place should be taken seriously in discussions of place politics. Defining who belongs in a place and who has a legitimate right to participate in place politics is an important element of the politics of propinquity, and stories about identity and belonging can therefore be understood as a political resource for constructing and reconstructing place borders. But stories about belonging can also produce and reproduce different politics of connectivities by drawing on links and relationships beyond place.

In this chapter I will examine how actors involved in the Olympic debate used stories about sense of place, identity, belonging and non-belonging to place themselves and others as Tromsø inhabitants. I will show how the involved actors I have interviewed used different discursive resources to position themselves as belonging in Tromsø, and discuss the politics of identities attached to these different stories about belonging. The chapter will explore interviewees' stories about attachment to Tromsø through nativity and through emotional ties and discuss how interviewees talked about their sense of place and their sense of themselves as Tromsø inhabitants. One important difference that will be examined is that between discursive practices drawing on a story about belonging through being "born and bred" (Taylor 2010) in Tromsø, and discursive practices drawing on stories about "elective belonging" (Savage et al 2000). I will show how stories about nature and stories about Tromsø as a cosmopolitan place were used as resources for constructing a sense of elective belonging. Stories that refer to belonging in connection to the Northern Norwegian region, and stories about (dis)connectivities beyond the Northern Norwegian region will also be considered. Stories about Sami belonging and the use of Romsa, the Sami name for Tromsø, in the Olympic proposal, will be examined to see how Sami and non-Sami Tromsø residents used stories about identity and indigeneity in different ways. The question of Sami belonging or non-belonging is illuminating also in that it shows how some local identities could be used as a basis for accepting or not accepting actors that had been defined as Other.

Having explored different stories about belonging, I will ask what politics of identities these stories contribute to. Who are included by these stories, and who are excluded? In some accounts there is a sense of ambivalence between elective belongers and born and bred "town boys". This ambivalence will be explored together with stories about a sense of exclusion and non-belonging as a result of the Olympic debate. While the question of Sami identities and

belonging were discussed openly in the interviews, other ethnic minorities were rarely mentioned. Why not, and what effect may that have had? What are the limits of elective belonging – can anyone choose to belong?

5.1 Being a “Tromsøværing”: The born and bred story about belonging in Tromsø

In the interviews I asked the involved actors in the debate whether they were born and/or raised in Tromsø or had moved to the town as adults, whether they had lived anywhere else, and if they had, for how long they had been living in Tromsø. I also asked whether the interviewee considered him/herself to be a “Tromsøværing”. This is a local expression, similar to the term Londoner. In simple terms, Tromsøværing means someone who lives in Tromsø, but the connotations varied somewhat across the interviews, as did the interviewees’ willingness to use this word about themselves. While some would state unequivocally that he or she was a Tromsøværing, others were more diffident and many were very clear that they would *not* call themselves Tromsøværing. In this first section I will explore the way interviewees used this place-based identity term and argue that Tromsøværing worked as an expression of a born and bred sense of local affiliation.

The interview excerpt below is from an interview with an actor who said that she would absolutely call herself a Tromsøværing. I asked her what the term meant to her:

I guess it means being born and raised here, and I feel that this is where I've got my roots and where I am home. And then you could add these generations of parents who are born and raised in Tromsø too. Based on the old ways, but that has been more and more diluted of course, but at least I've got a mother from the Tromsø Island who is raised here, and my father is from (a municipality north of Tromsø). No, but for my part it's having your roots here. My childhood here, I think that is the strongest part of it. And I notice that especially now that I have my own children that one has a history with the parents one meets, that one has some roots there too to place them, a history related to the grown-ups that one meets through ones kids.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ IMK: Tromsøværing, er det et ord du vil bruke om deg selv?

Intervjuperson: Ja, det vil jeg absolutt, ja.

IMK: Hva legger du i det?

Intervjuperson: Hva *jeg* legger i det?

IMK: Ja, sånn for deg, hvorfor?

Intervjuperson: Nei, det er vel det at jeg er født og oppvokst her og føler at det er her jeg har mine røtter og det er her jeg hører hjemme. Og så kan man jo legge på disse generasjonene med foreldre som er født og oppvokst i Tromsø og. Utfra sånn gammelt av, men det blir jo mer og mer utvannet da, så jeg har en mor i alle fall som er

In this narrative, being a Tromsøværing is linked to having roots, mainly through one's own childhood, but also through that of one's parents. The interviewee expressed surprise when asked to specify what being a Tromsøværing meant to her, indicating that she thought the content of the term was obvious and unnecessary to explain. In the first pilot interview I did, I stumbled on this question myself. After having established that the interviewee was born and raised in Tromsø, I felt that the question about whether he regarded himself to be a Tromsøværing was a little stupid, and answered it myself by saying that "I guess you do, having been born and raised here." My slip-up showed me what the term meant to me, but in order to find out if it was understood the same way by other interviewees I made sure to actually raise the question to them in later interviews.

In the interview quoted, Tromsøværing works as an established story about belonging to a place through being "born and raised here". This sense of belonging through being born and having grown up in a place is well established in many different studies of place and identity in different contexts (Simonsen 1993, Savage 2008). In her study of how middle-class women in England constructed their sense of identity in relation to place, Taylor found that one of the most commonly used discursive resources was a story that she called the "born and bred narrative resource". The born and bred story assumes a natural connection between having been born and grown up somewhere, and having a sense of belonging. According to Taylor, "the born and bred narrative resource (...) establishes the connection to place associated with local or native identities, including at the national level. It sets up a distinction between the people who authentically belong somewhere and others who are newcomers or outsiders." (Taylor 2010:13). Taylor claims that the ideal of being rooted and belonging to a place through a long-term relationship with it is a story that is deeply resonant and continues to hold relevance also in a context where many of her interviewees do not live in the place where they grew up. The ideal of natural belonging that is implicit in the born and bred story is defined through nativity – being born in a place establishes an actor as being of that place. The born and bred story thus works as an immutable claim that the subject is a local.

fra Tromsøya og oppvokst her og faren min er fra [kommune nord for Tromsø]. Nei, men for min del så er det å ha røttene sine her. Barndommen min her, jeg tror det er det som er det sterkeste. Og det merker jeg spesielt nå som jeg får egne barn at man har en historie til de foreldrene som man treffer, at man har også noen røtter der at man kan plassere, en historie til de voksne menneskene man treffer gjennom ungene sine.

In the interview excerpt above, the actor's sense of being a Tromsøværing was based on two interlinked stories about nativity. The interviewee started by referring to her own birth and childhood, being raised in Tromsø, but she also talked about having parents and generations further back who were born and raised in Tromsø. Another interviewee answered my question about whether he called himself Tromsøværing thus:

Yes I do, since I was born here and my father is an old Tromsøværing and I have got a large part of my family living in Tromsø so that Tromsø has been my base all my life.⁴⁵

In both narratives, attachment to Tromsø is linked both to the individual actor being born and raised in the town and to earlier generations living in Tromsø. The former interviewee said that that she was a Tromsøværing “based on the old ways” too, seeing as her mother had been born and raised on Tromsøya. The interviewee did not expand upon this, but I interpret “the old ways” as referring to a story which is told in Tromsø about a true Tromsøværing being someone who can trace his or her nativity back through three generations having been born and raised within the old town borders. A Tromsøværing by this definition is often referred to as a “town boy” (bygutt). The term “town girl” (byjente) is also used, but not as frequently. The town boy-category can be understood as setting up an informal hierarchy of local belonging, in the sense that although anyone who is born within Tromsø municipality may be a Tromsøværing, only some can be a town boy. Both time (three generations back) and locality (the old town borders, the centre of the municipality) matters. As the first interviewee said, the town boy-story is “diluted”. It was often referred to in the interviews, but usually in a jokingly or dismissive way. But even as a joke it was used as a discursive resource in several interviews, both to support a born and bred story about what it meant to be a Tromsøværing, and as will be discussed later, to challenge it.

To one interviewee who had moved to Tromsø as an adult and lived in the town for several decades, the “town boy” or “generations back” story was used as an argument against calling himself a Tromsøværing.

IMK: What is the reason why you won't call yourself a Tromsøværing? What is it about that term which...

⁴⁵ Ja, jeg gjør det, siden jeg er født her og faren min er gammel Tromsøværing og jeg har veldig store deler av familien min bor i Tromsø sånn at Tromsø har vært min base i hele mitt liv.

Interviewee: No, actually I think, I respect the view that you have to be born here and have many generations before you, that's okay. I think it is a good thing that many people come here and become fond of the town. I do feel that Tromsø is number one, after all, but calling myself a Tromsøværing, that is... I say that I live in Tromsø, I have lived in Tromsø, and I will die in Tromsø.⁴⁶

Another actor argued that he could call himself a Tromsøværing even though he would never be a town boy.

IMK: Do you consider yourself a Tromsøværing?

Interviewee: I suppose I could say that I do, since I have lived here for 26 years now, and that is longer than I have lived in [other Northern Norwegian municipality] where I am from, so... I guess it's obvious then that... But one will never be a real town boy of course! And that's okay with me.

IMK: This thing with "town boy" is that...

Interviewee: No, it may have been 20 years ago, but today there aren't anyone who... If you look at the attachment of most people living in the town today I would say that maybe 2-3000 people could call themselves... So that... But it wasn't...

IMK: Less...?

Interviewee: Yes, I don't think anybody cares, and I certainly don't care⁴⁷.

In this narrative about belonging, the established story about town boys becomes a resource for arguing that it is possible to be a Tromsøværing without having been born and bred in Tromsø and without having a generational attachment. The interviewee laughed when he stated that he would never become a town boy. When I pursued the term, he argued that the

⁴⁶ IMK: Hva er grunnen til at du ikke vil kalle deg for Tromsøværing da? Hva er det som ligger i det som...?

Inf: Nei, egentlig så synes jeg det er, jeg respekterer det synet at du må være født og ha mange generasjoner i, det er greit, jeg synes det er bra at det er mange som kommer hit og blir glad i byen, jeg føler jo det at Tromsø er nummer en, tross alt, men å kalle meg for Tromsøværing det... Jeg sier jeg bor i Tromsø, jeg har bodd i Tromsø, jeg kommer til å dø i Tromsø.

⁴⁷ IMK: Regner du deg som Tromsøværing?

Inf: Jeg må vel i og for seg kunne si at jeg gjør det, i og med at jeg har bodd her nå da i 26 år, og det er jo mer enn jeg har bodd i [annen nordnorsk kommune] der jeg kommer i fra, så... Det sier seg vel i og for seg selv at da... Men ekte bygutt blir man jo ikke! (latter) Det gjør meg heller ingen ting.

IMK: Er det der med "bygutt", er det...

Inf: Nei, det var nå vel kanskje for 20 år siden, men i dag er det vel ikke noen som... Hvis du begynner å se på tilhørigheta til de fleste som bor i byen i dag så vil jeg tro at kanskje 2-3000 mennesker kan kalle seg... Så det... Men det var nå mer...

IMK: Mindre...?

Inf: Ja, jeg tror ikke det er noen som bryr seg om det og jeg bryr meg i alle fall ikke om det.

town boy-category wasn't really relevant any more, and added that he certainly didn't care because most people living in Tromsø today didn't have that kind of long-term attachment. At the same time there is a certain ambivalence in the narrative. The actor argued that he *supposed* he could call himself a Tromsøværing after having lived in the town for so long, but by referring to the town boy-story he also accepted that there were some limits to his status as a Tromsøværing.

The next interviewee quoted had also moved to Tromsø as an adult, but he was able to use the town boy-story in a different way to claim nativity:

IMK: I usually ask about [interviewees] Tromsø-attachment. Are you from Tromsø, are you born and raised here, or?

Interviewee: No, I' from [place name] in Finnmark, so, but I came to Tromsø in 1973.

IMK: OK, so that means you've lived here for 36 years?

Interviewee: Yes, and I have got a great grandfather who worked at the dockyard in the 1870s, so I can almost call myself a town boy.

IMK: Right. What about a term like Tromsøværing, is that something that you would use about yourself?

Interviewee: Well, yes I do, although I have never really left Finnmark for good, even though I may have in reality, but I never forget that I came from there.⁴⁸

The interviewee laughed when calling himself a town boy, but his intergenerational connection to Tromsø was still part of the discursive resources he would use to talk about his attachment to Tromsø. While he said that he would describe himself as a Tromsøværing he also stressed his lasting connection to the county where he was born and raised.

In some narratives the possibility of being a Tromsøværing seems to be rejected exactly on the basis of the interviewees lasting attachments to their place of birth. As one interviewee who had lived in Tromsø since the 1970s put it:

⁴⁸ IMK: Jeg pleier å spørre om Tromsøbakgrunn. Er du fra Tromsø, er du født og oppvokst her eller?

Inf: Nei, jeg er fra [stedsnavn] i Finnmark så, men jeg kom til Tromsø i 73.

IMK: Ja, så da har du bodd her i 36 år?

Inf: Ja, og så har jeg en oldefar som jobbet på Verftet på 1870-tallet så jeg kan nesten kalle meg for bygut (latter).

IMK: Ja, enn et begrep som Tromsøværing, er det et ord du bruker om deg selv?

Inf: Eh, ja det gjør jeg jo, samtidig som jeg aldri liksom har forlatt Finnmark for godt, selv om det kanskje er en realitet så glemmer jeg jo aldri at jeg er derifra.

No! I will never be a Tromsøværing; I am [from other municipality near Tromsø]. So that, I won't, but I will be living here of course, I don't think I will ever live anywhere else than in Tromsø. And my kids are Tromsøværings of course, but I'm not, when I introduce myself to someone I say that I am a [from other municipality] but living in Tromsø.⁴⁹

There were several of the interviewees who said that although they were not Tromsøværings, their kids who had been born and raised in Tromsø were. Again this reinforced the birthright that is inherent in a born and bred story about belonging. Having been born in Tromsø seemed to be more important also than having been bred there. One interviewee explained that she felt like a Tromsøværing because she was born in Tromsø, even if she had for the most part been raised in other Northern Norwegian municipalities.

I feel like a Tromsøværing, but at the same time I do notice that I haven't had those formative years in the town, when you go to school, primary and high school, because that's when you establish a set of relations and I don't have that, but... I don't know if I dare say to third generation Tromsøværings that I feel like a Tromsøværing, but I do have a very clear identity to Tromsø, so I will feel, I will say that I am a Tromsø... Tromsøværing.⁵⁰

Again in this quote the town boy-story about a true Tromsøværing being someone who can trace is nativity three generations back is represented as a potential challenge to the interviewees' professed identity as a Tromsøværing, albeit a challenge which the interviewee is ready to defy.

There were also a few interviewees who argued that being a Tromsøværing did not have anything to do with where you were born and raised. This excerpt is taken from an interview with an actor who had already told me that he was born in Tromsø, but who explained his sense of being a Tromsøværing without referring to these roots.

IMK: Would you say that you consider yourself a Tromsøværing?

Interviewee: Yes. Yes.

⁴⁹ Nei! Jeg kommer aldri til å bli Tromsøværing, jeg er [fra annen kommune nær Tromsø]! Sånn at jeg, det har jeg ikke, men altså jeg kommer jo til å bo her, jeg tror ikke at jeg kommer til å bo noen andre plasser enn i Tromsø. Og ungene mine er jo selvfølgelig Tromsøværinger, men jeg er det ikke, så når jeg skal presentere meg så sier jeg at jeg er [fra annen kommune] men jeg bor i Tromsø.

⁵⁰ Inf: Ja, jeg gjør det, mentalt, jeg føler meg som Tromsøværing, men samtidig kan du si, jeg merker jo at jeg ikke har de der formative årene i byen som er akkurat da du går på skole, grunnskolen og videregående, for da er det et sånt spenn med relasjoner som man etablerer, så det har jeg ikke, men ... Jeg vet ikke om jeg tør å si til tredje generasjons Tromsøværinger at jeg føler meg som Tromsøværing, men jeg har en helt klar identitet til Tromsø, så jeg vil føle meg, jeg vil si at jeg er en Tromsø... Tromsøværing.

IMK: What do you mean by that?

Interviewee: I mean that I feel at home in Tromsø. And that I have lived here for more than three months.

IMK: So does that mean that this is the benchmark for others too to be considered a Tromsøværing?

Interviewee: Yes, I think that is the norm. I hear about many who have less attachment in terms of the number of years than I do who consider themselves Tromsøværings. The way I understand it calling yourself Tromsøværing is a rather flexible concept and the threshold for doing so is very low.⁵¹

Another actor, again born and raised in Tromsø himself, made a similar argument:

To me it's not necessarily about where in the world you were born, but about where your sense of attachment is, and to me it's very much here. But there may be many people who have lived for a longer or shorter time in Tromsø who still have a strong sense of attachment to the town.⁵²

According to these two interviewees it was the *feelings* of attachment rather than the nativity that was important in defining a Tromsøværing. I will discuss claims of belonging based on emotional ties in the next section, but note for now that very few interviewees who were not born in Tromsø were willing to use the term Tromsøværing about themselves based on feelings of attachments. One exception was a man who had moved to Tromsø 37 years ago, who stated:

I feel like a Tromsøværing, I'm proud of living here.⁵³

Another interviewee, who had lived in Tromsø for 19 years, gave the following answer to my question about whether or not she considered herself to be a Tromsøværing:

I'm becoming more and more so; after all I have almost lived longer in the same place here than I have lived in one place down south. (...) I have been wondering when I can call myself a Tromsøværing, how many years I must

⁵¹ IMK: Vil du si at du regner deg som Tromsøværing?

Inf: Ja ja. (selvfølgelig tone)

IMK: Hva legger du i det?

Inf: Jeg legger i det at jeg føler meg hjemme i Tromsø. Og har bodd her mer enn tre måneder.

IMK: Så det vil si at det er kriteriet også for andre til å regnes som Tromsøværinger?

Inf: Ja, jeg tror det er kriteriet. Jeg hører mange som har mindre tilknytting i antall år enn meg som opplever seg som Tromsøværinger. Jeg har en oppfatning av at det å kalle seg Tromsøværing er et ganske fleksibelt begrep og terskelen er veldig lav for det.

⁵² Det er for meg ikke en, altså det handler ikke nødvendigvis om hvor i verden du er født, men hvor du føler din tilhørighet, og den føler jeg er veldig sterk her. Men det kan være mange som har ulik botid i Tromsø men som likevel føler sterk tilhørighet til byen

⁵³ Jeg føler meg som Tromsøværing, stolt av å bo her i byen.

*have lived here to call myself that. I do feel that I'm going home to Tromsø, but it's a strange thing, you're going home to [her birthplace] too, but in another way, there you're only going to be for a short period and then you're going home again. So this is home, really. I long to be back home here when I've been away for a little while.*⁵⁴

It is interesting to note the choice of personal pronoun in this excerpt. The interviewee uses “I” when she talks about her attachment to Tromsø and a more detached “you” when she talks about her birthplace. To me this indicates that she does have a strong identity as a Tromsø-inhabitant, and still she is reluctant to call herself Tromsøværing. Like this actor, there were many interviewees who would say that they felt at home or felt that they belonged in Tromsø but did not call themselves Tromsøværing. They would instead use other established stories to talk about belonging and to claim a sense of attachment.

5.2 Stories about emotional ties and elective belonging

*I've had a youthful dream since the 1960's to experience more of Northern Norway, having spent 3 years as an officer in the brigades in Troms County. This dream has been partially fulfilled, but not fully. I had a strong hope and faith that this project would last for another 10 years. Regrettably, this was not to be.*⁵⁵

This quote is taken from a speech made by Petter Rønningen, executive director of Tromsø Romsa 2018, at the end-of-project gathering or “wake” held in November 2008, one month after the bidding project had been abandoned by the Norwegian Confederation of Sports. Rønningen had been recruited as director in the final stage of the bidding project. As someone who had been involved in the successful Lillehammer Olympic games of 1994 as well as many other Olympic bidding projects, he represented expertise and experience, but he had not been a Tromsø-supporter for a long time. In fact he had made public statements against

⁵⁴ Jeg blir jo mer og mer det, jeg har jo nesten bodd mer tid her på et fast sted enn jeg har bodd sørafor på et fast sted. (...) Jeg har jo fundert på når jeg kan kalle meg Tromsøværing da, hvor mange år må jeg ha bodd her for å kalle meg Tromsøværing, men jeg føler at jeg skal hjem til Tromsø, men det er rart med det, du skal hjem til [fødestedet] også, men på en annen måte, der skal du bare være en liten kort periode og så skal du hjem igjen. (ja) Så her er hjemme, virkelig. Jeg lengter hjem hit når jeg har vært borte ei lita stund.

⁵⁵ Ungdomsdrøm fra 60-årene om å få med meg mer av Nord Norge etter 3 år som offiser i brigaden i Indre Troms. Drømmen har gått litt i oppfyllelse, men bare litt. Et prosjekt jeg hadde sterkt håp og tro på skulle vare i 10 år til. Slik ble det dessverre ikke. (Opening speech by Petter Rønningen at the “wake” of Tromsø Romsa 2018 06.11.09)

Tromsø's candidature at an earlier stage of the project, saying that the plans were unrealistic. Rønningen did not live in Tromsø during the 8 months that he was director. By talking about how he had hoped to set up a long-term relationship with Northern Norway and referring back to his experiences as a young soldier posted in the region, Rønningen claimed emotional attachment and personal feelings of hope and dreams for Tromsø. This emotional attachment worked towards establishing Rønningen as a committed participant and genuine "mourner" of Tromsø's Olympic project, some kind of "honorary local". In this section I will discuss how interviewees used stories about feeling attached to Tromsø, and argue that these worked as an alternative to the born and bred story about belonging. I would like to note that while Clarke, Hoggett and Thompson (2006) argue that "emotions are central to our understanding of the social and political world" (Clarke et al 2006: 8), my aim in discussing feelings of attachment is not to accurately describe or represent how people feel about place, or how they are affected by it, but rather how they talked about feelings and affect in connection to place.

Tromsø has a large proportion of inhabitants who have moved to the place as adults. Many come from the surrounding municipalities or the larger Northern Norwegian region, while others come from Southern Norway or abroad. As explained in chapter 3, the interviewees mirror the general make-up of the population in this regard, as 15 of the 24 involved actors I interviewed had moved to Tromsø as adults. As an example of these incoming migrants to Tromsø I will quote an interviewee who had moved to Tromsø from a nearby municipality.

I'm from [municipality South of Tromsø]. The first time I came to Tromsø I was 18, (...) I graduated from high school here and stayed for 10 years. I went to Harstad for a year (...), then I moved to Oslo where I met my husband, and we moved to [municipality where I was born] because of his job. (...) We returned here in 2005. So I consider myself a girl from [municipality], but my heart beats for Tromsø. I've always known that Tromsø is where I will live and that my children will grow up here.⁵⁶

Note that like Rønningen the interviewee emphasises her emotional ties to Tromsø, saying that her heart beats for the town. In *Globalization and Belonging* (2005), sociologists Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst raise the question of what happens to local identities and belonging in a context of globalization and increased mobility. Based on a series of interviews with

⁵⁶ Innflytter fra [kommune sør for Tromsø]. Første gang jeg kom til Tromsø var jeg 18 år gammel, (...), tok siste året på gymnaset her. Ble her i 9-10 år. Hadde et år i Harstad (...), så flyttet jeg til Oslo. Traff mannen min der og så flyttet vi til [kommune] fordi han var i [yrke]. (...) Så jeg opplever jo at jeg er [fra kommune], men har et bankende hjerte for Tromsø. Jeg har alltid visst at det er Tromsø jeg skal bo i og at ungene mine skal vokse opp her.

residents of four different Manchester suburbs, Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst introduce the concept *elective belonging* to describe a sense of belonging and identifying with a place without being born and raised there. They argue that “people feel they belong when they are able to biographically make sense of their decision to move to a particular place, and their sense of belonging is hence linked to this contingent tie between themselves and their surrounds” (Savage et al 2005: 207). The authors show that actors make reflexive discursive connections between their place of residence and their perceived identity, and that a sense of belonging is premised on being able to tell a coherent story about place and self. One of their interviewees made a connection between his love of outdoor recreational activities and the easy access to the hills from his residence to claim a sense of belonging, whereas another interviewee who described himself as working class explained that he found it difficult to fit in in his old neighbourhood because it has been gentrified and was now perceived as a middle-class area. Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst also quote examples of interviewees who used similarities and connections between their place of residence and other places where they had lived or had some kind of emotional tie with to justify a sense of belonging.

In my interviews with actors in the Olympic debate I found that expressions of elective belonging were often linked to stories about how the actors understood, used and felt about Tromsø – stories about having a sense of place. While the born and bred discursive resource connected to the term “Tromsøværing” seemed to be difficult to use plausibly by actors who had moved to Tromsø as adults, the sense of place stories were used both by “natives” and more recent arrivals. Stories about senses of place were often told in response to two of the photographic prompts used in the interviews, and I will therefore discuss these in some detail below. The first photo (Image 1) is taken from the top of Tromsøya and shows the central parts of the town as well as the bridge to the mainland. It’s a winter scene, the sky is a dark blue and there are lights from the town and bridge. The second photo (Image 3) shows a mountain scenery in which the sun is shining over a gently sloping snow-covered landscape crossed by a few ski tracks. In commenting on the photos actors described what they saw as the character and qualities of the town, and often expressed feelings of attachment, pride, love or affinity in relation to these.

Image 1 was generally described as highly representative of Tromsø by most interviewees. In the words of one interviewee:

*The blue Arctic light, ocean meets mountains, strong contrasts, city and nature. This image is a kind of condensate of what Tromsø is.*⁵⁷

Another interviewee emphasized that the image focused on the built-up parts of the town and the most densely populated areas, as well as showing the bridge to the mainland and the mountain Tromsdalstind, which she described as the most typical symbols of Tromsø. Like the former interviewee she was also concerned with the dual presence in the photo of ocean and mountains, the urban and the natural landscape:

*And I think it is important that you include that closeness to nature and... Both the mountains and the fjord, and that there are actually a few things happening here, it's very dense actually, where the heck are the town squares?*⁵⁸

The interviewees tended to use the term nature rather consistently when referring to the natural landscape. The word “rural” was seldom used to contrast the urban identity of Tromsø. The interviewees did not talk about the relationship between the town and the rural areas, but about the relationship between the town and nature. I think this is quite significant in that very few interviewees seemed to want to identify Tromsø and themselves as rural, even though Tromsø municipality includes a number of rural villages. As mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, one popular acronym and story about Tromsø is that it is the “Paris of the North”. In national tourist marketing “Paris of the North” has been used to refer to Tromsø having a relatively large number of pubs and nightclubs, telling a story about a Tromsø as a place where there is always a lot of opportunities for partying and going out. There were many references to this established story about Tromsø in the interviews, for example one interviewee talked about Tromsø as a place where there was always opportunities for socializing and where people did not just sit at home in the afternoons. Note the way the interviewee quoted above emphasised that “there are actually a few things happening here, it's very dense actually”. The term “actually” in the narrative seems to be a way of protesting against an assumption that nothing really happens, and that Tromsø is sparsely populated. The sense of Tromsø as an urban place seems to be an important difference from other places in Northern Norway, in this case the place that the interviewee had moved away from. Through a story about herself as desiring a more urban life which

⁵⁷ Altså blått arktisk lys, sjø møter fjell, sterke kontraster, by og natur. Dette bildet er jo et sånt kondensat av hva Tromsø er.

⁵⁸ Og jeg synes det er viktig at du får med den nærheten til naturen og... både med fjellene og fjorden, og at det skjer faktisk litt her, veldig tettbygd her egentlig, hvor pokker er torgene?

Tromsø can offer, the actor draws on an “urban repertoire” (Taylor 2010) or “urban ethos” (Bæck 2004) to construct a sense of elective belonging.

Although Image 3 focused on the natural landscape, comments on this also tended to draw on the connections between “town and nature”, like in this account from an interviewee who had moved to Tromsø 14 years ago:

It was, it was... It was silence. Beautiful. This is a place that I would want to go to. Because it also reminds me very much of the first weeks I spent in Tromsø 14 years ago, and the weather was nice and... I got to go with someone, I took my babies with me out, and I thought “wow, here you have everything within a... You’ve got mountains and powder snow, and the ocean, which I had longed for. And you’ve got the town. Now you can’t see the town in this picture, but it’s there.”⁵⁹

Through a personal story about how she had felt when she first moved to Tromsø the interviewee described Tromsø as a place that had everything that she had been longing for in one place, not just mountains and snow, but also the ocean and the urban facilities of the town. This story thus produces a sense of elective belonging based on an appreciation of what Tromsø has to offer.

The mountain scenery of Image 3 was met with expressions of emotional and also practical engagement by many interviewees. Some interviewees demonstrated personal familiarity with the scene through making very detailed descriptions of it, talking about the quality of the snow (powder snow, new snow, excellent skiing conditions), estimating the temperature and the time of year it would have been taken. One interviewee described the landscape as somewhere that she liked to go skiing, and said:

This is what makes me joyful, when I am in the mountain and feel that this is there just for me, and yes, that is completely priceless.⁶⁰

Taylor argues that “the repertoire of nature and landscape appears to be an alternative resource for constructing belonging, and one which can be drawn on by speakers who position themselves outside the born and bred narrative” (Taylor 2010:83) I found that also

⁵⁹ Det var, det var ... Det var stillhet. Nydelig. Dette var en plass jeg ville ha reist til. For det minner meg også veldig mye om de første ukene jeg var i Tromsø for 14 år siden, og det var vakkert vær og... Jeg fikk bli med noen, tok med meg babyene mine ut i, og jeg tenkte Jøss, her har du alt innenfor en... Du har fjell og puddersnø og havet som jeg hadde lengtet etter. Og så har du byen. Nå ser du jo ikke byen her men den er der. (01.04.09)

⁶⁰ Dette er det som gjør meg lykkelig, når jeg er på fjellet og føler at dette er bare der for meg, og ja, det er helt ubetalelig. (24.06.09)

interviewees who did use the born and bred story sometimes combined this with stories about their love of nature. This shows that the story about attachment to place through love of nature was an effective discursive resource. Here is an example of an interviewee who had been born and raised in Tromsø explaining why she had chosen to move back after having lived in Southern Norway for a few years:

Well, eh, I am very fond of Tromsø, very fond of Northern Norway. Very fond of the nature of course, and I like the fact that there aren't that many people here. (...) I'm incredibly fond of winter, I think it's great with skiing and snow, and the changing of the seasons, I'm very fond of that.⁶¹

In this quote the interviewee expresses her feelings of love and attachment to Tromsø through talking about nature, skiing and snow, as well as the changing of the seasons. Several interviewees mentioned that the perfect weather conditions depicted in Image 3 were not all that common, and described it as postcard scenery. One interviewee called it a rarity, the kind of conditions that one dreamed of but only got for a few days a year. The instability and unpredictability of the weather, and the harshness of the winter months, especially the dark season, was something that was often referred to in relation to a sense of belonging in Tromsø. Interestingly these stories did not draw on an appreciation of the qualities of the place but rather on an ability to cope with its challenges. When asked what the worst thing about Tromsø was, a lot of people immediately answered “the weather”. Some added that although the weather was of course bad, they didn't really want to complain too much about it, because they had after all chosen to live here and if they hadn't been able to cope with it they could just move. The dark season during mid-winter when the sun does not rise above the horizon for two months seemed to have been feared as one of the most negative features of Tromsø and Northern Norway by inhabitants from southern parts of Norway, and not least by their friends and families. Embracing the dark season was thus also a resource for claiming a sense of belonging, like in this quote from an interviewee who had moved to Tromsø from Southern Norway:

No, in that sense I've always been very fascinated by Tromsø in the winter with lots of snow, and not least the light is something I have found very attractive. I think the issue of the dark season has been a little overrated. When I was going to move here [people told me] how are you going to manage the dark season,

⁶¹ Nei, eh, jeg er veldig glad i Tromsø, veldig glad i Nord-Norge. Veldig glad i naturen selvfølgelig, og så er jeg glad i at det ikke er så mye folk her. (...) Utrolig glad i vinteren, jeg synes det er supert med ski og snø, og de skiftingene i årstidene er jeg veldig glad i.

*but in that sense, I think it has been only fascinating, and the Northern Lights, and in that sense I haven't noticed any difference compared to living in the South when it comes to the light.*⁶²

Stories about elective belonging could be used as a challenge and a way of questioning the legitimacy of a born and bred sense of belonging. Consider for example this quote from an actor from No to the Olympics who referred to elective belonging through love of nature as more genuine than a local attachment based on nativity.

*And then they come and purport to tell us how we should steward these [natural] riches, which they have no relationship to. And none of them, including the local 2014 and 2018-leaders, they are not the ones we meet in the mountains! They are not the ones we meet on the ski slopes or on the mountaintops or on the fjord. Because they are sitting in meetings or in restaurants or they are in Oslo! Or in Brussels or wherever.*⁶³

The interviewee argued that to be able to steward the natural resources of Tromsø in a good way one should actually take part in the different outdoor activities that these surroundings may facilitate. To be spending all one's time in meetings or restaurants is viewed as suspect, and travelling too frequently to Oslo, or even worse to Brussels, is in a way to forfeit the identity as local. This could also be seen as a tension between politics of propinquity and politics of connectivity, since participating in social and political networks in Oslo and Brussels, the latter symbolizing the European Union, is described as problematic. It would seem that in order to have legitimacy in local politics one should concentrate one's time and energy at the level of propinquity.

Stories about bad weather and a local identity based on hardship and endurance were also used as a resource for challenging the legitimacy and local credentials of others. One example was the discussion of the weather as a possibly critical factor for a successful Olympic hosting. Here is a quote from one of the Tromsø 2018 employees, who argued that the

⁶² Nei sånn sett så har jeg vært veldig fascinert av Tromsø om vinteren med masse snø og, og ikke minst det lyset synes jeg har vært veldig flott. Jeg synes dette med mørketida har vært litt sånn oppskrytt. Da jeg skulle flytte så var det hvordan skal du klare det da med mørketida, men sånn sett så har jeg, det synes jeg bare har vært fascinerende og dette med nordlyset, og sånn sett så har jeg ikke merket noen forskjell ifht det å bo sørpå eller med lyset. (Interview 28.05.09)

⁶³ Og så kommer de og skal liksom fortelle oss hvordan vi skal forvalte disse rikdommene som de ikke har noe forhold til! Og ingen av dem, og det gjelder også den lokale 2014 og 2018-ledelsen, det er ikke de vi treffer på fjellet! Det er ikke de vi treffer i skibakken eller på toppurer eller på fjorden. For de sitter jo i møter eller på restauranter eller er i Oslo! Eller i Brussel eller hvor de nå måtte være.

Olympic opponents used the possibility of adverse weather conditions to argue against the bid:

Well, they would talk about how bad the weather is in Tromsø. [...] What kept recurring was that February is a terrible month in Tromsø, we haven't got any hotels, it snows all the time, the airport is closed, we have no places to serve food... My experience was that they too often would portray us as a kind of "oh dear, who would want to go there"-region.⁶⁴

In this account, there is a "they" and an "us". "They" are the opponents who would paint a bleak picture of Northern Norway. "Us" was used about the region, and the interviewee positioned himself as a loyal inhabitant who would not complain. He was interviewed on a rather cold day in June, and he argued that of course the weather was not particularly good or warm compared to Oslo where he had been the day before. "But I live here. So sitting and talking about how terrible it is..."⁶⁵ He continued his argument thus:

I mean the weather is of course, it is a factor in Northern Norway and it always has been, the weather may be poor. But if we are going to plan always for the possibility of poor weather then we should really stay indoors most of the time, we shouldn't even go out fishing, because there may be a storm! But that is a very dangerous position, if you live in a nature like this, to go around worrying about the weather. It is very dangerous, right. It's almost, if you think about it, it restricts us very much. No conferences should be planned in Tromsø, because the airport might be closed. We shouldn't plan on playing football here in March, it might snow. I mean, to me it has always been that the weather is a bit of a factor, and we have to be the best at handling it.⁶⁶

The quote above draws on a story about Northern Norway as a place where harsh weather conditions must and have been braved. It is related to the "We shall stand through it"-story that is described in the introduction. The reference to fishing adds to this association. By drawing on this story the actor links the Olympic project both to the "us" of the region today

⁶⁴ Nei, ellers så snakket de om hvor dårlig vær det er i Tromsø. [...]Og det som gikk igjen det var at februar er en elendig måned i Tromsø, vi har ikke hotell, det sner hele tida, flyplassen er stengt, vi har ikke steder å servere mat til dem... Altså jeg opplevde at de litt for ofte fremstilte oss som en sånn "uff-og-uff, hvem som vil reise dit"-landsdel.

⁶⁵ Men jeg bor jo her. Så det å sitte og snakke om hvor elendig det er...

⁶⁶ Altså været er jo, det er jo en dimensjon i Nord Norge og har alltid vært det, det kan bli dårlig vær. Men hvis vi skal planlegge alltid ut i fra at det kan bli dårlig vær så bør vi egentlig mest holde oss innendørs, da bør vi ikke engang dra ut på havet for å fiske, det kan jo bli storm! Men det er jo et livsfarlig ståsted, hvis du bor i en slik natur, at du går rundt og bekymrer deg for været. Det er veldig farlig sant. Det er nesten, hvis du tenker over det så legger det noen enorme begrensinger på oss. Det bør jo for eksempel ikke planlegges å ha noen konferanser i Tromsø, det kan jo bli stengt flyplass. Vi bør jo ikke planlegge å spille fotball her i mars, det kan jo komme til å snø. Altså for meg har det alltid vært sånn at været er en liten dimensjon og vi må være de flinkeste til å håndtere det.

and to the historical settlers along the coast, and indicates that the opponents are not living up to this history.

What happens to a sense of elective belonging if the qualities of place which the sense of affinity and coherence is built on change? There were some interviewees whose narratives drew on a story about not belonging or feeling less attached to Tromsø because of the way that the Olympic project had been pursued. One of the actors who had moved to Tromsø as an adult said that although he didn't regret his move, he felt that the town had changed for the worse during the years that he had lived there:

But to be honest, I do perceive that there has been a shift, and I think that the Olympic project has been a part of that shift, which in my opinion has not been very positive for the town. I think that Tromsø was a much more open town when I first came here, it was easier to get things done and I feel that it has been a little, not just because of the Olympics, it's probably also to do with the way society is changing in general, but it has been more of the Old Boys' Club and the business-interests have gotten very strong.⁶⁷

The term "Old Boys' Club" was mentioned by several interviewees. I interpret this as referring to a critical story about friendship and camaraderie among elite figures. The interviewee added that he considered himself a Tromsøværing and was very fond of Tromsø.

And that was something which I also thought was a little hurtful about this Olympic project, that if you were critical and against it you weren't considered a real Tromsø-patriot.⁶⁸

Another interviewee expressed anger about the way some of the leading figures in Tromsø 2018 in her opinion had tried to silence criticisms and debate.

Someone talks together, make a decision and then it is implemented. And it might be a Boys' Club, now I call it the Old Boys' Club. Because they are mostly men and they are above 50 most of them, above 60 too maybe, and they are town boys, except for the Mayor. But they need to be careful unless the town becomes uninteresting to live in for highly educated, well-versed people who have an alternative. Me for one, I will live in this town as long as it's interesting, as long as I can have some... If the day comes that I think it's

⁶⁷ Men jeg merker jo for å være helt ærlig at det har skjedd en sånn dreining, og det mener jeg at OL-prosjektet har vært en del av den dreininga, som jeg mener ikke har vært spesielt positiv for byen, at Tromsø, jeg synes Tromsø var en mye mer åpen by når jeg kom hit, at det var lettere å få gjennomslag for ting og, jeg føler det har blitt litt sånn, jeg skal ikke si bare på grunn av OL, det har sikkert litt også men den tida vi lever også, altså samfunnsutviklinga, men det har blitt litt sånn mer Gutteklubben Grei og næringslivet har veldig sterke pressgrupper.

⁶⁸ Og det syntes jeg også var litt sårt ifht dette OL-prosjektet at hvis man, ja hvis man var kritisk og mot det så var man ikke ordentlig Tromsø-patriot

*getting too, too much ugh, then... And I don't think I'm the only one who is sitting loosely. With all this lecturing about attraction, lecturing about marketing... One needs to be careful unless people are disappointed when they move here. They need to take care! We need to take care.*⁶⁹

The interviewee was making herself an example of people who might decide to move elsewhere, saying that she had other opportunities if she felt that her talents were not appreciated. Note the way the term town boy was used as part of the criticism against the “Old Boy’s Club” in this account. The interviewee talked about how “they”, presumably the established political elites, needed to take care if they wanted people to stay in Tromsø. At the same time, in a bit of an afterthought, she said that “we” need to take care, returning in my interpretation to a role that she was used to having in Tromsø as someone who did take part in planning projects and was involved in development schemes in different ways. She expressed ambivalence about the town, saying that the Olympic project had highlighted a sense of exclusion from important political processes. This sense of exclusion was claimed as partly a personal experience and partly on behalf of the professionals whose knowledge and opinions had not been heeded by the Olympic bidding committee. The experience of exclusion was also gendered. It was the men in the Boy’s Club that she claimed were making decisions behind closed doors, and it was the male figures in Tromsø 2018 that she was critical of. In this narrative, the way the Olympic project, especially Tromsø 2018, was organized, becomes a symbol of the things that the actor dislikes about Tromsø, and so she says that she lost her enthusiasm and ended up not giving a damn, because it was not her project. What this example shows is the conditionality of elective belonging. When local attachment is based on whether or not you can claim to “feel at home” in a place, the sense of attachment may change if the feeling of being at home changes. The example also indicates that elective belonging has a relational dimension, at least to this interviewee. In her narrative, her sense of attachment depended on perceived conditions of participation and inclusion.

⁶⁹ Det er noen som snakker sammen, fatter en beslutning og så blir det gjennomført. Og det er kanskje gutteklubb, nå kaller jeg det gutteklubben grei for det er mest menn der og de er over 50 de aller fleste, over 60 kanskje og, og de er bygutter, bortsett fra ordføreren. Men de skal passe seg for at denne byen blir uinteressant å bo i for høyt utdanna, oppegående folk som faktisk har et alternativ. Jeg for min del, jeg bor i denne byen så lenge den er interessant, så lenge jeg kan ha noe... Den dagen jeg synes det begynner å bli for, for mye æsj (latter), så... Og jeg tror ikke det er bare jeg som sitter løst. Når all denne prekinga om attraktivitet, preking om markedsføring... En må passe på så folk ikke blir skuffet når de flytter hit. Det skal de passe på! Det skal vi passe på! (Interview 01.04.09)

The stories about sense of place and belonging can be understood as producing a local identity in which strength of feeling replaced roots, birthright and cross-generational attachments. Both the born and bred story and the stories about emotional attachments to Tromsø can be understood as politics of identity focusing on propinquity and local turf. There was however also another version of the urban story that focused on the relationship between Tromsø and other places, thus producing a politics of connectivity. This story was also used to express a feeling of elective belonging, and drew on a description of Tromsø as an international or solidarity-oriented town. As one of the interviewees described it:

*Tromsø is very much expressed as a solidarity town, and we have got quite a lot of active groups around that, concerned about Gaza and things like that.*⁷⁰

I have termed this the cosmopolitan story about Tromsø. Simonsen (2005) argues that cosmopolitanism in terms of being open to various kinds of foreign trade, impulses, food and culture has long been an ideal associated with the urban. Although Waley argues that claims that “such- and-such a city was/is cosmopolitan” (Waley 2009: 244) are often rather vague, he notes that cosmopolitan imaginations are often used in place promotions. Nava (2002) emphasises that cosmopolitanism might mean many different things, and has suggested four different perspectives on cosmopolitanism. One is based on political theory and philosophy and refers to the need for and possibilities of constructing a universal *polis* and some kind of global citizenship that would facilitate the creation of a cosmopolitan democracy. I would argue that the quote above, which emphasised solidarity with Gaza, can be understood as cosmopolitan in this sense. A second perspective is that of the cosmopolitan as an actual global citizen, that is an actor who has experiences of and competences related to living transnationally. While this perspective is often linked to a criticism of the cosmopolitan figure as a western middle-class ideal (a criticism which is related to Massey’s critique of the power-geometry of globalization), a third cosmopolitan perspective points to the cultural hybridity of diaspora cultures and migrants. Finally, Nava suggest a fourth perspective, which she calls an aesthetic or affective cosmopolitanism based on consumer culture and an attraction towards the exotic. Ley (2004) emphasises that the idea of cosmopolitanism should be understood as always located and thus used and expressed in different ways in different context. I would argue that the way the cosmopolitan story was used in Tromsø it partly worked as a claim for

⁷⁰ Tromsø er jo veldig en sånn uttalt solidaritetsby, og der har vi jo ganske mange aktive miljøer, opptatte av Gaza og sånne ting

urbanity linked to an affective cosmopolitanism, while at the same time expressing a political commitment to ideals of international solidarity.

The next quote is as an example of an affective cosmopolitan story about Tromsø. It was told by an interviewee who had moved to Tromsø as a young man. He combined it with a story about nature and about the region to construct a compelling personal account of elective belonging.

[When I came to Tromsø the first time] I travelled up on the coastal steamer in order to see the coast. And the further North I came, the more amazed I was. And in Tromsø I was welcomed on the quay by my boss, [name] who was a political refugee from South-Africa, a negro, Indian-negro, I mean a really brown handsome man, the first coloured [profession] in Norway, that was also a strong meeting with the international Tromsø, metaphorically speaking. And the sun was shining, it was warm, we went to [workplace] and I worked there for two months as [profession], and it is the most fantastic summer I have ever had. (...) [Because] I experienced the Northern Norwegian hospitality and the Northern Norwegian inclusive attitude, combined with this unbelievable nature and the midnight sun almost like a revelation. (...) So when I returned to finish the last three years of my education I thought that this is where I will live, this is my place, I've come home.⁷¹

Interestingly, even in this account which drew on several stories to construct a sense of elective belonging, the actor added that his grandfather had also worked in the same Northern Norwegian municipality where he later got his first job as a fully trained professional. “So I've got, I also have got roots back in time.”⁷² The notions of roots draws on a born and bred approach to belonging, and it was typical that actors would mention any cross-generational connection that they may have had to Tromsø or Northern Norway to reinforce their sense of attachment.

⁷¹ og så tok jeg hurtigruta oppover for jeg tenkte jeg skulle se kysten. Og jo lenger nord jeg kom jo mer målløs ble jeg. Så ble jeg tatt i mot på kaia i Tromsø av min sjef på [arbeidsplass] som var XX, som var politisk flyktning fra Sør-Afrika, neger, indier-neger, altså en ordentlig brun vakker mann, [yrke], den første fargede [yrke] i Norge, også et kan du si, et sterkt møte med det internasjonale Tromsø hvis du ser metaforisk på det. Og solen flommet, det var varmt, vi dro til [arbeidsplass], jeg fikk leilighet og jobbet der i to måneder som [yrke], og det er den mest fantastiske sommeren jeg har hatt noen gang. Fordi (...) jeg opplevde den nordnorske gjestfriheten og den nordnorske inkluderende holdningen, kombinert med denne vannvittige naturen og midnattssolen som en åpenbaring nesten. (...) Så jeg tenkte da jeg dro tilbake for å avslutte de siste tre årene av studiet, da var jeg bare halvveis, så tenkte jeg at her, her skal jeg bo, dette er mitt sted, nå har jeg kommet hjem.

⁷² Så jeg har, jeg har også røtter tilbake.

5.3 Stories about regional belonging

The former interviewee talked about “the Northern Norwegian hospitality and (...) inclusive attitude” together with a story about the cosmopolitan Tromsø to describe his sense of local attachment. Regional stories about belonging were frequently drawn upon in the interviews as an alternative to or a supplement to stories about local belonging. For example, one interviewee who was from Finnmark county answered my question about whether he would call himself a Tromsøværing by stating an alternative identity as someone from Northern Norway:

No, I don't think I mostly use Tromsøværing, I guess [I call myself] a Northlander.⁷³

Interviewees who were born and raised in one of the Northern Norwegian counties would often refer to the region, both in reference to their sense of attachment to Tromsø and when talking about their views about the Olympic project. As an example of this, one interviewee explained his choice of working for Tromsø 2018 by listing his regional attachments and his feelings of enthusiasm connected to the possibilities that the bid would create for Northern Norway.

I have always been a friend of this project, and as a Northern Norwegian patriot, as [someone from one Northern Norwegian county] living in Tromsø with a father from [another Northern Norwegian county] I felt that this was one of the best projects we could have, since Hurtigruta [the coastal steamer] if you ask me, something that could be of significance for the region, and the chance to be a part of and helping to shape something like that, the potential of that was totally irresistible, I left a steady job for it.⁷⁴

In this narrative, regional attachment was established with reference to being born and bred in Northern Norway. The cross-generational aspect was also highlighted by the interviewee referring to having a father who was born in another Northern Norwegian county.

Interviewees who had moved to Tromsø from Southern Norway would also refer to a sense of Northern Norwegian regional belonging. According to one interviewee the degree to which

⁷³ Nei, jeg tror ikke jeg bruker Tromsøværing først, det er nok nordlending.

⁷⁴ Jeg har vært en venn av dette prosjektet bestandig, og Nord-Norge patriot, og som [en fra et nordnorsk fylke] bosatt i Tromsø og med far fra [et annet nordnorsk fylke] så følte jeg at dette var noe av de beste prosjektene vi kunne ha, siden hurtigruta, spør du meg, som kunne bety noe for landsdelen og det å få være med og forme noe sånt, potensialet av det var helt uimotståelig, jeg sa opp en fast jobb for det.

she would identify with the town was dependent on context and her emotional state. When asked whether or not she considered herself to be a Tromsøværing she answered:

*No. Yes. Both yes and no. Sometimes I will use “we”, especially if I’m angry.*⁷⁵

She explained this by telling me a story about a conference she had been to. A senior government representative had come to Tromsø from Oslo to open the conference.

*This guy, he did what they always do. It’s a kind of speed-dating with Northern Norway. They come, they read something from a power point, which we could have read ourselves, they could have just sent us the presentation, and then before the next speaker has started they will leave, and then the conversation continues internally, while I don’t see what use it will be for them, most of all I don’t understand why they are so busy. Why can’t they stay and build a little competence? (...) And when I talk about these kinds of things I want to talk about “we”, we in Northern-Norway.*⁷⁶

Note that although the interviewee started by saying that she would consider herself a Tromsøværing when she was angry, she ended up by talking about being part of a Northern Norwegian we. It seems that a claim to regional attachment was often considered more plausible for those that have moved to Tromsø as adults than the term Tromsøværing. One interviewee said that he felt more like a Northern Norwegian than an Oslo boy:

*I have lived in Northern Norway for almost 35 years, [at this point he changed accent and started talking with a Tromsø dialect], so I feel as much Northern Norwegian, I feel more Northern Norwegian than I feel like an Oslo boy. And I feel much more like I belong; I am much more grounded and interwoven with Northern Norwegian culture than Southern Norwegian culture. (...).*⁷⁷

Although the interviewee usually spoke a typical Oslo dialect or standardized Norwegian, he would sometimes change his accent to a Tromsø dialect. In this quote the change of dialect seemed to be a way of underlining his sense of alienation from his background in Southern Norway and to accentuate his allegiance to Northern Norway.

⁷⁵ Nei. Ja. Både ja og nei. Jeg snakker noen ganger i vi-form, og det er spesielt når jeg er forbannet.

⁷⁶ (...) fyren gjorde det samme som de alltid gjør. Det er sånn speed-dating med Nord-Norge. De kommer, de faktisk leser opp noen ting fra en power point som vi kunne ha lest selv, de kunne sendt den oppover hit, og så før neste taler er i gang så er de dratt, og så fortsetter samtalen internt, mens, jeg ser ikke nytten for dem, for det første skjønner jeg ikke hvorfor de har det så travelt. Hvorfor de ikke blir her og bygger litt kompetanse. (...) Og så, og da tenker jeg når jeg snakker om sånne ting da vil jeg snakke om ”vi”, vi i Nord-Norge. (Interview 01.04.09)

⁷⁷ Så jeg har vært i Nord Norge i snart 35 år, (slår over på ”tromsøværing”) så æ føle mæ like nordnorsk, æ føle mæ mer nordnorsk enn æ føle mæ som en Oslogutt. Og æ føle mæ langt meir tilhørandes, mye meir forankra, mer innvevd i det nordnorske enn æ føle i det sørnorske. (Interview 10.07.09)

Paasi (2003) has noted that “‘regional identity’ seems to not be confined to any specific regional scale” (Paasi 2003: 477). Stories about regional belonging can be understood as producing a politics of connectivity where Tromsø was constructed as an integrated part of a wider Northern Norwegian region. At the same time, the regional stories also drew on a sense of disconnectivity, both from the national capital and from the rest of the world. The potential of the Olympic bidding for building regional pride and abating a sense of disconnectivity was one of the main arguments put forward by proponents of the Olympic project. As an example of this thinking, the next quote is from one of the actors involved in Tromsø 2018. When I asked him what it was about the Olympic project that had made him want to spend a lot of time and energy on it he replied:

It was simply, the image of it was actually that there are many international maps where the Arctic and Tromsø are consequently left out, the border is drawn somewhere around Trondheim. That is true of the weather map on CNN, but also of many other maps, for someone who is interested in maps and has sat down to look at it. And I don't want to live in a region that for eternity is to be kept outside Europe and the European map and the World map. I want this region to be equal with the rest of Europe and the world. That even though we are far north our children will know that they live in a place that receives the same attention or even more attention than others.⁷⁸

In this quote the interviewee refers to the Arctic, Tromsø and the region as one, and talks about its inhabitants as “we” and “our children”. He draws on a story about the Northern region as “left out” and invisible, and positions Tromsø and the region as unitary and with common interests. Like in the former quote about feeling like part of a Northern Norwegian “we” when perceiving disdain from a conference speaker from Oslo, the common interest of the region tended to be expressed in relation to the South as a common adversary. This was particularly evident in the stories that referred to the demise of the Olympic bidding process. One interviewee who had been sceptical towards the Olympic bid said that despite her own criticisms against the project she had been rather upset when the Norwegian Confederation of Sports’ decision to abandon the bid was made public:

⁷⁸ Nei, det var rett og slett, altså bildet på det var egentlig det er mange internasjonale kart der Arctic og Tromsø helt konsekvent faller utenfor, grensa går ett eller annet sted i Trondheim. Du det gjelder for så vidt CNN sitt værkart, men det gjelder mange kart, for en som er interessert i kartverk som har satt seg ned og sett på det. Og jeg har ikke lyst til å bo i en landsdel som for evigheten skal være utenfor Europa og Europakartet og Verdenskartet. Jeg har lyst til at denne landsdelen skal være likeverdig med resten av Europa og verden. At selv om vi er langstrakt og langt mot nord så skal våre barn vite at de bor på et sted som har den samme oppmerksomheten og gjerne mer oppmerksomhet enn andre.

Because right then at that moment I felt a little sad. And I remember that the whole family was watching, (...) and even the kids got angry. They hadn't really cared at all before that, but suddenly they understood a little, like... "Why aren't we good enough up here?" "Why is everything supposed to happen in the South?" So it does affect something.⁷⁹

Another interviewee said that she felt a little embarrassed about being from the South herself.

Generally speaking, those who are from the North, they sort of don't exist in Norway. And I am a little embarrassed about that, as a Southerner. Because I am a Southerner, you can hear that in my voice... (...) There are a lot of prejudices still. That we are very different, that there are polar bears walking in the streets, things like that. They don't think we have traffic lights up here either. (...) There is a reason why we're called Paris of the North. Even though that nickname goes back to the old days. We aren't some kind of, we have the latest fashions and everything up here too, we're not... rural or anything.⁸⁰

Note how the interviewee uses the Paris of the North story and emphasises Tromsø's urban status as an argument against the prejudices of the South. In the interview she referred to meeting prejudices both from her family and acquaintances in the South and from a state agency that she was dealing with, and she expressed a sense of Northern Norway being disempowered in relation to the South. Referring to the possibility of a renewed Olympic project to bid for the Winter Games of 2022 she said:

I don't think we will ever get it. Because it's Tromsø. Sorry, but the Southerners have given their opinion and they are in the majority down there, where they decide, But I guess it is because they've never set foot in Tromsø. They haven't seen how nice it is here. That we are an ordinary sort of people up here too. Not least.⁸¹

The reference to people from the North as not existing in the eyes of the South, and her argument that Southerners had never realized that "we are an ordinary sort of people" draw on a story about the North being constructed as Other and inferior which was frequently mentioned by interviewees. Rob Shields (1991) describes geographical marginality as a result

⁷⁹ For akkurat da i det øyeblikket ble jeg litt lei meg. Og jeg husker at hele familien satt og så på, (...) og til og med ungene ble sinte. Er ikke det litt, de hadde ikke brydd seg i det hele tatt, men plutselig så skjønnte de litt sånn... "Hvorfor er vi ikke gode nok her oppe?" "Hvorfor skal alt skje sørpå?" Så det berører jo noe.

⁸⁰ Nei, generelt, de som er nordaførr, de eksisterer liksom ikke i Norge. Og der er jeg flau som søring. For jeg er jo søring, det høres jo på stemmen min (latter). (...) Jeg ser det henger mange fordommer igjen også. At vi er veldig spesielle, det går isbjørn i gatene og sånt. De tror ikke vi har lyskryss her oppe heller da. (...) Det er ikke for ingenting vi er Nordens Paris. Selv om det er veldig gammelt siden vi har fått det tilnavnet. Men vi er ikke noe, vi har siste mote og alt mulig her oppe også, vi er ikke noe... på landet.

⁸¹ Jeg tror ikke vi kommer til å få det. På grunn av at det står Tromsø bak. Sorry men søringane har sagt hva de mener og de har flertall der nede, som bestemmer. Men det er vel fordi de aldri har satt sine bein i Tromsø. Ikke sett hvor fint vi har det. At vi er et vanlig folkeslag her oppe også. Ikke minst.

of places having “been placed on the periphery of cultural systems of space in which places are ranked relative to each other” (Shields 1991: 3). The interviewees’ story about the perceived inferiority of the North in the eyes of the South can be understood as a story about the stigma of marginality. The use of this story in the months following the scrapping of the bid should be understood in light of the public media debate about the end of the Olympic project. For several days the local newspapers ran stories about people feeling angry, discriminated against, cheated and hurt. There were also stories about Tromsø inhabitants from the South who were ashamed of their background, and there even was an initiative from a few persons who wanted Northern Norway to secede and form a new state named Hålogaland. In the local media the decision by the Confederation to stop Tromsø’s bidding process was largely interpreted as motivated by the earlier competition between Tromsø and Oslo about being the national host, and the withdrawal of the application for a state guarantee was described as a result of regional discrimination and prejudices. The politics expressed in these stories can perhaps be described as a frustration over what was perceived as a political disconnectivity, which will be further discussed in chapter 7. The focus here is on the identity stories that followed from this.

Several interviewees referred to the president of the Norwegian Confederation of Sports, who was quoted in local media as having described Northern Norway as “up there”⁸². This expression was clearly seen as a symbol of a way of thinking about the North as Other. In the words of one actor:

What I felt was very hurtful was the way things were said, it was a kind of top-down attitude, I think it was very clumsily handled by NIF and... It was also very strange to... I have never before felt that I lived in such a marginalized place as I did then. I mean, Norway’s fifth largest town being referred to as “up there”, and it was hardly Norway at all I felt...⁸³

In this narrative there was a sense of surprise that Tromsø and Northern Norway were being described as marginalized and Other. In the public meeting arranged by the Historical Society a man from the audience told a story about how he had grown up with a deep sense of inferiority because of being from the North. He reminded the audience that in the 1960s

⁸² ”oppi der”

⁸³ det som jeg syntes såret veldig det var den måten, ting som ble sagt, måten ting ble sagt på, det ble en sånn ovenfra og ned holdning, jeg syntes det ble håndtert veldig klønete fra dette idrettstyret og... Det var også veldig merkelig å... Jeg har aldri opplevd at jeg har bodd på et så marginalisert sted før som da. Altså Norges femte største by blir omtalt som ”oppi der”, og det var nesten ikke Norge følte jeg, og...

letting-ads in Southern newspapers would state that Northlanders need not apply, and argued that people in Northern Norway who were surprised at the prejudices that had surfaced in the closing process had forgotten their own history.

It's important to note that the stories about Northern Norway as having been betrayed and discriminated against by the Norwegian Confederation of Sports were not accepted by the Olympic opponents, who argued that these stories were a way for the local elites to explain and excuse the fact that the Olympic project simply wasn't good enough. One opponent said that the North-South discussion had angered him and made him feel belittled:

I must say, I think I can count on one hand the times that I've been frustrated and furious in the course of this [debate], but that was when the Bishop and [the County Governor] came with their stupid statements about us being frustrated and feeling heartbroken, that was, are they at all proud of living up here, it was a kind of excuse us for existing. (...) So that's why it makes me so furious, when [they] sort of make us smaller than we really are.⁸⁴

In this narrative, the statements from Bishop and the Governor are described as contributing to a process of constructing the North as small and humble, or what could be termed a kind of self-othering.

The story about the region as having a common interest in Tromsø's Olympic hosting was also contradicted by the Olympic opponents. According to another member of No to the Olympics, it was the lack of solidarity with the wider region that had caused her to take a stand against Tromsø Romsa 2018. She explained that she had been rather positively inclined towards Tromsø Romsa 2014 because the initial tournament rounds and some of the facilities were supposed to be distributed to other parts of Northern Norway. When Tromsø Romsa 2018 was presented as compact Olympic games she had changed her mind about the whole project.

First of all I thought it was a very sort of selfish thought of Tromsø, which I look at as a solidarity town that is supposed to distribute resources and involve

⁸⁴ Jeg må si at jeg tror jeg kan telle på en hånd de gangene jeg har blitt frustrert og forbannet i denne [debatten], det var da han biskopen og [fylkesmannen] kom med sine dumme uttalelser om at, de sa at vi er frustrerte og føler oss knuste, det var bevare meg vel, er de stolte over å bo her oppe, det var sånn unnskyld at vi eksisterer. (...) Så derfor blir jeg så lyne forbannet når han Svein Ludvigsen og biskopen liksom gjør oss mindre enn det vi er.

*everybody. And with the rather limited population that we have up here in the North, I thought it was extremely selfish for everything to end up in Tromsø.*⁸⁵

Here the story about Tromsø as a solidarity town and the story about Northern Norway as having common interests were used as an argument against a compact Olympic hosting in Tromsø. This quote is thus a good example of how the stories that actors would draw upon to construct a sense of belonging in Tromsø and the region were also used as part of their interpretative repertoire in debating the Olympic bid. This shows that stories about belonging work not only as a way of claiming a local identity but also as a claim towards determining what that local identity should mean. This will be discussed further in the next section, which looks at stories about Tromsø's indigenous status.

5.4 The story of Romsa and an ambivalent sense of indigenous belonging

Romsa is the Sami name for Tromsø. From the first press conference in 2004, the idea of hosting the Winter Olympics in Tromsø was presented as a co-hosting by the Norwegian and the Sami people, and Tromsø Romsa 2014/2018 was used as the official name of the Olympic project committee as a symbol of this co-hosting. In this section I will explore different stories about Sami belonging and non-belonging in Tromsø. The quote below is from an interview with an actor who was born in Finnmark county and had moved to Tromsø as a young adult. When asked if he considered himself as a Tromsøværing he replied:

*Halfway. You never shed completely where you are from. But then you appropriate the new places that are in the town and the identity of the town. However, as long as you speak a different dialect and have a family with high cheekbones, you will always have some feet outside the town too.*⁸⁶

When I asked what he meant by high cheekbones, he explained that his mother and her family were Coastal Sami, whereas his father was Norwegian.

⁸⁵ For det første så så jeg det som en veldig sånn egoistisk tanke for Tromsø som jeg ser på som en solidaritetsby som skal fordele godene og som skal involvere alle. Og med den faktisk begrensede folkemengden vi er her oppe i nord så synes jeg det at alt skulle havne i Tromsø var veldig usolidarisk.

⁸⁶ Halvveis. Det, du blir aldri ferdig med der du kommer i fra. Og så tilegner du deg de nye plassene som er i byen og den identiteten som byen har. Men så lenge du snakker en annen dialekt og har familie med høye kinnbein så har du alltid noen føtter utenfor byen også.

*So that is perhaps not typical of a Tromsø-boy, which is why I say that it feels a little two-sided.*⁸⁷

The actor describes his Sami heritage and Sami identity as contrary to a typical Tromsø-identity, and thus as a reason for feeling different or Other in relation to the “Tromsø-boy”. The understanding of a Sami identity as Other can be understood in relation to Edward Said’s (1978) theories about orientalism. Like the Oriental people and cultures, the Sami as an indigenous people have been understood as “Other” in relation to Western and Norwegian culture. As Ketil Zachariassen (2011) argues, they have been described as uncivilized and inferior to the Norwegian “civilization”. Although the Norwegian state policies towards the Sami have changed dramatically in the last decades, I would argue that stories about Sami as “Other” are still an important part of the interpretative repertoires of both ethnic Norwegians and Sami. While traditional Sami culture today tends to be understood more in terms of the stereotypical stories about indigenous people as “noble” and knowledgeable nature people, the point remains that they are “always different from the products of Western civilization” (Lomba 1998: 46).

The interviewee quoted above had argued that he felt different from a typical Tromsø-boy because of his Sami heritage. However, when I referred to Tromsø Romsa, and on the basis of his description of his relationship to Tromsø asked him if he thought that Tromsø was not a Sami town, he rejected this interpretation and claimed that he certainly thought of Tromsø as having a Sami identity.

*I think of the name Tromsø which one believes has a Sami dimension, and also you don't need to spend much time on Main Street before you notice that people are, have somewhat higher cheekbones than they do in Grünerløkka (a trendy Oslo neighbourhood), so... And the population, many of the strongest Sami milieus in Norway can be found here, outside Kautokeino and Karasjok I mean, so... No, I definitely find that the town has a Sami identity, but of course, if you go to Alfheim [football stadium] and sit there, or in some other extremely Tromsø environments then that may not be what is exposed.*⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Så det er kanskje ikke typisk for det å være Tromsø-gutt, så det er derfor jeg sier at det kan oppleves litt sånn tosidig.

⁸⁸ Nei, jeg tenker både på navnet Tromsø som man mener har en samisk dimensjon, og så skal du jo ikke gå mye i Storgata før du ser at folk er, har litt høyere kinnbein enn de har på Grünerløkka, så jeg... Og befolkninga, og mange av de sterkeste samiske miljøet i Norge finner du kanskje her, altså hvis du går utenfor Kautokeino og Karasjok så... Nei, jeg identifiserer helt klart at byen har en samisk identitet, men det er klart at går du på Alfheim og sitter der, eller på noen andre sånn veldig Tromsø-miljøer så er det kanskje ikke det som kommer frem.

This account of Tromsø seems to draw on several different and somewhat conflicting stories about Tromsø and about what it means to be Sami. The first argument for Tromsø's status as a Sami town is historical and linguistic, and refers to a theory that Tromsø was first named by Sami inhabitants and that the current name of the town is a modification of an original Sami name. This linguistic argument can be seen as part of an established story about Tromsø as originally a Sami place, which was later taken over by Norwegian settlers, a story in other words about Tromsø having been colonized by Norwegians. A little later in our conversation the interviewee also referred to more recent historical evidence of Sami activities in Tromsø. He explained to me that the reason one of the roads in Tromsø is called Tourist Road was that it was used by foreign tourists on their way to visit a Sami reindeer-herding camp. The second argument in the quote above was that there are many Sami people living in Tromsø today. The reference to high cheekbones as a physical trait that distinguishes people of Sami origin seems to draw on a genetic or "by blood" story about what it means to be Sami. Whereas the interviewee previously had used the high cheekbones as a symbol of his own status as an outsider in Tromsø, he now used the same trait to claim that there were more Sami people or people of Sami origin among in Tromsø than in Oslo. The two different statements should not necessarily be read as a contradiction, but rather as a sign that belonging or non-belonging is a relative phenomenon, and that physical traits like "high cheekbones", while not "typical of a Tromsø-boy", may still be seen as more commonplace in Tromsø than in Oslo. The third argument for Tromsø being a Sami town seems to draw on a cultural understanding of what it means to be Sami, as the interviewee states that Tromsø has some of the strongest Sami milieus in Norway. Milieu implies community. The narrative is brief on this, but I interpreted the statement as referring to an established story about Tromsø as the home and workplace of a number of prominent Sami academics and artists, which can be classified as an intellectual Sami milieu. The interviewee qualifies the strength of Tromsø's Sami milieu by saying that the Sami municipalities of Karasjok and Kautokeino (in Finnmark County) are of course the most prominent in this regard. By referring to Oslo, Kautokeino and Karasjok, the narrative places Tromsø in the middle of a scale of places that are more and less Sami. Finally, the quote differentiates between different places in Tromsø as being more or less compatible with a Sami identity. While Main Street (the urban centre of the town) is portrayed as a place where there are many Sami people, the football stadium

Alfheim is described as an “extremely Tromsø environment” where the Sami presence is less visible, and perhaps less welcome. It seems like Alfheim and the term “Tromsø-boy” are symbols of an established story about Tromsø that is *not* Sami, in which a Sami identity would indeed be Other.

The different stories about Tromsø and Sami identity discussed above indicates a certain ambivalence, both as to what it means to be Sami, and to whether Tromsø is a Sami town. This ambivalence was also voiced by other interviewees, like in this response to my question about whether an actor perceived Tromsø as a Sami town.

I do at least perceive that there is a large proportion of the inhabitants who have Sami origins, a minority of those speak Sami, but... Well, I don't know what to say, if you look at it in the light of Tromsø's history then there are not that many basically who, where there was a Sami settlement and such core areas, but in the town you had a little and in some villages. But then there is the fact that people's marriages criss-cross and in purely genetic terms I'm sure we all have a little Sami in us, but I don't know... My perception is that every time Sami identity is discussed then there is a large part of the population who are disregarded, it seems that it is actually Kautokeino and Karasjok that are the Sami core areas and everybody else are sort of second range Sami according to them. (...) And if you have lost the language, I mean the Sami language, then you are in many ways no longer qualified to be Sami or to having that identity, at least that's how I perceive that it is from the State, when it comes to certain things, that you have to have the language or at least come from the core areas with a larger proportion of...⁸⁹

The interviewee quoted here expressed perplexity as to what would count as relevant and accepted criteria for calling someone or someplace Sami. This ambivalence as to what it takes to be a “proper Sami” has also been described by Lina Gaski (1996: 41). She argues that both inter- and intra-ethnic discourses have tended to focus on particular cultural traits, such as language, traditional costumes and Joik [traditional Sami chanting/singing], and as a result individuals are conceived of as “more or less Sami” (Gaski 1996: 41). But ambivalence may

⁸⁹ Jeg oppfatter i alle fall at det er en stor andel av befolkninga som har samiske røtter, et mindretall av dem kan snakke samisk (latter), men... Ja, jeg vet ikke hva jeg skal si, hvis man ser det i Tromsø bys historie så er det jo ikke så mange i utgangspunktet som, hvor det var samisk bosetting og sånne kjerneområder, men i byen hadde du jo litt og i enkelte bygder. Men så er det jo det at folk gifter seg litt på kryss og tvers og sånn rent genetisk så har vi sikkert alle litt samisk i oss, men jeg vet ikke, jeg oppfatter i alle fall at hver gang det er snakk om det samiske så er det jo en god del av befolkninga som blir undervurdert, jeg oppfatter det faktisk at det er Kautokeino og Karasjok som er de samiske kjerneområdene og alle andre er liksom andrerangs samer ifht dem. Ja jeg gjør faktisk det, det er, og det er for så vidt i kjerneområdene, men hvis du ikke, hvis du har mistet språket, altså det samiske språket, så er du på mange måter ikke lenger kvalifisert til å være samisk eller ha den identiteten, i hvert fall så opplever jeg at det er litt sånn type statlig når det er snakk om, ja, en del ting at da må du ha språket eller være i hvertfall fra kjerneområdene og ha større andel av

also be understood as an inherent quality of otherness. Koefoed and Simonsen draw on the work of Zygmunt Baumann to argue that ambivalence is in fact the defining feature of “the stranger”, ambivalence being “the possibility of assigning an object to more than one category” (Baumann 1991: 1, in Koefoed and Simonsen 2010: 19). The actor quoted above referred to genetical criteria, historical presence, language and living in an area where the majority of the population are Sami. Her conclusion as to whether Tromsø was Sami or not was:

I guess yes, in some ways, but in other ways not.⁹⁰

The interviewee also claimed that unlike other places in Northern Norway, the Sami language and Sami people were not stigmatized in Tromsø. She substantiated this by saying that Tromsø has a Sami kindergarten and that there had not been any incidents like the shooting at Sami signs that had taken place in the neighbouring municipality of Kåfjord a few years back.

There were also a number of interviewees who stated unequivocally that they considered Tromsø a Sami town. One interviewee drew on both the present and historical presence of Sami in Tromsø as well as in the Northern Norwegian region to support this view:

There are many Sami living in Tromsø, we have a Sami history and we are sort of a central meeting place for the entire Northern Norwegian, and to an extent the Norwegian, Sami culture.⁹¹

Another interviewee referred to the Sami kindergarten, Sami classes in school and said that Tromsø had long been promoting Sami symbols. Like the former narrative, she also referred to Tromsø’s position in the region.

I think it’s a natural thing, given that Tromsø is the largest town in Northern Norway.⁹²

One interviewee referred to her upbringing in Tromsø, thus activating her status as a born and bred Tromsøværing, and argued that she had always been used to Sami people being a part of Tromsø’s urban environment and of the population.

When I was little there were many Sami who came to Tromsø and dressed up and wore Sami costumes, and there are many Sami people living in Tromsø

⁹⁰ ja jeg tenker at det er jo, ja, på mange måter ja men på andre måter er det ikke

⁹¹ Det bor veldig mange samer i Tromsø, vi har en samisk historie og vi er liksom et sånt innfartssted for hele det nordnorske og til dels norske samiske

⁹² Det skulle bare mangle med Tromsø som den største byen i Nord Norge å ikke skulle ha det.

*too. I have always had Sami people in my classes in school, so I perceive Tromsø to be also a Sami town, and I think it is quite natural that we have new signs here in the Town Hall that are also in Sami.*⁹³

The word “also” in connection to Tromsø’s Sami identity and the use of Sami language is important to note. None of the interviewees argued that Tromsø was exclusively a Sami town, and many used words like “also” or explicitly stated that they considered Tromsø as a Sami town and a Norwegian town. Some interviewees used the term “two cultures” or “two nations” in their description of Tromsø’s Sami identity, like in this quote:

*To me it is a town where you have a natural relationship, at the university, at the museum, many places, a natural relationship to the fact that this is the largest town or a sort of, I use the concept “capital”, the largest or most dominating cultural town in the North, and it is a relaxed and natural relationship to the fact that we are populated by two nations.*⁹⁴

Other actors stated in more or less certain terms that they did not consider Tromsø as a Sami town at all. To one of the actors, who had expressed a negative view of the Olympic bid, the Sami profiling of Tromsø through the Olympic project was a provocation.

*Yes, that was actually something which made me very annoyed every time I saw it, that Tromsø Romsa 2018, trying to portray Tromsø as a Sami town, and there are more Sami living in Oslo than in Tromsø, so that was something I reacted very strongly against and thought it was just stupid.*⁹⁵

The actor questioned the reasoning behind the project committee’s branding of the Olympics as Sami, and maintained that this didn’t make any sense.

*[They are] trying to create connotations to the Sami on the mountain plateaus with a tent and a reindeer, that’s not what it’s like in Tromsø.*⁹⁶

In this story, Sami culture is positioned as foreign to Tromsø and as something negative, which it is reasonable for the interviewee to react strongly against. The interviewee also refers

⁹³ Da jeg var lita så var det mye samer som kom til Tromsø som pyntet seg og tok på seg samedrakt, pluss at det er jo mye samer som bor i Tromsø og, og jeg har bestandig gått i klasse med folk som har vært samer, altså sånn, så jeg oppfatter at Tromsø er også en samisk by, og jeg synes det er helt naturlig at vi har nye skilt her i rådhuset som også er på samisk

⁹⁴ For meg er det en by der du har et naturlig forhold, på universitetet, Tromsø museum, veldig mange steder et naturlig forhold til det at dette er den største byen eller en slags, begrepet ”hovedstad” sier jeg i gåseøyne, den største eller dominerende kulturelle byen i nord, og det er et avslappet og naturlig forhold til det at vi bebos av to folk.

⁹⁵ Ja det var faktisk noe som gjorde meg kraftig irritert hver gang jeg så det der Tromsø Romsa 2018, hvor man prøvde å fremstille liksom Tromsø som en samisk by og, det bor vel flere samer i Oslo enn det gjør i Tromsø, så det der det, det reagerte jeg egentlig veldig sterkt på og syntes det var bare dumt

⁹⁶ prøve å skape assosiasjoner til samene på vidda som sitter i et telt og en rein, sånn er det jo ikke i Tromsø

to a story about Oslo being the place in Norway with most Sami inhabitants. In this context the reference to Oslo seems to work as a reinforcement of Tromsø as a non-Sami town. As the Norwegian capital, Oslo is not generally perceived as Sami, and this should mean that Tromsø isn't Sami either.

Another interviewee, while acknowledging that there were some Sami living in Tromsø, and approving that there was a Sami kindergarten and a Sami language class in some schools, said that to *her* Tromsø was not a Sami town and Sami symbolism didn't have anything to do with *her* Tromsø-identity. She said she didn't mind that Sami culture was used to promote the town, but she argued that it didn't really matter to her sense of the town's identity.

No really, I think that identity is something which you relate to in a way, it is something that affects you, so that... It wouldn't make any difference to my Tromsø-identity. My sense of belonging to Tromsø is connected to Tromsø being an open town, a town where things happen, a warm town... And in that sense yes, the Sami things are okay, it's neither a pro or a con for me, and whether it is promoted a lot or a little it's still a marginal proportion of the population who are Sami and they do their things and they have their things, so...It's okay that they can do it, it's okay that Tromsø has a Sami school such as Prestvannet where the kids can be in a Sami class if the parents want that, and the school observesthe Sami National Day, that... That's open and inclusive and it is okay that those who have a Sami identity can be taught in their own language, I think a town as big as Tromsø should be able to do that. But it has no significance for my identity or my relationship to Tromsø, but it is another facet of Tromsø as an open and generous town, sort of.⁹⁷

This account draws on the cosmopolitan story about Tromsø, and Sami language classes and celebrating the Sami National Day are framed within this story. Sami cultural practices are described as acceptable, okay, given that Tromsø is an open and generous town, but unlike the confirmatory stories, the Sami culture is not represented as an inherent or native aspect of Tromsø, and the interviewee also stresses that the Sami are a “marginal proportion of the population”. The interviewee represents herself as someone who is in a position to accept that

⁹⁷ Nei altså, jeg tror at, jeg tror at identitet tror jeg er noe som på en måte, som du har noe forhold til, altså det er noe som berører deg, sånn at... Det ville ikke ha noen betydning for min Tromsø-identitet. Altså min tilknytting til Tromsø den kobler seg til Tromsø som en åpen by og en by hvor det skjer noe, en varm by... Og da er det litt sånn ja men da er det greit med det samiske, det er ikke... Det er verken pluss eller minus, for mitt, og om det promoterer mye eller lite så er det en marginal andel av befolkninga som er samisk og de gjør sine ting og de har sitt, og så... Det er greit at de får gjøre det, det er greit at Tromsø har en samisk skole sånn som Prestvannet og der kan ungene gå i samisk klasse for de foreldrene som ønsker det, og skolen har en markering av samefolkets dag, det... Det er åpent og inkluderende og det er greit at de som har en samisk identitet får mulighet til undervisning på sitt eget språk, det synes jeg at en by som er så stor som Tromsø skal holde seg med. Men det har ingen betydning for min identitet eller for mitt forhold til Tromsø, men det føyer seg inn i en sånn fasett av Tromsø som en by som... som er åpen og romslig liksom.

Sami culture is promoted in the town, and by doing this she implicitly positions the Sami as Other. Saying that something is okay makes it a concession, not a right. Accepting the Sami people becomes something that the speaker and an implicit “we” are able to do, as the rightful gatekeepers of a generous town. At the same time, the gatekeeper-function is limited by the interviewee’s reference to identity as something personal. She states that “all things Sami” are okay, but at the same time dismisses Sami cultural expressions as insignificant for her identity and her perception of Tromsø.

While the former actor rejected the idea that Tromsø was a Sami town but accepted Sami culture and symbolism as part of a cosmopolitan story about Tromsø, there were some actors who expressed scepticism to Sami culture and rights altogether. One interviewee, when asked if he perceived Tromsø to be a Sami town, responded by questioning the idea that Sami should be seen as any different from Norwegians.

No. Eh... No, I don't really, I perceive Sami as Norwegians and that has nothing to do with politics. I can't say that I in any kind of way am able to treat Sami in any other way than I treat Norwegians, I really can't. I do respect the fact that they have their own national costume and all such things, and that's something that they must be allowed... But I am sceptical towards the influence they have over, to a certain extent over land and water. Which in a sense is a negative discrimination, if you can use such an expression when it comes to Norwegians.⁹⁸

On the surface, this statement may seem somewhat contradictory, in that the actor starts out by saying that he perceives Sami as Norwegians, but at the same time recognizes that they have their own national costume “and all such things”. Sami are in other words both part of the Norwegian nation and recognized as a separate cultural group. The interviewee confirmed that his reference to land and water was in connection with the so-called Finnmark legislation, under which Crown Land in Finnmark County has been transferred to a special committee consisting of members from Finnmark County Council and from the Sami Parliament. I interpret his insistence on treating Sami in the same way as Norwegians as a protest against this law, which was intended to solve the question of indigenous rights to Crown Land.

⁹⁸ Nei. Eh... Nei, jeg gjør jo egentlig ikke det, jeg ser jo på samer som nordmenn og det har ikke noe med politikk å gjøre. Jeg kan ikke si at jeg på noen slags måte klarer verken å behandle samer på noen annen måte (liten latter), enn jeg behandler nordmenn, jeg klarer ikke det. Jeg har jo respekt for at de har en egen nasjonaldrakt og alt sånn, og det må de jo få lov til... Men eh, jeg er sånn sett skeptisk til den innflytelsen de har over, de har over til en viss grad land og vann altså. Som blir i og for seg en negativ diskriminering hvis man kan bruke et sånt uttrykk når det gjelder nordmenn da.

“Norwegian” in this context refers to the nation state as the provider of citizenship and political rights, whereas having a separate national costume and other cultural symbols is something that should not lead to separate rights from that of other citizens, and ultimately something that should belong to the private sphere. This was expressed thus:

*Keeping the Sami heritage alive, well that must of course to a certain extent be up to the Sami themselves*⁹⁹.

This interviewee used the genetic story in a slightly different way from the ones quoted earlier. He argued that very few people in Northern Norway were of “pure Sami origin”¹⁰⁰, but added:

*Many of us, perhaps a majority have Sami ancestors (...) But I feel like a Norwegian! And not... no matter how much Sami ancestry one might have.*¹⁰¹

In this account, genetic ancestry is questioned as a source of Sami identity, at least as long as it is not “pure”. The Norwegian identity is upheld as primary for the interviewee regardless of any possible Sami ancestry, and by using the general “one” it would seem that this should also be primary for others who are not purely descended from Sami. By stating that all Norwegian citizens should be treated the same, the actor represents himself as someone who is unbiased and tolerant. At the same time, like the former interviewee, he describes Sami culture as something “that must be allowed”, thus placing himself as part of a majority position with a legitimate right to allow (or forbid) the cultural expressions of the Sami as Other.

Other actors, while saying that Tromsø was not a Sami town, argued that there was a marketing potential in indigeneity and in referring to the Sami culture. The next quote is from an actor who had supported the Olympic bid.

*I do think that it may be tactical to use the Sami dimension externally, and the Sami are happy to be used, because that gives them economic benefits, and there's no need to look down on them for that really, but... It's commercial. But it has no, to me it makes no difference if it's called Tromsø 2018 or Tromsø Romsa 2018, but I can see that there is money to be had from exotification of the Sami.*¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Det med å holde den samiske arv i hevd, det er jo, må jo være opp til samene selv til en viss grad.

¹⁰⁰ ren samisk avstamming

¹⁰¹ det er veldig mange av oss, kanskje et flertall som har samiske aner (...) Men jeg føler meg jo som nordmann! Og ikke... uansett hvor mye samisk avstamming man skal ha

¹⁰² Jeg tror jo det er taktisk lurt å bruke det samiske utad, og samene lar seg jo gladelig bruke, for det gir jo klingende mynt, og ingen skal fortenke dem i det altså, men, og det... Det er kommers. Men det har, altså, for

Another proponent, while also rejecting a description of Tromsø as Sami, argued that the Sami profiling and focusing on indigeneity was a fair enough element of a Northern Norwegian Olympic hosting, but perhaps a little kitsch.

*It's a tourist event in many ways this thing, and you should perhaps fudge it a bit both with the fishing vessels and the reindeer and what do I know, it's a necessity and one has to dare to do that, the Olympic Games are a bit of a cliché, and that's allowed, it's supposed to sell on American television...*¹⁰³

The same interviewee said that he had not perceived the Sami dimension as very prominent in the Olympic project. Another described the Sami profiling as “mostly for decorative purposes, something that had to be included like it was at Lillehammer”. She also questioned the link between a sports event and the Sami culture, but said that she supposed it would be a suitable part of the opening ceremony. She added that indigenous representation also was an important part of what could be called the established Olympic story.

*And I do think it was important to have a Sami representative included when they were going abroad to talk to the world. Because all the other Olympics, or many other Olympics, especially in the opening ceremony have had a link to the genuine and authentic in the different regions.*¹⁰⁴

These narratives seem to draw on a story about Sami culture as something exotic that can be used to attract tourism and provide added value to an Olympic hosting as an added aesthetic dimension. The narratives also refer to established stories about what is expected at an Olympic opening ceremony, and about what kind of imagery a globalized or American TV-audience would be interested in. In the latter narrative, the Olympic Games at Lillehammer in 1994 were used as a point of reference.

The increased attention and visibility related to a Sami co-hosting of the Olympics was used as an argument for the bid by two actors who had both been involved in Tromsø 2018. One of them referred to Vancouver, who was going to host the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, and said that the indigenous population of Canada were recognized as co-hosts of the Olympics,

meg, det spiller ingen rolle om det heter Tromsø 2018 eller om det heter Tromsø Romsa 2018, men jeg ser altså det der, jeg ser eksotiseringa av det samiske at det ligger penger i det.

¹⁰³ det er jo et turistevenement dette her på mange måter og du skal jo kanskje smøre litt tykt på brødsriver både i forhold til sjarken og reinsdyrene og hva vet jeg, og det må man gjøre, det må man tørre å gjøre, OL er litt sånn elg i solnedgang, det, det er lov å, det skal jo selges på amerikansk tv

¹⁰⁴ Og så tror jeg nok det var viktig å ha med en samisk representant når de skulle ut og snakke med verden. Fordi alle de andre OL, eller mange andre OL spesielt i åpningsseremonien har jo hatt en link til det grunnleggende og autentiske i de ulike regionene da.

and that the organizers had expressed this “very clearly in the design and logo as well as in video-presentations of Vancouver”¹⁰⁵. He also argued that although the Olympic project of Tromsø had now been cancelled, the fact that the project had been named Tromsø Romsa 2018 had led to increased attention to the town’s Sami component.

*I think we made it more conspicuous, really... I don't know how many articles there have been with this (the Tromsø Romsa 2018) logo included. I don't know how many articles have the word Romsa in them. I've even heard the Sport's President totter her way through the word Romsa for the first time. I mean, it's been out there, I've even seen it on German webpages.*¹⁰⁶

The importance of making the Sami presence in Tromsø more visible was also emphasised by the other actor from Tromsø 2018. He claimed that one of the tangible products of an Olympic hosting would have been a Sami symbolic or “signal building” in Tromsø. According to this actor, if the Olympic project had been realized, there would have been between 10 and 20 large structures built for the Games, and “one of things that would be left in Tromsø was a very noticeable building which in terms of architecture and design would reflect Sami history and identity.”¹⁰⁷ This however was not the most important thing for the interviewee. He continued by saying that:

*I think that for the people, for the Sami, it would have been a project of pride, where they had been 100 percent represented as hosts, had contributed to creating a success, this would have meant a lot to the individual. It would have created more pride, more, even more people would have dared to be what many of us in Northern Norway are, which is [people with] Sami ancestors and roots.*¹⁰⁸

Actors who argued that increased visibility would be a positive outcome of an Olympic hosting seem to draw on an established story about Sami culture as somehow hidden and under-communicated. The latter quote also implies that Sami people are ashamed of their heritage, and that it is therefore important to render them visible and create pride through representation. Note that although the actor did not identify as Sami himself, he talked about a

¹⁰⁵ veldig sånn tydelig både i design, logo , video-fremstillinga av Vancouver

¹⁰⁶ Jeg tror vi fikk synliggjort altså... Jeg vet ikke hvor mange artikler denne logoen har vært i. Jeg vet ikke hvor mange artikler ordet Romsa har vært i. Jeg har til og med hørt idrettspresidenten stavre seg gjennom ordet Romsa for første gang. Altså, det har vært der ute, jeg har til og med sett på tyske nettsider.

¹⁰⁷ en av de tingene som skulle stå igjen i Tromsø det var et veldig synlig bygg som arkitektonisk, designmessig reflekterer den samiske historie, identitet

¹⁰⁸ Men jeg tror at hos menneskene, hos samene ville vært et sånt stolthetsprosjekt, der de hadde vært 100 % med på vertskapssida, hadde vært med på å lage en suksess, at det ville ha vært, ligget igjen veldig mye hos det enkelte individ. Det ville ha skapt mer stolthet, flere, enda flere ville ha turt å være det vi mange i Nord-Norge er, nemlig samiske aner og røtter.

Northern Norwegian collective identity where many of “us” have Sami ancestors, thus constructing a common regional interest in the increased Sami pride that the Olympic hosting was supposed to create.

While the latter actor focused on the need to build Sami pride, according to another actor the point of the Olympic hosting was not to improve Sami rights but rather to showcase them. This actor, who identified as Sami and who was an Olympic proponent, argued that the indigenous population of Norway was well integrated and well taken care of, but that this was not the typical situation for indigenous people elsewhere in the world who were living in difficult condition.

So I hope that, when we discussed it at that time part of it was about how the fact that we gave the games an indigenous character here would have a rub-off effect and a distribution beyond Norway. Whether that would have succeeded or not I don't know, but there was at least a good focus on it. And I think, or I am quite sure that it would have been such a consciousness politically, or from the state, Norway is very good in that regard, that's my serious opinion.¹⁰⁹

This account draws on a story about Norway as a champion of indigenous rights, and the Olympic hosting is portrayed as a chance to showcase the excellent Norwegian policies to the rest of the world.

The Olympic opponents took quite a different view of the role and potential of a Sami co-hosting of the Olympic Games. Several interviewees used the expression “cake decorations” in response to my question about the bid's Sami profile. One actor put it this way:

I think that it was just icing on the cake to them. But yes, the Sami aspects are a part of the culture here, yes, I think that is absolutely obvious. (...) For me who belongs in Tromsø, who is born and raised here, with a father from [municipality north of Tromsø], the Sami aspects are a completely natural part of us and the things that are here, so I think it is kind of artificial to highlight it so much.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Så jeg håper at, når vi diskuterte det på den tida så var en del hvordan kunne det faktisk at vi ga det et urfolkspreg her få en smitteeffekt og en spredning ut over Norge. Om det kunne ha lyktes det aner jeg jo ikke, men i alle fall oppfatter jeg at det var en bra bevissthet om det. Og jeg tror eller jeg er helt sikker på at det ville ha vært en slik bevissthet politisk, eller fra statens side, der er jo Norge flink mener jeg helt seriøst.

¹¹⁰ Altså, det tenker jeg var bare som kakepynt for dem. Men ja, det samiske er en del av kulturen her, ja, det synes jeg er helt selvfølgelig. (...) For meg som hører til i Tromsø, som er født og oppvokst her, så kan du si med en far fra [kommune nord for Tromsø], så er det samiske en helt naturlig del av oss og det som er her, så jeg synes det blir sånn kunstig å trekke det sånn veldig frem.

Note how the actor used her credentials as a born and bred Tromsøværing to argue that Sami aspects were a natural part of the local culture. In addition the actor referred to her father's background from a municipality north of Tromsø where the Sami proportion of the population is greater than it is in Tromsø. This account draws on a story about Sami culture as something that is ordinary, part of everyday life. The use of Sami symbolism to promote an Olympic bid is categorized as artificial, not because the Sami aspects are foreign to Tromsø but because they are so natural that highlighting them is unnecessary and irrelevant. This may seem like a contradiction, but I interpret the quote as a protest against turning something that according to the interviewee is familiar and part of the everyday life into something that is exotic and "foreign" by "highlighting it so much". Another actor described the use of Sami symbolism as an attempt to create an exotic background.

As for the Olympics and the Sami aspects I think that the Sami, as seen so many times before, were used just like they were used on the Joika-tin. A happy Sami, Joika-meatballs, a kind of stick-on stage set. (...) They just glued the Sami on to [the bid] like a kind of colonial, sort of "hey, here we have some funny pygmies next to our new barrel factory in the Amazonas. Here they are with their spears, oh dear how exotic it is." Pure humbug.¹¹¹

Joika is the brand name of a canned meatball made from reindeer-meat. The can is decorated with a smiling boy in a traditional Sami costume. The product has been on sale for decades and is well-known in Norwegian popular culture, to the extent that Joika and the Joika-boy can be seen as an iconic image of how Sami culture has been used for marketing purposes in Norway. The quote draws on a postcolonial critique of how indigenous people have been exoticized and used for entertainment purposes by business interests in other parts of the world. The interviewee classified this exoticification as a scam. He also argued that the Olympic project organization had not really asked the Sami population what they thought about the bid. He demonstrated this by telling a story about how he had met members of a reindeer-herding family in the mountains behind Tromsdalstind and discussed the Olympic bid with them.

They told me that if the Olympic Games of 2018 are implemented that would be the end of the reindeer-herding. Because both the skiing stadium and the roads to it are in the middle of the trekking route and in the calving areas, and as he

¹¹¹ Til OL og det samiske så mener jeg at det samiske, som så ofte ellers, ble brukt akkurat som det blir brukt på Joika-boksen altså. En lystig same, Joikakaker, som en slags påklistret kulisse (...) Klistret bare det samiske på som en sånn kolonial, litt sånn hei her har vi noen morsomme pygmeer ved vår nye tønnefabrikk i Amazonas. Her står de med spydene sine, du verden så eksotisk det er. En ren bløff.

*said, nobody listens to us, nobody speaks with us, we are just supposed to be a stage set next to the cable car when they come.*¹¹²

In this story, the reindeer-industry is portrayed as the ones representing Sami interests. This is worth noting, as many other actors commented that Sami culture was not only about reindeer herding. While keeping reindeer is the traditional livelihood for inland Sami, fishing has been the main industry for coastal Sami. In Norwegian culture the coastal Sami have been less visible, perhaps because fishing is also thought of as a typical industry for coastal Norwegians, and reindeer herding has been considered as epitomic of the Sami. There are some conflicts of opinion and interest between different Sami groups. According to one interviewee with coastal Sami background:

*Sami culture is of course very multifaceted. One tends to think mostly about the reindeer herding Sami and the things connected to those. The coastal Sami population may be bigger than the reindeer herding Sami population here, and the coastal Sami population is also a far more suppressed people than the reindeer herding Sami.*¹¹³

While some of the proponents quoted previously had referred to the Vancouver Olympics to argue that an Olympic hosting in Tromsø would bring increased awareness of Sami culture in Norway, for many of the opponents the argument ran the other way. One of the interviewees answered my question about whether a Tromsø Romsa 2018 could have improved the status of Sami culture in Tromsø thus:

*No, I don't think so. But that is probably because I am influenced by what I have read about the Vancouver Olympics. Because there too they have brought the indigenous population forward, and it was supposed to be a hightening of them and they were to be very much involved, but it turned out to be purely ornamental, it has no root in reality, so I feel that it is, they are exploiting this thing.*¹¹⁴

According to one opponent, indigenous people had always been used by the Olympic organisation, whether it was aboriginals in Australia or American Indians in Canada. He claimed that there was a great deal of local resistance to this from indigenous people, and said

¹¹² de fortalte at hvis OL 2018 blir realisert så er det slutt for reindrifta. Fordi både skistadion og tilførselsveiene ligger midt i trekkruta og i kalvingsruta, og som han sa, ingen hører på oss, ingen snakker med oss, ingen har spurt oss, vi skal bare være en kulisser på fjellheisen når de kommer.

¹¹³ samisk er jo veldig sammensatt, man tenker jo veldig lett på, man har jo lett for å tenke på, skal vi si reindriftssamer og den sånt, den sjøsamiske befolkninga er jo kanskje større enn den reindriftssamiske her, den sjøsamiske befolkninga er jo også et mye mer undertrykt folk enn den reindriftssamiske

¹¹⁴ Nei det tror jeg ikke. Men nå er jeg sikkert påvirket av det jeg har lest om Vancouver-OL. For der har de også løftet frem urbefolkningen og det skulle være sånn, et løft for dem og de skulle involveres veldig, men det ble bare staffasje, det har ikke rot i virkeligheta, så jeg føler at det, de utnytter dette her.

that the Olympic organization was as far from Sami culture as it could be. At the same time he acknowledged that there were people within the Olympic project organization in Tromsø who had genuinely wanted to promote Sami culture. Another opponent argued that it would be much better if the Norwegian state had wanted to do something to showcase and profile the Sami culture without involving the Olympic organization in it.

Norway has a lot of opportunities for profiling the indigenous aspects, and we do too, we don't need the IOC to do that, and it would actually be a declaration of failure if Norway was to say that we can't champion indigenous rights without having the IOC on board, because the IOC couldn't care less about the Sami question, they don't care about indigenous people, to them it is only one thing that counts and that is power and money. And control. One mustn't forget that Samaranch was Sports Minister in the fascist Franco-Government. These are dark forces who are not particularly concerned about democracy and development. It is an undemocratic, male chauvinistic, feudal little gang of conspirators who have incredible amounts of power and controls incredible amounts of money, and they overrun all democratically elected governments who gets the Olympics, because they have to enter into and accept all aspects of this slave contract. There is no reason to believe that it would be "value for money" if we now, let's say that we used 100 million kroner on Sami profiling in the Olympics, there is no reason to think that would have been a better investment than if we spent 100 million on some other long-term investment for profiling the Sami nation. And improve the reindeer herding industry and for example find a solution to the pressing question about how we can stop the overgrazing of mountain plains and find a balance between the different herding systems and the different groups who are herding, because that is a sensitive question.¹¹⁵

In this narrative an established story about the IOC as an undemocratic organisation was used as an argument against any positive outcome of profiling Sami culture through an Olympic hosting. The narrative draws on links between IOC and fascist regimes, and sets up a very stark conceptual contrast between indigenous rights on the one hand and the IOC which is

¹¹⁵ Norge har jo veldig mange muligheter til å profilere urfolksaspektet, og det gjør vi også, så vi trenger ikke IOC til det, og det ville være en fallitterklæring om Norge skulle si at vi kan ikke profilere urfolksrettigheter uten å ha IOC med, for IOC driter jo en lang marsj i hele samespørsmålet, de driter jo i urfolk, for dem er det bare en ting som teller og det er makt og penger. Og kontroll. Man må ikke glemme at Samaranch var idrettsminister i fascistene Franco sin regjering. Dette er mørke krefter som ikke er noe spesielt opptatte av demokrati og utvikling. Det er en udemokratisk, mannssjåvinistisk, føydal liten konspirasjonsgjeng som sitter med uhorvelig mye makt og styrer uhorvelig mye penger, og overstyret alle demokratisk valgte regjeringer som får OL, fordi de må da gå inn i og godta alle aspektene ved denne slavekontrakten. Ingen grunn til å tro at det ville være "value for money" hvis vi nå, la oss si at vi brukte 100 millioner kroner på samisk profilering i OL, ingen grunn til å tro at det ville vært en bedre investering enn om vi brukte 100 millioner på en annen langsiktig investering i å profilere den samiske nasjonen. Og styrke reindrifta og finne for eksempel det som er det brennende nå, finne gode løsninger på hvordan skal vi stoppe nedbeitinga av vidda og finne balanse mellom de forskjellige driftsformene og de forskjellige gruppene som drifter, for det er jo et veldig prekärt og følsomt spørsmål.

both male chauvinistic, feudal and running slave contracts on the other. The narrative also uses a more economic reasoning, saying that a given amount of money could be better invested in other ways that would give a more concrete output. And again the reindeer-herding industry is put forward as the “true” Sami interest that should be invested in. The narrative concluded by stating that the Sami profiling of the Tromsø bid was only about marketing, and that it was all about “exotic icing on the cake, like the midnight sun”¹¹⁶.

5.5 The politics of identities

In my exploration of different stories about belonging, I have aimed at showing some of the political implications of identity stories by explicating how stories were sometimes used together to supplement or contradict each other. In this final section I will expand on the relationship between stories about belonging and the politics of identities by asking what political work stories about being a Tromsøværing, having a heart beating for Tromsø, being a Northlander or having high cheek-bones *do*?

Place stories are discursive resources for making meaningful and effective statements about what a place was, is and should be. Stories about belonging in a place can be understood as a *claim* towards being recognized and taken into account in place politics. By positioning the speaker as belonging, the story works to assert his or her place-based identity. Different stories about belonging draw on different interpretative repertoires of identity, and work to recognize some actors as belonging while defining others as not belonging in a place. At the same time, being recognized as belonging in a place is also a question of being recognized as interested, as someone who has rights and should be included in the distribution of goods and bads. Thus, the claim for recognition that is produced through narratives about belonging is also a claim for rights and interests. As I have shown in this chapter, claims of belonging can be based on rights of birth as in the stories about being a Tromsøværing, strengths of feelings as in the stories about emotional attachment and elective belonging in Tromsø, regional affinities as in the stories about Northern Norway, and on group-based cultural or genetic bonds as was the case with the stories about Sami belonging in Tromsø. Different stories about identity and belonging can be combined, illustrated by how actors who had identified

¹¹⁶ eksotisk kakepynt på linje med midnattssolen

themselves as born and bred Tromsøværings could also draw on stories about a love of nature as a resource for stating their commitment and legitimacy as an actor in the Olympic debate.

The strength of the born and bred story is that it assumes a natural relationship between having been born in a place and belonging. Stories that positions an actor as a born and bred Tromsøværing is thus a resource for claiming entitlement and legitimacy in place politics through a self-evident and purportedly non-negotiable identity as local. I have shown some examples of how this resource was used in discussions of Tromsø as a Sami place and the role of Sami culture in the Olympic proposal. It is important to note that the assumed natural and non-negotiable born and bred story about who can be a Tromsøværing is of course also a social construction, and that this construction can be negotiated through discursive practice. The discussion of the town boy-story shows how the meaning of roots and temporality, as well as the borders of the town, change and are contested. I have also referred to actors who argued that you could be a Tromsøværing based on emotional attachment, saying that the important thing was that you felt at home in the town. The different ways that Tromsøværing was used in the interviewees' accounts indicates that this term and what it means to belong in Tromsø is being negotiated and that there may be some changes in how belonging is constructed. At the same time, the interviews show that the born and bred story about being a Tromsøværing continues to be a relevant resource for claiming belonging, and that even people who had moved to Tromsø as adults would draw on any personal stories about intergenerational ties or "roots" to the town that they could plausibly claim.

Stories about emotional attachment and belonging through love of a place can be understood as an alternative resource for claiming a sense of belonging and local identity. As emphasised by Savage, Bagnall and Gaynor in their discussion of elective belonging, claims of belonging can be constructed by telling a coherent story about affinities between the qualities or identity of the place and the identity of the speaker. Actors that I have interviewed did this by drawing on stories about Tromsø as urban yet close to nature, highlighting especially their love of nature. Elective belonging was also established through stories that drew on affinities between the region and the town, and stories about a cosmopolitan or solidarity-minded town. Love of a place is often claimed as a way of explaining political motives. According to Ahmed (2004), love is a way of valuing something and of creating an ideal object. Acting in the name of love can work to enforce a particular ideal onto others by requiring that they live up to an ideal to enter the community. Love of a place can also be used to challenge other actors' legitimate positions, as seen in the account of one Olympic opponent who claimed that the local

leadership of Tromsø 2018 were not really competent to steward the natural landscape around Tromsø because they didn't partake in outdoor activities. It's important to note that elective belonging has its limits. Although actors may draw on different aspects of a place to form a coherent narrative frame for their sense of belonging, the place stories must be plausible, there must be some connections between actors' personal narratives and the culturally accepted stories about place. As Doreen Massey has argued¹¹⁷, elective belonging is also a question about the resources and freedoms required to belong. Not everyone is free to elect to belong anywhere, and there is also the question of having your sense of elective belonging accepted by others.

Who can be included in stories about born and bred, elective and regional belonging, and who risks being excluded? The question of Sami identities and Sami claims of belonging were discussed openly in the interviews. I have shown that the notion of Sami belonging in Tromsø was somewhat ambivalent, and that both Sami and non-Sami actors drew on stories about exclusion as well as inclusion. Ethnic or cultural minorities other than the Sami were hardly ever mentioned in the interviewees' stories about local belonging. This may have been an effect of the selection of interviewees, or a reflection of the topics that had been highlighted in the Olympic debate. It is still worth noting, and warrants a question as to which stories about belonging and not belonging that could have been told, had I interviewed actors with an immigrant background, or actors from religious minorities, about their local attachments and identities. And which stories about local identities would the actors I did interview draw on had the topic of discussion been for example immigration or the building of a new mosque? This question also points towards a discussion of how stories about belonging contribute to negotiating politics of propinquities and connectivities. According to Amin's discussion of the two, questions of identities, borders and belonging have to do with politics of propinquities, whereas politics of connectivities deal with politics beyond place. Based on the stories discussed in this chapter I would argue that identity and belonging also has to do with the kind of connectivities that can be made relevant for a place, as seen for example in the cosmopolitan and regional stories about belonging. I would further argue that borders are constructed not only in relation to the local level of propinquity, but also in relation to the region and the nation, drawing on a flexible interpretative repertoire of connections and

¹¹⁷ Personal communication, April 2010.

disconnections. This flexibility can for example be seen in relation to stories about the Northern Norwegian region, which were used both as a level of common identity and belonging, and as a geographical entity that was described as separate from Tromsø. In the next chapter, which focuses on stories about development and the politics of interests, this relationship between Tromsø and Northern Norway will be explored further.

6 Stories about development, politics of interests

This chapter will engage with stories about different kinds of urban and regional development in relation to the Olympic bid, and consider how these stories in varying ways contribute to negotiating politics of interests, as well as politics of propinquities, connectivities and disconnectivities. As emphasised by Bærenholdt and Haldrup (2003), development is a polyvalent term, and stories about urban and regional development “can cover many dimensions such as business development, living conditions, service provisions, government and image” (Bærenholdt and Haldrup 2003: 63). While this is true also of the stories discussed in this chapter, a common feature is that they all relate to questions of economic or material interests and resources in some sense. The development processes described in the stories include physical, symbolic and/or economic changes, ranging from material and symbolic development of the region to land use and real estate developments within the centre of Tromsø. As an example of the latter, consider this response given by one of the participants at the municipality’s planning meeting to a question raised by the chair what challenges the municipality would have to face if Tromsø was going to host the Winter Olympics?

The town must look after its soul, and keep the sense of a small town. Don’t build a miniature Manhattan, that would be horrible! Don’t let the investors frolic freely.¹¹⁸

This account draws on a story about infrastructural and real estate development as potentially damaging and disrupting to the symbolic soul of the town, and portrays investors as untrustworthy if left to their own devices. The quote shows some of the discursive connections between stories about development and interests. While some interests are described as driving development, others are seen as potentially affected or destroyed by it.

Tromsø 2014 was introduced to the public as a regional development project. The bid was described as a “blue Nokia” that would boost innovation and investments not only in Tromsø but in all the three northern counties. When asked about their reasons for supporting or opposing the bid, there were many actors who referred to the region. According to one Tromsø Romsa 2018 employee, the regional motivation was almost self-explanatory.

¹¹⁸ Byen skal kunne berge sjela. Beholde småbypreget. Ikke bygge Manhattan i miniatyr. Skrekk og gru! Ikke la kapitalen boltre seg fritt. (paraphrased, based on field notes)

It was the classic cliché about “giving the region an uplifting”¹¹⁹.

After Tromsø 2018 had changed its concept to compact games the potential for locating arenas and sites in other parts of the region was substantially diminished. However, as exemplified by the above quote, the regional development story was frequently drawn upon both by opponents and by proponents in explaining their views on the Olympic project.

What is meant by regional development, and what is the relationship between local development, regional development and national or international development? How are interests constructed as local, regional or international? And how are environmental interests described in relation to developmental interests? According to one of the actors interviewed:

As for the environmental impact and all that, [the Olympic games] are to be arranged some place or another, so why can't we host them? I mean, [...] those CO2-emissions and all that, they will come some place in the world anyway [...].¹²⁰

In this chapter I will examine stories that in different ways draw on and negotiate the concept of development and interests. I will look at how actors used stories about different kinds of development to explain and justify their positions on the Olympic project, and consider how these stories relate to questions about interests and place politics. I start by exploring stories about land use and development in and around Tromsø, focusing on how the concept of vulnerability is used in stories about local development, and considering stories about tourism in particular. Following this discussion I will turn to stories about regional development, and discuss how actors describe the relationship between local and regional development interests. I will also discuss different stories about environmental consequences of an Olympic project and especially look at how stories about the region and regional development were used both to combine and to negotiate between environmental concerns and other interests. Stories about interests and development draw on and produce stories about identities, propinquities and connectivities. I will conclude this chapter by discussing the political work done by stories about development, and consider the politics and geographies of interests in relation to identities and place politics.

¹¹⁹ Denne klassiske klisjéfylte ”gi landsdelen et løft”.

¹²⁰ Det der med miljøeffektene, alle sånne ting, [OL] skal arrangeres en eller annen plass, hvorfor kan ikke vi få det? Altså [...] de CO2-utslippene og alt sammen, de kommer en eller annen plass iverden uansett [...]

6.1 Stories about vulnerability, land use and development

In this section I will consider stories about Tromsø's natural and built landscape and interviewees' accounts about expected physical and material developments in Tromsø in relation to the prospect of an Olympic hosting. While these accounts can be understood as contributing towards the politics of interests in relation to land use in Tromsø, they also relate to Amin's definition of the politics of propinquity as being about the negotiations that arise from people sharing the same turf. The stories discussed here draw on different constructions of interests in relation to physical place, including ownership rights, general public interests, aesthetic concerns, conservation considerations and user rights. A key point of difference in the stories about land use and interests was the perceived need for development versus what was portrayed as a vulnerable town and a vulnerable natural landscape. One Olympic opponent described the prospect of rapid urban development in connection to an Olympic hosting thus:

*I actually think Tromsø is too small, too vulnerable, and there were too many things left uncertain, so I don't think we would have done very well for the next 10 years if we were to have worked for an Olympic hosting, and if the IOC had chosen Tromsø I think that the realities would have come to us in a rather dramatic way. Because there were incredibly many people and an incredible lot of facilities that were to be fitted, compact, it would have changed Tromsø very much, and it would not have been a natural development of a town. Tromsø has changed a lot during the last 10-15-20 years, but it has been a natural development based both on how people and the governments of Tromsø wanted the town to develop. By hosting the Olympics that would in a way be the dominating factor in how Tromsø was to develop, and I'm not sure that would be the right way to develop such a small town as Tromsø is. It would have dominated the urban development very much.*¹²¹

In this account, an Olympic hosting is described as an unnatural development boost that might be too much for the town to handle. Tromsø is portrayed as small and vulnerable, and the

¹²¹ Jeg tror egentlig at Tromsø er for lite, det er for sårbart, det var for mange løse tråder til at jeg tror at vi ville ha fått det godt de neste ti årene, hvis vi skulle ha, hvis at vi skulle jobbe for at vi skulle hatt et OL og hvis IOC hadde bestemt seg for Tromsø, så tror jeg kanskje at realitetene hadde kommet til oss på en, ja, på en ganske dramatisk måte. For det var utrolig mye folk og utrolig mye anlegg som skulle plasseres, kompakt, det ville jo forandre Tromsø veldig mye, og det ville ikke være en naturlig utvikling av en by. Tromsø har utviklet seg veldig mye de siste 10-15-20 årene, men det har vært en naturlig utvikling utifra hvordan både folk og styresmaktene i Tromsø ville at byen skulle utvikle seg. Ved å få et OL så ville det på en måte være det som dominerte hvordan Tromsø skulle utvikle seg, og jeg er ikke sikker på at det ville være den riktige måten å utvikle en såpass liten by som Tromsø. Det ville dominere veldig på byutviklinga.

interviewee tells a story about how an Olympic development would influence on everyday life in Tromsø for the next 10 years. This story was also drawn upon by other interviewees, who said that they had been very worried about the effects of the construction period, and described Tromsø as far too small to handle the necessary influx of workers. One interviewee argued that there would be “chaos here for a long time. Construction work. I can’t quite imagine how things would work out...”¹²² Another claimed that Tromsøya would become uninhabitable:

*I mean I have thought some times that if there was an Olympics then I wouldn't be able to live here, I mean live on a construction site, and it would have ruined the small, as I've said this small island will collapse into the ocean in the end.*¹²³

These accounts draw on an interpretative repertoire of Tromsø as lifeworld, emphasising everyday life and practical living conditions. In their socio-cultural study of development processes in Sandvika, Per Gunnar Røe, Frøydis Eidheim and Lene Schmidt (2002) argue that residents’ draw on several different lifeworld-discourses in their descriptions of Sandvika, and that these discourses are at odds with the aesthetic and economic discourses of planners, developers and politicians. This perceived discrepancy between lifeworld and development interests seemed to be an important element of some of the sceptics’ stories about the potential disruptions of the Olympic project.

While the narratives of the opponents tended to draw on a story about Tromsø being a small town, and too small for the Olympics, other actors argued that Tromsø was bigger than Lillehammer and used this as an argument against any fear of the Olympic development domination:

You could say that during the Lillehammer Olympics... There were many people who claimed that this would lay Tromsø in ruins and things like that, but in fact Lillehammer has never been finer than during and after the Olympic games, the town was renovated wonderfully. So was Hamar [Lillehammer's neighbouring town which co-hosted the games together with another town], but those towns have far less potential than Tromsø. Tromsø is bigger than the three Olympic towns in the Lillehammer-region seen together. So I did not fear

¹²² Kaos her i lang tid. Anleggsarbeid. Ser ikke helt hvordan det skulle gått til...

¹²³ Altså jeg har jo tenkt noen ganger at ble det OL så kunne jeg jo ikke bo her, altså bo på en byggeplass og det ville kommet til å ødelegge den lille, som jeg har sagt den lille øya detter jo i havet til slutt.

*being completely waltzed over by... When tiny Lillehammer was not laid in ruins I can see no reason for Tromsø to be laid in ruins either.*¹²⁴

In this account the story about the Lillehammer Olympics is used to portray Tromsø as more than big enough to handle the development pressure that a hosting would have produced. By referring to Lillehammer having been wonderfully renovated the interviewee suggested that the Olympic hosting might actually restore Tromsø rather than lay the town in ruins.

Several interviewees drew on a story about Tromsø as being in a process of rapid physical transition with a great deal of building activity going. As noted in the introduction this situation was viewed with scepticism by one of the participants in the municipality's planning meeting, who feared that an Olympic hosting would turn the town into a "Manhattan in miniature". Her concern may have been linked to various debates and controversies over building projects in Tromsø in the last decade. Especially in the town centre the building of large modern apartment buildings next to or replacing existing smaller wooden houses have caused both anger and frustration among local politicians and members of the general public (Birkelid 2004). Petitions have been organized against the building of houses with more than five stories in the centre of town. Many interviewees expressed concerns about the regulation of the built environment with regards to the town's recent and future growth and development, complaining about how builders took liberties and how building rules and regulations did not seem to be upheld. According to Toril Nyseth (2008) such concerns were also an important factor in the 2005 citizens' planning initiative Project BY05 (Byutviklingens år). Project BY05 has been described by Ronny Kristiansen (2012) as a "critical-alternative planning initiative" aimed at "developing alternative ways of understanding and doing urban planning and development" (Kristiansen 2012: 2, my translation). While this project had been concluded by the time I did my interviews, the stories told by interviewees about public planning and private developers were probably influenced by the criticism that had been voiced through this initiative.

¹²⁴ Og du kan si at under Lillehammer-OL... Det var mange som hevdet at dette kom til å legge Tromsø i grus og sånt, men altså Lillehammer har jo aldri vært finere enn under og etter olympiaden, byen ble jo fantastisk fint pusset opp. Det samme med Hamar også, men de byene har jo mye mindre potensiale enn Tromsø. Tromsø er større enn de tre OL-byene i mjøs-regionen til sammen. Så jeg fryktet ikke at man skulle bli valset totalt over av... Når bittelille Lillehammer ikke ble lagt i grus så kan jeg ikke se noen grunn til at Tromsø skulle bli lagt i grus heller.

General frustrations about lack of regulation and public control were often linked to concerns about the effect of the Olympic project. For example one of the Olympic opponents drew on a story about how the developers behind a prestigious housing project called Theodor's Pier had used illustration images in a way that he believed concealed the actual visual impact of the proposed housing complex to argue that the illustration images of projected Olympic facilities had also been misleading.

Something that made me really frustrated a few years ago was when they tried to, yes you could say cover the church, through that project Theodor's Pier, when they were going to build out into the sea, which was when I saw for the first time what manipulation of images may do. [...] Yes, unfortunately images are no longer, they can be used to express anything. And that was also a point we had when it came to that monster on the so-called Mandela Common [one of the proposed Olympic venues], then too, you sit with your back against [the view that would be covered].¹²⁵

The stories about the consequences of physical development schemes call upon different kinds of interests. The developers are assumed to be motivated by profit. Their interests can be described as having to do with the property rights, whereas the interests of the general public related to aesthetic concerns, the fear of chaos and congestion can be understood as having to do with users' rights, as well as the property rights of neighbours. As an example of the latter, several interviewees mentioned their scepticism against the suggested location for the Olympic ski jump on Tromsø Island. One interviewee argued that the ski jump would in practice split the cross country skiing track which runs along the top of Tromsøya in two, which would be detrimental for skiers and other users of these green areas. He explained that he had attended the municipal planning meeting in order to raise the possibility of moving the ski jump to where the cross country venue had been planned, saying that he would have preferred to live next to a cross country track rather than a huge ski jump. He added that one of the ice halls had been planned right next to his building, and that had felt a little uncomfortable.

Obviously, big sports facilities very close to people are like a double-edged sword. It's nice to have the facilities to do the sport, but it may also be a little,

¹²⁵ Det er noe som gjorde meg skikkelig frustrert for et par tre år siden da de prøvde å, ja du kan si tildekke kirka, gjennom det prosjektet som går på, det her, den gangen da, de skulle bygge ut i sjøen, Theodors brygge, hvor jeg fikk for første gang se hva manipulering av bilder kan gjøre. [...] Ja, dessverre så er ikke lenger bilder, de kan brukes til å få frem hva som helst. Og det var også et poeng vi hadde når det gjaldt dette med denne monsteret nedpå Mandelasletta som det kalles, og også da, du sitter med ryggen til.

*these big halls and ski jumps, it requires, parking I'm sure and other things which I'm sure for the closest neighbours may feel a little uncomfortable.*¹²⁶

Another interviewee started out by saying that she was 60 percent positive and 40 percent negative towards the bid. Her support for the Olympic project was premised on her belief that it would create a positive self-image and entrepreneurial spirit to inhabitants in the entire Northern Norwegian region, whereas her negative attitudes were linked to her fears for Tromsø.

*I would say that my 40 percent against [the bid] had to do with being a Tromsøværing, because I imagined that it would create quite a great pressure in the town, and it might transform our town to an even higher degree than the forces that are pushing today, but one can't say really, it may be that the brakes would also have been more evident in that case, but the way it is today there are hardly any limits, really...*¹²⁷

The interviewee emphasised her identity as a Tromsøværing when discussing her views about what she termed transformations of the town, thus drawing on a story about having roots in the town. This identity story worked to legitimate her general interest as a local in discussing what the town should look like. She also referred to a personal experience of having been away from the town for a year, saying that it was incredible how much had been built during that one year. Note that her worries about disruptive urban development were not restricted to the Olympics. When asked what she thought Tromsø would be like in 2018 without the Olympic bid she answered:

*A little more of what used to be the beautiful old Tromsø will probably have been ruined, knowing our municipal planners, more concrete blocks will have popped up in the town centre unfortunately, blocking even more of the ocean view on the island.*¹²⁸

She concluded that Tromsø would become more ugly, and more like any other town, although she laughingly hoped that some new paths for cyclists and pedestrians would also have been built. The culprits in her story about Tromsø's too-rapid physical transformation were the

¹²⁶ Så det er klart at altså, store idrettsanlegg er jo også, tett innpå folk, er et tve-egget sverd. Det er fint å ha anleggene for å drive sporten, men det kan også være litt sånn, disse store hallene og hoppbakken og sånn, det... sikkert parkeringsplasser og andre ting, i alle fall for de som havner nærmest kan oppleve, eller at det kan være ubehagelig.

¹²⁷ jeg ville si at mine 40 prosent mot de var knyttet til Tromsøværingen, for jeg så for meg at det ville skape ganske stort press i byen, og det ville kanskje omforme byen våres enda sterkere enn de kreftene som i dag pusher på, men det vet man jo ikke, det kan jo hende at bremsene også ville blitt tydeligere da, men sånn som det er i dag så er det jo nesten fritt frem for, ja...

¹²⁸ litt mer av det som var det vakre gamle Tromsø er sannsynligvis rasert, kjenner jeg byplanleggerne våre rett, smekket opp flere betongfirkanter nede i sentrum dessverre, bygd igjen enda mer av havutsikten på øya

“weak politicians and municipal planners who open up for the ravaging of profit hunting and insatiable greed”.¹²⁹ It is interesting that the story focused on the regulators rather than the investors. This was perhaps because the investors were expected to be driven by profit whereas the interviewee held politicians and planners to higher standards and had expected them to consider the interests of the general public? In the first quote from this interviewee she had mentioned the possibility that an actual Olympic hosting might have had a positive effect on the planning procedures, that the brakes would be more evident. When asked about this, the interviewee said that there were some restrictions and demands for planning and environmental considerations included in the requirements from the IOC, and that larger projects might also attract more professional investors who were willing to consider aesthetics. She contrasted this to the “local private actors who have been given the latitude to set up glass and concrete without any inhibitions”¹³⁰.

Not everybody was worried about physical transformations. When asked what the town would look like in 2018 without the Olympic hosting, one interviewee answered:

*There has been a wild building boom lately, if you go 9 years back the town looked rather, well the centre was more or less the same, but outside of the centre there has been a tremendous growth, and I expect that will continue, although perhaps not at the same speed as now. But that's the main thing, I don't think you will see any drastic changes. So, I expect a gradual change. I think the town will be recognizable in the future too. Just more houses, more buildings.*¹³¹

The interviewee thus recognized the fact that the built environment of the town was changing, but unlike the former interviewee he didn't draw on a story about lack of public control, destruction or unwanted transformations. On the contrary, he claimed that there had not been many changes in the centre of the town and he thought the town would be recognizable in the future too. His interests as a local resident were in other words not threatened by the building developments. Another interviewee simply stated that he thought the town was okay as it was.

¹²⁹ svake politikere og byplanleggere som åpner opp for profittjagets raserings, umettelige grådighet

¹³⁰ lokale private aktører som får fritt spillerom til å smekke opp betong og glass hemningsløst

¹³¹ Det har jo vært en vanvittig byggeboom i de siste, hvis du går 9 år tilbake så så byen, ja sentrum så vel noenlunde likt ut men litt utafor sentrum så, det har jo vokst noe vanvittig, og det vil sikkert fortsette, tror jeg, kanskje ikke i samme tempo, så, men... Men det er det viktigste, jeg tror ikke du vil se noen drastiske endringer frem til da. Så nei, en gradvis utvikling tror jeg. Ellers tror jeg byen er til å kjenne igjen, da også. Ja, mer hus, mer boliger.

Even though many people think that the town is messy and not good looking, the town is constantly being criticized... I have no objections against the town, the town is as it is, that's okay, one may always find things to criticize but one may always find positive things as well¹³².

Several Olympic opponents pointed out that they were not against development as such. As one interviewee put it:

We tend to be portrayed as backwards-looking and reactionary, that we want nothing to happen here, nothing to develop in this town, but of course we do want things to develop and things to happen, but at the same time we must realize that we have some limits here.¹³³

The Olympic opponents' insistence that they were not backwards-looking was not necessarily accepted by other actors. For example one of the undecided interviewees mentioned the protests against tall buildings as an example of how the people behind No to the Olympics were always against everything. According to her, discussing only how many stories buildings should have was missing the point. She said that she was not particularly in favour of tall buildings, but that the important thing to her was the architectural qualities and meaning behind a particular project, and whether the design "has been done with tenderness and talent. Not just any average..."¹³⁴ Her account seemed to be based on a story about the protesters against tall buildings as being formalistic and not very progressive, whereas she thought that developments could bring positive qualities to the town, given that one "bring in competent people who can make something beautiful and who is able to handle the necessary considerations"¹³⁵. Like the former interviewee who was 40 percent sceptical of the bid because of the expected negative results it would have on the town, this interviewee also seemed to be drawing on a story where the lack of aesthetic considerations are connected to *local* investors. They both looked to professional actors who could deliver better designed projects from *outside* the town. This perspective may have been a result of concrete cases in Tromsø where local builders have gotten into conflict with buyers and owners of existing houses neighbouring new projects.

¹³² Selv om mange synes at byen er rotete og ikke fin, byen får jo stadig vekk kritikk, så... Jeg har ikke noe å utsette på byen, byen er nå sånn som den er, det er greit det, man kan jo alltid finne ting å kritisere men man kan alltid finne positive ting også.

¹³³ vi blir jo gjerne fremstilt som bakstrebersk, at her skal ingenting skje, ingenting skal utvikle seg i denne byen her, og det vil vi jo selvfølgelig at ting skal utvikle seg og at ting skal skje, men så samtidig så må vi innse at vi har en del begrensinger i dette her

¹³⁴ gjort med ømhet og med... talent. Ikke hva som helst slags gjennomsnittlig...

¹³⁵ får inn kompetente folk som kan lage noe som er vakkert og som tar de nødvendige hensynene og klarer å håndtere det...

The stories discussed above concentrated on developments in the built environment and the question about whether the town was too small and vulnerable to handle a rapid Olympic expansion. Stories about the natural environment around Tromsø also drew on the notion of vulnerability, often referring to Tromsø's Arctic or Subarctic position. As one opponent of the bid put it:

*And the other thing then is the question about how many wounds this would create in a vulnerable subarctic nature, this has been very important to me.*¹³⁶

The idea of subarctic nature being particularly at risk was drawn upon in the 2014-proposal, and may thus have been introduced or popularized by the Olympic project itself. Stories about vulnerable nature also tended to focus on the local environment of Tromsø, and on everyday life in the city.

*And then of course there has been a discussion about nature, I mean the vulnerability, to what extent would this in a way affect vulnerable nature, mountains, I mean large sports' facilities and infrastructure, so the environmental debate has been prominent, both in terms of the construction work and bringing a lot of people in for a short period of time, and the entire infrastructure.*¹³⁷

Note that the mountains were mentioned particularly as a part of the vulnerable nature which the former interviewee was worried about. As discussed in chapter 4, the “ethnoenvironmental” (Lehtinen 2006) issue of protecting Tromsdalstind as a holy mountain in traditional Sami religion was used also by non-Sami actors to protest against the development plans there. This was evident in the interviews as well. The idea of Tromsdalstind as “holy” seemed to have become an established story in its own right, which was now used as an additional discursive resource in some of the narratives about environment as vulnerable nature. Based on this story, development or “facilitation” of the natural landscape was described as a spoiling or sacrilege, for example by one (non-Sami) interviewee who talked about Tromsdalstind in these terms.

¹³⁶ Og det andre er da dette med hvor mye sår ville dette skape i, i en sårbar subarktisk natur, det har vært veldig viktig for meg.

¹³⁷ Og så har det jo vært en diskusjon på naturen, altså sårbarheta, hvor mye ville dette på en måte påvirke sårbar natur, fjell, store idrettsanlegg, infrastrukturen, altså, så den miljødebatten har jo vært mye fremme, både ifht anleggsvirksomhet og i fht å få veldig mye folk inn på kort tid og i hele tatt selve infrastrukturen.

*There were in fact strong interests who wanted to, to use the expression rape Tromsdalstind, which lies there, and set up an alpine site on it, defile this mountain with ski lifts and cable cars and iron and wretchedness.*¹³⁸

As discussed by Rose (1993) the visual and discursive encodings of nature as feminine, pleasurable and seductive have a long history in western ideologies about landscape. In the account above, expressions like rape and defilement were used to describe a potential development. Together with words like virginal and untouched, the interviewee seems to draw on a metaphorical story of the natural landscape as feminine and pristine, and because of this, vulnerable. The same story was drawn upon quite explicitly by a member of No to the Olympics commenting on the front page illustration of their Counterstatement (discussed in chapter 4).

*Untouched nature, clean air, animal life and spectacular experiences, completely free. And this is supposed to be free. No one will be allowed to come and say that this should be turned into profit. Which is what the Olympics are about. This is to be turned into profit, by CBS, Pepsi, Coca Cola, whoever it may be, we are in a way going to take your raw materials, as described here, and then we'll make money out of them, and then we'll throw you like some other whore that's been used, right. That beautiful peasant girl from Northern Thailand, who comes from such a poor family that they have to send her to town to become a prostitute, right. And then the rich folks from the West come and use her and throw her away. They throw away this natural beauty who really doesn't deserve anything but the deepest respect for the hard work and the innocent purity which she represents, oh I got very pompous now perhaps, but in a way no one is going to come here and flatten us down and first of all say we know what's best for you.*¹³⁹

The interviewee qualified the comparison with a poor Thai peasant girl forced into prostitution as being pompous, but he did not retract it. The quote is interesting because it does a lot of discursive work. Northern Norway is positioned as young and innocent, and in need of protection. IOC-interests are described as punters, and resistance against the project

¹³⁸ Der var altså sterke krefter som ville, for å bruke uttrykket voldta Tromsdalstind som ligger der og så lage et alpinanlegg på den, besudle dette fjellet med heiser og gondoler og betong og jern og elendighet.

¹³⁹ Uberørt natur, rein luft, dyreliv og spektakulære opplevelser helt gratis. Og dette skal være gratis. Ingen skal få lov til å komme og si at dette skal vi omsette i profitt. Og det er det OL, IOC, handler om. Dette skal vi omsette i profitt, på CBS, for Pepsi, for Cola, hvem det måtte være, vi skal på en måte ta råvarene deres, som er beskrevet her, og så skal vi gjøre penger utav det, og så skal vi kaste dere som en annen hore som har vært brukt, ikke sant. Den vakre bondejenta fra Nord-Thailand som kommer fra en så fattig familie at de er nødt til å sende henne til byen for å bli prostituert, ikke sant. Og så kommer rikfolka fra Vesten og bruker henne og kaster henne. Og kaster da en sånn naturrik skjønnhet som egentlig ikke fortjener noe annet enn den dypeste respekt for det harde arbeidet og den uskyldigheten som hun representerer, å nå ble jeg veldig pompøs her kanskje, men på en måte skal ingen få komme her og valse oss ned og for det første si vi vet hva som er best for dere.

becomes resistance against *outsiders* who will take control and make illicit use of the region. In this story the question of protecting vulnerable nature around Tromsø is related to a politics of connectivity, where the potential risks are linked to the possibility of an exploitative economic relationship with powerful actors from outside the local area.

In contrast to this story, I would like to consider the response to the mountain image from one of the actors involved in Tromsø 2018. When asked to comment on the image she said that this was the kind of landscape that she would like to spend hours of solitary skiing in. When I told her that this picture had been on the front page of No to the Olympics' counterstatement she responded:

Yes, they don't want any disturbances in... I can understand that. It actually struck me too, don't come here and destroy. But I can't help thinking that we have so many great mountains and areas that won't be affected, so what if we take some areas and as I would call it facilitate for use. In the long run I think that would serve as preventive health work. (...) So yes, we must have some areas where we can have this silence, but we're also going to take some areas and facilitate for use.¹⁴⁰

This quote indicates that the vulnerable nature story was to a certain extent shared by proponents as well as opponents of the Olympic bid. The main difference expressed in the above quote was not between seeing or not seeing the value of the quiet and untouched natural landscape and outdoor activities, but rather how this value could best be managed and to what extent it should be made more easily available for use. By referring to preventive health work the actor draws on a story about local user interests to argue for the building of Olympic facilities. But as I will discuss in the next section, the Olympic project was also described as a project for developing winter tourism and facilities for visitors.

6.2 Stories about tourism: Selling place

According to Willy Guneriussen (2008) the assumed economic importance and potential of tourism was an important rationale behind the Olympic project. He has described the Olympic bid as a project to promote Northern Norway as a location for postmodern industrial

¹⁴⁰ Ja, de vil ikke ha noen forstyrrelser i... Det forstår jeg. Det slo meg faktisk også, ikke kom og ødelegg. Men jeg kan ikke fri meg for at vi har så vanvittig mange flotte fjell og områder som ikke vil bli berørt, så om vi nå tar noen områder og som jeg kaller det tilrettelegger for bruk. In the long run... I lengden tror jeg det vil være med på å forebygge helsekøer. (...) Så ja, vi må ha noen områder der vi kan ha denne stillheta i men vi skal også ta noen områder og tilrettelegge for bruk.

investment and for a post-industrial “economy of adventure”, culture and tourist experiences. Even after the bid had been cancelled, several interviewees pointed to a positive effect on the tourist industry as the most tangible result of the five-year bidding process. As one former employee of Tromsø 2018 put it:

*I know one thing, which I have been told directly by institutions and actors within the tourist industries, they have noticed that there have been more people coming to Tromsø because of the Olympic proposal. Polaria have noted a distinct increase and people have asked for Olympic artefacts. The hotels refer to conferences being held in Tromsø because “this year the Olympic town will be the venue for our congress”.*¹⁴¹

The effects on tourism were often linked together with stories about the importance of visibility, like in this response from another Tromsø 2018 employee to my question about what effects the process may have had:

*First of all it has created a lot of attention around Tromsø. Secondly, it has caused a lot of conferences and arrangements to be held in Tromsø which otherwise would have been held elsewhere. So we have already had some gains from an Olympic hosting that never came. The businesses and the hotel industry say so themselves. And thirdly it has done something about the entire mentality and image already.*¹⁴²

In this section I will discuss stories about selling Tromsø and Northern Norway as a consumer product for tourism and consider how these stories contribute to negotiating place politics of interests. The two former accounts both draw on a story about tourism as an economic resource that in order to be utilised depends on gaining the attention of potential visitors. But how is this achieved, and how are the interests of the tourist industry understood in relation to other interests in place? David Harvey (1996) has argued that space-time restructuring since the 1970s has resulted in a tendency towards an increased pressure for places to attract mobile capital, and that as a result of this “the selling of place, using all the artifices of advertising and image construction that can be mustered, has become of considerable importance” (Harvey, 1996: 297-298). The importance of image construction in advertising place was

¹⁴¹ Ja, og så vet jeg en ting som jeg har fått direkte ifra reiselivsinstitusjoner og aktører, de har merket at det har kommet flere til Tromsø på bakgrunn av at vi er søkere, søknad til OL. Polaria merket markant økning og folk som spurte etter OL-artikler. Hotellene kan referere til at konferanser har blitt lagt til Tromsø, i år er det OL-byen som skal være stedet for vår kongress.

¹⁴² For det første så har den gitt masse oppmerksomhet rundt Tromsø. For det andre så har den skapt at en rekke konferanser og arrangementer har blitt lagt til Tromsø som ellers ikke ville ha kommet hit. Så vi har allerede hentet ut noen gevinster av et OL som aldri kom. Det sier jo næringslivet og hotellnæringa selv. For det tredje så har det gjort noe med hele det mentale bildet allerede.

something that interviewees also commented on in relation to the photographic prompts discussed earlier. Responding to Image 1, which shows central parts of Tromsø at night, one actor reflected:

Well, you know... This is a kind of glossy idealized image that is being used to market Tromsø in winter. It is a very beautiful image which does not show untouched mountains but rather the town mountains that are close by, and Tromsdalstind of course which we all have a relationship to, whether we consider it a holy mountain or simply a wonderful mountain. I am one of those who think it is a wonderful mountain, one of the grandest characteristic marks of Tromsø. I don't know what else you would want me to say...? This is of course an image that shows a great deal of Tromsø's infrastructure, we have a fjord on which there still is coastal traffic, and we have the Tromsø Bridge. Yes, and Tromsø is a compact town.¹⁴³

The interviewee started by acknowledging that this was a glossy kind image that was often used for marketing purposes, thus drawing on a story about Tromsø as a product for others, assumedly tourists, to consume. The interviewee then went on to say that the image was beautiful, and talked about the mountains and her love of Tromsdalstind, and in doing this her perspective changed from a story about Tromsø as a tourist location to a story about sense of place and her own feelings towards Tromsø. This story focused on the mountains around Tromsø, which were described almost as an integrated part of the town. The term town mountains can be seen as illustrative of how the interviewee portrayed this relationship. After having talked about the mountains she paused and puzzled as to what else should be said about the image, before adding that it also showed the infrastructure of the town, the traffic on the fjord and the compact character of the town centre, aspects that can be understood as part of a story about Tromsø as a setting for everyday life. In this account there did not seem to be any conflicts between stories about Tromsø as a tourist location and stories drawing on having a sense of place or on everyday life.

The sense of place stories about Tromsø as being marked by a co-presence of urbanity and nature were also drawn upon directly in accounts about how to market Tromsø. This response

¹⁴³ Nei, vet du, eh... Det er jo et glansbilde som man bruker når man skal markedsføre vinter-Tromsø. Det er jo et meget vakkert bilde som viser ikke uberørte fjell men viser de nære byfjellene og Tromsdalstind selvfølgelig som vi alle har et forhold til enten vi synes det er et hellig fjell eller vi bare synes det er et herlig fjell, jeg tilhører jo da de siste som synes at det, det er et av de flotteste kjennetegnene ved Tromsø. (pause) Eh, jeg vet ikke hva mer du vil jeg skal si, dette er jo et bilde som viser også en god del av infrastrukturen i Tromsø, at vi har et sund som det enda er trafikk på og vi har Tromsøbrua, ja, og Tromsø er en kompakt by.

to the same image from a former employee of Tromsø 2018 seems to be a good example of a tourism-story of Tromsø as “urban yet wild”:

*The unique thing about Tromsø is that you have city or urban facilities, this far north. There are nobody who believes it, that one may come this far north and have hotels with international standard and shopping possibilities like any large city in the World. And yet ten minutes away from your living room-door you can have spectacular experiences of nature, straight into the wilderness.*¹⁴⁴

Brynhild Granås (2009) has described how one of Tromsø’s neighbouring towns Narvik is promoted through two different sets of interpretative repertoires as being simultaneously “unique” and “ordinary”. This account does some of the same discursive work by insisting that Tromsø is “unique” and at the same time “like any large city in the World”. The interviewee links Tromsø’s urban status to the possibility to consume. As Steven and Malcolm Miles (2004) have noted, the link between consumption and the city is well established, almost to the point of mythologisation. The focus in the quote is on facilities such as hotels and shopping, and the assumed consumer is the visitor who comes this far north. The size of the city is not mentioned here, but later in the same interview, the interviewee expressed a firm belief in Tromsø’s potential to attract the decision-makers in the IOC, an attraction that she linked to Tromsø’s relatively small size. She argued that the concept was “compact and simple, kind of ‘bring it back to what it used to be’, kind of the village.”¹⁴⁵ This description is somewhat at odds with the former comparison of Tromsø as having the same consumer facilities as “any large city in the world”. The interviewee continued by saying that the concept was at the same time “extremely spectacular with nature and natural phenomena like the northern light and the mountains that plunge down in [the fjords], it would have been absolutely wicked”.¹⁴⁶ The natural phenomena and the landscape around Tromsø are not used in contrast to the city as consumption, but rather as an enhancement and added value to the overall tourist product.

¹⁴⁴ Det som er spesielt med Tromsø er jo at du har storbyfasiliteter, så langt mot nord. Det er jo ingen som tror det, at man kan komme så langt nord og ha hoteller med internasjonal standard og shoppingmuligheter som hvilken som helst storby i verden. Og så ti minutter utenfor stuedøra så har du altså naturopplevelser som er helt spektakulær, rett i villmarka.

¹⁴⁵ kompakt og enkelt, litt sånn ”bring it back to what it used to be”, litt sånn landsbyen

¹⁴⁶ voldsomt spektakulært med natur og naturfenomener som nordlys og fjellene som stuper ned i, det hadde vært helt rått...

As a contrast to the superurbanity suggested by the former interviewee when comparing Tromsø to “any large city in the World”, consider this response from a member of No to the Olympics:

Yes, this shows how wonderfully fine the town is, an excellent Northern Norwegian town which has no need for clichés, you know there was a time after the launch of Tromsø 2014 when you couldn't mention the Olympics without using the term spectacular, right, there were these clichés that had to be used. And yes, this does show a wonderfully fine town, which one are welcome to try and attract tourists to, which sells itself really. (...) An excellent little town in Northern Norway.¹⁴⁷

Although the interviewee emphasized that he and the other members of No to the Olympics did not have anything against tourists coming to Tromsø, he rejected the use of what he called clichés in marketing the town. The description of Tromsø as “an excellent little town in Northern Norway” draws attention to the more ordinary aspects of place politics. This can be understood as a challenge to place stories that focus on Tromsø as a tourist destination. Later in the interview the actor argued that although tourists were welcome enough, the emphasis of politicians and developers ought to be on the everyday life for the population, and on solving problems related to schools, hospitals and homes for the elderly rather than on arranging a grand party, as he called the Olympics.

Another photographic prompt (Image 2) used in the interviews depicts a free-style skier jumping down an extremely steep cliff close to the top of a snow-covered mountain. Image 2 shows clear blue sky, white snow and mountains bathed in the bright lights of late-winter. Interestingly, the immediate response from many of the interviewees to this image was to distance themselves from participating in this kind of activities.

This is an amazing picture which I, if I was to tell you my reaction to it, I would of course never have set off down such a cliff.¹⁴⁸

Yes, that's the kind of thing that I think is quite horrible, why do they bother! Killing themselves!¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Ja, dette viser dette fantastiske fine ved byen, som ligger der som en Nordnorsk flott by som man ikke trenger å knytte floskler og disse, det var jo en stund 2014 startet jo med at man kunne ikke nevne OL uten at det skulle være spektakulært ikke sant, det gikk igjen en del sånne floskler som skulle brukes. Og ja, dette viser en fantastisk fin by, som man gjerne må prøve å få turister til og som, som selger i seg selv, (...) Men dette viser en flott småby i Nord-Norge.

¹⁴⁸ Dette er jo et fantastisk bilde som jeg, hvis jeg skal si min reaksjon på det så ville jo jeg aldri ha satt utfor en slik fjellskrent.

¹⁴⁹ Ja, det der er jo sånt som jeg synes er helt horribelt, at de gidder! Slå seg i hjel!

Some of the interviewees explained that they had used to do this kind of downhill skiing before, but that they had been injured or had accidents that in some way or another had prevented or deterred them from continuing with the activity. One interviewee expressed deep regret about this, while at the same time distancing herself from the image as being rather non-engaging:

*Grief! This was how I would carry on. I need to get back to the mountain side. It [the image] doesn't really give me much. I don't get any real impression, there isn't any drama in it really, and there is too little leaping power. You can ski here, in a way, that's...*¹⁵⁰

The disengagement from the image seems somewhat paradoxical in connection to the expressed emotion connected to the activity. One possible interpretation may be that the disengagement partly has to do with the fact that the image is not easily identifiable as being from a particular place that the interviewee would recognize. Several interviewees noted that although the landscape shown in the picture was nice and would be found around Tromsø, it could also be found in many other places.

*It is a great picture, clean and nice, and that's one thing, it is not unique for Tromsø, for all that I'm concerned I don't know if [this picture] is taken in Tromsø at all, but it is one of the advantages that we have, yes.*¹⁵¹

Other interviewees emphasized how it is different from other similar mountain landscapes elsewhere. Although the picture does not show it, several interviewees mentioned how the mountains rose straight up from the fjords.

*What's unique about the mountains in Tromsø is of course, if we had seen this from his back we would probably have seen the ocean down here, so that, our mountains are of course spectacular, they are tall and wild and that's great, it's a little like the Alps. But that's not, the difference between Tromsø and the Alps, or Lyngen [a neighbouring municipality] and the Alps is that you have the ocean; it looks as if you're diving into the ocean. That's what's unique about our place.*¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Sorg! Det var sånn jeg dreiv på. Jeg må komme meg tilbake i fjellsiden. Det sier meg egentlig ikke så mye. Jeg får ikke noe sånn inntrykk, det er ikke noe dramatisk i det egentlig, det er for lite spenst. Her kan du stå på ski liksom, det er...

¹⁵¹ Det er et flott bilde, reint og fint, og det er jo en ting, det er ikke spesielt for Tromsø, jeg vet ikke om det er tatt i Tromsø i det hele tatt for mitt vedkommende, men det er jo et av de pre'ene vi har, ja.

¹⁵² Det som er unikt med fjellene i Tromsø er jo, hvis vi hadde sett fra ryggen hans ville vi sikkert sett hav her nede, så den, fjellene våre er jo spektakulære, de er høye og ville og det er flott, det er litt som alpene. Men det er jo ikke mer, det som er forskjellen på Tromsø og alpene eller Lyngen og alpene er at du har havet, det ser ut som du stuper ned i havet. Det er det som er det unike med hos oss.

Seeing the image as a promotional advantage or sales potential was an association made by many interviewees. One interviewee who himself was a dedicated cross country skier identified the image as being from Lyngen, a mountainous area just outside Tromsø municipality. He argued that this type of photographs was a kind of tourist brochure for Tromsø, and that this was a branch of the tourist industry that seemed to be thriving.

*Tromsø as having undiscovered, yes, somewhat undiscovered or unknown resources in the form of this kind of recreational outdoor activities which are used by very few people today, but a group on the rise. But this has been pointed out as one of the products or one of the qualities of Tromsø that one could and should develop further.*¹⁵³

Mykletun and Guimóthy (2007) emphasises that the presence of a certain element of risk-taking is an important element of adventure tourism. It would seem that the perceived risk-taking in this image made many interviewees identify this activity with tourism rather than the kind of skiing that they themselves did. A large number of interviewees seemed to interpret Image 2 as a somewhat exclusive and extreme product that could be marketed for a select group of tourist consumers. To the opponents of the Olympic project though, the product is not really compatible with a large-scale development of the skiing industry. As one of the members of the No to the Olympics network expressed it:

*Especially during spring, if you go skiing in the mountains here you will meet tourists, you'll meet Italians, Swiss, Austrians, Germans I've met on the mountain tops here, they come in small groups, by boat, they anchor up outside the beaches and experience that nature, great. You see we're not protectionists, we do want a lot of people to experience the great things here, we are telemark [a style of alpine skiing] skiers ourselves and climb the peaks, we are more than willing to share, but it is of course this unspoiltness, this amazingly beautiful unspoilt state that we want to protect.*¹⁵⁴

The stories about tourism seem to draw on potentially conflicting interests and a tension between politics of propinquities and politics of connectivities. While attracting tourists from outside the region can provide jobs and economic profit for some actors, there is a potential

¹⁵³ Tromsø som med uoppgaget, ja, litt oppdaget eller ukjente ressurser i form av denne typen friluftliv som brukes av veldig få i dag, men veldig økende gruppe. Men dette er jo påpekt som et av de produktene eller en av de sidene av Tromsø som man kan og bør utvikle videre. Ekstremiskikjøring.

¹⁵⁴ Spesielt på vårparten, går du på fjellene her så møter du turister, du møter italienerne, sveitsere, østerrikerne, tyskere har jeg møtt på toppene her, som kommer i små grupper, båt, strandhugg og oppleve den naturen, flott. Altså vi er ikke proteksjonistiske, vi vil jo at veldig mange skal få oppleve dette kjempefine her, vi kjører jo telemark selv mange av denne gjengen her og går på toppene, og vi deler det jo gjerne, men det er jo dette uberørte, dette fantastisk fine uberørte som vi vil beskytte.

conflict of interest between actors who want to preserve the natural landscape around Tromsø as it is today and actors who want to facilitate the landscape for tourist consumption. There is also a question about what local politicians should spend time and resources on, with some actors arguing that it is more important to focus on the production of everyday goods and services related to politics of propinquities.

6.3 Stories about regional development

While the two preceding sections have focused on stories about development and interests mostly related to Tromsø, this section will consider stories about the Olympic bid as a regional development project. These are also stories about Tromsø's relationship to the Northern Norwegian region. In constructing and reconstructing different perspectives on local and regional interests, responsibilities and possibilities, the stories about the impact of Tromsø's proposed Olympic hosting on regional development contribute to negotiating both politics of interests, propinquities and connectivities.

As described in the introduction to this chapter, the regional argument was very often drawn upon by proponents of the bid to explain their support of the Olympic story. For example, one actor said that he had been sceptical when she first heard about the Olympic proposal.

But when I started to realize what kind of opportunities this would bring, and I thought back to Lillehammer where one had deliberately used the Olympics as a political project to build up the interior region which was in a slump, they needed a boost in the Mjøsa region, and I can see no reason why one shouldn't do that in Northern Norway too. We have the competence, we have the basis needed to build arenas, and we have people, of course we have to bring in a lot of competence, a lot of labour that we don't have, but that would contribute to the uplifting.¹⁵⁵

This account draws on a story about a national Olympic hosting as a political project that can and should be used as a lever to support economic growth in regions that are struggling. The idea that the Olympics should provide regional development can be understood as part of an internationally established story about the Olympic hostings (Gold and Gold 2007). The need

¹⁵⁵ Men når det begynte å gå opp for meg hva dette ville gi av muligheter, og jeg tenkte tilbake til Lillehammer hvor man hadde bevisst politisk brukt et OL til å bygge opp innlandet som lå nede, man trengte en boost i den Mjøs-regionen, så hvorfor i all verden skal man ikke kunne gjøre det i Nord-Norge også? Så kompetansen har vi, og utgangspunktet har vi til å få arenaer, og folk har vi, selvfølgelig må vi tilføre masse kompetanse, masse arbeidskraft som vi ikke har, men det vil være med på å løfte.

for an economic boost and uplifting of the interior counties north of Oslo was also used as an argument in connection to the Lillehammer-Olympics (Spilling 1995, Essex and Chalkey 2007). The interviewee's account positions Northern Norway as a region that both needs and deserves this kind of political support to prosper. This is an established story about Northern Norway that has long roots and which is found in several different forms. According to Arbo (1997) public debates about Northern Norway have long tended to draw on two contrasting images of Northern Norway, as "the backwards and undeveloped region" or as "the resourceful region" (Arbo 1997: 310, my translation). In the interviews there were several actors that in different ways drew on a story about the surplus value of resources and products from Northern Norway being taken away from the region and used elsewhere.

When one considers the fact that one has most resources as such and has contributed to a large portion of BNP as such in Northern Norway, and has received very little in return for that, considering what people in all ages and all professions have... it has created a kind of, this isn't quite the way it should be.¹⁵⁶

This account builds on a story about how important Norwegian resources are located in the northern region (traditionally fish, but oil and gas are becoming more frequently mentioned as part of this), and states that Northern Norway has received very little in terms of national investments considering the region's contribution. There were also several references to the need for "filling the gap between North and South when it came to the building of facilities and infrastructure"¹⁵⁷. According to one actor:

There have been a lot of investments in the Eastern regions. In the Western regions too, many billions in the 1990s. Gardermoen Airport, the Gardermoen airport railway, the Lillehammer Olympics, the new Opera house, the Oslofjord-tunnel, the new National Hospital. Enormous investments. And I thought this country should invest in other areas too, not just the Central and Eastern regions, because I guess that was the pursued area during the Nineties, and the Internal Eastern regions to boost businesses there, so I think that it is absolutely reasonable to have some major efforts here. What large investments have there been here North, we have got the University and there

¹⁵⁶ Når man ser på at man har de fleste ressursene som sådan og har stått for store andeler av BNP som sådan i Nord Norge og har fått veldig lite igjen for det ifht at det har både på, av folk i alle aldre og alle yrkesgrupper, så er det skapt en sånn at dette er ikke helt sånn som det bør være.

¹⁵⁷ å fylle det, den kløfta mellom nord og sør når det gjaldt anleggsutbygging og infrastruktur

*was an outcry when the Polar Environment Institute came here. (...) I think it is right for us to receive some things in Northern Norway too.*¹⁵⁸

Note that in this account, state investments in Tromsø such as the University and the Polar Environment Institute are referred to as investments in the Northern region. The tendency to consider Northern Norway as synonymous with Tromsø can be seen in many of the accounts about regional development.

The opposite story to that of Northern Norway as a resource-rich region and net contributor to the national economy is that of Northern Norway as poor and heavily subsidized. According to one of the proponents, the Olympic project aimed exactly at changing this story:

*The birth of the project, I mean before the Olympic idea had even been mentioned or launched, was all the classical conditions with centre and periphery, where Northern Norway and Tromsø are the periphery and have through generations had a reputation for being a kind of dysfunctional region in need of help, always in need of help, almost a kind of development aid to Finnmark, black oceans, depopulation, and when the idea was sown and got a lot of sympathy to begin with, that was exactly because of, I almost would use the word geopolitical context, where the capital, the centre said, finally something came from there that might have a value, which isn't just a subsidy, which is self-propelling and means that we might not have to subsidize them in the future if we support an Olympics to Tromsø now.*¹⁵⁹

In this latter account, the story about Northern Norway as subsidized is used as an argument in support of the Olympic project in two different ways. On the one hand, the project was supposed to reduce or remove the need for subsidies because it would create such a strong growth-impulse, which would then be self-reinforcing. On the other, the actor used the story about Tromsø and Northern Norway as having a bad reputation as an argument in itself,

¹⁵⁸ Ja, kanskje grunnen, du kan, si, det er investert veldig mye i Østlandsområdet. Vestlandet også, masse milliarder på nittitallet. Gardermoen, Gardermobanen, OL, operaen, Oslofjordforbindelsen, Rikshospitalet: Enormt store investeringer. Og jeg synes dette landet skal også satse på andre områder, ikke bare sentrale østlandsområdet, for det var vel det som var satsingsområdet på nittitallet, indre østlandsområdet for å få opp næringslivet der, så jeg synes det er helt rimelig at vi skal ha noen større satsinger her. Hvilke større satsinger har det vært her nord, vi har universitetet, et ramaskrik da polarinstituttet kom hit. (...) Jeg synes det er riktig at vi skal få noen ting til Nord Norge også.

¹⁵⁹ Hele fødselen til prosjektet, altså før OL-ideen ble i det hele tatt nevnt eller lansert, så er det jo alle de klassiske forholdene med sentrum-periferi, der sånn Nord Norge og Tromsø er periferien og har i gjennom mange generasjoner hatt et slags sånt rykte på seg for å være en litt sånn skakkjørt landsdel som trenger hjelp, trenger hjelp hele veien, nesten en sånn u-hjelp til Finnmark, svart hav, fraflytting, og når da ideen ble sådd og fikk veldig stor sympati til å begynne med, så var det nettopp i en sånn, jeg holdt på å si geopolitisk kontekst, der hovedstaden, sentrum sa, endelig kom det noe derfra som kanskje har en verdi, og som ikke bare er en subsidie, som har en egen drakraft som gjør at kanskje vi kan slippe å subsidiere dem i fremtida ved at vi nå støtter et OL til Tromsø.

because the Olympic hosting was expected to change this and show the Southerners that Tromsø and Northern Norway could pull off such a huge project.

The Olympic opponents tended to describe the regional rhetoric and purported regional impact of the Olympic project as a challenge. One of the municipal councillors who was against the Olympic bid, explained that there had been some disagreements about the bid within his political party. I asked him what the arguments for the Olympics had been.

It was about the how if we had gotten the Olympic hosting we would have had such insanely large allocations for communication and infrastructure and roads, that we just couldn't say no to that, we couldn't say not to getting all these roads and all that infrastructure, that's the argumentation that was used. But of course I think that we should be able to get roads in Northern Norway without the Olympics. But anyway, that was the arguments that were used.¹⁶⁰

In this account the possibility of infrastructural developments in Northern Norway was accepted as a reasonable argument, although the interviewee said that he thought these kinds of developments should not be made dependent on an Olympic hosting. According to two of the members of No to the Olympics, the first name of the network, Yes to the Coast, No to the Olympics, was chosen as a response to the regional challenge. One member said that they had used the name as a “demonstration of the fact that we were loyal Northlanders even if we were against the Olympics”¹⁶¹. This statement shows some of the discursive strength of the regional story and the problem that the opposition was faced with in rejecting a project that was framed within this story. The other member explained the choice of the network's name thus:

It was the Nordlys editor who launched this thing about a blue Nokia, the coast as a blue Nokia fairytale. So in the 2014 concept there was more of a coastal rhetoric from the proponents, while in 2018 there was more about the districts and employment and yes, centralization of course, but they wrapped it up in more of a general development of Northern Norway, right, the North Calotte and all that, because of what had happened in the meantime. So I thought it was important that the first touch of the motto was a yes. And we wanted to say that of course we support the coast, it's why we live here, the coast is our basis of existence. It's our route of transportation, it is our source of food, it is the population along the coast and so on. The Sami culture, sorry the Kven culture,

¹⁶⁰ Det går jo på at, det går jo på at hvis vi hadde fått OL så ville vi ha fått sånne sinnssyke bevilgninger til samferdsel og infrastruktur og vei at vi ikke kan si nei til det, vi kan ikke si nei til å få alle disse veiene og den infrastrukturen, det er jo de argumentene de har brukt. Men jeg mener jo det at vi må kunne få veier i Nord Norge uten OL. Men det er i allefall de argumentene som har vært brukt.

¹⁶¹ Det var ei sånn markering av at vi var gode nordlendinger selv om vi var mot OL.

our whole history is the coast. So yes to the coast, no to the Olympics, right, that was the story behind it, we wanted to make a motto which was very clearly defined, which signalled that our value base was to defend something good against something that will be worse, thus yes to the coast and no to the Olympics. And then there was Olympics 2018. No thanks. And we called it an unsustainable project. (...) Because the 2018-bid was a lot worse than the 2014-bid in creating centralization and in a way more ruthless. And since the coastal rhetoric at that time was more or less out of the bidding foundations, so to speak, it was Tromsø, compact, short distances, lots of, eh, screw the districts, there will be nothing built elsewhere. We said this was unsustainable.
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In this account about the changing rhetoric around the Olympic bid, there is also an indication of how the stories about the region changed from Tromsø Romsa 2014 to Tromsø Romsa 2018. While the first stories about regional development focused on coastal Norway, there was an increasing emphasis on other aspects of the North. In the above quote the interviewee used the term North Calotte, which is an old name for the Northern region stretching from Northern Norway, Northern Sweden, Northern Finland and the Kola Peninsula. In the interviews there were many actors who referred to the so-called High North-strategy of the Government and argued that the Olympic project would be a perfect way of fulfilling the expectations of state investments in the northern counties that this strategy had created. As one actor explained the reason why he had supported the bid:

*This could be the project that provided the High North initiative with content. And I thought it could be a grand historical project that would be a vehicle and a catalyst of other things.*¹⁶³

In Norwegian the High North is referred to as Nordområdene. “The High North” is the translation that the Norwegian Government has chosen to use for this term. Another possible

¹⁶² Og det var vel [Nordlys-redaktøren] som lanserte dette blå Nokia med kysten som et blått Nokia-eventyr. Så i 2014-konseptet lå det mye mer kyst-retorikk fra tilhengerne, mens i 2018 lå det mer distrikt og arbeidsplasser og ja ja sentralisering selvfølgelig, men det de pakket det inn i var mer sånn almenutvikling av Nord Norge ikke sant, Nordkalott og bla bla, for da hadde det jo skjedd en del ting i mellomtiden. Så jeg mente at det var viktig at det første anslaget i mottoet var et ja. Og at vi ville si at selvfølgelig er vi for kysten, det er derfor vi bor her, det er jo kysten som er livsgrunnlaget vårt. Det er transportveien, det er matfatet, det er befolkningen, bosettingen langs kysten og så videre. Den samiske kulturen, unnskyld den kvenske kulturen, hele historia vår er kysten. Så ja til kysten, nei til OL, ikke sant, det var historien bak det, det var et ønske om å lage et motto som var veldig klart definert, som signaliserte at vårt verdigrunnlag var at vi vil forsvare noe som er verre, noe som er bra mot noe som blir verre, altså ja til kysten og nei til OL. Og så ble da OL 2018? Neitakk. Og da formulerte vi et prosjekt uten bærekraft. (...)Og 2018-søknaden var jo mye rære enn 2014-søknaden i sin sentralisering og sin på en måte hensynsløshet. Og da var den kystretorikken mye mer ute av søknadsgrunnlaget kan du si, det var Tromsø, kompakt, korte avstander, masse eh... drit i distriktene, det blir ikke bygget noe andre steder. Dette er ikke bærekraftig sa vi.

¹⁶³ dette kunne være det prosjektet som fylte nordområdesatsinga med innhold og det var, at det kunne være et stort historisk prosjekt som kunne, på linje med, at det kunne være en motor og en katalysator for andre ting.

translation is “the Northern areas”, which has somewhat different connotations. The next quote is a good example of how the story about the “High North” policy has been used by actors in connection to the Olympic debate and in other public discourses. Note that the actor does not use the term Northern Norway to denote the region, but talks about the “Northern areas” or the High North.

Obviously it was a huge regional development idea. Even if we formally and realistically need to think about an Olympic hosting in a country as a national project, the large effect, the spill-overs of this event would be in the North, and as such have more of a regional consequence than anything else. And it was of course more of an international than a national project, the Olympics are by definition an international project, but also the fact that the world was to discover the Northern areas, as a kind of political, it wasn't that the world was to discover Norway but the world was to discover the High North in a way. To see the resource base, the geostrategic importance, the foreign policy implications but not least the fantastic nature, make it available so that one would increase the travel industry and tourism, just the fact that there is a civilization here, that one actually lives a normal life up here, to know that and to believe it. That in itself was a very important effect of this, which had a regional consequence, more than a national one.¹⁶⁴

Several commentators have noted the change in terminology from Northern Norway to High North and discussed what this change may entail (Angell, Eikeland and Selle 2010), and this account gives some hints towards this. There is no mention of fisheries or population distribution, farming or industrialisation. These are themes that have had a prominent place in previous established stories and academic approaches to Northern Norway (Brox 1966, Brox 1982, Drivenes et al 1998, Gerrard 1999) and also in political debates, for example the debate preceding the 1994 referendum about whether Norway should join the European Union. Instead the actor talks about “the resource base, the geostrategic importance, the foreign policy implications “, themes that point towards the newly opened oil and gas fields in the Barents Sea, the relationship to Russia and possibly the cooperation over Svalbard and the Arctic sea routes. The stress is not on national policy but on opening the eyes of rest of the

¹⁶⁴ Det er klart at det var en enorm regional utviklingsidé. Selv om vi formelt og reelt må tenke på et OL i et land som et nasjonalt prosjekt så ville de store effektene av, ringvirkningene av den hendelsen ville jo bli i nord og sånn sett få en regional konsekvens mer enn noe annet. Og det var jo mer et internasjonalt enn et nasjonalt prosjekt, det er jo per definisjon et internasjonalt prosjekt, et OL, men også det at verden skulle oppdage Nordområdene, som en slags politisk, ikke si verden skulle oppdage Norge men verden skulle oppdage Nordområdene på en måte. For å se ressursbasen, geostrategiske betydning, utenrikspolitiske problemstilling men ikke minst den fantastiske naturen, gjøre den tilgjengelig slik at man fikk økt reiselivet og turismen, bare det at det er sivilisasjon her, at man faktisk lever et normalt liv her oppe som både vet det og som tror det. Det i seg selv ble en sånn veldig viktig effekt av dette som hadde et regionalt nedslagsfelt. Mer enn nasjonalt.

world to the potential of the High North. The only reference to possible developments on land is connected to “the fantastic nature” and the possibilities that showcasing this nature would open for the tourist industry. At the same time the interviewee states that it is important to let the world know that “there is a civilization here”.

What does “regional development” refer to? What kind of process was the Olympic project expected to contribute to? Narratives about regional development often combined different stories both about the region and about development. As an example consider the next narrative which combines the High North story with a more traditional story about Northern Norwegian regional development. The actor had mentioned regional development, and I asked if this had been her main argument for the bid:

Yes, I think perhaps it was. The fact that one would think some very big thoughts, and had a long term and really hairy vision up here, within the High North political framework, building out this part of the country, making this part of the country grow, business and industries development, infrastructure, a boost, cultural identity and making Northern Norway more available, making it... modernizing Northern Norway, professionalising Northern Norway, be visible in the country, be visible in the world.¹⁶⁵

While this narrative, like the former, mentions the importance of being visible to the outside world, it also talks about the importance of thinking big thoughts and having long term visions “up here”. The story that is drawn upon in this narrative is of a Northern Norway where people had not dared to attempt big projects, and the Olympic bid as having changed this. As one interviewee put it:

I have always felt that this region has lacked, perhaps not so much Tromsø, but I think a great part of the region has lacked a kind of regional pride, it has been kind of cap in hand.¹⁶⁶

The image of the region as having stood with its cap in hand, being humble and unwilling to make demands seem to draw on a metaphorical story about Northern Norway as the nation’s smallholder. It’s interesting to note that the interviewee exempted Tromsø from this metaphor, thus setting up a distinction between the town and the rest of the region. Another

¹⁶⁵ Ja, jeg tror kanskje det. Det at man tenkte noen veldig store tanker og hadde en langsiktig og skikkelig hårete visjon her oppe, innenfor rammen av et nordområdepolitisk rammeverk, det å bygge ut denne delen av landet, det å få denne delen av landet til å gro, på næringsutvikling, infrastruktur, boost, kulturidentitet og gjøre Nord-Norge mer tilgjengelig, gjøre det... modernisere Nord-Norge, profesjonalisere Nord-Norge, synes i landet, synes i verden.

¹⁶⁶ jeg synes jo alltid denne landsdelen har manglet litt denne måten å være, kanskje ikke så mye i Tromsø men jeg synes mye av landsdelen har manglet litt sånn å være stolt av landsdelen på, det har vært litt sånn lua i handa

actor used the term “we” to describe the changes that she claimed had occurred in the entire region:

I think that we have developed an appetite for thinking big and ambitiously, I think that we have developed an appetite for a big project and a long term project in order to achieve, reach another stadium of development, to develop this region both in economic and social terms.¹⁶⁷

In the latter quote the capacity for regional development is described as having to do with visions and self-esteem. The need for developing this self-esteem was also used as an argument for backing the bid by one actor explaining how her initial scepticism had been turned into support.

It was because Læg Reid [Tor Læg Reid, the first director of Tromsø Romsa 2014] is a very talented visionary, and I saw that he had seen some qualities in this town and this region which we actually haven't been very good at noticing ourselves. And I also saw that an Olympic hosting would help change the image of Northern Norway. Not only in our own minds, but also in the South actually. And I thought that, to me that was the most important reason for supporting the Olympic project.¹⁶⁸

This story about the Olympic bid as a much needed and positive boost to the Northern Norwegian spirit of entrepreneurialism and opportunity seeking was also drawn upon by many of the supporters when asked if they could see any positive outcomes of the now closed Olympic process.

I thought about it today, what a fantastic boost it gave when the Northlanders understood that here is a common vision for us to gather around. And I do say Northlanders, because there are very many people in the North who have supported this idea. It also creates a kind of optimism for the future. (...) What it means in terms of whether people have moved back here or made some investments that they otherwise wouldn't is difficult to say. But on my own account I know that it has contributed to me thinking that whatever I will do in the future I will always be working for Tromsø and Northern Norway, to make it better to live here. Because living here is so good but it is going to be even better. (...) And I think that one needs something, some people or visions or boosts, to make us lift our heads a little and focus our vision in the same direction and think yes, this is a good place to be, and we are going to stand

¹⁶⁷ jeg tror at vi har fått smaken på å tenke stort og ambisiøst, tror at vi har fått smaken på å se at vi trenger et stort prosjekt og et langsiktig prosjekt for å få opp, komme på et annet stadium i utvikling, det å utvikle denne regionen økonomisk, samfunnsmessig.

¹⁶⁸ Men det var fordi at jeg så faktisk, han Læg Reid er veldig dyktig tror jeg med å være visjonær, og jeg så at han så noen kvaliteter i denne byen og denne landsdelen som faktisk vi ikke har vært flink nok til å se selv. Og så så jeg også at et OL ville kunne bidra til å snu bildet av Nord-Norge. Både i vårt eget hode, men også der sør. Faktisk. Og det syntes jeg, det var for meg den viktigste grunnen til å være for OL

*shoulder by shoulder and build the region together. We're never going to give up!*¹⁶⁹

This account draws on a story about the region as having common interests and a shared fate, and the moral seems to be that people need to share the same visions and stand shoulder by shoulder “in a coherent and relatively stable ‘growth coalition’” (Swyngedouw 2000: 551) in order for the region to grow and prosper. Tromsø and Northern Norway are positioned together as basically the same thing, and therefore “very many people in the north” supported the Olympic idea. While this actor claimed that a sense of common interest was created by the Olympic process, another argued that the lack of a united front from Northern Norway had contributed to the failure the project.

*And then there wasn't enough joint pressure from the region, we were too hesitant.*¹⁷⁰

The same actor stressed that the positive effects of an Olympic project would benefit the entire region and said that any doubts that she herself had harboured about the Olympic bid was connected to possible detrimental effects for Tromsø but that she had been willing to accept these because the effects for the region would make up for these.

In the accounts of many of the Olympic opponents, the common interest between Tromsø and the rest of the region was questioned. In relation to the public debate about Southern prejudices for example, there were several actors who noted that the tendency of the centre to want all kinds of investments and arrangements for themselves was something that could be found not only in Oslo but also in Tromsø. As one member of No to the Olympics put it:

I do think that we have been focusing a lot on the Southerners, having a North-South debate and all that, but Tromsø has actually developed into a lot of the same as Oslo. We are acting like if something is to happen in Northern Norway, and for example Harstad and Narvik and Alta wants to do it, I think that Tromsø does just the same as Oslo used to do before, we say “no, we can't place this in Harstad because they don't have the competence, we can't place it

¹⁶⁹ jeg tenkte på det i dag, for et fantastisk løft det ga da nordlendingene skjønnte at her har vi en felles visjon som vi kan samles om. Og nå sier jeg nordlendinger, det er veldig mange nordpå som har vært for denne ideen. Det også skaper en sånn fremtidsoptimisme. (...) Hva det betyr i forhold til om folk har flyttet tilbake hit eller gjort noen investeringer som de ellers ikke ville eller, det er vanskelig å si. Men jeg vet i alle fall for mitt vedkommende at det har bidratt til at jeg tenker at uansett hva jeg gjør i fremtida så skal jeg alltid jobbe for Tromsø og Nord Norge, at det skal bli bedre å leve her. Fordi det er så bra å leve her men det skal bli enda bedre. (...) Og jeg tror at man trenger noe, noen folk eller visjoner eller løft, som kan få oss til å løfte hodet littegranne og ha blikket i samme retninga og tenke yes, det er her et bra sted å være, og her skal vi stå skulder ved skulder og skal bygge landsdelen i lag. Vi skal aldri gi oss!

¹⁷⁰ Og så var det litt for lite samlet trykk fra landsdelen, vi var for nølende

*in Narvik because this is not something they know anything about, we are the only ones who know how to do this". This was the way Oslo used to act in relation to Northern Norway before, that we can't have a university in Tromsø because we haven't got anyone to teach there, we can't have the Polar Environmental Centre in Tromsø because we haven't got people there, that was how Oslo used to behave, and this is how I think that Tromsø is now acting a lot of the time. I would like to think Northern Norway more as a whole and not just think about Tromsø, I think we have a tendency towards getting bloody selfish and wanting everything to be centred here. We're really not being solidaric towards other Northern Norwegian towns at all.*¹⁷¹

The actor continued by saying that although he did want Tromsø to grow and do well, the town was also dependent on the regions around it, and that too fast a growth in Tromsø would only lead to what he called a Klondike-effect with increasing prices and a shortage of houses for young people who were going to get established for the first time.

*So that's why I believe in a stable development and growth, that one should get new tasks, one may very well move things out of Oslo and into the districts, but we have to be willing also to have things moved from Tromsø to Skjervøy or Harstad, we shouldn't sit here and suck and suck everything towards us and give nothing back.*¹⁷²

One of the municipal councillors who opposed the Olympic bid explained that if he had been asked by a journalist on the street what he thought about hosting the Olympics in Tromsø, his first impulse would probably have been that it was a great idea. But "as a politician you have to think a little more long-term."¹⁷³ He said that he was very surprised that the municipalities around Tromsø, and members of his own political party in these municipalities, had supported the bid, because these municipalities would not have any spill-over effects of an Olympic hosting in Tromsø. He explained this by arguing that that with only 13 Northern Norwegian representatives in the Parliament, if this investment had gone through the Southern

¹⁷¹ Og så synes jeg, at vi fokuserer veldig på søringene, at søringene, nord-sør-debatt og sånt, og så synes jeg jo at Tromsø også har utviklet seg å bli veldig mye sånn som Oslo er, at vi er sånn at hvis noe skal skje i Nord Norge og for eksempel Harstad og Narvik og Alta melder seg på, så synes jeg jo at Tromsø oppfører seg sånn som Oslo gjorde før, for vi sier at nei vi kan ikke legge det til Harstad for de har ikke kompetanse, vi kan ikke legge det til Narvik for dette kan ikke de, det er bare vi som kan dette her, det var jo sånn Oslo oppførte seg overfor Nord Norge før, at vi kan ikke ha universitet til Tromsø for vi har ikke lærekrefter der, vi kan ikke ha Polarmiljøsentret til Tromsø for vi har ikke folk der, sånn oppførte Oslo seg før, sånn synes jeg at Tromsø oppfører seg nå mot veldig mye, jeg har lyst til å, jeg liker jo å tenke Nord Norge litt mer helhetlig og at det ikke bare skal være Tromsø, jeg synes vi har en tendens til å bli jævlige egoistiske selv også og alt skal sentreres hit, så lite solidariske mot andre nordnorske byer, det synes jeg vi er.

¹⁷² Så derfor så tror jeg at ei jamn utvikling og vekst, at man får lagt nye oppgaver til her, at man flytter ting gjerne ut fra Oslo og til distriktene, men vi må også være villige til at ting kan flyttes ut fra Tromsø og til Skjervøy eller til Harstad og sånt, så ikke vi skal sitte her og suge og suge og ingenting gi fra oss.

¹⁷³ ... som politiker må man tenke litt lenger.

representatives would take a very long time to allocate any major investments in the North again. He also claimed that an Olympic hosting would lead to a negative brain drain in the surrounding municipalities.

My assessment was that for Northern Norway the surrounding municipalities would actually face recession and decline. Because all the competent people who are sitting around in the municipalities, to the extent that there are any competent professionals out there, but anyway those people that they've got who could be attractive for Tromsø would have been drawn to Tromsø, so that the municipalities would face a reduction in their competence. Which is why I couldn't understand the other municipalities. And in addition there is the case that if a lot of money was invested in Tromsø's infrastructure there would be considerably less left to invest in the other municipalities' infrastructure in the years to come, so I really couldn't understand their position.¹⁷⁴

The view that the Tromsø Olympics would not have any spill-over effects on the rest of the region was put forward by many of the opponents, and it was also frequently mentioned in the public debate. Many of the proponents commented on this claim and protested against it. As one of the employees in Tromsø Romsa 2018 put it:

When people say this isn't a Northern Norwegian project, I must say that before I started working in the project I saw it as something Northern Norwegian, and I still do, really, I don't think that the spill-over effects of the project, had it been realized, would have stopped at the municipal border. There's something about if this British actor who came and made a Northern Lights program for here, if that could lead to 1 million, no 10 million kroner worth a week of tickets for the Coastal Steamer, how much wouldn't a project like this lead to? And I don't think that [the tourists] would only go to Tromsø; I think they might very well decide to go to Hammerfest too. So that was actually my motivation, or my thought about spill-overs.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Men for Nord-Norge sin del så så jeg det jo faktisk sånn at for de omliggende kommunene de ville jo faktisk få en regresjon og en tilbakegang. For det er klart at alle de flinke folkene som sitter rundt i kommunene, i den grad der er flinke fagfolk ute, men i alle fall de folkene de har ute som kunne være attraktive for Tromsø, de ville ha blitt trukket inn til Tromsø, slik at kompetansemessig så ville du ha fått en reduksjon av kompetansen ute i kommunene. Og det var en av grunnene til at jeg ikke skjønte de andre kommunene da. I tillegg så er det jo dette med at det ville ha blitt brukt betydelige midler i Tromsø på infrastrukturen i Tromsø, slik at det ville bli betydelig mindre i årene fremover til å bruke i de andre kommunene i Nord Norge på infrastruktur, så derfor skjønte jeg ikke deres holdninger til det.

¹⁷⁵ Når folk sier at dette her er ikke noe nordnorsk så før jeg begynte i prosjektet så jeg det som noe nordnorsk og det gjør jeg enda, altså det, jeg tror ikke det er sånn at prosjektet sine ringvirkninger hvis det ble realisert hadde stoppet ved Tromsøgrensa. Det er noe sånt at hvis denne britiske skuespilleren som var og laget et sånt nordlysprogram her, hvis det kunne føre til 1 million, nei til 10 millioner i uka på solgte hurtigrutebilleter, i verdi, hvor mye kunne ikke et sånt prosjekt gjøre? Og da tror jeg ikke at de bare skal innom Tromsø, jeg tror godt de kan finne på å gå av i Hammerfest også. Så det var egentlig sånn motivasjons, eller sånn den ringvirkningstanken.

Another employee explained that although they had initially wanted to arrange an all-regional Olympics with ice hockey in Finnmark and biathlon in Nordland that would have been a huge handicap in terms of actually winning the bid. The compact games were thought of as the most attractive solution for the IOC, and as this actor argued, even the outskirts of Tromsø municipality wouldn't get any sites or facilities. This however did not mean that there would be no spill-over effects according to this interviewee. He argued that the main purpose of the Olympics was to put Northern Norway on the map.

And if an Olympic hosting could contribute to more people discovering Northern Norway it wouldn't really matter where the Olympics was.¹⁷⁶

The actor talked about the Olympics as a project to create regional pride and identity, and as a project to promote Northern Norway as a tourist destination, and argued that both these aspects were equally important for the entire region. His final argument was that to improve sports facilities in Tromsø would in fact benefit young athletes from the rest of the region because they could then move to Tromsø rather than to Southern Norway:

And then there is a third dimension, which is that today all the young talented winter athletes from Northern Norway have to move south. Of course everybody can't stay in the small villages, but wouldn't it be better to have a place in Northern Norway, a proper place for professional sports, than for everybody to have to go South?¹⁷⁷

This then was a story about regional centralisation as preferable to centralisation in the South.

According to one of the municipal councillors, who could perhaps be described as a sceptical proponent, a greater emphasis on the regional perspective was one of the things that had been gained from the Olympic process:

I think that one thing which will continue to have an impact on Tromsø for a long time was that we thought that this couldn't be just about Tromsø, Tromsø can't think only Tromsø and the Tromsø island and the area around it, we have to think all of Northern Norway. And this awareness that Tromsø can't develop on its own, all of Northern Norway has to develop if people shall live here in the future. It has done something to us, we have got a much closer cooperation with Bodø, well, with the other towns as well, but especially with Bodø, so that cooperation which has been growing between the towns of Northern Norway is

¹⁷⁶ Og hvis et OL i Tromsø kunne bidra til at flere oppdaget Nord Norge så spiller det egentlig ingen rolle hvor OL arrangeres

¹⁷⁷ Så har du den tredje dimensjonen, og det er at i dag må all nordnorsk ungdom som er flink med vinteridrett dra sørover. Ja det, alle kan selvfølgelig ikke bli på småplasser, men er det ikke bedre at vi har et sted i Nord Norge, et ordentlig sted hvor man kan drive med toppidrett, enn at absolutt alle må dra sørover.

*something which I think will be very useful in the future development of the entire region. Because it is a little simplistic to believe that Tromsø can survive if the rest of Northern Norway dies, that's just not possible.*¹⁷⁸

The actor concluded that this conscientisation had been one of the most positive outcomes of the entire Olympic process. Another Olympic proponent shared this view of the process as having raised Tromsø politicians' regional awareness and solidarity. He referred to how Tromsø previously had competed against Harstad when a new Police Academy was to be located in the region, whereas the Tromsø Mayor now was very concerned with supporting Bodø's attempt of becoming one of several Norwegian bidders for the European Football Championships.

One interviewee suggested that Tromsø 2018 had somehow manipulated the neighbouring communities into supporting the bid:

*I'm a little surprised that they have gotten so much support from the rest of Northern Norway. And I feel that it has been a little trickery involved, they have sort of taken each municipality at the time. This is perhaps what they have been working most on, and they have been good at getting people and municipalities to join them... I feel it hasn't been fair play, really... They have created very much a glossy picture of what will happen to the region...*¹⁷⁹

But how much support did actually Tromsø receive from the rest of Northern Norway?

According to one of the Tromsø Romsa 2018 employees there really had not been a lot of political backing in the end.

We had strong support among people in the region. But within the political Northern Norway the support was quite mixed. To begin with everyone were in favour. But when it started to get closer to a reality there were many politicians, especially in Nordland, who thought, "Wow, are we really going to let Tromsø have all this?" So that on the outside they supported it, but

¹⁷⁸ Også tror jeg og at det som har vært, som kommer til å prege Tromsø i lang tid fremover, så tenkte vi også at det kan ikke bare være Tromsø, Tromsø kan ikke bare tenke Tromsø og Tromsøya og området rundt, vi må tenke hele Nord-Norge. Og den bevisstgjøringa på at Tromsø kan ikke utvikle seg alene, hele Nord Norge må utvikles hvis det skal bo folk her i fremtida. Det har gjort noe med oss, vi har fått et mye tettere samarbeid med Bodø, ja de andre byene da, men først og fremst med Bodø så det har vært viktig, det samarbeidet som har vært utviklet da mellom bykommunene i Nord Norge tror jeg kan være veldig nyttig for den videre utviklinga i hele landsdelen. For det er litt for enkelt å tro at Tromsø kan overleve hvis resten av Nord Norge dør altså, det er ikke mulig.

¹⁷⁹ Det er jeg litt overrasket over at de har fått så mye støtte i fra resten av Nord Norge. Det føler jeg også er litt sann lureri at de har, har liksom tatt for seg hver enkelt kommune, det er kanskje det de har jobbet mest med i forhold til, og der har de vært, for a si gode ifht å få folk med seg da, kommuner med seg og... Jeg føler ikke det har vært sånn helt redelig det spillet de... De har dannet veldig sånn glansbilde av hva som vil skje med regionen...

internally, and towards the national authorities, we didn't really have anyone pulling any weight for us. We were actually quite alone.

One of the participants from the public meeting, who had supported the bid, argued that Tromsø tended to “fall between two chairs”¹⁸⁰. He said that Tromsø being a large town in Northern Norway wasn't really considered a partner by the surrounding areas, who saw “Tromsø as sort of the ghost of centralisation”¹⁸¹, but in the national context Tromsø was still considered little more than a fishing village. He concluded that the way the project had ended might also have damaged Tromsø's reputation.

There were some aspects about the way things were handled, comments that were made, letters to the newspaper editors, the media storm... The way things were done, there were parts of this process which didn't really speak in our favour, and which I think to a certain extent damaged Tromsø's reputation. I think Tromsø has a good reputation as a nice and friendly place with nice and friendly people, but for a few weeks there we were neither nice nor friendly and things got very polarized, so it was... I'm not sure this issue has strengthened Tromsø's hand very much. We didn't get any other projects to compensate for the [scrapping of the bid] and Tromsø is in no way in a stronger position, perhaps not a weaker one either, but...¹⁸²

Through the discussion in this section I have shown that the region works as a versatile and contested concept, and that stories about the region were used in many different ways to argue both for and against the Olympics. The region was described both as a unit with common interests, and as an entity whose interests differed from those of Tromsø. Stories about the region drew both on a “smallholder-metaphor” of Northern Norway as a region in need of political and economic support from the central government, and on a “possibilities-metaphor” in which the resources and attractiveness of the region was emphasised. The shift in emphasis from Northern Norway to the High North can perhaps be seen as an extension of the latter. The most striking thing in the regional stories discussed here is perhaps the way regional interests and regional development were referred to as inherently good, to the extent

¹⁸⁰ falle mellom to stoler

¹⁸¹ Tromsø som sånn sentraliseringsspøkelse

¹⁸² Ja, det var en del måter ting ble håndtert på, kommentarer som falt, innlegg i avisene, mediekjør, måten en del ting, en del av denne prosessen ble gjort på som absolutt ikke talte til vår, til Tromsøs fordel, og som jeg tror til en viss del også var skadelig for Tromsøs omdømme. Jeg tror Tromsø i utgangspunktet har et godt omdømme som en trivelig og grei plass med trivelige og greie folk, men i noen uker der var vi verken trivelig eller grei og det ble veldig polarisert, så det var... Så er det ikke sikkert at den saken der har styrket Tromsøs hånd noe særlig. Det kom jo ingen prosjekter som skulle kompensere for dette her og Tromsø står ikke noe sterkere på noen måte, står kanskje ikke noe svakere heller men...

that supporting the region was described as more or less a moral imperative against which neither Olympic proponents nor opponents would argue. As I will show in the next section, stories about the region and regional interests were also used in negotiating the meaning of environmental stories.

6.4 Green stories: Global warming versus regional development

By green stories I mean stories that in some way or another drew on ideas about protecting or conserving nature or the environment. In the public debate, both the proponents and the opponents had used arguments about environmental concerns to support their views. One of the questions I raised in the interviews was therefore how the interviewee regarded the environmental aspects of the proposed hosting. In this section I will discuss different stories about the environment and how these were used in actors' accounts about the Olympic debate. The politics associated with these stories varied from politics of (dis)connectivity to politics of propinquity, as did the sense of local responsibility, interests and agency in relation to environmental issues. As I will show, stories about regional development were often used together with stories about the environment, both to reinforce an argument for environmental innovation and to negotiate between environmental concerns and other interests.

The most common response to my question about the environment was to discuss the increase in air traffic to and from Tromsø during the two weeks of the actual Olympic Games, and the increased CO₂-emissions that would follow from that. In the words of one actor who was sceptical towards the bid:

[There would be] a lot of departures to Tromsø, as opposed to having it some place where you wouldn't have to fly so many people in, I mean that would lead to huge CO₂-emissions and things like that.¹⁸³

Another interviewee had not made up her mind firmly about the proposal, but was clear that the hosting would be problematic in terms of the environment. She argued:

Okay, we may talk about environmental protection in relation to the Olympics, but we can't realize those things by transporting a lot of people to Tromsø by airplanes.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ masse flyavganger til Tromsø i stedet for å ha det på en plass der man ikke behøvde å fly så mye folk inn, altså at det ville føre til store CO₂-utslipp og forskjellige sårne ting

In both the accounts quoted above, environmental issues were linked to air travel and CO₂-emissions. This link did not need to be explained, as the interviewees were drawing on an established story about the environment as endangered by CO₂-emissions creating global warming. For the last decade, and especially since the publication in 2007 of the 4th UN assessment report on climate change, global warming has arguably been the most prominent public story about the environment. I found that in my interviews, this was the story which most of the actors would refer to when asked about the environmental aspects of the bid. The established understanding of increased air travel causing increases in CO₂-emissions was acknowledged as an environmental issue by many of the supporters too. They however did not accept this as a reason from abstaining from the bid. As one proponent put it:

In environmental terms arranging an Olympics isn't a very good thing at all, and especially not in a small place because of the increased demands for travelling by the audiences. (...) [But] the Olympic concept and all Olympic projects whether here or there do involve a lot of travelling and rich people being transported around half the earth in order to participate or to be part of the support-teams or audiences.¹⁸⁵

In this account, the detrimental effects of CO₂ are taken for granted, but it does not automatically follow that emissions can be stopped or that people in Tromsø should take any special responsibility for this.

In many of the accounts drawing on the global warming story, the environment seems to be understood as something that is far away, both in terms of time and space. The possible effects of climate change on everyday life in Tromsø was generally not referred to by either the opponents who listed this as an argument to scrap the bid, nor by the proponents who wanted to carry on with the Olympic project despite the ensuing emissions. The stories seemed to confirm Giddens' paradox in that "the dangers posed by global warming aren't tangible, immediate or visible in the course of day-to-day life" (Giddens 2009: 2). Also, as the next quote from a Tromsø 2018 employee shows, emissions were seen as a global problem, which could neither be solved nor made much worse by what happened in Tromsø.

¹⁸⁴ ja vel vi kan snakke om et miljøvern med OL men vi klarer ikke å oppfylle de tingene der med å transportere masse folk til Tromsø med fly

¹⁸⁵ miljømessig så er ikke det å arrangere OL på mange måter en god sak i det hele tatt, og spesielt ikke på en liten plass som kanskje krever enda mer reising av publikum. (...) [Men] det er klart at OL som idé og hele OL-prosjektene enten det er her eller der er jo masse reising og rike mennesker som skal flyttes rundt halve jorda for å enten delta eller være støtteapparat eller tilskuere.

*I could understand the environmental aspects of the debate, but I never understood quite what to agree with that was wrong about [the Olympic project]. For example people would talk about air traffic. Yes, the air traffic during the Olympics would be the same as approximately 2 days traffic at Schiphol in Amsterdam or Heathrow in London, approximately the same emissions, but what is the problem then, is it that the planes are here or that the global emissions continue, because they will no matter what, we can't stop the Olympics even though we don't do it here.*¹⁸⁶

Since climate change is portrayed as a global rather than a local problem in these narratives, it seems that avoiding increased CO₂-emissions from Tromsø-bound air travel is a question of taking moral responsibility for “doing the right thing”. This responsibility may be understood as a politics of place beyond place (Massey 2004), but the connections (if any) between Tromsø and “the global” are not articulated. This lack of connection seems to make it easy for the Olympic proponents to reject the oppositions criticism of increased CO₂-emissions from the hosting by claiming that “if we don't do it, others will.” Many proponents argued that increased air travel was an issue with regards to any Olympic Games, not just in Tromsø, and that opposition against Tromsø's hosting based on this argument could therefore only make sense in conjunction with opposition against all similar events everywhere, as shown in this quote from a Tromsø 2018 employee:

*Of course there is no doubt that the Olympics in themselves are not very environmental friendly. You have to build some things, more infrastructure, and you have to fly people from all around the world to one particular place. So that with regards to the environment it might perhaps be better not to have this kind of events. [One should] stop arranging both the football World Championship, European Championships, skiing World Championships and so on, all the big events that require people to travel and that infrastructure is built. That is of course a reasonable stand to make, if you believe in it, it's a reasonable stand, I would assume it is difficult to defend, but it is a reasonable stand if you are against the Olympics in general and the football World Championship in general because it creates so much activity.*¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ jeg kunne forstå miljødimensjonen i den, men jeg forsto aldri helt hva man skulle være enig i der som var gærent med det. Folk snakket for eksempel om flytrafikken. Ja, flytrafikken under OL det ville være ca 2 dagers trafikk på schiphol i Amsterdam eller Heathrow i London, ca det i utslipp, men hva er problemet da, er det at flyene er her eller at de globale utslippene fortsetter, for de kommer jo uansett, vi kan ikke stoppe OL selv om vi lar være å gjøre det her.

¹⁸⁷ Så er det vel ingen tvil om at et OL i seg selv ikke er en veldig sann miljøvennlig handling. Du må jo bygge en del og mer infrastruktur og du må fly folk i fra hele jordkloden til ett sted. Så i forhold til miljøet ville kanskje det beste vært å ikke hatt sånne arrangementer. Sluttet med både Fotball-VM, EM, VM på ski osv, alle store arrangementer som krever at mennesker ferdes og at det bygges opp infrastruktur. Det er jo et redelig standpunkt, hvis du mener det, det er et redelig standpunkt, det er vanskelig å forsvare vil jeg tro, men det er et redelig standpunkt hvis du er mot OL generelt og VM i fotball generelt fordi at det skaper så mye aktivitet.

In this account, opposition against Tromsø 2018 was described as reasonable only if it was absolute and consistent in opposing all global sports events, and by inference the opponents were portrayed as unreasonable as long as they did not do this. Another proponent questioned the moral value of the opponents' arguments about CO₂-emissions on the basis of their own travel habits.

I mean, to be honest I thought it was completely ridiculous for these No to the Olympics people to be talking about the environment, when they are travelling to Spain to go jogging.¹⁸⁸

She explained that this was something she had personally witnessed, and she was indignant that the opponents argued against the increased air travel with regards to the Olympics when they themselves were not willing to give up flying to pursue their own leisure activities. Like the former interviewee, she argued that if the environmental argument was to have any meaning, it would have to refer to the Olympics as a concept, not just Tromsø's potential hosting.

What do you think it costs to send the entire West over to China? What are the environmental implications of that? I didn't hear a single word about that from No to the Olympics. The severe environmental burden was the air journey from Tromsø to Oslo. I do agree that during 14 days, and maybe a little longer, there would have been more air journeys generated, but to me the environmental argument was a hollow one, with regards to this issue. I mean, the environmental argument may be an argument against the Olympics as a concept, yes. But whether it should be located to Tromsø or to Oslo? That is in my opinion quite marginal.¹⁸⁹

By referring to the competition from 2007 between Tromsø, the capital Oslo and Trondheim to be the national bidder, the question of responsibility for CO₂-emissions is turned into a question of geography and regional inequalities. This interviewee was not alone in drawing on a regional inequality story. One proponent responded to my question about the environmental aspects of the bid by lamenting the fact that there is no railway in Northern Norway.

We don't have any alternatives to air travel. Of course you may get on a boat, but still that is more weather dependent, it is easier to get on a plane. It is more

¹⁸⁸ Altså for å være helt ærlig så synes jeg at det var helt latterlig av disse Nei til OL å kjøre på med miljø, og så reiser de ned til Spania for å jogge.

¹⁸⁹ Hva tror dere det koster å sende hele vesten over til Kina? Hvilke miljøkonsekvenser har det? Jeg hørte ikke et ord om det fra Nei til OL. Og den tunge miljøbelastninga, det var altså flyturen fra Tromsø til Oslo. Og jeg er jo enig i det at i 14 dager og kanskje litt mer enn det ville ha blitt generert litt mer flyreiser, men for meg var miljøargumentet et hult argument, i denne saken. Jeg mener at, altså ... miljøargumentet kan være et argument mot OL som konsept, ja. Men om det skal legges til Tromsø eller til Oslo? Det synes jeg er helt marginal.

harmful to fly; it would have been less harmful if we had got trains. It is the most environmental friendly any way. But... why shouldn't we be allowed to have it? Why should only Southern-Norway have all these things? Because that's what it's all about. The Oslo region and down there. They are to have the best roads, they are to have the best... accessibility to everything around them.¹⁹⁰

Another interviewee argued that Northern Norway as a region should be careful about arguing against the Olympics in Tromsø on the grounds that this would cause more air travel, lest this argument should be used against any government institution or any events being localized outside the most densely populated areas of Norway.

I did of course think that in terms of the environment arranging the Olympics is not a great thing at all [...] but at the same time [...] you could use that argument against many things, and that's something that we in Northern Norway should be careful about in my opinion. [...] You could say, should we have large government institutions here should we have events here that involve people travelling to participate. [...] Should we have big meetings for doctors [and other professions], or should these things be in Oslo because it is better in terms of the environment to have them where more people live and the total travel impact is less.¹⁹¹

What happens in the accounts quoted above is that in the context of arguing for the Olympic hosting, the story about global warming and questions of environmental justice and distribution of environmental goods and bads (Lehtinen 2003) are subsumed by a story about regional redistribution and justice. The possibility to use air transport is described a necessary right, and individuals living in Northern Norway are not only excused from taking personal action against CO₂-emissions (there are no trains), but even accused of putting regional development at risk if they argue against extensive air travel. The place politics that follows from this is one of disconnectivity from the global warming story, with no local agency required or requested.

¹⁹⁰ Vi har jo ikke noen alternativer til fly. Du kan sette deg på en båt da, men allikevel så er det væravhengig og sånne ting, det er lettere å sette seg på et fly. Det er mer skadelig å fly, det hadde vært mindre skadelig hvis vi hadde fått tog. Det er vel det som er mest miljøvennlig i alle fall. Men... hvorfor skal ikke vi få lov å få det? Hvorfor skal bare sør-Norge ha alt dette her? For det er jo det det handler om (mm). Oslogryta og nedover. De skal ha de beste veiene, de skal ha de beste...eh, tilgjengeligheten til alt rundt seg.

¹⁹¹ Det er klart at det tenkte jeg at miljømessig så er ikke det å arrangere OL på mange måter en god sak i det hele tatt [...] men samtidig så [...] da kan du bruke det argumentet på mange ting, og det skal vi i Nord Norge være forsiktig med synes jeg, altså det, du kan jo for så vidt si, skal vi ha store statlige institusjoner her, skal vi ha evenementer her som krever tilreisende, altså mange små arrangementer summerer jo fort opp til noen store. Skal vi ha kongresser for leger lagt til Tromsø [og andre yrkesgrupper] eller skal vi ha sånne ting i Oslo fordi at miljømessig sett er det bedre å ha det der flere bor og den totale reisebelastninga blir kortere.

Another story that was drawn upon by actors when discussing the environmental impacts of the bid was the vulnerable nature story which was discussed in section 6.1. Arguments about vulnerable local nature seemed to be more compelling than the ones about climate change, not only for the opponents but also for many of the proponents. The next quote is from an interviewee who had mixed feelings about the bid. She drew on both the global warming story and the vulnerable nature story in her reflection on environmental impact.

There are of course the interventions in nature. And if there are road developments and such things, and lots of traffic. But that might have positive consequences if public transport was improved. And one thinks, and some have argued too, that the communications here are by airplane which is of course emitting, there is no railway here, so there are those things, but that is in my mind on a smaller scale than the huge emissions and destructions, that's what I, I mean the local environment, destructions, that's what I'm worried about.¹⁹²

Note that the stories about vulnerable nature were generally anthropocentric rather than ecocentric (Castree 2001). The need to protect the local environment around Tromsø was premised on its value for the local population. It was the inhabitants' pleasure in the scenic beauty and recreational value of the mountains and fjords that was posited against the potential for economic development and tourism. As noted by Berge (2006) in his discussion of the proposed protection of the Geiranger-Herdal landscape area, the conflict arises because it is difficult to realize all these values at once. Even one of the most dedicated proponents of the bid said that he could sympathise with the opponents on the issue of landscape protection, although he would not let that sympathy govern his choices:

I can understand the No-side with regards to the clean, beautiful, don't destroy and all that. But damn it, if you follow that line of arguments all the way then we should do nothing here, we should keep this as a wildlife reserve.¹⁹³

According to this account, protecting vulnerable nature would in effect mean halting all developments and making Northern Norway into a wildlife reserve. This is similar to the line of arguments about air travel, that if one should abstain from arranging the Olympics in

¹⁹² Det er jo inngripen i naturen. Og så er det jo hvis det blir veiutbygging og sånt og få masse trafikk. Men det kunne jo også få positive konsekvenser hvis den offentlige transporten ble bygd bedre ut. Og det man tenker, som noen har argumentert, det er jo også at, at det er den kommunikasjonen som går hit er fly, som er, som slipper ut da, det går ikke jernbane hit, så det er jo sånne ting som, men det er jo tenker jeg i mindre skala enn store, store svære utslipp da og ødeleggelse, det er vel det som, altså da, nærmiljøet, det er jo ødeleggelse, det jeg er redd for.

¹⁹³ Men altså, jeg skjønner, jeg skjønner nei-sida i forhold til det rene, vakre, ikke ødelegg og alt det der. Men pokker heller, hvis du følger den argumentasjonen helt ut så gjør vi ingenting her, da beholder vi dette som et naturreservat.

Tromsø because of the increased CO₂-emissions, one might just as well abstain from any kind of activities that would lead to increased air travel. This is an all or nothing kind of logic, which may probably best be understood as an effect of the overarching discursive framework of the Olympic debate. For interviewees who were committed to supporting the Olympic bid, their narratives could only remain consistent if they were able to reject all arguments about the detrimental effects, or if these could not be rejected only with regards to the Olympics to reject the principle behind them as unrealistic. One of the proponents accused the opposition for following the same kind of logic when they used environmental arguments to oppose the bid.

Some parameters of it I could understand, but this thing with all the species they were worried about, no, I wasn't, I couldn't quite get that. I think that just the fact that it had the Olympic tag on it, to build a ski slope was wrong and then you started looking for what type of berries it would affect.¹⁹⁴

The interviewee rejected the arguments about detrimental effects on nature by questioning the motives of the opponents, implying that they were not objective in their concerns about vulnerable species. He was in effect drawing on a discursive repertoire about the social and political nature of the opponents' knowledge about the environment (Braun and Wainwright 2001). The same interviewee also used lack of knowledge as an argument against the "vulnerable nature"-discourse.

The bottom line really, both when it came to sports facilities and when it came to the environmental issue, was that I felt that it was difficult to... It takes a lot of knowledge in order to be specific and qualified on that, and that was why I was very surprised at people's obstinacy. I did consider it, but I wasn't ready to reject it completely, that actually had to do with my own competence.¹⁹⁵

Environmental issues are portrayed as too complicated for lay people to have a definite opinion on. By inference, the opponents who insisted that specific activities would be detrimental were being too opinionated, perhaps even a little pig-headed. Note that this account assumes that specific knowledge about nature is possible, but only for experts. The interviewee's own position as someone who supports the Olympic bid in spite of

¹⁹⁴ Parameterer inn i det kunne jeg forstå, mens dette med alle de artene man var redd for, nei, det var jeg ikke, det kunne jeg ikke helt se. Jeg tror at bare det at OL-merkelappen var på det, at man skulle bygge en slalombakke så var det galt, og da begynte man å se etter hva slags bær det ville gå utover.

¹⁹⁵ Bottomline var egentlig både når man snakket om haller og når det var snakk om miljødimensjonen at jeg følte at det var vanskelig å... Det krever så mye kunnskap å kunne være detaljert og god om det, og derfor var jeg så veldig overrasket over påståeligheta til folk. Men jeg hadde en betenkelighet med det, men ikke nok til at jeg ville avvise det helt liksom, det gikk egentlig på min egen kompetanse.

environmental arguments is rationalized, as he does not want to act on an unqualified consideration.

In the case of the two former stories, global warming and vulnerable nature was used by opponents of the Olympic bid as an argument to support their narratives, whereas proponents of the bid used a story about the need for regional development to counter the normative imperatives of the global warming and vulnerable nature stories. In what I have termed the model environmental city story however, economic development, infrastructural investments and environmental innovations were articulated together in a way that made it possible to use the story as a discursive resource in arguing for the Olympic bid. Among my interviewees there was in particular one actor who claimed that his support of the bid (and that of his political party) was premised on the environmental benefits this would bring.

*We have been supportive of this project since an early stage of inquiry. Based on an understanding that this would be positive both for Tromsø's business development and the possibility of realizing some major changes in terms of infrastructure, transportation, sports facilities, implementation of more environmentally friendly technology and more environmentally friendly ways of running the municipality. We thought it could be a real lever for implementing some of the major changes that might be difficult to realize in the ordinary life cycle and within ordinary municipal budgets.*¹⁹⁶

In this account, it was the need for “more environmental friendly” technologies which was taken for granted as an established story, and the Olympic project was seen as a lever which would help implement these. By referring to an inquiry into the facts of the project, and using terms like implementation and budgets this interviewee draws on an interpretative repertoire of responsibility and governance. The interviewee explained that his ambition was to “make Tromsø a model city on environment and modern transport and energy solutions.”¹⁹⁷ He admitted that he had many scruples about the environmental implications of large-scale developments in Tromsø and about the need to increase air transport during the games, but he claimed that he was optimistic about the possibilities for solving these problems with technology. He concluded that:

¹⁹⁶ vi har vært for dette prosjektet siden ganske tidlig i utredninga. Ut i fra en tanke om at vi vurderte det som positivt for Tromsøs både næringsutvikling og muligheten for å få gjennomført en del store grep da på infrastruktur, transport, på idrettsanleggsida og på innfasing av mer miljøvennlig teknologi og mer miljøvennlige måter å drifte denne kommunen på. Vi trodde det kunne være en stor brekkstang for å få gjort en del sånne store grep da som kan være vanskelige å gjennomføre et vanlig livsløp og innenfor vanlige kommunale budsjett.

¹⁹⁷ gjøre Tromsø til en modellby da på miljø og moderne transport og energiløsninger

The reason why I decided to support this was the prospects of getting a more environmental friendly city, that we could become, the city could invest properly in renewable energy and better public transport so that one could in the long run reduce emissions considerably, so that in a longer environmental perspective beyond the fourteen days we would as a society have had a very positive environmental account and the city would be greener after the Olympics than before.¹⁹⁸

In the model environmental city story, protecting the environment is not a question of absolutes. Practices can be more or less environmental friendly, and currently problematic practices do not need to be stopped, they only need to be technologically improved. It seems a little unclear whose responsibility it is to implement these environmental friendly technologies. As for the place politics implied in the story, there are elements of both propinquity and connectivity. On the one hand Tromsø as a town should become a model city, but on the other hand it is not possible to do this within ordinary budgets. An external lever is required for the major change can take place.

Among the Olympic proponents there were several actors whose narratives seemed to be drawing on the story about a model environmental city. One interviewee argued that:

Obviously, I do think that one should strive to do this as propitious as possible in terms of the environment, and I think that no matter what one does today, planning, building, one's own actions too, one should try to include an environmental component.¹⁹⁹

Another interviewee stated that:

Our approach was that no matter what Norway does as a leading country on environmental issues, we will do it properly, we will do it in the best way possible in 2018 with regards to hosting an Olympics and preserving the environment.²⁰⁰

In these accounts, the environment is not seen as a limitation for economic development or a reason to abstain from the Olympic hosting or any other actions, but rather one of many aspects that should be considered and accommodated to the best of one's ability. Note that in

¹⁹⁸ grunnen til at jeg likevel valgte å gå for det det var jo utsiktene til at man kunne få på plass nettopp en mer miljøvennlig by, at vi kunne bli, byen kunne investere skikkelig i fornybar energi og bedre kollektivtransport sånn at man kunne på sikt redusere utslippene betraktelig, sånn at i et lengre miljøperspektiv utover de 14 dagene så ville vi som samfunn hatt et veldig positivt miljøregnskap og byen ville vært grønnere etter OL enn før

¹⁹⁹ en det er klart, jeg mener jo at man skulle bestrebe seg på å gjøre dette så gunstig som mulig på miljø, og det mener jeg uansett hva man gjør i dag, planlegger, bygger, også ens egne handlinger, så skal man prøve å tenke inn en miljøkomponent.

²⁰⁰ vår tilnærming var at uansett hva Norge skal gjøre som et toneangivende land på miljø så skal vi gjøre det veldig skikkelig, vi skal gjøre verdens beste måte som er mulig i 2018 iforhold til å lage et OL og bevare miljøet

the latter quote it is Norway, rather than Tromsø or Northern Norway, which is mentioned as the responsible agent that should do this, so the local responsibility is somewhat blurry.

The model environmental city story focused on possibilism and technological advances as the way to solve environmental problems. Within this story, business interests also played an important role. As one interviewee explained:

When selling the idea of the Olympic project to business and industries, one of the most important arguments was in fact the environment. Because Norwegian business interests know that one of the ways to survive, one of the ways to brand yourself today, both in terms of actual product development but also in terms of having a good reputation, is to show responsibility and willingness to invest in improving the environmental dimension of your enterprises. And hosting an Olympics would have been a very good development arena for driving green solutions, developing green solutions, anything from very simple logistical things to more complicated emission technologies for example.²⁰¹

Environmental concerns are discussed as a win-win-situation in which regional and economic development is part of the solution rather than a problem. The place politics that is implicated in this story is a politics for local growth based on economic investments and buyers from “outside”. But according to one of the opponents, both the technological solutions and the place politics that were propagated within the “model city”-narrative were quite problematic.

I feel that it wasn't locally embedded, I mean, they fly in a former Bellona employee to produce this strategy, and of course it is influenced by Bellona's environmental views that environmental technology should solve everything. Just look at transport, it's all about having other vehicles, electric and other fuels. All that is fine, but I think one should also look at how you can make more people walk and bike and use public transport, information and consciousness-raising and these things. And it was not just Bellona, but business also who had a strong position in this project, and of course business is not interested in discussing economic growth and more fundamental environmental questions. They are very preoccupied with technology as a way to solve this problem. I mean on a very paramount level, this discussion about air transport shifting to a more environmental friendly fuel, that is something which is very difficult for a local community, for a municipality to do. The

²⁰¹ en av de viktigste salgsargumentene overfor næringslivet når det gjaldt OL det var faktisk miljø. Fordi at norsk næringsliv vet at en av de tingene man kan overleve på, en av de tingene man kan profilere seg på i dag, både når det gjelder reell produktutvikling men også når det gjelder å ha et godt omdømme er å vise seriøsitet og investeringsvilje på å utbedre miljødimensjonen i sin egen virksomhet. Og det at et OL ville nettopp bli en veldig fin utviklingsarena for å kjøre mye grønne løsninger, utvikle mange grønne løsninger, alt fra veldig enkle logistikking til mer komplisert teknologi på utslippsfronten for eksempel

*municipality has to work on a quite different level, so I thought they were very unrealistic, with the level they were on.*²⁰²

As an alternative to the model environmental city story, some Olympic opponents drew on what I have termed the sustainable city story. Whereas the model environmental city story was used to portray the Olympic project as a progressive force for realizing more environmental friendly technologies and products, the sustainable city story combined concerns for the local environment with a concern for climate change and a critique of over-consumption and production. Some actors drew on the sustainable city story to implicitly and sometimes explicitly question the logic of the model environmental city.

*You don't need an Olympics in order for Tromsø to be a model city, [...] it would have been much better to launch Tromsø as a model city without the Olympics, I felt it was a paradox that they used that as an argument for hosting the Olympics really. It was kind of a contradiction, to build motorways around Tromsø in order to make Tromsø a model environmental city... I don't think it makes any sense.*²⁰³

As an example of the sustainable city story I will quote an account in which the environmental effects of an Olympic hosting are represented together as an excessive and unsustainable use of resources that the interviewee wants to distance herself from.

And then there is the environmental perspective too; they are going to build a motorway from here [the town centre] to Movika, why, because it was exactly what they needed for the Olympics, not before and not after. And many things like that, everything that was to be flown in, yes, they were going to expand the airport just for this event, for those few days, I mean it would not have been sustainable, it would not have been something we could make use of afterwards to the degree that one would want for such a huge event, it was simply too big, it was oversized. And then there was the excessive use of

²⁰² jeg føler det, at det ikke var lokal forankret altså, at de får flysendt en tidligere medarbeider i Bellona som skal utarbeide den her, og det er klart at den er farget av Bellonas syn på miljø at det er miljøteknologi som skal løse det, se på alt som er transport det er jeg kun som går på at man skal ha andre kjøretøyer, el og annet drivstoff. Det er jo vel og bra det men jeg mener jo også man må se på hvordan man kan få flere til å gå og sykle og reise kollektivt og informasjon, bevisstgjøring og sanne ting. Ikke bare Bellona men også ifht at næringslivet som var veldig sterke i dette prosjektet her, og det er klart de fleste i næringslivet er ikke interessert i å gå inn på den biten der som i forhold til økonomisk vekst, ifht litt mer grunnleggende miljøhensyn. De er jo veldig opptatte av at det er teknologi som skal løse dette her. Altså på veldig sann overordnet nivå, denne diskusjonen ifht flytransport at man skulle få annet drivstoff, det er jo veldig vanskelig for et lokalsamfunn, en kommune å gjøre, kommunen må jo jobbe på et helt annet nivå, så jeg følte at det var veldig sann urealistiske, det nivået de befant seg på.

²⁰³ man trenger jo ikke et OL for at Tromsø skal være et utstillingsvindu, det kan de jo, det hadde vært mye bedre, hvis, å lansere Tromsø som et utstillingsvindu uten et OL, det er det jeg følte at ble et paradoks at man brukte det i saken for å få OL da. Det var liksom motstridende altså, å skulle bygge motorveier rundt Tromsø for at Tromsø skulle bli et utstillingsvindu på miljø, ja det... Jeg synes ikke det henger på greip da.

*resources, which is completely beyond anything I stand for and would want to represent.*²⁰⁴

The interviewee links the question of environmental issues to her own self-representation. The interviewee identifies with the town, but distances herself from the Olympic project as something she would not want to represent. In this account there is a clear distinction between “they” who want to build unsustainably and “we” who would use the facilities afterwards and who wouldn’t need all the things that would have to be built for the Olympics. “We” appears to mean all the inhabitants of Tromsø, but it is not clear in this narrative who “they” are – they may be both the local Olympic proponents and people from outside Tromsø.

In the next quote, from another interviewee, there is a stronger distinction between local and non-local environmental impacts. This account is interesting also in that it evaluates local versus non-local impacts differently from the ones previously discussed.

*Yes I do think that seen in isolation one could have localized many facilities and done a lot in Tromsø without having any major negative environmental impacts. I do think one can, one could do that actually, so it wasn’t really the big interventions, I don’t think, I didn’t fear that really. [...] It has more to do with the IOC who, for example all the participants when they are in the Olympic village are to drink Coca Cola products, and Coca Cola is disputed you know, and I do think, I have kids at home who boycott Coca Cola, so we do that, and so that leads to a bigger [debate about] who pays for the feast and who is it we... It may not be that noble, it may not be only the noble sports competition, but there may be such large economic interests behind who are interested in it.*²⁰⁵

Local nature is not referred to as vulnerable or as particularly threatened by an Olympic hosting in Tromsø. On the contrary, the interviewee argued that the necessary developments could be done in a responsible and even beneficial manner. “In terms of landscape I think one

²⁰⁴ og så dette miljøperspektivet også, de skal lage motorvei herfra til Movika, hvorfor det, jo for det var akkurat det de trengte til OL, ikke før og ikke etter. Og mange sånne ting, alt samma som skulle flys inn her, ja, skulle bygge ut flyplassen akkurat for dette arrangementet her, for de få dagene, altså det ville ikke ha vært noe, det var ikke bærekraftig, det ville ikke ha vært noe, vi kunne ikke ha utnyttet det etterpå i den grad som man skulle ønske for å ha et sånt arrangement, altså det var rett og slett for stort, det var overdimensjonert. Og så kom jo alt dette her med all den vanvittige ressursbruken, som er helt beyond alt det jeg står for og det jeg ønsker å representere.

²⁰⁵ ja, jeg tror nok at sånn isolert så kunne man lokalisere veldig mange anlegg og gjøre mye i Tromsø uten at det faktisk var en stor negativ miljøkonsekvens, det tror jeg nok at man, det ville man kunne få til faktisk, så det var ikke sånn at det ville blitt de store inngrepene. [...] det har mer med IOC å gjøre som for eksempel så skal alle deltakerne når de er i deltakerlandsbyen på OL så skal de drikke Coca Cola produkt, og Coca Cola er jo omstridt og jeg synes jo, jeg har unger hjemme som boikotter Coca Cola så vi gjør det, så kommer det en sånn større [debatt om] hvem er det som betaler gildet da og hvem er det vi... Det er kanskje ikke så edelt, det er ikke den edle idrettskonkurransen bare men det er sånne store pengekrefter bak som er interesserte i det.

could have done a lot and even improved the environment.²⁰⁶ Her reservation against the Olympic bid was linked to the influences of large multinational corporations like Coca Cola on the IOC. She draws on a story about Coca Cola as being engaged in questionable practices, and therefore “disputed”. She also refers to economic interests behind the apparently “noble sports competition”. The discursive link between these economic interests and the environment probably has to do with over-consumption and aggressive marketing, although she does not explicitly state this. After a follow-up question she repeated that “No, when it comes to the environmental issues I am really thinking more about Coca Cola and the like.”²⁰⁷

The story about multinational corporations as responsible for environmental hazards that seems to be implied by the former interviewee was more explicitly referred to in the next quote from one of the leading Olympic opponents. Here there is also a very explicit distinction between local and non-local forces.

*But to me the Olympic project is part of a bigger struggle about values, [...] and the environment, and about what it takes to make human life better. To put it in slightly grand terms. And I think that on-going struggle is very significant exactly here in Northern Norway. Because we are an arena where district meets centre, where resources meet profit and where Northern Norway as a region actually has the right and the access to the dish of food, the big dish being the ocean, the small dish being the land, the light, the grass, the milk, the potato, the reindeer... But we don't have our hands on the steering wheel, someone somewhere else does. Like the way it is so many other places in the world. And the struggle over food and over the environment is and remains the fundamental struggle. It is more important I think, than the struggle to define political systems. And so when this Olympic project came sailing along in 2014 and again in 2018, and the basic values to such a degree is based on a use and throw away attitude from Coca Cola and the IOC, in other words the ones whom I otherwise regard as the adversaries in the struggle for global justice. The globalized cynical and ruthless profit forces, if they are to come into Northern Norway and disturb both the eco-balance and the human balance that is here, which is so delicate and sensible, that would be catastrophic. You see, that was my immediate reaction: This would flatten the town, the district and the region, and we would be left as losers. The nature, the people and the environment.*²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ sånn landskapsmessig så tror jeg man kunne ha gjort veldig mye og faktisk også forbedre miljøet

²⁰⁷ Nei det med miljø så tenker jeg mer på sånn Coca Cola egentlig.

²⁰⁸ Men for meg så er OL-prosjektet en del av en større strid om verdier, [...] og miljø og om hva som skal til for å gjøre menneskelivet bedre. For å si det med litt store ord. Og den kampen tror jeg utfolder seg med veldig stor betydning nettopp i Nord-Norge. Nettopp fordi vi er en arena der distrikt møter sentrum, der ressurser møter profitt og der Nord-Norge som område sitter egentlig med retten og tilgangen til matfatet, det store matfatet havet, det lille matfatet jorda, lyset, graset, melken, pottiten, reinsdyra, men vi sitter ikke med handa på rattet, det

Here sustainability is linked to food production and to the traditional means of subsistence in Northern Norway, which were fishing-farming and reindeer herding. The interviewee also refers to a story about the region, but here the emphasis is not on economic development but on regional sustainability in a wider sense. Northern Norway as a region is portrayed as united and in balance, although this balance is delicate, and with a single common interest as disenfranchised food producers. The people of Northern Norway are also apparently in balance with nature and share its fate, in that any interference in this balance would leave both nature, the people and the environment as losers. The place politics that are implied by this story seems to be one in which the local level is free from conflict, which means that there is in effect no politics of propinquity. Politics seems to belong to the realm of connectivities. The adversaries are from outside, in the form of globalized capital. But there is also a possibility for international solidarity between Northern Norway and other places in the world, areas that are positioned as equally powerless and exploited by “the centre” and “the profit forces”.

In contrast to those drawing on the model environmental city story, narratives drawing on the sustainable city story do not present environmental threats and protection as a potential win-win-situation. The focus is on limited resources and limited space, and this leads to more of a zero-sum game metaphor. Since consumption is part of the problem, technological advances that lead to increased consumption is not seen as a solution. In the sustainable city story, local agency and responsibility seems to be undermined by external agents. The sustainable city story does not however advocate a “closed” or communitarian place politics, but rather a politics of connectivity in which different places have common interests in preserving the environment.

gjør de et annet sted. Som så mange andre steder i verden. Og kampen om maten og kampen om miljøet er og blir den grunnleggende kampen. Den er viktigere synes jeg enn kampen om å definere politiske systemer. Og når da dette OL-prosjektet kom seilende i 2014 og på nytt i 2018, og verdigrunnlaget er til de grader basert på en bruk og kast holdning fra Coca Cola og IOC, altså fra de som jeg ellers ser på som motstanderne i kampen om en global rettferdighet. Nemlig de globaliserte kyniske og hensynsløse profittkreftene, og hvis de da skal komme inn i Nord Norge og forstyrre både økobilansen og den menneskelige balansen som er her, som er så delikat og så følsom, så ville det bli en katastrofe. Altså det var min umiddelbare reaksjon: Dette kommer til å valse ned byen, distriktet og regionen, og vi kommer til å sitte igjen som tapere. Naturen, menneskene og miljøet.

6.5 The politics of interests

This chapter has engaged with the Olympic debate as an arena for place politics of interests, and focused on stories about local and regional development, as well as stories about global impacts of economic development in relation to environmental stories. The discussion of how actors in the debate used stories about development to argue for and against the Olympic bid shows that development is a commonly held but fundamentally ambiguous project. Most actors will argue that they want development, but in different ways, basing their stories about development on different understandings and conceptions of interests, driving forces and impacts of development. Different stories about development and interests work to *justify* development or conservation projects by referring to aesthetical, economic and environmental values. I have shown that stories about regional development and regional interests were also used to override other stories, for example stories about global warming. Regional development can be described as a moral imperative in many of the accounts discussed here. In the discursive practices of the proponents and the undecided actors, regional differences and prejudices and the need for regional development worked to justify the proposed bid as reasonable and justified, whereas in the discourses of the opponents regional stories worked as a justification of why the bid was not reasonable, as opponents argued that Northern Norway would not benefit from a compact Olympic hosting in Tromsø. Stories about the need for regional development were also used as discursive resources in discussions about the environmental impacts and potentials of the Olympic project.

The emphasis placed on regional development by all actors is a highly relevant example of how politics of interest are always also a politics of identities. The question of which interests that are considered important is also a question of *whose* interests they are understood to be, and how different actors identify with them. Different identity-stories can be used to justify different kinds of development-stories and interests. In section 6.1 I quoted an interviewee who used her identity as Tromsøværinger, drawing on roots and a long-term attachment to place, to argue against real-estate developments that would put pressure on the existing physical landscape of the town, whereas she referred to Northern Norway and a regional identity in arguing for the positive developmental effects of a bid. Another example of the link between politics of identities and politics of interests can be found in the way different interviewees described the use of Sami culture in marketing the Olympic bid. One member of No to the Olympics said that he could understand that “both Sami and artists” conceived of

the Olympics as a cultural event that gave them an opportunity to showcase their products and their characteristics.

*That could be something positive about an Olympic hosting, I guess, except that I would very much dislike that function, the decoration, the civilizing process of displaying the exotic. But of course there were many both monetary motifs but also more symbolic, cultural expressions that could be promoted by the Olympics, that is for sure.*²⁰⁹

According to this actor the use of Sami symbolism in connection to an Olympic hosting would be a kind of exotification of indigenous culture, which positioned it as Other. But at the same time the actor argued that such a showcasing would have economic and cultural benefits for Sami actors, and therefore he would not condemn their participation in it. Another interviewee, when asked about her opinion about the use of the Romsa-name and Sami culture in marketing the Olympic bid, told a story about how she for the last three years had been involved through her kids' sports team in the annual National Reindeer-Race taking place on Tromsø's Main Street. To begin with she had thought it was quite strange that anyone would pay hundreds of kroner to watch some reindeer rushing by, in the cold and with very few facilities. But this year she had met several foreigners who had travelled to Tromsø just in order to see the race, and she said that according to guidebooks the most exotic thing to be found in Norway was reindeer-races. She described the fact that people would come all the way from England for this as an eye-opener.

*So I think that when other people pay attention to it, we may be a little blind ourselves, but when others pay attention we become more attentive.*²¹⁰

This quote shows the relationship between tourism as an economic interest and as a way of constructing and renegotiating identities. The interviewee argued that positive attention from people outside can change the internal perception of a place, and that the evaluation of Sami culture may also change because it is considered positive by the outsiders.

Another important question in relation to the politics of interests is the way in which some interests are being described as near and important to accommodate in some way (propinquities), which are further away yet still important (connectivities), and which are

²⁰⁹ Det kunne jo være positivt med et OL, for så vidt, bortsett fra at jeg ville mislike veldig sterkt den funksjonen, pyntet, det sivilisatoriske ved å vise det eksotiske. Det er klart en god del både pengemessige motiver men også mer sånn symbolske, kulturelle uttrykk igjen kunne befordres av et OL, det er klart.

²¹⁰ Så tror jeg at ved at andre blir oppmerksomme på det, vi er kanskje litt blinde selv men ved at andre blir oppmerksomme på det så blir vi oppmerksomme.

considered irrelevant or unrelated (disconnectivities). In the case of the environmental stories there was a clear difference between stories about global warming, in which the interests in relation to abating climate change were constructed as far away both in terms of time and place, and the stories about vulnerable nature in which the interests in conserving the natural landscape around Tromsø were constructed as urgent and immediate. Propinquities and connectivities are negotiated in stories about local and regional development, responsibilities and possibilities. One interesting effect of the versatility of the regional story was that the way the Northern Norwegian region itself was represented varied from a politics of propinquity in which the region was one and had to negotiate interests and possibilities internally to a politics of connectivity in which Tromsø's relationship with the wider region was negotiated. There were also some actors that argued that the Olympic project had in fact represented a politics of disconnectivity from the Northern Norwegian region, with Tromsø attempting to keep all potential growth and all economic resources to itself. One should note however that propinquity is not always represented as an assurance of local interests being respected. In the stories about land use and development in Tromsø, local developers despite being "close" were described as unable to take responsibility for the aesthetic qualities of prospective building projects.

What kinds of place politics are implicated in the different stories about development and interests? Different stories about interests draw on different subject positions, and can therefore be used to represent and mobilise different types of political agents or interest groups. In the global warming story, local political actors have little scope for action. The story seems to demand a kind of global or ecological citizenry and cosmopolitan-minded political actors, one in which politics of responsibilities take precedence over politics of propinquity. Stories about the town and the natural landscape as vulnerable, on the other hand, appeal to a local political community, perhaps based on what Calhoun (2003) calls a particularistic solidarity. Local development is described as a process that needs to accommodate and protect local interests. Stories about regional development, and about a model environmental or sustainable city, combine politics of propinquity and connectivity, and therefore seems to be able to combine different kinds of political solidarities and the kind of collective ecological citizenship envisaged by Melo-Escrihuela (2008). The scope for action becomes bigger, while the link to particularistic solidarities is retained. In the next chapter I will look at stories about the Olympic debate and about the Olympic bidding process to consider how different political actors are described by themselves and others, and how

stories about the Olympic debate itself can be understood as part of an ongoing negotiation of the politics of place politics.

7 Stories about democracy, politics of place politics

This chapter explores the ways in which democracy and democratic values were represented and contested by the interviewees in reference to place politics and the Olympic debate. The stories contribute to what I have termed the politics of place politics, that is the negotiations and struggles over how decision-making processes should take place, the question of how powers and influences are conceptualised and acknowledged, and representations of different actors as legitimate or illegitimate participants in place politics.

The politics of place politics encompasses both politics of propinquities and politics of connectivities. In terms of propinquities, the politics of place politics can be described as the politics of determining and negotiating the local “rules of the games”. Stories about democracy and representations of actors and processes as living up to or being in discrepancy with established stories and democratic discourses were used by interviewees both to justify actions and views, and to blame and discredit opponents. Consider for example this description of the people in Tromsø 2018 by one of the members of No to the Olympics:

And those people they don't read case documents, they just sit and talk and then they say "yes but that's the way it is, I will buy this apartment building here and then we'll set up a store, yes but that will be nice you know, yes. Economic assessments? No, never mind, I think I have a good project!" It was that kind of haphazard treatment of public assets which really astonished me, you know.²¹¹

Through interpretations and claims about democracy, stories about the Olympic debate contribute to confirm and renegotiate understandings of what a democratic place politics may mean, and to produce and reproduce Tromsø as a political arena for social interaction and power struggles.

But the politics of place politics also concern questions of connectivity and disconnectivity in place politics. Stories about the Olympic process contributed to these questions through negotiating understandings of the potentials and limitations of local place politics. Among the interviewees who had supported the bid, there were many who were very indignant about the

²¹¹ Og de folka de leser jo ikke sakspapirer, de sitter bare å prater og så sier de ”ja men sånn e det, æ kjøper denne bygården her og så lager vi manufakturforretning, ja men det blir fint vet du, ja. Kalkyle? Nei drit i det, æ trur æ har et godt prosjekt!” Så sånn lemfeldig omgang med samfunnsverdier som virkelig forbløffet meg altså. (Interview excerpt, my translation.)

way the project had ended. One proponent stated unequivocally that it was the “breechers’ nobility”²¹² in Oslo that had won.

*So the most important thing was the North-South-dimension. And I hope that you in your work will be able to trace that in a distinct way and can write something about it. Because that’s the most important lesson in my opinion, that it simply struck again. And the Olympics could have helped to shatter those hard images, those prejudices, but no, they were actually victorious.*²¹³

The actor continued by arguing that she had thought that the Olympic process would help reduce the prejudices against the North, and that she had thought things had gotten better, but she now realized that she had underestimated their strength.

This chapter starts by examining stories about discussion and engagement as a democratic ideal in place politics. These stories can be understood as a kind of meta-discussion about the Olympic debate and how it was understood in retrospect by some of the involved actors. Following this I will look at stories about the different institutional actors or aspects of the debate and how these were described in relation to the democratic ideal. These include stories about Tromsø Romsa 2018 as a governance project, stories about local party politics and the decision-making processes within two of the ruling parties and the municipal council, stories about No to the Olympics as an activist network and stories about the Sami political actors involved in the bid. In section three I will examine stories about the role that different media played in the Olympic debate, and in section four I will explore the stories about how the Confederation of Sports and the responsible ministers in the Government decided the fate of the Olympic project. Section five discusses stories about Northern Norway’s relationship to the South and the claim that Northern Norway is politically marginalized by powerful actors in the South. While the two first sections relate to politics of propinquity, the next three are concerned with how politics of connectivity are conceived and represented by local actors in Tromsø. One plausible story about the Olympic in Tromsø is that its fate shows how a local initiative was ultimately decided in the state capital. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how actors perceived the potentials and limitations of place based politics, while also

²¹² Nikkersadelen. (Breechers are a kind of skiing pants, and the term “breechers nobility” is often used about the more established elements of Norway’s rather small upper class.)

²¹³ Så, nei det viktigste var den nord-sør-dimensjonen. Altså den, jeg håper at du i arbeidet ditt kommer på sporet av den på en tydelig måte og kan skrive noe i forhold til den. For det synes jeg er den viktigste lærdommen at den slo til, it strikes again altså, rett og slett, og det kunne OL ha vært noe i forhold til å bryte opp de der harde bildene, fordommene, nei de seiret faktisk.

asking how these stories contribute to constructing and negotiating those potentials and limitations.

7.1 Stories about the Olympic debate

The inherent value of discussions and debate as a democratic practice seemed to be a commonly held reference point for all the interviewees. Both proponents and opponents, as well as those who were more or less undecided, agreed that the fact that there had been a debate was one of the positive outcomes of the whole Olympic project. As one of the proponents put it:

*No, I mean, the point of departure for me is that I think that all debates about us developing, even struggling about the direction in which things should be developed, I do think that's good. Deeply and seriously I think that that is the very cornerstone of democracy, right. I mean two opinions meet, and after a while four and seven and ten, and then we develop through democratic processes a free debate, an open debate and it may well be a hard debate, and then civilized decisions are made which we all agree on, and then it is as it is, it means that you've had your arguments tried, and something will always come out of something, right.*²¹⁴

This quote can be seen as describing a collective democratic ideal: An open and fair debate followed by democratic decision-making. The actor draws on an interpretative repertoire of democracy, discussion and representation which is well-established in political and philosophical theory. The emphasis on a free and open debate can be seen as drawing on a Habermasian ethics of communication and the “ideal speech situation” as the foundation of deliberative democracy (Kalleberg 1999). The interviewee also underlined the importance of political struggle and difference for democracy, a point which has been argued by political theorists such as Chantal Mouffe (2000) and Iris Marion Young (2000). The ideal described by the actor quoted here was generally shared by all the actors interviewed about the Olympic debate. Where the interviewees differed was the degree to which the debate had actually been open and fair, and to an extent whether the local decision-making process had been fair. As I

²¹⁴ Nei, jeg mener utgangspunktet for meg er at jeg mener at alle debatter som handler om at vi skal utvikle, og gjerne strides om i hvilken retning ting skal utvikles, mener jo jeg er bra. Dypt og seriøst mener jeg at det er jo selve demokratiets arnestein, ikke sant. Altså to meninger møtes og etter hvert fire og syv og ti, og så utvikler vi gjennom demokratiske prosesser en fri debatt, en åpen debatt og gjerne en hard debatt, og så bringes det inn i siviliserte beslutninger som vi er enige om, og så blir det som det blir, altså det betyr at du har fått prøvd dine argumenter, og noe kommer jo alltid ut av noe, ikke sant.

will show in this section, stories about democracy were used both to legitimize and to discredit actors in the Olympic debate.

The interviewee quoted above had been in a powerful position in the debate. His account indicates potential trouble in the idealized story about the debate. By insisting that all debates are good, and adding that even struggles and hard debates are welcome, the account seems to respond to a possible claim that the debate which took place in Tromsø may have been problematic in any way. The notion of “civilized decisions” being made and everybody agreeing is also a way of representing the case as closed and branding any further attempts to criticize or continue the struggle as “uncivilized”. I interpreted this part of the account as referring to the decisions made by the majority of representatives in the municipal council who had backed the bid and founded Tromsø 2018. The statement then works as an implicit critique against the continued opposition work of No to the Olympics. Interestingly, the interviewee was among those who had ultimately “lost” the debate, since the Olympic project had been abandoned, and elsewhere in the interview as well as in public he had been criticizing the decision-making process, saying that it was wrong that the Norwegian Confederation of Sports had been given such powers to actually cancel the bid. The statement may therefore also be interpreted as part of a critique against the democratic status of the way the Olympic debate had been terminated because the decisions were not made in a “civilized” way.

Among the Olympic opponents there seemed to be two lines of arguments about the quality of the debate. The following quote from one of the members of No to the Olympics neatly illustrates both:

“The debate was in fact civilized and factual. Take our spokesperson for example, who was the spearhead of this, he did to a very small degree experience any kind of cheekiness, and well, he wasn’t yelled at by anybody to put it like that, we who stood for this were respected, we were to a large extent, in a way, yes, it was a good style of debate, there wasn’t a very you know bad climate of debate. Not very. But there were very many who got very sore. Very sore.” ²¹⁵

²¹⁵ ... debatten var jo sivilisert og saklig. Sånn som [talspersonen vår] som sto i spissen for dette han opplevde i veldig liten grad sånne frektheter og, ja han ble ikke skjelt ut for å si det sånn, vi som sto for dette ble jo respektert, vi var jo langt på vei på en måte, ja, det var en bra debattstil, det var ikke en veldig sånn dårlig debattklima. Ikke veldig. Men det var veldig mange som ble veldig sår. Veldig sår.

The interviewee started by saying that the debate had been civilized and factual, using the small qualifying “in fact”, and goes on to say that their spokesperson had to a very small degree experienced “cheekiness” and that they were to a large extent respected. He also says that the debate climate wasn’t *very* bad, but that some got *very sore*. All these qualifying expressions makes it seem as if there was something about the debate that didn’t fit into the established story about a civilized debate. There is also an implicit account of there being some cheekiness, some extent to which the opponents were not respected and that the debate climate was okay but not very good. By saying that some people got very sore, the interviewee also indicates that the Olympic proponents did not fully live up to the norms of a factual debate.

The same kind of qualifying statement about the debate having been mainly good, mainly factual, but also to a small degree irrelevant, was presented by an interviewee from Tromsø 2018. He took care to say that he thought that the opposition had been *mostly* fair, and even asked me specifically not to take any negative comments he may have uttered out of context in a way that made him seem more negative than he was. This again shows something about the norms around the inherent value of democratic discussion. Political opponents should be treated with respect, but there is of course a dilemma for political actors in that if the opponents are represented as too sensible and respectable it becomes more difficult to discredit their views. Interviewees from both sides therefore tried to balance between acknowledging their counterparts and making them seem slightly ridiculous. As discussed by Cass and Walker (2009) one way of doing this may be to construction political opponents’ motives as emotional and therefore less impressive. For example an interviewee from No to the Olympics described the people from Tromsø 2018 as being driven by enthusiasm rather by competence:

*They were not very competent, to put it like that, they were very enthusiastic and not very well grounded in... And it was a bit funny, or you know, we didn’t consider 2018 to be a very smart organization.*²¹⁶

Whereas an interviewee from Tromsø 2018 described the actors from No to the Olympics as coming across as angry and out of touch with Northern Norway:

²¹⁶ De var veldig lite kompetente, for å si det sånn, veldig entusiastiske og veldig lite funderte i... Og det var litt artig, eller sånn, vi regnet jo ikke 2018 som en særlig smart organisasjon.

*[They] made a mistake when it came to communication, they weren't siding with Northern Norway, they became in fact a, some angry lawyers and old communists...*²¹⁷

Another point of criticism related to the quality and norms of the public debate was the question of the adversary's willingness to actually participate in the debate. According to several of the No to the Olympics members, the central actors in Tromsø 2018 refused to meet them in public debates. One interviewee claimed that Tromsø 2018 tended to call the popular former Tromsø-Mayor Erlend Rian and ask him to represent them "when there were some nasty things to, when they were going out in open terrain".²¹⁸ The indication was that the central leaders of the organization had not wanted to get their hands dirty or were too afraid to meet any opposition. One interviewee expressed annoyance at not being taken seriously, saying that Tromsø 2018 would send Ole Mjøs, a former rector of Tromsø university and former chairman of the Nobel Peace Prize committee. The interviewee described Mjøs as a kind and jovial man who would not argue but rather insisted that the protesters would all join forces with the project committee and volunteer their services as professionals once the bid had been won. The criticism thus seemed to be that it had not really been a proper debate at all, because the central decision-makers in Tromsø 2018 had evaded the struggle.

*The head of communications at Tromsø 2018 never met us, the Mayor never met us. We arranged public meetings at Driv again and again, I was of course a very strong spokesperson for having a regular meeting place where people could come and say what they wanted. We invited the editor of Harstad Tidende [the local newspaper of another town in Troms, who had expressed scepticism against the Olympic project]. And in all these meeting places these people were conspicuously absent. They didn't want to talk with us, and they didn't want to talk with the people. It was the vertical axis, it wasn't the horizontal building of alliances. And they paid for it. Because in the end it was fifty-fifty even in Tromsø. And there was a majority against the bid in Northern Norway, right, remember the last poll after the Veritas-report came out.*²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Kommunikasjonsmessig så synes jeg de gjorde en tabbe, de ble ikke på parti med Nord Norge, de ble egentlig en sånn, noen sinte advokater og gamle AKP'ere...

²¹⁸ når det var noen ekle ting som, når de skulle ut i åpent lende. (Interview excerpt, my translation.)

²¹⁹ Kommunikasjonssjefen møtte oss aldri, ordføreren møtte oss aldri. Vi laga folkemøter på Driv igjen og igjen, jeg var jo en veldig sterk talsmann for at vi måtte ha en regelmessig møteplass hvor folk kunne komme og mene hva de ville. Vi inviterte Harstad-ordføreren, ikke sant. Nei, Harstad-redaktøren, redaktøren i Harstad Tidende. Og på alle disse møteplassene så glimret jo disse menneskene med sitt fravær. De ville ikke snakke med oss, og de ville ikke snakke med befolkningen. Det var den vertikale aksene, det var ikke den horisontale byggingen av

While both the organized opponents and the most active proponents of the Olympic project claimed that the debate had been fact-oriented and fair, interviewees who had been less directly involved in the public debate were less impressed. Some complained that the debate had been too confrontational, and that both the proponents and the opponents had shown little willingness to listen to arguments that went against their own view. For example one interviewee said about No to the Olympics that although she did respect them “my impression was that they were not very willing to engage and be in a dialogue...”²²⁰ She said that she had wanted to get information and be involved, but as she was a little sceptical without having taken a definite standpoint she had not felt comfortable with going to the public meetings which No to the Olympics hosted at Driv. Instead she had participated at a public planning meeting arranged by the municipality in April 2007, which she had expected to consist of more than just no and yes as she put it. She was pleased with the meeting:

*It was quite, it was very interesting, I felt uplifted when I left. (...) Yes, because I thought there was great involvement, sort of balanced between those who were for and... If you were for you were also nuanced. And if you were against, then... Then you may not have been so nuanced? My impression was perhaps that there were several people who actually thought the idea was good but who were also nuanced with regard to both the process and with... yes, the possibilities for avoiding the worst traps and making this into a kind of society-developing project. (...) There's no point if one can't listen to each other, that will only bring... disruptions and unpleasantness and very little which is constructive.*²²¹

Somewhat contrary to Habermasian ideals of rational deliberations, claims of emotionality were used by interviewees on both sides of the debate not only to discredit their opponents but also to legitimize their own involvement. Derek Edwards (1997) notes that emotional discourse may be used both to construct thoughts and actions as irrational or as sensible and rationally based. Furthermore, “emotion categories are used in assigning causes and motives

allianser. Og det fikk de jo svi for. For helt til slutt var det jo fifty-fifty til og med i Tromsø. Og det var flertall i Nord Norge mot, ikke sant, du husker den siste målingen etter at Veritas-rapporten kom.

²²⁰ ...jeg opplevde dem som lite villige til å gå inn og være i dialog da...

²²¹ Det var helt, det var veldig interessant, jeg var oppløftet da jeg gikk derfra. (...) Ja, for jeg syntes det var stort engasjement på, sånn balansert på de som var for og... Var du for så var du også nyansert. Og var du mot så... Så var du kanskje ikke så nyansert? (latter) Jeg opplevde kanskje der at det var flere som egentlig syntes ideen var god men som også var nyansert i forhold til både prosess og med... ja, mulighetene for å styre unna de verste fellene og få dette her til å bli et sånt samfunnsbyggende prosjekt. (...) Det har liksom ikke noen hensikt hvis en ikke kan lytte til hverandre, det blir jo bare... gnissninger og utriveligheter ut av det og lite konstruktivt.

to actions, in blaming, excuses, and accounts” (Edwards 1997:170). The former interviewee described herself as feeling uplifted after the municipal planning meeting, and based this partly on the fact that there had been great engagement among the participants. Linked to the positive norm of discussion and debate, there seemed to be a positive valorisation of emotional engagement. One proponent put it like this:

*[What was positive was] the positive engagement of Tromsø inhabitants in general. I mean both those who were for and those who were against. Everybody had good points of view, people got involved in an issue.*²²²

Emotional engagement was also sometimes talked of as an imperative for being part of the debate. At the public meeting arranged by the municipality’s planning department in April 2007 the Mayor of Tromsø introduced the debate as follows:

*[In planning for the Olympics] we need help in the form of inputs from the general public, all those who care.*²²³

James M. Jasper (2006) argues that emotions may be seen as both means and ends in politics. The discursive linking of the general public with “all those who care” can perhaps be described as putting emotional involvement forward as both a means and an end in place politics. The Mayor’s statement indicates that there is more to publicness than being an inhabitant; you should also have an emotional interest. At the municipal planning meeting many of the participants talked about their hopes and visions for future Tromsø. One of the most enthusiastic speakers was the local representative of an organization for the disabled. Both in the group discussions and in the plenary session she stated that to her organization, hosting the Olympics in Tromsø would be a great opportunity to secure universal accessibility-standards everywhere, and that because of this she supported the Olympic project wholeheartedly. When talking she expressed positivity and enthusiasm both in her choice of words, by smiling and using a positive tone of voice. When asked in a subsequent interview why she had chosen to go to the municipal meeting she explained:

*I was going to represent [the organization], but at the same time this is something I’m passionate about, and the others know that I am passionate about that part of... I would like for people to understand what we want.*²²⁴

²²² Positive engasjement i Tromsøværingar generelt. [...] Jeg mener både de som var for og de som var imot. Alle hadde gode synspunkter, folk engasjerte seg, i en sak.

²²³ Vi trenger hjelp: Innspill fra folk flest. Alle som bryr seg. (Public municipal meeting, my notes, 23.04.08)

According to the interviewee, the strength of her feelings (passion) about the issue of universal accessibility was the reason why the other members of the organization had wanted her to represent them, in order to deliver their views about the Olympic project and the municipality's planning ahead of it. In this account, as in the Mayor's statement about the public being "all those who care", emotional engagement is described both as a means and as an end in place politics. Whereas in the account of one of the Olympic opponents, a deeply felt emotional involvement was described as the end which tried to pursue through No to the Olympics:

To me this was not a political run of duty, a kind of "oh [surname], he's against everything". To the contrary, this was a deeply felt and actually rather desperate project.²²⁵

The latter quote shows that claims of emotional involvement can work as a discursive resource for legitimizing democratic participation, and stories about emotions in relation to place were also used to strengthen or legitimize arguments for or against the Olympic bid. As the example of the Mayor's discursive link between public involvement and caring about the place shows, interpretative repertoires about emotions and about democracy can be understood as both resources for and products of place politics.

7.2 Stories about the local actors

In this section I will consider stories about some of the central organizational actors in the debate, and examine how they were used by interviewees who represented these actors, and by others. Stories about how actors worked, what interests they served and who they represented can be understood as doing political work by legitimizing actors' own position and by discrediting or disputing the position of others.

Tromsø Romsa 2018 AS as a governance project

Tromsø Romsa 2018 AS was a project organisation set up as a joint venture between Tromsø municipality, Troms County and various private investors. Tromsø municipality was in control of the A-shares, and the mayor therefore acted as general meeting of the venture. But

²²⁴ Jeg skulle jo representere [organisasjonen] men samtidig så er det noe jeg brenner for, det vet de andre også at [navn] brenner for den delen at... Jeg vil gjerne at folk skal forstå hva vi ønsker.

²²⁵ Så for meg var ikke dette noe politisk pliktløp av typen "å [etternavn] han e no mot alt!" Tvert i mot dette var et dyptfølt og egentlig et ganske desperat prosjekt.

because there were also private owners involved the municipal council and the municipal control committee were not allowed access to the kind of information which they would have had about a fully municipally owned company. According to Tennås Holmen (2011) Tromsø Romsa 2018 AS functioned as a governance network in which actors from the municipality, private owners and various local and regional civil society actors worked together with employees and board members of Tromsø Romsa 2018 to produce the necessary application documents to be assessed by the Norwegian Confederation of Sports.

The status of Tromsø Romsa 2018 as a governance-type organization was contended and negotiated in different ways by interviewees. In their stories about Tromsø Romsa 2018, the interviewees seemed to draw on and combine established understandings of the rules and limits of politics, business and networks in various ways. One argument which was put forward by both proponents and opponents of the Olympic project was that Tromsø Romsa 2018 had not had done enough to secure the support and involvement of the general population. According to one of the municipal councillors:

*Many people in Tromsø had no relationship with that Tromsø 2018-organization.*²²⁶

Hajer and Wagenaar (2003) argue that governance networks can and should “create the capacity to interact and communicate” (Hajer and Wagenaar 2003: 11). The municipal councillor emphasised that Tromsø Romsa 2018 had not really had enough resources to be able to do required work to “anchor” the organization. Aarsæther, Bjørnå, Fotel and Sørensen (2009) have used Tromsø Romsa 2018 as an example in their discussion of the the role of networks in public governance and whether these networks can be held accountable by democratic standards. The authors argue that the traditional model of liberal democratic accountability based on representative democracy and the possibility of sanction through general election is not suitable for discussing the accountability of networks. However, rather than simply assuming that all networks are therefore undemocratic, the authors suggest a reformulation of accountability based on interaction and “an ongoing dialogue between accountability holders and accountability holdees in order to improve the effectiveness of complex governance processes” (Aarsæther et al 2009). Among the actors that networks should interact with in order to ensure accountability are politicians, relevant stakeholders and

²²⁶ Sånn at veldig mange i Tromsø hadde ikke noe forhold til den 2018-organisasjonen.

the larger citizenry. With regards to Tromsø Romsa 2018, Aarsæther et al finds that the network to a moderate degree has been interacting and held responsible by local politicians and relevant stakeholders, but that their level of accountability in terms of making themselves available for scrutiny and discussions with the general citizenry was low. The authors are especially critical of the fact that in the context of the inter-town competition with Oslo and Trondheim Tromsø Romsa 2018 kept their detailed plan for locating different venues secret until the proposal had been submitted to the Norwegian Confederation of Sports. “Knowing that land-use issues in a compact and fast-growing town entail highly controversial decisions, this is opposite to a process of fostering a ground for interaction and mutual understanding” (Aarsæther et al 2009).

Tennås Holmen (2011) argues that limited time and the need to produce quick results were reasons why “a number of fast decisions were made using available resources and networks. Broader involvement and inclusion in the decision-making processes were therefore considered problematic” (Tennås Holmen 2011: 44, my translation). Lack of human resources was mentioned as a limiting factor by many of the interviewees from Tromsø 2018. For example one interviewee said that they had been unable to follow up all the local people who had had suggestions and ideas for the Olympic project. Another interviewee who was a Tromsø inhabitant without any ties to either Tromsø 2018 or No to the Olympics claimed that he had tried to present an idea he had about building ice-halls on huge barges to one of the local Tromsø 2018 leaders, and jokingly said that he was still offended by the fact that the leader had not wanted to listen to this.

There seemed to be a common understanding among many of the interviewees that Tromsø 2018 was a public organization, and that it ideally should have functioned more or less as an open public space. As noted by Hajer (2003), the formulation of public policy has traditionally “functioned as a *public domain*” (Hajer 2003: 95, emphasis in original), a space for public discussion and deliberation. The shift towards policymaking taking place in public-private networks therefore “creates some friction with the idea of representative democracy” (Hajer 2003: 95). This friction was especially drawn upon in some of the criticism that No to the Olympics put forward against the project organization.

*Just think, they didn't bother to mobilize people in Tromsø to support the Olympics. Not a single public meeting, one event only which was spearheaded towards a segment of the population, and that was a children's ski race on Main Street. [...] There weren't many participants, because the weather was poor.*²²⁷

This last quote was from a member of No to the Olympics, who added that he had thought it was both offensive and misleading when the project organization had marked the launch of the project with a closed celebration at one of Tromsø's most popular pubs, Ølhallen (Beer Hall).

*It was just the invited inner circle who was at Ølhallen, that's an insult to the Ølhall-concept in my opinion. Because it looked as if the population were rejoicing at Ølhallen.*²²⁸

The interviewee's statement seems to rest on an expectation that it would have been both appropriate and advantageous for Tromsø 2018 to function more like a popular movement. By referring to the organization as having privileged an "inner circle", the interviewee is questioning the legitimacy of Tromsø 2018. This questioning again builds on a story about Tromsø 2018 as a public organization that should follow other norms of responsibility and openness than a private company.

While governance networks are often described in literature as particularly well-suited to "tackle complex, uncertain and conflict-ridden policy problems" (Sørensen & Torfing 2007: 12), many of the actors drew on an established story about public organizations as having to be more responsible to public needs and demands than private companies, and claimed that Tromsø Romsa 2018 AS lacked the necessary knowledge and competence to handle the Olympic project. One interviewee argued that the Olympic project had to be regarded as a social development project but that the complexity of the processes involved had not been properly grasped by the leading actors in the bidding organisation. She questioned the competence of Tromsø 2018, and added that she knew that the municipality had a lot of expertise but that this was not being taken into consideration by the "boys" in power.

²²⁷ Tenk at de ikke gadd å mobilisere folk i Tromsø for OL. Ikke et eneste folkemøte, ett arrangement som var rettet mot et segment av folket, og det var et barneskiløp, i Storgata [...] det var ikke mange som deltok heller for det var dårlig vær!

²²⁸ så var det jo bare den inviterte indre kretsen som var på Ølhallen, det er en fornærmelse mot Ølhall-konseptet etter mitt syn. For det framsto som befolkninga jublet på ølhalla, ja.

Thus I almost think that the Olympic project was a little... It was poorly grounded. Poorly grounded in the expertise that was here, in the community, both in relation to the University, in relation to the research park maybe, in relation to the municipality especially and in relation to the segment of private businesses that... Yes, many segments in private business, not just these companies who do private consultancies and who...²²⁹

This account draws on a normative link between democratic decision-making and knowledge, which will be further explored in relation to the municipal council and No to the Olympics. Questioning the competence of the organization is also an implicit questioning of the legitimacy of the involved actors. The normative link between democracy and having an open discussion and debate was also confirmed by this interviewee when she told a story about a meeting between local sports' confederations and Tromsø Romsa 2018 where she had been present. She said that in this meeting, a leading local Tromsø Romsa 2018 employee had reprimanded the local confederations for having raised a critique in several newspapers that Tromsø Romsa 2018 was not prioritizing general amateur-level sport facilities in Tromsø. According to the interviewee, the local employee had complained that it was difficult for him and Tromsø Romsa 2018 to do a good job when they went to Oslo and had to spend half their time in meetings trying to reject and explain this kind of "whining".

So then I thought, well, are we going to be gagged until, I mean, are you asking us to shut up? Are there going to be no critical voices here?²³⁰

The indignation which the interviewee expressed in relation to what she described as the employee's desire to quiet any opposition to the way Tromsø 2018 operated again seems to be based on a story about Tromsø 2018 as a public organization which was expected to follow the democratic playing rules.

The same interviewee also complained about the openness and possibility for critique and participation in Tromsø in general.

This town is cliquish, and that's a problem that many have seen before me and which means that maybe, there are so many capable people whose voices are not heard.²³¹

²²⁹ Så jeg tror nesten at det OL prosjektet var litt... Det var dårlig forankret. Dårlig forankret i den kompetansen som var her, i miljøet, både i forhold til universitetet, i forhold til forskningsparken kanskje, i forhold til kommunen særlig og i forhold til det segmentet i det private næringslivet som... Ja veldig mange segmenter i det private næringslivet, ikke bare disse firmaene som driver med privat konsulentvirksomhet og som...

²³⁰ Så da tenkte jeg ja skal vi ha munnkurv fram til, altså, ber du oss om å holde kjef? Skal det ikke være noen kritiske røster her?

She admitted that it was possible for example to write feature articles and letters to the editor, but argued that if one had written something really provocative one needed to have time and guts to enter into a time-consuming debate, and one needed allies and networks which were again time-consuming and difficult to build up. This can be described as a process of professionalization of the political field. The interviewee added that she thought the problems with cliquishness had been reinforced through the Olympic process.

It was as if the unilateralism, the public unilateralism, which may be what I mostly, there is very little diversity in public Tromsø, and this unilateralism was in my opinion almost reinforced through the Olympic process, because it was such an extremely closed process. You know, I actually went from enthusiasm to saying that I don't give a damn about the whole Olympics. Because I think that they are putting Tromsø municipality to the side, they are putting regular planning work to the side, they are even putting, even the municipal council are put to the side, I mean the Mayor was in of course but they put the council to the side, all the politicians in the county are put to the side. But not only that, I think that the private sector too, when it comes to architects, planners, engineers, social scientists, was put on the sideline.²³²

As this last quote shows, stories about Tromsø Romsa 2018 AS as a governance network were used both as a critique of one of the central actors in the debate and as an explanation for why actors were sceptical of the Olympic project itself. This critique should also be understood as a way of contending the local playing rules by questioning the role of governance networks and making demands towards how such networks should function. As I will show in the next subsection, the role of more traditional political parties and the local representative democracy were also discussed and questioned in the interviews.

Local party politics and political leadership

The Olympic proposal was launched by the Labour Mayor at a surprise press conference on top of the Fløya Mountain in May 2003. Several of my interviewees referred to this start of

²³¹ Denne byen har et klikkproblem, det er det som mange har sett før meg og som gjør at kanskje, det er så mange dyktige folk som ikke kommer til ordet.

²³² Dette er, det er kanskje noe sånt, som jeg syntes ble forsterket av OL-prosessen. Det som var, ensidigheten, den offentlige ensidigheten, det er kanskje det jeg mest, det er lite mangfold i det offentlige Tromsø, og den ensidigheten syntes jeg nesten ble forsterket gjennom OL-prosessen, fordi det var en sånn forferdlig lukket prosess. Vet du jeg gikk faktisk fra en begeistring til å si at jeg driter i hele OL. Fordi jeg synes de setter Tromsø kommune til sides, de setter vanlig planarbeid til sides, de setter, til og med kommunestyret settes til sides, altså ordføreren var jo med men de setter kommunestyret til sides, alle politikere i fylkeskommunen settes til sides. Men ikke nok med det, jeg synes også det private, i forhold til arkitekter, planleggere, ingeniører, samfunnsvitere ble satt til sides.

the Olympic project as problematic in terms of party politics and democracy. Their narratives drew on parallel stories about lack of transparency and member involvement in the party apparatus of the governing Labour and Socialist Left parties. Interviewees also expressed indignation and lamentation about the fact that the issue had not been deliberated within the party organizations prior to the media presentation. One interviewee who was a veteran of the Labour Party put it this way:

*Things have been, to tell you my opinion of it; things have been kept tight, for example at the start of the Olympic issue when... I was fairly, I wouldn't say central, but I had some influence in the board of the Labour Party, and it was sudden, it came as a surprise, do you remember the footage when they presented the Olympic issue, it had never been discussed, we knew nothing. Odd.*²³³

The lack of prior discussion was described by this interviewee as odd, something unusual that couldn't be easily accounted for or understood. He claimed that this was not the normal course of action within the party organization.

*I would say it's not the way things are usually done in the Labour Party. At least, things are discussed, we reach an agreement before one goes public, so... I think it was strange, this procedure*²³⁴.

By using words like odd and strange, the interviewee's statements can be understood as a mild but clear criticism of the party apparatus in connection to this issue, while he at the same time maintained a story about being loyal to the party in general. His account of having been disempowered as a party member by the way the Olympic project had been organized can be seen as an example of what Swyngedouw (2005) calls the Janus Face of governance-beyond-the-state (or in this case beyond the formal municipal structures), through which the parameters of political democracy are renegotiated in a way which empowers some actors while disempowering others. Another political veteran, from the Socialist Left Party, drew on a similar story in her narrative about the launching of the project. According to her, the lack of party involvement was partly caused by the municipal collaboration between the Socialist

²³³ Det har, hvis jeg skal si min mening, det har holdtes litt sånn tett, for eksempel starten av OL-saken, da... Jeg var rimelig, skal ikke si sentral, men jeg hadde innflytelse inn i styret i arbeiderpartiet, og det kom plutselig, det kom bardus på, husker du bildene da de presenterte OL-saken (ja), det var aldri diskutert, vi visste ingenting. Pussig.

²³⁴ Det er ikke vanlig i arbeiderpartiet at man gjør sånn synes jeg. I hvert fall, det diskuteres jo, vi blir enig før man legger frem altså... Jeg synes den var rar, fremgangsmåten.

Left Party and Labour, which had caused the party organization to wither, but she still described the Olympic project as an especially critical case.

Yet, we did have a, at that time we had a board which was intact, we arranged members' meetings, you see it was a rather, well not excellent activity going on, but you see, in any case we open the newspapers one day and there it is, with much ado, the Socialist Left Party will now, Tromsø will now, somebody has had a great idea and so on and so forth. And there we were as members of a board (...) we knew nothing.²³⁵

While the former interviewee chose to label this lack of political involvement as strange, the second interviewee described herself and her fellow board members as feeling humiliated and lost:

It is in a way, that feeling of almost being caught with our pants down, because we were kind of, in a way bewildered.²³⁶

The accounts of these two interviewees from two different political parties both draw on an established story about how in relation to a controversial political issue both organizational procedures and ordinary members were being sidestepped. There are two important subject positions in this story: The loyal and hard-working party member who puts the organizational wellbeing of the party or the ideological causes first, as opposed to the political entrepreneur or leader who doesn't care about the party and who is in it for his/her own glory or private interests.

The interviewee from the Socialist Left Party described the Vice Mayor from her own party as a central driving force in detaching the party organization from the political deliberations taking place within the municipal collaboration with Labour.

[She] had some personal ambitions and wasn't that concerned with, was in a way a new type of politician.²³⁷

Entrepreneurial leaders are typically described as motivated by "personal" interest, and this is contrasted to the narrative subject position as loyal party workers.

²³⁵ Men altså vi hadde et, vi hadde på det tidspunktet et intakt styre, vi arrangerte medlemsmøter, altså det var en sånn, ja altså, ikke sånn strålende aktivitet, men altså, i alle fall så åpner vi avisene en dag og så ser vi, altså stor ståhei oppå Fløya, nå skal altså SV, nå skal Tromsø, det er en som har fått en strålende idé og så videre og så videre. Og da satt altså vi som medlemmer av et styre (...) vi ante ingenting

²³⁶ Det blir på en måte, den følelsen av å bli tatt nesten med buksa nede, fordi at vi ble liksom litt, på et vis i villrede

²³⁷ Så jeg tenker at [hun] hadde noen personlige ambisjoner og var ikke så opptatt av, var på en måte en ny type politiker.

I have often thought about how much time I've spent on this party, and I've never had much ambitions on my own behalf, and there have been many of us who have [spent a lot of time on the party].²³⁸

In the narrative of the Labour veteran, the role of the self-interested politician seemed to be ascribed to two of the local Labour politicians who had been involved in running Tromsø Romsa 2014/2018. These were accused of having disregarded the local party apparatus, as in this quote referring to one of them:

We have tried a few times to get [name] to come to these meetings in the local branch, but that has proven difficult. He may not have thought it very worthwhile to come to such a small Labour meeting to inform us. I have contacted him several times, but he hasn't had the time, hasn't made it enough of a priority.²³⁹

The theme of “personal interests” as opposed to working for the common good was mentioned by this interviewee as well. In discussing the bidding process and why Tromsø Romsa 2018 had been promoted internationally before the bid had been approved by the Norwegian government, he explained that he thought that the leaders of Tromsø Romsa 2018 had been motivated by a desire to meet Rogge and other IOC-celebrities.

Yes, I thought it was an odd decision for them to go to, I think it was Mexico or Guatemala, it was a big meeting where they promoted Tromsø. I think it's strange, but I think there are personal interests behind it.²⁴⁰

In opposition to the personal motivation of these leaders the interviewee refers to himself as having lost his own political position because of the strong commitment he had to preserving the green areas on the Tromsø Island from development for Olympic facilities.

How does the story about local party politics relate to the question of place politics? Drawing up a distinction between “personal” and “public” interests serves as a normative argument about what kind of interests that are legitimate and should be pursued through formal politics. Representative democracy through well-functioning party apparatuses is presented as the

²³⁸ Jeg har mange ganger tenkt på hvor mye tid jeg har brukt på dette partiet, og jeg har aldri hatt noe særlige ambisjoner på egne vegne og vi har vært mange som har hatt det

²³⁹ Vi har prøvd å få [han] med noen ganger på sånne lokallagsmøter, men det har vært vanskelig. Han har kanskje ikke syntes det har vært noe særlig å komme til et sånt lite arbeiderpartimøte for å informere. Jeg har kontaktet han flere ganger, men han har ikke hatt tid, har ikke prioritert det nok.

²⁴⁰ jeg tror dette med at de markedsførte det utenfor Norge var litt sånn personlige interesser, det er hyggelig å treffe han Rogge og den gjengen der altså. For ledelsen i Tromsø 2018. Ja, jeg synes det var en pussig avgjørelse at de skulle være med, jeg tror det var i Mexico eller Guatemala det var et stort møte hvor de markedsførte Tromsø. Jeg synes det er rart, men jeg tror det ligger personlige interesser bak.

correct and just way of reaching political decisions by both interviewees. Both also argue for the importance of discussion, and regret the lack of internal discussion prior to the public announcement of the bid. There are some paradoxes in their accounts on this point, as the Labour veteran had resigned from his position in the local committee after losing a vote over the ski jump, despite what seems to have been lengthy and thorough deliberations. The Socialist Left veteran also valorised discussion as an important democratic virtue, while at the same time arguing that this discussion should ideally take place within the party and not be restricted to the politicians who had been elected to the municipal council and governed together with the Labour Party.

We have been very concerned with discussing things, being a democratic party, we would like also to bring forth non-parliamentary issues, I mean all that may, a party cannot be built only on what happens in the municipal forums. And then something happened because you sort of got the full-time politicians, a lot of discussions and decisions were now no longer made through members' meetings or in meetings between the members and the party apparatus, but they were made at the council hall in discussions, in joint representatives' meetings between Labour and the Socialist Left.²⁴¹

The problem with the discussions within the municipal forums and the ruling coalition was presented as having to do with the lack of influence for ordinary party members, but the interviewee also argued that the municipal politicians lacked the necessary competence and knowledge about the issue at hand.

And also because I thought that as a politician one has a responsibility to, I mean you are going to make political decisions for a long time ahead which are to be based on knowledge and thorough analysis, and the few times that the municipal council and central committee discussed this issues there were none, I mean there were no objections, there were no questions, there was just this hallelujah, we support this...²⁴²

By criticizing the municipal representatives for their lack of relevant knowledge and willingness to engage in critical debate of the bid, the narrative creates a link between

²⁴¹ Vi har vært veldig opptatte av at ting skal diskuteres, at vi er et demokratisk parti, vi vil gjerne at, løfte frem også uteomparlamentariske saker, altså alt det som, et parti kan ikke bare tuftes på det som foregår i kommunale organ. Og så skjedde det noe fordi du fikk på en måte heltidspolitikerne, du fikk veldig mange av diskusjonene og beslutningene tok nå ikke lenger i medlemsmøtene eller i møte mellom medlemmene og partiapparatet, men de ble tatt nå på rådhuset i diskusjoner med altså i felles gruppemøter mellom Arbeiderpartiet og SV.

²⁴² Og også fordi jeg tenkte at som politikere så har man jo (...)et ansvar for å, altså du skal ta politiske beslutninger for lang tid fremover som skal være basert på kunnskap og grundige analyser, og de få gangene kommunestyret og formannskapet diskuterte denne saken så var det ingen, altså det var ingen motforestillinger, det var ingen spørsmål, det var bare sånn halleluja, vi er for...

democracy, discussion and knowledge which recurred several times during the interview, for example in the interviewee's expressed disappointment that even the representatives from her own party, who she claims had used to be characterized by being well-informed, had lacked even the basic knowledge about planned Olympic facilities. This discursive link between democracy, knowledge and debate will be explored further in relation to stories about No to the Olympics as an activist network.

No to the Olympics as an activist network

No to the Olympics was a network, not a membership organization. As noted by Aars and Kvalvåg (2005), activist networks share many of the characteristics and features of governance networks. Among these, Aars and Kvalvåg emphasise the informal selection of leadership and the tendency for resourceful groups to dominate such networks. No to the Olympics consisted of around a dozen very experienced politicians and activists from different political parties and backgrounds. This was presented by actors from within the network as a practical decision. A membership organization would require a great deal of time and resources compared to running a small network based on what one interviewee called "parliamentarian-activists (...) organizing public opposition"²⁴³. The question of the network's democratic status was however mentioned and discussed by several interviewees. According to one of the activists the group had had some debates around the issue of democracy and legitimacy, and he claimed that he had insisted that they should define themselves as "a kind of working committee which was responsible towards a group of self-defined, a wider group of Olympic opponents"²⁴⁴. Through public meetings that were hosted by No to the Olympics these self-defined opponents were invited to come and keep themselves oriented about the network and bring forth their opinions. According to the interviewee the meetings would draw between 20 and 50 persons.

²⁴³ vi er på en måte en gruppe, relativt unik gruppe av parlamentarikeraktivister som har lang fartstid innenfor det parlamentariske livet på formell basis, altså kommunestyre, fylkesting osv, og så har vi en veldig lang erfaring på å organisere folkelig motstand.

²⁴⁴ ... et slags sånn arbeidsutvalg som sto ansvarlig overfor de, ei gruppe selvdefinert, videre gruppe av OL-motstandere...

*We made this, a kind of legitimization of our activities so that we didn't appear to be an elitist self-appointed group. Which we were in a sense, but... we acted in reference to the greater public opposition.*²⁴⁵

The activist used words like legitimization and responsibility towards a wider public, but admitted that the lack of formal democratic organization was somewhat problematic. In discourse terms one may say that the democratic status of the network created some “trouble” which needed to be worked on, not least because of the critique that the network itself had raised against the democratic status of Tromsø Romsa 2018 AS. One example of such discursive work was the implicit links created between discussion, knowledge and democracy, as discussed in relation to the interview with the Socialist Left veteran in the former subsection. The interviewee described the No to the Olympics network as “a sort of workshop for political discussions”²⁴⁶, emphasizing the wide range of formal and informal knowledge within the group:

*I do think that we possessed a wide range of competences, and many could write, and just the fact that we translated this counter-statement to Spanish and German and English and... We obviously had a lot of resources even though we had neither time nor money to do so.*²⁴⁷

The counter-statements, in which the network argued against both the expected positive effects of an Olympic hosting and the calculations of expenses, were a source of pride and sense of legitimacy for several of the activists interviewed. One interviewee referred to the academic background of the majority of the network members, and said that they had wanted the counter-statement to hold the same standard that they would have expected from any other academic text that they wrote. He showed me a pile of drafts, saying that they had checked all their facts and deliberations through a thorough collective writing process. The resulting documents could in his opinion have been very useful as a kind of quality check for the leaders of Tromsø 2018, but he claimed that they had not wanted to listen to them and had never read it.

Several member of the network would refer to their cross-party constitution.

²⁴⁵ Så vi laget en slags sånn, liksom legitimering av vår virksomhet slik at vi ikke fremsto som en elitistisk selvbestaltet gruppe. Det var vi for så vidt men, men... vi forholdt til en større nei-offentlighet.

²⁴⁶ ... vi i Nei til OL vi ble en slags, et verksted for politiske diskusjoner... (Interview excerpt, my translation.)

²⁴⁷ ... jeg tror jo at vi som satt der vi hadde kompetanse på et bredt nivå og mange kunne skrive, og bare det at vi oversatte denne motmeldinga til spansk og tysk og engelsk og... Det er klart at vi hadde mange ressurser selv om vi ikke hadde verken tid eller penger til å gjøre det.

*We were made up of people from the Socialist Left, Red, the Centre Party (...) and the Conservatives. [Name] from the Conservatives joined the network, so we had a fairly cross-political basis.*²⁴⁸

This cross-political constitution was not a result of deliberate construction according to the interviewees, as the genesis of the network had been a group of running mates, who had organized themselves as “Tromsø Ordinary Marathon Confederation” (TAM). According to one interviewee, TAM was set up by himself and one of the other network members.

*[We wanted] a counterpoise to this BUL-environment [an established sports' confederation], they were the posh people in town, the big shots and lawyers and estate agents and business people, they were running too, it was a kind of snobbish environment, so we set up TAM, to be marathon club for ordinary people*²⁴⁹.

This quote is a good example of how the network members would tell a story about themselves as “common people” in opposition to the local elites, even when running. The potential “trouble” posed to this narrative by the fact that three of the most central members of the network were a doctor, a university professor and a lawyer was sometimes acknowledged but usually patched over with reference to the different political views held by the network, as in this quote from another network member:

*There was no doubt a relatively high academic... It was, people with higher education for the most part, ranging, ranging from 35 to 60 years old, yes we did get after a while a pensioner as well. So it was people who... But it was politically very diverse, from Red to Conservatives...*²⁵⁰

Sami political actors

Tromsø's Olympic bid was backed by both a local Sami organization in Tromsø and by the Sami parliament. As discussed in previous chapters, both the concept of the Sami people co-hosting Olympic Games in Tromsø, and the potential of promoting Sami identities and interests through an Olympic bid, was debated. Especially the Olympic opponents were

²⁴⁸ Vi var jo sammensatt av folk fra SV, Rødt, Senterpartiet, Venstre, Høyre. Ikke Venstre forresten, men Høyre. Han [navn] fra Høyre sluttet seg til nettverket så vi hadde en passelig tverrpolitisk basis.

²⁴⁹ ...en motvekt til dette BUL-miljøet, det var fiffen i byen, det var storkara og advokatene og eiendomseierene og forretningsfolkene, de drev også og løp, det var et litt sånn snobbemiljø, så vi stiftet da TAM, det skulle være en folkelig maratonklubb.

²⁵⁰ Det var jo ikke tvil om at det var et forholdsvis høyt akademisk... Det var det jo, folk med høyere utdanning i det alt vesentlige, spennvidde, spennvidde fra 35 til 60 år, ja fikk jo med da etter hvert en pensjonist også. Så det var folk som... Men det var politisk veldig sammensatt da, fra Rødt og til Høyre...

sceptical of the role played by official Sami representatives. Several actors questioned both the legitimacy and the wisdom of the Sami President's support of Tromsø Romsa 2018. As one actor put it:

*And we have come to realize that although the President cheered for this project it was certainly not all the Sami organisations who... But I had a feeling that it becomes something that it is exciting to display, something which is exotic and which somehow fits into the Arctic magic. And there was no discussion about it either. It was a kind of possibility for highlighting the Sami questions, but I doubt if the results would have been in line with the way I've come to understand that many people within the Sami milieu, both when it comes to culture and arts and science and what not, politics, would like to represent the Sami aspects.*²⁵¹

Another actor used the term seduction:

*I do think it is strange that [Tromsø] 2018 have managed to, the way I see it they have managed to seduce many of the Sami decision-making organizations, because I can't see that there is any Sami politics in this, except that the Sami culture of course would get its share during the Olympics and such things, and shall we say as entertainment and such. But they have done a good job of decorating the cake with it and gotten some Sami organisations on board.*²⁵²

One member of No to the Olympics described the Sami political representatives who supported the project as claquers (professional clappers), a term that indicates that they were paid to show their support regardless of the quality of the performance.

*They did of course have some claquers who came, I remember I was at a football match where the Chairman of the Sami parliament came in with a Sami flag at Alfheim, that was really... It was so undignified and so embarrassing; it was such an embarrassing attempt from [Tromsø] 2018 to glue the Sami onto the bid.*²⁵³

²⁵¹ Og vi har jo bare skjønt i ettertid at en ting var jo at presidenten jublet for dette her men det var jo slett ikke sånn at alle samiske organisasjoner... Og men jeg fikk en følelse av at det blir noe som er spennende å vise frem, som er noe eksotisk og som på en måte passer inn i den arktiske magien. Og det var jo heller ingen debatt om det. Det blir på en måte sånn at det var en mulighet til å kunne sette, til å sette de samiske spørsmålene på kartet, men det spørres om resultatet hadde blitt sånn som jeg har lært å kjenne at mange innenfor det samiske, både når det gjelder kultur og kunst og vitenskap og hva det måtte være, politikk, ønsker å presentere det samiske på.

²⁵² jeg synes jo det er rart at 2018 har klart, jeg oppfatter det som at de har klart å forføre mye av de samiske beslutningsorganene for dette her, jeg kan jo overhodet ikke forstå at dette, bortsett fra at den samiske kulturen selvfølgelig ville få sine deler under OL og sånt og skal vi si som underholdning og den sånn, så kan jeg ikke si at det er noe samepolitikk i dette her sånn sett. Men de har flink til å pynte kaka med det og fått med en del samiske organisasjoner.

²⁵³ Så hadde de selvfølgelig noen klakkører som kom, jeg husker jeg var på en fotballkamp hvor sametingets formann kom inn med et Sameflagg på Alfheim, det var jo helt... Det var jo så uverdigg og så pinlig, det var altså så pinlig, det var et pinlig forsøk fra 2018 på å liksom klistre samene til søknaden.

This description of the Sami representative as somehow an unnatural presence at Alfheim football stadium seems to draw on the same story as that discussed in chapter 5 about Alfheim being a "very Tromsø-environment". My interpretation of the account is that the use of Sami symbolism in this non-Sami environment was undignified and embarrassing because it was not *genuine*, and that the Sami parliament and its Chairman were portrayed as having been used by Tromsø Romsa 2018 AS. In his discussion of Sami ethno-political mobilisation in the early 20th century, Zachariassen (2011) has noted that the questioning of indigenous representatives authenticity is a well-known strategy by the state to counter the claims put forward by such representatives. I would argue that the dismissal of the Sami parliament's Chairman as a *claqueur* serves as a similar strategy to counter the claim that the Olympic hosting would benefit the Sami people.

I asked members of No to the Olympics if there was anyone in their network with a Sami background. There wasn't, but they argued that there were several Sami among their supporters and that they thought the Sami profiling of the Olympic bid was humbug. Several interviewees mentioned two Sami actors from Tromsø when they explained how they viewed the Sami aspects of the bid:

You see, [name] is someone I have gotten to know through many years and he is a very knowledgeable man who is concerned with Sami questions, and he had a lot of critical comments and considerations around the Sami perspective of [Tromsø] 2018. You see, it's not that I was all that concerned about this but he was, and so was this Sami artist, who has made all those images of Tromsdalstinden, [name], he was also a representative of the Sami culture who was very critical towards the way the project had been presented.²⁵⁴

This last quote is interesting because the interviewee argues that these are not her own views but those of someone she considered a knowledgeable and respected Sami intellectual. The way I interpret the narrative it is an attempt to solve a discursive problem, which arguably existed in several of the accounts that draw on a postcolonial critique of the Olympic project. Since the actors were not Sami they could not plausibly position themselves in a subject position in relation to the claimed exotification of Sami culture. They therefore ended up

²⁵⁴ altså [navn] som er en person som jeg har lært å kjenne i disse for så vidt gjennom mange år og som er en veldig kunnskapsrik mann som er opptatt, han er jo opptatt av det samiske, altså han hadde jo veldig mange kritiske kommentarer og betraktninger rundt det samiske perspektivet i 2018. Altså det er ikke det at jeg var så opptatt av det men han var jo det og likedan han samiske kunstneren, han, det er ikke han som har laget det men han som har laget alle bildene av Tromsdalstinden, [navn], han var jo også en representant for det samiske som var veldig kritisk til prosjektet sånn som det ble lagt frem.

representing the interests of the oppressed from a majority subject position. The emphasis in this narrative that “it’s not that I was all that concerned about this but he was” can be understood as a way of acknowledging this discrepancy.

The quote below, which is taken from an interview with a local politician, highlights some of the ambivalences between cultural profiling and exotification.

I do think that an Olympic hosting in Tromsø would have to present itself as both Norwegian and Sami, and I think they were very aware of that really. Because I think that what Tromsø has got which one would have to market us with in order to arrange a different Olympics is that we are two cultures here, originally, and... I mean it is exotic that we have got, that the Sami live here, and it is sort of the wrong way to put it, they have always lived here of course, mostly before we came, and, but the fact that we, yes, that we have got two cultures that are the same and equal, I think that will be a very marketing... An advantage in the marketing of an Olympics in Tromsø. Whether the Sami would feel that an Olympics would be something that they would want to be involved in marketing, I don't know.²⁵⁵

The interviewee quoted draws on several different stories about how to understand the relationship between the Sami and the Norwegian culture. The account can be read as an attempt at negotiating between these different stories and acknowledge some of the ambivalences. The Sami presence in Tromsø is described as historically rooted, exotic and a marketing potential, but the actor also argues that exotic may not be the right concept and that the Sami may not want to be hosts on those terms. The problem of speaking on behalf of the Sami is also noted and the actor admits that she knows far too little to actually say what the Sami interest is. At the same time it is worth noting that the narrative assumes that there can be *one* Sami interest in relation to the Olympic project.

²⁵⁵ jeg tror absolutt at et OL i Tromsø hadde vært nødt å presentere seg som både norsk og samisk, og det tror jeg og de var veldig bevisst på altså. Fordi jeg tror det som Tromsø har som man jo måtte markedsføre oss på for å arrangere et annerledes OL det er jo det at vi er to kulturer her altså, opprinnelig, og... Altså det er jo eksotisk at vi har, at samene bor her, og det blir liksom feil måte å si det på, de har jo alltid bodd her, stort sett før vi kom, og men det at vi, ja at vi har to kulturer som er sidestilt og likestilt, det tror jeg vil være en veldig markeds... En fordel i markedsføringa av et OL i Tromsø. Hvorvidt samene ville føle at et OL ville være noe de ville være med på å markedsføre, det vet jeg jo ikke. Om de ville synes at dette her er noe som er litt utenfor, det er vel ikke så veldig mange, jeg vet ikke hvordan jeg skal si det, eller jeg vet faktisk altfor lite om hva slags forhold den samiske befolkninga har til OL. Jeg går utifra at de er like interesserte som etniske nordmenn er, men om de har, jeg vet ikke, nei det vet jeg faktisk altfor lite om, så det kan jeg ikke si noe om, hvordan de ville forholde seg til det, men at et OL-selskap ville prøve å få det samiske profilert det er jeg 100% overbevist om. Kanskje de gjorde opp regnskap uten vert, det vet jeg ikke.

7.3 Stories about local and national media

The Olympic debate in Tromsø was to a great extent a media event. As discussed above, the debate started when the plans to put forward a bid were announced to local and national media at a press conference from the Fløya Mountain. As such the Olympic project could fittingly be described as an example of “mediatized governance” (Hajer 2009). Most people first learned about the bid from media reports about this press conference, and many would reminisce about where they were when they heard the news when asked by me what their initial reaction to the project was. Greg Nielsen (2009) has noted that the intended audience of newspaper articles plays an important role in dialogic framing, and that this framing also influences on how a given topic is represented. Reports about the Olympic debate can be seen as an interface between politics of propinquity and politics of connectivity, as the “same” news were sometimes reported in many different newspapers and other media both locally and nationally, but sometimes in different ways with different audiences in mind. Barnett argues that media plays a vital role as “the ‘space of politics’ implied by the idea of the public sphere” (Barnett 2004: 190). As such, the different local and national media can be seen as representing multiple and differentiated public spheres that provide multiple spaces for place politics.

The role of the media was commented on by many interviewees, and it was also frequently discussed as part of the actual debate itself. One topic that was mentioned by several interviewees was the role played by *Nordlys* and its editor Hans Kristian Amundsen. Amundsen played an important role in propagating and defending the project, not only through his own editorials but also through his role as a commentator in other media, especially debates that were sent on radio and television through national broadcasting. Many interviewees claimed that *Nordlys* had been biased towards the Olympic project and that not only the editorials but also the general news items had been partial in favour of Tromsø 2018. One municipal councillor put it like this:

It was actually clear from the beginning that the result would be a no. Even though we have a newspaper here, Nordlys, who managed to represent the matter in a totally different way.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ ...egentlig i fra begynnelsen av så var det egentlig klart at det ville bli et nei. Selv om vi har en herværende avis, *Nordlys*, som klarte da å fremstille det hele på en helt annen måte.

Interviewees from No to the Olympics talked about *Nordlys* as a difficult arena to access, and described this as a democratic deficit in relation to the Olympic debate in particular. They argued that the number two newspaper *Bladet Tromsø* (currently named *iTromsø*) had been more willing to present their views and write about their meetings and public actions. Carrie Buchanan (2009) argues that daily newspapers play an important role in constructing a local sense of place, both through form and content. Although I do not have enough empirical material to make any substantiated claims about the content and form of the two different newspapers' coverage of the Olympic debate, I would suggest that the fact that Tromsø has two daily newspapers may be one of several contextual factors that enabled several different stories of place to be voiced and thus contributed to the intensity of the local Olympic debate.

The television-documentary "Behind closed doors – the game about the Olympics" by the national broadcasting corporation NRK played an important role in the debate, both locally and nationally. According to Hanstad (2008) the documentary and the media critique that followed it changed the public's attitude to Tromsø 2018, and this again caused politicians like Trond Giske to become less supportive. Hanstad claims that the economic arguments based on the external evaluation committee's report would not have been so damaging for Tromsø 2018 if central politicians still wanted the project to continue. However, because of the documentary Tromsø 2018 was no longer seen as an attractive project to support, and Giske along with Støre and Prime Minister Stoltenberg chose to sit silently and watch as the critics in the Norwegian Confederation of Sports cancelled the Olympic bid. One of the interviewees from No to the Olympics likewise argued that the documentary was one of the main reasons why the project failed.

*But it wasn't about the project, it was only about the process, the process was actually disreputed because of the methods.*²⁵⁷

The interviewee emphasized that the oppositional network had had nothing to do with the documentary and didn't know what was coming when it was first broadcasted. He also expressed surprise at the way influential actors in Tromsø 2018 had let down their guard and showed off "less sympathetic" character-traits.

²⁵⁷ Men den gikk jo ikke på prosjektet, den gikk jo bare på prosessen, at det var, prosessen kom i vanry rett og slett pga metodene.

Hanstad also discusses the so-called SMS-scandal in which the national newspaper VG made public an SMS which supposedly had been forwarded to Truls Dæhli by Bjørge Stensbøl. The SMS, which congratulated Tromsø 2018 on the support they had gotten from VG in January 2007 was signed “Jonas” and appeared to be written by Foreign Secretary Jonas Gahr Støre. Although Gahr Støre denied having sent the SMS and Stensbøl claimed that he did not remember it, an impression was created that the government had been unfairly meddling in the decision that the Confederation was going to make about a national candidate city. Hanstad argues that because of this the national politicians became very wary of any contact with Tromsø 2018 in the following months. His assessment is backed by the following quote from one of the interviewees from Tromsø 2018, who described how this wariness made their job more difficult:

Yes, we felt that the Ministry of the Environment was... The Ministry of the Environment was interested but somewhat wait-and-see. I mean they showed a positive interest towards our initiatives, but at the same time they kept that distance which many did towards us unfortunately, in the important political phase when things were in the end depoliticised. Because the politicians, after that NRK documentary, when the politicians saw that in order to have anything to do with us, in order not to appear to be abused or lobbied by Tromsø 2018, we couldn't have any dialogue after a while. And it was that distance which made me feel that we weren't able to massage in well enough the knowledge and the understanding which these decision-makers had for the project, not well enough, we didn't have enough time to work.²⁵⁸

The interviewee added that because of this critique from the media politics had been almost chemically removed from the issue, a process that she described as “brutal” in terms of democracy. In this account, democracy requires that social actors like Tromsø 2018 should be able to access and have influence on political decisionmakers. Putting forward information and even “massaging in” knowledge and understandings is represented as a healthy and necessary part of democratic decision making processes. The critical focus in various media following the NRK-documentary had thus not only damaged the possibilities of Tromsø 2018 but also made the process less democratic according to this interviewee.

²⁵⁸ Ja vi følte at miljødepartementet var... Miljødepartementet var interessert men avventende. Altså de utviste en positiv interesse for de initiale tiltakene vi hadde men holdt samtidig den avstanden som så mange gjorde til oss dessverre, i den viktige politiske fasen hvor til slutt ting ble apolitiseret. Fordi politikerne, etter det NRK Brennpunkt programmet, når politikerne så at for å ha noe med oss å gjøre, for at de ikke skulle fremstå som misbrukt eller lobbyet av Tromsø 2018 at vi fikk jo ikke dialog etter hvert. Og det var den avstanden som gjorde at jeg ikke følte at vi klarte å massere godt nok inn i den kunnskapen og de forståelsene som disse beslutningstakerne hadde for prosjektet, ikke godt nok, vi fikk ikke god nok tid til å jobbe.

7.4 Stories about why the bid was cancelled

Int: There is no doubt in my mind that there has been a raw power game going on and that there have been strong forces that never wanted Northern Norway and Tromsø [to have this], no doubt. And you could discuss whose event this is, is it the Confederation of Sport 's event or is it the government who has to decide how this should be done? And otherwise, well, the Olympic decision in the Confederation steering committee, it's got a little to do with democracy. Those who are in the Eastern regions, perhaps they are 50-60 percent of Norway's population. And in a democracy there should be a reasonable distribution based on where people live. And let's say the board of the Confederation says that we are going to have 60 percent of the representatives in the committee, which means that 40 percent of the committee are from outside the Eastern region. So they can say that it's democracy which decides, we've got 60 percent of the population living in the Eastern region, we are 60 percent of the committee, we can make a democratic decision. (...) But it is a bit of a paradox to me... (...)

IMK: So are you saying that we who live in Northern Norway tend to get a little squashed, is that it?

Int: Yes, we are a tenth of the population, that means we get a tenth of the representatives in boards and committees, in the parliament and so on, and when you think about it like that one will never have the possibility to develop other parts of the country. They will only look at it as expenditure.²⁵⁹

The Olympic project was cancelled in October 2008 after the steering committee of the Norwegian Confederation of Sports decided to withdraw their application for a financial guarantee from the government. Because of the Confederation's decision, the Olympic project was never formally deliberated by the Norwegian Government or in parliament. The withdrawal of the application was met with great frustration and anger in Northern Norwegian media. Not only avowed Olympic proponents, but also many who had been more sceptical

²⁵⁹ jeg er ikke i tvil om at det har vært et rått maktspill der og at det har vært sterke krefter som aldri har egentlig vært innstilt på Nord Norge og Tromsø, det tviler jeg ikke på. Og man kan diskutere hvem er det egentlig sitt arrangement dette her, er det idretten sitt arrangement eller er det regjeringa som må bestemme dette her, hvordan skal dette her gjøres? Ellers så er det her, ja OL avgjørelsen i idrettsstyret, det har litt med demokrati å gjøre. Det som er nå, i østlandsområdet, der bor kanskje 50-60 % av Norges befolkning. Og i et demokrati så skal det være rimelig fordelt etter hvor folk bor. Og la oss nå si at idrettstyret sier at vi skal ha 60 % av representantene i et idrettstyret, dermed er det da sagt at 40 % av idrettstyret er utenfor østlandsområdet. De kan da si at det er demokrati som bestemmer, vi har 60 % av befolkninga i østlandsområdet, vi er 60 % av styret, vi tar en demokratisk avgjørelse. (...) Men det er litt tankekors for meg altså. (...)

IMK: Tenker du at vi som bor i Nord Norge blir litt skvis, er det...?

Inf: Ja, vi er en tiendedel av befolkninga, da skal vi ha en tiendedel av representanter i råd og utvalg, i storting osv. og da, når man tenker sånn så har man aldri mulighet til å få utviklet andre deler av landet altså. Da ser de bare på det som en ut... Kostnad.

towards the project, argued that the decision-making process had been undemocratic, that the Norwegian Confederation of Sports was biased against Northern Norway and that the issue was too important to be left to the Confederation. Among the actors that I interviewed there were many who shared this verdict. One interviewee, who had been living in neighbouring Finnmark County at the time that the decision was made, put it like this:

No, I did think that there is a very unfortunate mix here, I mean it was after all she as president and the steering committee who have asked, and they've had a process with several bidding towns, they have chosen Tromsø and then you pull out the plug, my perception was that it wasn't quite a fair game. And whether it was the best that could have happened anyway in the long run I can't say, but I do think that they interfered and made a political decision which I think they shouldn't, they shouldn't have meddled in that at all, and that was how I perceived the media in Finnmark too, that that's what people here meant too, that there are someone here who does, I mean who takes a stand and may think that they are more important than they really are.²⁶⁰

The expression “not a fair game” was used by many interviewees. In this quote it seems to refer both to the process within the Norwegian Confederation of Sports, and to the impression that the steering committee in abandoning the Olympic project had been trespassing into a realm of societal politics, because the consequences of their decision was too far-reaching. The quote draws on two separate but intertwined stories, with two different main characters. The first story focused on the internal power structures and struggles within the Confederation. The woman referred to was Tove Paule, who was President of the Confederation when the bid was cancelled. She had been elected shortly after Tromsø had been chosen as the Norwegian candidate. In the documentary *Behind Closed Doors* Paule (who was then an ordinary board member) was shown as having been supporting Oslo's candidature and showing disbelief when Tromsø was chosen. The representation of the internal process within the Confederation as biased was by many interviewees focused on a narrative about the President as having never supported the bid, and that she had been waiting for a chance to get out of the project. The most complete version of this story was presented to me by an interviewee connected to Tromsø 2018:

²⁶⁰ Nei jeg oppfattet jo at her er det ei veldig uheldig blanding, altså det er tross alt hun som president og styret som har bedt, og de har fått en prosess med flere søkerbyer, de har valgt ut Tromsø og så trekker du ut pluggen, jeg oppfattet at det var ikke helt rent spill. Og om det var det beste som kunne ha skjedd likevel på sikt, det kan jeg ikke svare for, men jeg synes at de gikk inn og tok en politisk avgjørelse som jeg mener de ikke, de burde ikke ha lagt seg borti den i det hele tatt, og det var det som jeg oppfattet i media i Finnmark også at det var det som folk her også mente, at her er det noen som gjør, altså tar noen grep og tror at de er kanskje viktigere enn det de egentlig er.

Yes, the image of that, it is the most unhappy moment which Tove Paule have ever had as a Norwegian sports' manager, that was when she as a member of the sports' committee lost the vote about where the Olympics should be. If one looks at that documentary and sees that body language, and the contempt she shows towards [another board member who had been lobbying for Tromsø] and the tiny majority, then one can also understand her joy two years later by being able to withdraw the application. It is the entire image of Norwegian Sport. I mean the contempt against Tromsø's application, "up there, those up there", when she lost the vote 6-6, and the joy by being able to stop it two years later, it's completely interwoven and that's really the answer. She was only waiting for any opportunity, she never wanted this project to prosper, she was hoping that it would fail all the way, she was happy whenever there were conflicts, she was happy whenever there were indications that there might be a slightly higher bill on any of the facilities, I mean an internal happiness, and internal joy that I've never seen the like of. This is just an image of Norwegian sport, this is why it could never have hardly worked out, with a sports' president who was pleased every time there was trouble up here.²⁶¹

The story as it was told in this account was confirmed by other interviewees from Tromsø 2018, although some were more moderate than others. One former employee expressed regret at the way that Paule had been represented in Northern Norwegian media, saying that she had been unfairly vilified, but adding that she had hoped for more support and interest from the president than what they had received. The same interviewee argued that the main problem with the process within the Confederation was that the board should have made a unanimous decision about which town that should be their candidate. As it was there was a lack of unity and legitimacy for the project right from the start, and she said that this had been very frustrating for the organization as they tried to implement a project that the formal bidder had not really wanted to realize.

Among the Olympic opponents, the story about the Sport President and the Norwegian Confederation of Sports as the project's nemesis was strongly rejected. One municipal

²⁶¹ Ja bildet av det, det er det ulykkeligste øyeblikket Tove Paule har hatt som idrettsleder i Norge, det var da hun som medlem av idrettstyret tapte avstemminga om hvor OL skulle være. Hvis man ser på den dokumentaren og ser det kroppsspråket, og den forakten hun viser mot han [navn], og det lille ja-flertallet, så forstår man også gleden hennes to år senere ved å kunne trekke søknaden. Det er hele bildet av norsk idrett. Altså forakten mot Tromsø sin søknad, "der oppe, de oppi der" da hun tapte avstemminga 6-6, og gleden av å kunne stoppe det to år senere, den henger så, den er helt sammenvevd og det er egentlig svaret. Hun ventet bare på enhver mulighet, hun ville aldri dette prosjektet det beste, hun håpet det skulle gå galt hele veien, hun var glad hver gang det var konflikter, hun var glad hver gang det kom antydninger om litt høyere regninger på noen av anleggene, altså en indre glede, en indre jubel som jeg aldri har sett maken til. Det er bare et bilde på norsk idrett, derfor kunne dette aldri i verden knapt gått bra, med en idrettspresident som godtet seg over hver gang det var vanskeligheter her oppe.

councillor argued that this story went against the norms of formal democracy, in a similar vein as that of the central proponent quoted earlier on the ideals of democracy:

*I think it indicated that one may be a bit of a bad loser, that one attacks the process and in a way won't accept the decision which was made.*²⁶²

One of the members of No to the Olympics also argued that those who blamed the final result on Paule were not only bad losers but also male chauvinists:

*I thought it was, they have been incredibly poor losers, they've been, they have revealed their reactionary attitudes through caricaturing a democratically elected leader who is a woman and an outspoken and brave leader because she disagrees with them, if she had agreed with them she would have been Brigitte Bardot or Sophia Loren, she would have been the most fantastic woman in the world, but they in fact also use a kind of unpleasant contempt for women and the idea that she is so ugly and try to make her into almost an enemy image of a witch. Incredibly embarrassing to see these losers stand forth and try to search for all kinds of external explanations for why they have done a garbage job. Twice they've spilled dozens of millions of kroner to deliver an application that is so badly done that even a child can tear it apart on formalities. And we've done it twice, it's been done twice in the formal arena, and still they can't sit down and pick up the mirror and say sorry, we're not good enough.*²⁶³

The latter quote shows that there are two competing stories about why the Olympic project failed, and also what is at stake for the actors in asserting one or the other. The interviewee from No to the Olympics was telling a story about how the central actors in Tromsø 2018 had been foiled by their own incompetence, using strong words like losers and garbage job to describe them. He also claimed that the actors had revealed themselves as male chauvinists by attacking the female Sports' President. The interviewee stressed that the people behind Tromsø 2018 had twice put forward an application that he claimed had been "picked apart" by himself and his compatriots, followed by a formal dismissal of the applications by professional actors. This statement plays into the future power struggle in Tromsø. The people

²⁶² Jeg synes det vitner om at man kanskje er litt dårlig taper, at man skal angripe prosessen og at man på en måte ikke aksepterer at det vedtaket ble fattet.

²⁶³ Jeg syntes det var, de har vært utrolig dårlige tapere, de har vært, de avslørte sine reaksjonære holdninger gjennom å karikere en demokratisk valgt leder som er kvinne og en tydelig og modig leder fordi hun er uenig med dem, hadde hun vært enig med dem så hadde hun jo vært Brigitte Bardot eller Sophia Loren, da hadde hun vært den mest fantastiske kvinne i verden, men de bruker altså også litt sånn ubehagelig kvinneforakt og det at hun er så støgg og prøver å lage henne nærmest til et fiendebilde av en heks. Utrolig pinlig å se disse taperne stå frem og prøve å lete etter alle mulige utenforliggende forklaringer på at de har gjort en søppeljobb. To ganger har de sølt bort titalls millioner kroner på å levere en søknad som er så dårlig at selv et barn kan rive den i filler på formelt grunnlag. Og vi har gjort det to ganger, det er gjort to ganger i det formelle rommet, og likevel kan de ikke sette seg ned og ta opp speilet og si sorry, vi er ikke gode nok.

behind Tromsø 2018 were to a large degree the local political and business elites, and branding them as incompetent would reduce their influence. The story also confirms and draws on an implicit link between legitimacy and competence, which means that the “losers” in Tromsø 2018 were not only “not good enough”, but by inference should not continue in their current positions of leadership.

The other story about the final decision-making process focused on the question about whether the Confederation should have the right to decide on whether or not the Olympic project should be realized. This story usually built on and confirmed the story about the Confederation’s lack of internal democracy, but the primary focus was on the formal proceedings and the fact that an Olympic bid would be far more than a sports’ arrangement. According to a municipal councillor:

*I reacted strongly against the way it was done, the way it was delegated to eh, such an organization as that sports’ committee you know, it was very bizarre, and it was the strictly formal issue, it is very bizarre that a society development project, it would have been that in any case, far more than a sports’ celebration, that a society development project is delegated to such a, the sports committee I mean, that the Golf Confederation should be allowed to sit and decide such things, I thought that was in the best case scenario undemocratic, and quite cowardly.*²⁶⁴

The interviewee was adamant that the Olympic bid was a society development project, and that as such it should have been deliberated and decided on by the Norwegian Government and parliament. This was the expected procedure, which had also been proposed by the Ministry of Finance when they commissioned the external evaluation of the bid. Even interviewees who had been fairly sceptical towards the Olympic project drew on this story in which the decision making process was questioned. As another municipal councillor put it:

*No, one may say a lot about the way it happened! And why the Government then said that all right, now that the Confederation of Sports, the actual political process or decision making process, it wasn’t very good.*²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ Jeg reagerte veldig på måten det ble gjort på, måten det ble delegert til eh, en sånn organisasjon som det der idrettstyret altså, det var veldig underlig, og det var det rent formelle da, det er veldig underlig at et samfunnsbyggende prosjekt, det ville det ha vært uansett, langt utover en idrettsfest, sant, at et samfunnsbyggende prosjekt delegeres til et sånt idrettstyret altså, at golfforbundet skulle få sitte og bestemme sånne ting, det syntes jeg var i beste fall udemokratisk, og ganske feigt.

²⁶⁵ Nei man kan jo si mye om måten det skjedde på! Og hvorfor regjeringa da sa at okei, da, nå har idrettstyret, selve den politiske prosessen eller beslutningsprosessen, den var ikke særlig god.

The decision by the Confederation to withdraw the application happened at an extraordinary committee meeting, which had been called shortly after the evaluation report was made public. Prior to this final meeting there had been several signs in the media that important decision-takers within the Confederation had been sceptical and had wanted to set an upper limit on how much of the development expenses which would be taken out of the annual grants which the Confederation received from the Government. Their demands had been met with rejection from the responsible Minister of Culture Trond Giske, and many interviewees argued that the Government had actually wanted the Confederation to scrap the bid. One interviewee speculated that decisions had been made during the Olympic Games in Beijing in August 2008, where Trond Giske had been together with the Sport President. Another argued:

*It was in fact Giske who didn't want this. And he avoided an uncomfortable job by giving it to someone who was more than willing to do it.*²⁶⁶

This account can be interpreted as drawing on a story about the political process as a game, in which the main motive for politicians is to try to maximize their wins and minimize their losses:

*Some try to make it seem like the politicians were being orderly, but I think they simply pushed the problem ahead of them, they got away from it easily. The political risk involved in supporting it was bigger than the reward for supporting it. There were few votes to be won, and few votes to lose actually. So it was, I think it was very practical to do it like this.*²⁶⁷

When discussing Giske and the Government, it seemed that the interviewees were moved by their positions in party politics rather than by their stand on the Olympic bid. For example one interviewee from Tromsø 2018 with a Labour background insisted that Giske's lack of support had been caused by the negative signals sent by the Confederation, whereas another Tromsø 2018 interviewee who supported one of the opposition parties in parliament, claimed that Trond Giske had used the Sport President ("as a marionette") in order to get away from having to scrap the bid himself. According to a municipal councillor from the Progress Party the main reason why the project failed was that the Government had not shown any interest. He said that local Labour politicians had been very keen, but the national Labour leadership

²⁶⁶ Det var jo Giske som ikke ville dette her. Og han unngikk en ubehagelig jobb med å gi det til noen som mer enn gjerne gjorde det.

²⁶⁷ Noen prøver å fremstille det som ryddig fra politikernes side, men jeg tror de skjøv problemstillingen foran seg rett og slett, de slapp lett fra det. Den politiske risikoen ved å gå inn for det var større enn gevinsten ved å gå inn for det. Det var lite stemmer å vinne og få stemmer å tape egentlig. Så det var, jeg tror det var veldig greit å gjøre det sånn her.

had not shared this enthusiasm and they had therefore been watching passively as the Confederation split and then said no.

Thus I actually think that one should thank the Government for the fact that it didn't happen, because they were so passive.²⁶⁸

7.5 Stories about regional disconnectivity

In the introduction to this chapter I quoted an interviewee who claimed that the endurance of a North-South dimension to place politics was the most important lesson to be learned from studying the Olympic process. In this section I will consider this claim together with other stories about Northern Norway's political relationship to the South. I focus on how actors perceived the potentials and limitations of place based politics, and how these stories contribute to constructing and negotiating those potentials and limitations.

One of the actors who had worked for Tromsø 2018 drew on a story about a long history of marginalization, arguing that although some of the socio-cultural discrimination against Northern Norway had been removed there were still the hard facts of structural differences to overcome. She described the debate about Southern prejudices as a rude awakening for some:

There may be somebody who have lived a few years in the 1990s and thought perhaps things weren't like that anymore, because politically and culturally when we go to Oslo we are not ashamed of being from Northern Norway anymore, so we thought that everything was okay now, sort of. You're allowed to speak with a dialect in national broadcasting, right, Northern Norwegian singer-songwriter traditions and there are houses along the shores and everything is okay. But things haven't actually changed, there is a tremendous underrepresentation of Northlanders in the real decision making forums, there is an under-communication of Northern Norwegian interest, we can't define our interests up here, we fight town against town and we have no control of our own struggles, so that's what infuriated us, because we woke up to that reality and we don't want to accept it.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ Så jeg synes jo faktisk at man har like mye å takke regjeringa for at det ikke ble noe, fordi de var så passive.

²⁶⁹ Så er det kanskje noen som har levd noen år på nittitallet og trodd at kanskje ting ikke var sånn lenger, fordi at politisk og kulturelt så skjemmes vi ikke av å være nordnorsk i Oslo lenger, så da trodde vi at alt hadde ordnet seg liksom på en måte. Det er lov å snakke dialekt i NRK, ikke sant, nordnorsk visesang og det står hus i fjærsteinan og alt er greit. Men det har jo ikke ordnet seg, det er jo en veldig ulikevekt i hvor mange nordlendinger som er i beslutningsfora der ting virkelig skjer, det er en underkommunisering av hva som er nordnorske interesser, vi klarer ikke å definere hva som er våre interesser her oppe, vi kjemper by mot by og vi har ikke grepet om vår egen interessekamp, så det er det vi ble så forbannet for, for vi våknet faktisk opp til den realiteten der men vi vil ikke erkjenne den

This account draws on a distinction between politics of identities and politics of interests. The actor argues that although cultural expressions associated with Northern Norway are not stigmatized in the same way that she claims they were in the 1950s and 60s, this does not mean that Northern Norwegian interests are better represented in the state capital. A similar point has been made by Brox (1998) who argues that subsidization and structural reorganization of Northern Norway has more to do with class politics and economic interests than with cultural prejudices. The actor quoted above was a little reluctant to use the term “North-South-division”, saying that the public debate about this issue had gotten out of hand. She described it as “a bit of a kindergarten” with people “shouting and screaming and swearing and war headlines in *Nordlys* and bloody Southerners and I don’t know what it all was. I thought that was almost embarrassing.”²⁷⁰ This referred to the content and form of the public debate in the final stage of the Olympic process, which several actors, both proponents and opponents, expressed a sense of unease about.

As one opponent put it:

*On the one hand I have no doubt that there has been a raw game of power with strong forces who never wanted Tromsø, but at the same time there has been a whining politics, I find it terribly uncomfortable and that takes us back to the old Northern Norwegian whining politics against the ones in the South who don’t... And I do think Hans Kristian Amundsen has been terrible in his running this campaign about North-South and has very much set us back.*²⁷¹

In this narrative there is a sense of the discussion and the “whining” as being detrimental to Northern Norway as a region because it reinforces a story about a poor and heavily subsidized region that was discussed by Arbo (1997).

A third opponent claimed that the entire debate about a North-South division had been created by the editor of *Nordlys* as a diversion from the actual facts of the closing process, and he argued that he had even felt manipulated into feeling discriminated against himself for a while:

²⁷⁰ hyle og skrike og bannes og store krigsoverskrifter i *Nordlys* og faens søringer, jeg vet ikke hva det var som sto alt. Den syntes jeg var nesten pinlig. Det synes jeg var litt barnehage.

²⁷¹ Sånn at på den ene sida så er jeg ikke i tvil om at det har vært et rått maktspill der du har hatt sterke krefter som aldri har hatt noe ønske om Tromsø, men samtidig så synes jeg jo det har vært en sytepolitikk, jeg synes en skrekkelig sånn ubehagelig, og da har vi vært tilbake på den gamle nordnorske sytepolitikken liksom mot dem sørpå som ikke, og jeg synes jo han Hans Kristian Amundsen har vært helt grusom med å hause opp denne her kampanjen nord-sør og satt oss kraftig tilbake.

Yes, it was a deliberate attempt to derail the entire debate by Nordlys and [the editor]. Because it would, and he did manage to do that, even I who have been opposed to the Olympics got a little angry and think that of course we could have managed, there's nothing about Northern Norway being that much worse than people in the South, so he succeeded with that, to get a kind of mud-slinging debate, between the Southerners are whining and the Northerners are lazy and all such things that was no good, it only made things worse if you ask me and perhaps even increased the negative attitudes down South. (...) So I think it was a derailment by Nordlys and it was well-arranged and worked well in order not to take the debate about the Government's role, they derailed with the front page they ran and made an artificial North-South divide, I don't think that was the core of the issue at all, but at least they got attention away from the Government's passive attitude in this matter.²⁷²

According to this account the divide between the North and South was artificial and constructed to serve a political purpose. One of the members of No to the Olympic who was also a member of the Socialist Left Party claimed that they had predicted that this debate would come up if the project was stopped:

And we predicted it, we wrote a letter to the editor, I wonder if it was during 2014, we wrote a letter to the editor where we said that if the Norwegian Confederation of Sports rejects this the Northlanders or the Olympic proponents will say that it is only because they still look down on us, you see, there was something about, there were many such discussions that were brought into this debate and it consisted of many things and it was difficult to get to the bottom of it.²⁷³

The actor argued that she had expected the story about regional prejudice to be activated. While post-facto claims of expectations should not be given too much weight, the statement can perhaps be seen as a sign of the degree to which the story about Southern prejudices is established as an explanation in Northern Norway. The actor also described the way many different stories tended to be brought into the Olympic debate, which as she said made it difficult to get to the bottom of, because there were so many different arguments in play at the

²⁷² Ja, det var jo et bevisst forsøk på å avspore hele debatten fra *Nordlys* og [redaktøren]. Fordi at det, og det klarte han jo, fordi han fikk selv jeg som har vært imot OL til å bli litt forbannet og tenke at selvfølgelig kunne vi ha klart det og det, det er jo ikke noe i Nord Norge at vi er så mye dårligere enn folk sør og så han lyktes jo med det, å få en sånn skitkastingsdebatt, mellom søringene syt så mye og nordlendingene er latsabber og det her som ikke førte noe godt med seg, som bare bidro til å gjøre ting enda verre spør du meg og kanskje bare øke de negative holdningene nedpå sørlandet. (...) Så jeg tror det var ei avsporing, det var ei avsporing fra *Nordlys* og den kom velregissert og bra for å slippe debatten om regjeringa sin rolle, så sporet de av med førstesida og lagde en kunstig nord-sør-konflikt, jeg tror ikke det er det det har dreid seg om i det hele tatt, men de fikk i hvert fall fokuset bort fra regjeringa sin passive holdning i saken.

²⁷³ Og vi forutså jo det, vi skrev jo et leserinnlegg, jeg lurte på om det var under 2014 så skrev vi et leserinnlegg der vi sa at dersom idrettstyret går imot dette her så vil det, så vil nordlendingene eller OL-tilhengerne si at det er bare fordi at de ser fortsatt ned på oss, skjønner du, altså det var noe med, det var mange sånne diskusjoner som ble løftet inn i denne her debatten og den besto av mange ting og det var vanskelig å komme til bunns i den.

same time. This had also made it difficult in her opinion for central politicians from her own party to take a stand against the bid, precisely because they did not want to be seen as biased against Northern Norway or as working against regional development.

There were several of the Olympic proponents who expressed a sense of unease about the North-South debate. One actor who had been working for Tromsø Romsa 2018 drew on two different and somewhat contradictory stories about the claim that Southern prejudices had caused the project's demise. On the one hand she said that she thought the public debate about the end of the project had been somewhat exaggerated, but argued that she could understand why it turned out that way.

I do think the closing process showed a great deal of sore feelings from the Northlanders, a massive "yes, now they're running over us once again" kind of attitude, and yes, I can understand why. We've had the same struggles over the Polar Environment Centre, the University, and the Mayor of [municipality south of Tromsø] called me and said "now I've read your report and this is the same story all over again, I've been fighting for a Pilot School in Bardufoss for 20 years, all my adult life, and I've been met with just the same arguments." (...) So you see, it has opened up some wounds.²⁷⁴

On the other hand, she said she could also understand the attitudes of some of her former colleagues and friends from the South, and the Southern athletes that she had been working with in Tromsø Romsa 2018, who according to her didn't quite understand what the fuss was all about. She referred to one athlete whom she said used to put things quite bluntly:

He says "You Northlanders, you're always whining so much", and he says that in order to provoke me of course, but there's something about the attitude that I feel I've been met with. OK, we don't have that much businesses up North, and what was supposed to be our flag carrier, the Coastal Steamer, we almost managed to run that ashore, and then we can't even get the calculations on the Olympic bid right, damn it, and it feels like being branded as a loser, I feel that. Which is why I am so concerned that we have to build these facilities and then we have to learn to crawl before we can walk, we have to show that we can do it. (...) We mustn't, I don't think we can cry out any more about what we want, we just have to show that we can deliver. If we want this loser brand off our foreheads. Yes, you can say that many processes are unfair, and they

²⁷⁴ Jeg synes jo den sluttprosessen viste voldsom sårhet hos nordlendingene, et voldsomt "ja, nå ble vi overkjørt nok en gang"-holdning, og ja jeg kan forstå det. De samme fightene har vært tatt i fht polarmiljøsesteret, universitet og ordføreren i [kommune sør for Tromsø] ringte meg fra Målselv og sa "nå har jeg lest rapporten deres og dette er samme historien på nytt igjen, jeg har slåss for flyskolen på Bardufoss i 20 år, en mannsalder, og jeg møter de samme argumentene!" (...) Så det er klart at det har vært med på å åpne noen sår der.

*are, but now I think we have to achieve something before we start crying out again.*²⁷⁵

The actor seems to argue that on the one hand there are prejudices, but on the other hand some of them are a little true, and the only way to counter them is to prove them wrong by working harder and “learning to crawl before we can walk”. This account can also be understood as an admittance to the discrepancy between the expenses calculated in the bid and those of the evaluation committee was an embarrassment, which Tromsø Romsa 2018 had to accept responsibility for.

Another Tromsø Romsa 2018 employee, while also admitting that the organization should have given some notice to the public that the calculated costs would have to be increased, argued that the way the increased expenses had been interpreted in central media was in itself an expression of prejudice and conflicts of interest between the North and the South:

*If you look at what has happened this last week there has been a lot of focus on the new Holmenkollen ski jump [in Oslo], it is Norway’s most expensive sports’ facility, right. It was supposed to, when it was started it was supposed to cost around 50 million kroner. And now the price tag is 1.3 billion. And if you look at that, and consider how there have been only a few negative newspaper reports about it, in the Oslo media mostly, and they have framed it as a budget phenomenon, as in “whoops, this was slightly more expensive than planned”. While when Tromsø presented their calculations that were 10 years into the future, you were almost branded as an idiot. I mean, these were budget overruns that hadn’t even happened, because nothing had been done yet, but you got branded as an idiot, while this which is the biggest and most dramatic budget overrun of all times becomes just a tiny notice nationally. This is also about geopolitics, about where in the world we are. When we miscalculate, as they say, we are idiots who can’t do maths. But when you have an actual budget overrun of 50 times [the original budget], in the middle of the capital, where the national newspapers, the parliament, the financial milieu are places, that’s just something that has to be expected. So that’s an interesting observation.*²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ Han sier ”dere nordlendinger dere syter nå så voldsomt”, det er for å provosere meg selvfølgelig, men det er noe med at den holdninga som jeg føler at jeg møter, at OK, det er ikke all verdens med næringsliv nordpå, det som skulle være vårt flaggskip som er hurtigruta det klarer vi nesten å kjøre på grunnen, det ser sånn ut, og så klarer vi faen ikke å regne heller på den OL-søknaden, det er liksom taperstempel i panna, jeg føler det. Det vi ikke må gjøre er å sette oss ned og syte, nå er det på tide å brette opp ermene og levere resultater. Det er derfor jeg er så opptatt av at vi må få disse anleggene på plass og så må vi lære å krype før vi kan gå, vise at vi kan. (...) Vi kan ikke, jeg tror ikke vi kan rope mer om at vi skal ha, nå må vi bare vise at vi kan levere. Hvis vi vil ha dette taperstempelet bort av panna vår. Så kan vi påstå at mange prosesser er veldig urettferdige, og de er det, men nå tror jeg vi skal få til noe før vi hyler og roper ut neste gang.

²⁷⁶ Hvis du ser siste uka så har det jo vært knyttet til Holmenkollen-anlegget har det vært mye fokus på den bakken, det er jo Norges dyreste enkeltidrettsanlegg, sant. Den skulle altså, altså den skulle ved dens spede start

A third Tromsø Romsa 2018 employee said that he had felt somehow mocked or ridiculed as a result of the way the Olympic project had been portrayed in the media. This came in response to my question about whether he thought anyone had lost anything from the Olympic process:

I think that, and I have noticed it myself when I've been down South, that it hasn't been very much fun to tell people what you've been working with. You appear as someone who can't do calculations and who sends SMS-messages out of hand and... Yes, facing the tabloid representation of us has not been a lot of fun at times.²⁷⁷

He argued that the sense of being slightly looked down upon had been present throughout the project in his interaction with the Norwegian Confederation of Sports and other actors in Southern Norway.

It generally felt a little as if, not all the time but often enough, as if you came from a small fishing village where there were Oluf²⁷⁸ clones running around. That is probably slightly exaggerated, but where you had no competence, no airport or nothing else, kind of the end of the world.²⁷⁹

To sum up the discussion so far, the Olympic proponents in varying degrees drew on a story about the Northern region as having been marginalized and Othered by the South, and referred to Southern prejudices as well as to stories about conflicting interests between North and South as an explanation for the Confederation's decision to abandon the bid. These stories draw on a sense of political disconnectivity between Northern Norway and the decision-making institutions in the South. The Olympic opponents on the other hand claimed that the

koste i størrelsesordenen 50 millioner kroner. Og nå koster den 1,3 mrd. Og hvis man legger til, hvis man legger merke til, det har vært et par negative oppslag på det i media, men stort sett i Oslo-media, og stort sett da som en budsjett-fenomen, som altså, oi, dette blir litt dyrere enn planlagt. Mens at da Tromsø la fram sine tall som egentlig ikke skulle gjelde før om 10 år, så fikk man nesten idiotstempelet. (mm) Altså, overskridelser som ikke har kommet engang, fordi man har ikke satt en eneste spade i bakken, fikk idiotstempelet, mens det er tidenes største og mest dramatiske kostnadsoverskridelse blir egentlig bare nasjonal liten parantes. Det handler også om geopolitikk, hvor i verden bor vi? Når vi regner feil, som man sier, så er vi idioter som kan ikke regne. Men når man får en rent faktisk kostnadsoverskridelse på 50 ganger, i hovedstadens midte, altså Akersgata, Stortinget, Børs og finansmiljøene i Oslo, så er det bare noe man må regne med. Så det er en interessant observasjon.

²⁷⁷ Jeg tror at, og det har jeg merket selv når jeg har vært sørpå, at det har ikke vært spesielt gøy å fortelle hva man har jobbet med. Da fremstår man som en som ikke kan regne og som sender sms'er i hytt og vær... Ja, den tabloide fremstillinga av oss har ikke vært spesielt morsom å møte til tider.

²⁷⁸ Oluf is a popular fictional character played by a Tromsø actor. He is portrayed as a simple, humorous and shrewd fisher-farmer, wearing a leather cap.

²⁷⁹ Sånn helt overbyggende opplevdes det litt sånn, ikke bestandig men ofte nok, som at du kom fra et sånt fiskevær hvor det sprang sånne Oluf-kloninger, nå setter jeg det helt på spissen, men, som hvor man verken hadde kompetanse eller flyplass eller noe annet på, litt sånn gokk

public outcry from *Nordlys* and public spokespersons about the North-South division was a diversion from the actual facts of the process, and a degradation of Northern Norway.

However, the Olympic project and its demise are not to only context in which stories about the Northern region as marginalized and disconnected are drawn upon. I will end this section by discussing an account from one of the members of No to the Olympics. Like the claims about Southern prejudices as having toppled the Olympic bid, this account also draws on a story about the Northern region as Othered and colonized by the South, but the context and the way it is used is different. The interviewee explained that he had just been to a conference in Lofoten, a fish-rich coastal region where there has been a controversy over the drilling for oil, and referred to how one of the speakers, a professor from Bergen, had argued that the Olympics and the debate about drilling for oil outside Lofoten were both examples of a Northern provincialism.

*Because as he said, and I think it's all wrong, but he said that it is members of Young Friends of the Earth from the Oslo Westside who are telling the Northern Norwegian population that they should be against oil drilling, and that of course made the local Lofoten members of Young Friends of the Earth very angry. And he said that it was actors in the Norwegian Confederation of Sports in Oslo who decided whether or not Tromsø was to host the Olympics, and I think that is a misconception too. So he's sitting there, in one urban clot, talking about the other urban clot, and both are speaking equally disparagingly about our possibilities to generate our positions and our opinions, and then there is this centre-periphery axis which I find very interesting of course.*²⁸⁰

In this quote, the professor from Bergen is portrayed as a representative of an urban power elite, and referred to as having depicted the failure of the Olympic project as a result of decisions taken outside the region, by another urban power elite, in Oslo. The actor from No to the Olympics rejects this interpretation, just as he says the environmentally engaged youngsters from Lofoten had rejected the interpretation of their protest against oil drilling as decided by an elite from Oslo. The interviewee insists that the Northern region is capable of “generating our own positions and our opinions”, and links the professor’s understanding of

²⁸⁰ For som han sa, jeg mener det er helt feil, det er vestkantungdom i NU som forteller den nordnorske befolkning at de skal være mot oljeboring, og da klikket det jo helt for de ungdommene fra Melbu som var der som er aktive i NU. Og så var det idrettsbevegelsens aktører i Oslo som bestemte om Tromsø skulle få OL, og det mener jeg også er en fullstendig feil oppfatning. Så han sitter i en urban klyse og snakker om den andre urbane klysen, og begge snakker like nedsettende om vår mulighet til å generere våre posisjoner og våre opinioner, så det er jo en sånn sentrum-periferiakse som jeg synes er veldig interessant da.

Northern Norway as provincial to an interpretative repertoire of centre-periphery relations. I followed up by asking him what he thought about the North-South debate, and he answered that he thought it was more about centre-periphery than about North-South. Like some of the other opponents quoted earlier he also accused *Nordlys* and other local media of trying to force the issue into a story about north and south. And then when he later spoke about the effects that the Olympic hosting would have had on Tromsø and the surrounding area, he drew on a story about colonialism.

*It's the colonial politics, right. We would have been a typical, a victim of a colonial policy which would have ruined all the sensitive values which makes it possible to live a good life in Tromsø.*²⁸¹

What these interview excerpts hint at in my opinion is that the story about the region as colonized, as Othered or as a victim of discrimination and marginalisation from the South was versatile and could be put to use in many different ways.

7.6 The politics of place politics

In this chapter I have explored stories about the politics of the Olympic debate, ranging from stories about the conduct and legitimacy of various local actors in Tromsø to the roles played by local and national media, the Norwegian Confederation of Sports and the central Government in determining the fate of the Olympic project. What conclusions can be drawn from these discussions about the politics of place politics in relation to the Olympic debate? And how do the stories contribute to negotiating different understandings of the potentials and limits of place politics?

Throughout the chapter I have shown how stories about democracy and an interpretative repertoire of democratic ideals, free discussion and the value of different opinions were used as discursive resources in actors' accounts about the debate, and that these stories about democracy performed political work by *legitimizing* actors' own positions and *discrediting* their opponents. Stories about the different actors in the debate also drew on interpretative repertoires of accountability, knowledge and popular support to legitimize the positions and opinions of compatriots and discredit the positions of adversaries. Stories about democracy

²⁸¹ Det er kolonipolitikken, ikke sant. Så vi ville vært et typisk, blitt et offer for en kolonipolitikk som ville ha ødelagt alle de følsomme verdiene som gjør det så godt å leve i Tromsø.

and democratic practice can be seen as an ambiguous and versatile discursive resource which was used and articulated in different ways by different actors. Like the stories about regional development, the usefulness of the democracy-stories seemed to rest on the fact that democratic ideals were a shared interpretative repertoire, and actors would not openly challenge or contend the moral status of these ideals although they might use them in different ways. The stories about the conduct of the Olympic debate and the roles played by different local actors can be seen as a negotiation over how democracy should be interpreted and how politics of propinquities can and should be conducted.

Actors' accounts about the role of the media, the Norwegian Confederation of Sports and the Government also drew on stories about democracy, accountability and representation. Being told by local actors in Tromsø, these stories can be seen as different bids towards interpreting and making sense of the playing rules and practices of place politics beyond place, while at the same time negotiating these rules. Actors' accounts about why and how the Olympic project was ultimately abandoned drew on stories about Tromsø and Northern Norway being disempowered and too far away from actual decision-making at the national scale. I have argued that a discursive repertoire of political marginalisation, prejudice and colonialism was used to explain and criticise the national process, both by Olympic proponents and sympathizers in relation to the Olympic bid and by Olympic opponents in relation to other political issues. While these stories contribute to constructing a local and regional identity and interest as different from and disconnected from (parts of) the national political establishment and interests, they should also be understood as a politics of connectivities through which local political actors contend the playing rules of place politics.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, one plausible way of interpreting the stories about the Olympic project in Tromsø is that its fate shows how a local political initiative was ultimately decided and dismissed by actors at the level of the state. While proponents of the bid lamented this situation, the local opponents were not only satisfied with the result but also with the role played by the central actors, especially by the state government in assessing and qualifying the economic calculations and development claims of Tromsø Romsa 2018 AS. Smith (1992) has argued that "jumping scales" in order to achieve political impact is not a practice which is confined to the most powerful actors. Millstein, Oldfield and Stokke (2003) have shown how popular movements working for housing reforms in South Africa have worked across different political scales in order to achieve their goals. The Olympic issue could also be understood as an instance where local activists, while unable to sway the

decision-making actors at the municipal and county level were able to have their perspectives heard and their political goals attained at the national level. As noted by Staeheli (1994): “To the extent that oppositional movements can move across scales – that is, to the extent that they can take advantage of the resources at one scale to overcome the constraints encountered at different scales in the way that more powerful actors can do – they may have greater potential for pressing their claims.” (Staeheli 1994: 388) Against this interpretation of the outcome of the Olympic debate, proponents of the project might argue that it was in fact the central level actors in the Norwegian Confederation of Sports who were the powerful actors, and that they used their privileged position at the centre to overrule the interests and initiatives of less powerful actors at the local level.

Stories about the relationship between local, regional and national politics in the Olympic project can also be understood as contributing to the social construction of scale (Marston 2000). Neil Brenner (1999) has argued that globalization processes lead to a re-scaling of the power of the territorial state. Incidentally, Olympic hostings are in themselves an example of such re-scaling, for example in the way that IOC requirements surpass national deliberations in determining large-scale urban and regional infrastructural developments in host cities (Gold & Gold 2009), as well as regulating revenues from the Games (Kitchin 2007). The stories told by local actors in the Olympic debate can be seen as attempts at constructing and reconstructing the legitimacy of the current politics of scale within Norway. Swyngedouw’s (1997) concept of glocalization is one of several contributions towards understanding the local level as an integrated part of rather than as a passive receptor of processes of scaling. By questioning the role of the Norwegian Confederation of Sports in determining the fate of the Olympic initiative from Tromsø through a discursive repertoire of democratic playing rules and representation, actors arguably contribute (or attempt to contribute) to processes of rescaling. Marston, Jones and Woodward (2005) have proposed a conceptualisation of scale that is flat rather than hierarchical, one that focuses on sites of interaction rather than levels. They argue that the local-to-global hierarchical model of scale “carries with it presuppositions that can delimit entry points into politics – and the openness of the political – by pre-assigning it to a cordoned register for resistance” (Marston, Jones and Woodward 2005: 427). Based on their argument I would pose the question whether the stories about Northern Norway being politically disconnected and disempowered actually reinforce rather than renegotiate scalar politics. Stories about disconnectivity may in fact contribute to precisely the kind of cordoning of local politics of a register of resistance which Marston, Jones and Woodward

warns against. The unease and ambivalence which some of the actors from Tromsø 2018 showed toward the story about a North-South divide may be taken as a sign that they too recognized this.

8 Future stories, future place politics

Once upon a time there was a town in Northern Norway whose political leaders wanted to make a bid to host the Winter Olympic Games. The tall snow-clad mountains, the blue fjords and the cosmopolitan-yet-unspoilt spirit of the town were listed as reasons why such a bid would be irresistible to the International Olympic Committee. The fact that the town lacked most of the necessary infrastructure and facilities to host such a mega-event was presented as a compelling reason for the Norwegian state to support the idea and thus contribute to endogenic regional growth and development. Unfortunately, the project was ultimately betrayed by members of the Southern Norwegian sports elite who were unwilling to invest in the Northern region.

Or, once upon a time there was a town in Northern Norway where local activists resisted an elitist project to bid for the Winter Olympic Games. The activists considered the bid to be unrealistic, and claimed that the bidding process would be expensive and ultimately unsuccessful. They also rejected the plans for building huge sports facilities that would spoil the natural surroundings of the town and were too many and too large for the needs of the local population, and they did not want the corrupt and undemocratic leadership of the IOC to dictate the future developments of the town. Fortunately the lack of economic realism inherent in the project was finally exposed, partly through the efforts of the activists, and the bid was cancelled by the national authorities, as it should have been from the start.

Despite the fairytale promise, there was no happily ever after in the Olympic project or in the Olympic debate. After all that has been said about place politics, this should come as no surprise. Part of the lesson of place politics, and an important point in Doreen Massey's writing about place, is that places are sites of multiple stories, multiple trajectories, and more often than not, conflicting identities and interests. Stories about "what really happened" are of course also stories about the future. When actors involved in the Olympic debate produce narratives about the Olympic project they use stories about Tromsø, and stories about identities, interests, propinquities and connectivities, as discursive resources to explain their positions and those of others. In doing this, they also contribute to reproducing and changing these stories in various ways and to varying degrees. The aim of this dissertation has been to explore the relevance of place stories for understanding and analysing place politics through a case study of the stories about Tromsø's Olympic debate. In this concluding chapter I will discuss the results of this exploration, and ask what place there is for place stories in place

politics. I will start by summing up the main findings of the case study and formulate some answers to the research questions that have been guiding the research and the analysis. I will also look at what has happened to the place stories and place politics of Tromsø after the Olympic debate, and discuss how the stories that were drawn upon in relation to the Olympic bid are being rearticulated and used in relation to other political struggles in Tromsø. Following this, I will discuss what theoretical and analytical conclusions that can be drawn from the case study.

8.1 Place stories and place politics in Tromsø's Olympic debate

The main research question guiding the exploration of place stories and place politics in relation to the Olympic project was:

How was place politics negotiated through place stories in the context of Tromsø's Olympic debate?

This research question has been approached through three analytical chapters, which focused on stories about identities, interests and place politics respectively.

The first analytical chapter (chapter 5) explored actors' narratives about belonging, and not belonging, in Tromsø, and traced the relationship between stories about identities, senses of belonging and entitlement to place. The chapter argues that the political work done by stories about belonging is to assert a *claim* towards place. Different stories about belonging draw on different identity stories, and these work to recognize some actors as belonging and others as not belonging in a place. I found that actors' narratives about belonging in Tromsø tended to draw on stories about having been born and bred in Tromsø (being a Tromsøværing) and/or on stories about having a sense of elective belonging in Tromsø based on emotional attachments. The born and bred story can be understood as a claim based on birth-rights, presented as a non-negotiable sense of entitlement and belonging. It asserts the narrator as an established inhabitant, a local, and stories about born and bred belonging can thus be understood as a boundary-drawing practice between the interests and identities of the locals as opposed to non-locals. The claim produced through stories about elective belonging on the other hand, was based both on a professed love for the place and on an assertion of knowledge and understanding. Both the born and bred story and the elective belonging story can be understood as a way of asserting oneself as someone with rights and legitimacy in relation to

the Olympic debate in Tromsø. I have argued that there is a certain tension between the born and bred and the elective belonging stories. Stories about elective belonging were sometimes used to challenge the claims of locals who were born and bred in Tromsø but who didn't partake in active use of Tromsø's natural surroundings. This tension can be described as contributing towards a politics of propinquities, through which the terms and limits of local belonging were negotiated.

Stories about belonging in the Northern Norwegian region, either through being born and bred in another Northern Norwegian municipality or through a regional sense of elective belonging, worked as alternative claims of legitimacy. The regional claim was particularly relevant in relation to the Olympic debate because of the way the bid had been framed as a regional development initiative. Claims based on regional connections can be understood as part of a politics of connectivities, through which the imagined borders of place influence was renegotiated to include areas outside the municipality. The Olympic bid had also been presented as a Sami and Norwegian co-hosting, using the Sami name for Tromsø in the name of the project organization. Despite this, actors drawing on stories about Sami identities were ambivalent in terms of Sami senses of belonging and entitlements in Tromsø. In most accounts, a Sami identity was constructed as an ethnic Other in relation to a Norwegian majority. This was seen both in personal stories about how actors understood their own identity, in stories about Tromsø as a place and in stories about what it means to be Sami. The stories about Tromsø's Sami credentials can be understood as contributing both to a politics of propinquity, in which the role and rights of Sami individuals and Sami culture in Tromsø were articulated and negotiated, and to a politics of disconnectivity, in which the Sami culture was constructed as removed from and irrelevant to developments in Tromsø.

Being recognized as belonging in a place is also a question of having your interests recognized, and of being recognized as interested, meaning someone who has rights and should be included in the distribution of goods and bads. The second analytical chapter (chapter 6) focused on stories about urban and regional development and the politics of interests. The chapter showed that urban and regional development was a commonly held but fundamentally ambiguous ideal. Most actors would argue that they wanted development, but in different ways. Among the different interests that were voiced in stories about development were the conservation of urban and natural landscapes, economic growth through urban real-estate projects and tourism, changing regional demographics, prevention of global climate change, providing incentives for technological advancements and promoting sustainable

consumption. Stories about development work to *justify* different development projects or conservation projects by referring to aesthetical, economic and environmental imperatives. Implicit in this justification there is also a justification of the interests served. In struggles over interests, identities are still in play, as a question about interests is always also a question about whose interests are being pursued and how. I have shown that the born and bred story about being a Tromsøværing was used to justify arguments against rapid urban transformations within Tromsø, whereas stories about regional belonging and regional interests were usually drawn upon in justifications of arguments both for and against the Olympic bid. In the narratives of the proponents and the undecided actors, regional differences and prejudices and the need for regional development worked to justify the proposed bid as reasonable and justified, whereas in the narratives of the opponents, regional stories worked as a justification of why the bid was not reasonable. Here the regional story worked as a justification for why Northern Norway would not benefit from an Olympic bid and/or hosting. Stories about the need for regional development were also used as an additional discursive resource in stories about climate change, green technologies and sustainability.

The emphasis put on the regional development story by most actors serves to explicate that struggles over interests are always also a negotiation of propinquities and (dis)connectivities. In the stories about the Olympic debate, some interests were constructed as near and part of the everyday politics of propinquities, and therefore necessary to accommodate in some way. One example of interests that were represented as necessary to accommodate by both proponents and opponents were those of conserving the natural landscape around Tromsø for recreational activities. Others interests, like the economic and demographic prospects of the Northern Norwegian region, or the relationship between the region and foreign companies and organizations like Coca Cola and the IOC, are represented as important in relation to a politics of connectivities. And finally there are those interests, like the effects of global climate change, which to varying degrees were described as distant and out of reach of local politics, and thus irrelevant or disconnected from place politics.

The third and final analytical chapter (chapter 7) examined stories about the potentials and limits of place politics. The chapter opened by discussing stories about the Olympic debate itself, noting that a shared story about democratic ideals based on free discussion and engaged debate was used as a discursive resource to legitimize actors' own positions and discredit opponents. Stories about the different organizational actors in the debate similarly drew on an

interpretative repertoire of democracy, accountability, knowledge and popular support to legitimize the positions and opinions of compatriots and discredit the positions of adversaries. The discussion of democracy and the debate showed that stories about democracy and democratic practice are an ambiguous and versatile discursive resource which was used and articulated in different ways by different actors. Through stories about democracy, actors in the Olympic debate negotiated playing rules or norms of conduct for local place politics. At the same time, stories about democracy worked to produce actors' legitimacy as a discursive resource in the field. Negotiations over playing rules contribute to struggles over how politics of propinquities can and should be conducted. But stories about democracy and claims of undemocratic influences from local and national media, and not least from the Norwegian Confederation of Sports, also worked to negotiate and question the playing rules and practices beyond local place politics, in this case the national political field.

The Olympic proponents' accounts about why and how the Olympic project was ultimately abandoned drew on stories about Tromsø and Northern Norway being disempowered and too far away from the decision-making actors in the capital. An interpretative repertoire of post-colonialism and prejudice from the South was used to explain and criticise the national process. While Olympic opponents rejected this explanation in relation to the Olympic project, I have shown that the opponents also drew on postcolonial stories in other discursive contexts. How the political process and its outcome is understood and described is of course also a part of the political struggle involved in place politics. I have argued that a possible alternative interpretation of the Olympic debate is that a small group of local activists were able to confront a local political elite by jumping scales and getting their arguments through to the national authorities. Stories about local and regional identity and interest as different from and disconnected from (parts of) the national political establishment and interests can also be understood as a politics of scalar constructions and reconstructions, through which local political actors attempt to contend the playing rules of place politics. As argued at the end of chapter 7, one may discuss whether the stories about Northern Norway being politically disconnected and disempowered actually reinforce rather than renegotiate scalar politics.

8.2 Place stories and place politics in Tromsø after the Olympic debate

What has become of the Olympic ambitions in Tromsø? In the months following the conclusion of the project there were some actors who argued that Tromsø could perhaps bid

for the 2022 or 2026 Olympic Winter Games. Others thought it more likely that Oslo would put forward a candidature, although many argued that this would be difficult given the demise of Tromsø's bid. As one interviewee put it:

And honestly I think it would be very difficult to present an Olympic bid from for example Oslo just like that, without including the Tromsø alternative. Because I think that an Olympic hosting in Oslo will cost approximately the same as here. I think it will be a public outcry at least in Tromsø and in the North if not... So I think perhaps, unfortunately, this North-South thing will at least produce a desire for an application from Tromsø if Norway is going to bid, Norway meaning Oslo. But if Tromsø will, if Tromsø starts an initiative on its own without having the backing of the whole nation behind it, I doubt very much. Yes. One mustn't take it backwards the next time.²⁸²

The actor quoted predicted a public outcry and a renewed bid from Tromsø if Oslo was to put forward an Olympic proposal. But when the President of the Norwegian Confederation of Skiing during the winter of 2012 did suggest that Oslo should bid for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, the initial public reactions in Tromsø was little more than a shrug and a “Well, what did we say?” After the Norwegian Confederation of Sports also endorsed an Olympic bid from Oslo, statements in online newspaper commentaries and especially in social media like Twitter and Facebook have been somewhat more bitter, but there have hardly been any politicians or public figures in Tromsø who have suggested that Tromsø should repeat its own candidature or in any way challenge Oslo's bid. Why have politicians and other actors in Tromsø kept away from the question? One possible explanation may be that the 2011 elections brought a change in the political leadership of the town. There is now a new Mayor and a new Executive Councillor, both from the Conservative Party (Høyre). Although the Conservatives supported the Olympic bid from Tromsø, I would suggest that the project was never *their* baby. They are now in a coalition with the Progress Party, who opposed the Olympic project right from the start, and who would probably strongly resist any political initiative to rekindle it. Given the failure of the project, it is probably not considered a vote-winner by any of the governing parties. In fact, the current Tromsø Mayor endorsed Oslo's

²⁸² Og jeg tror ærlig talt at det vil være veldig vanskelig å kjøre frem en OL-søknad fra for eksempel Oslo sånn just like that, uten at man tar med Tromsø-alternativet. For jeg tror at et OL i Oslo vil koste omtrent det samme som her. Jeg tror det vil bli et ramaskrik i alle fall i Tromsø og i nord hvis ikke... Så jeg tror kanskje det, dessverre, så vil den der nord-sør-greia i alle fall komme til å fremme et ønske om søknad fra Tromsø hvis Norge søker, Norge da i betydningen av Oslo. Men om Tromsø går og, om Tromsø starter med et eget initiativ, uten å ha landet bak seg, det tviler jeg veldig på. Ja. Man må ikke ta det baklengs neste gang.

candidature in a meeting with Oslo's Mayor (also from the Conservative Party). The Tromsø Mayor subsequently published a letter to the editor in the local newspaper *iTromsø* where he argued against renewing Tromsø's Olympic bid and also rejected to contend Oslo's candidature:

*Tromsø was defeated mainly on the basis of non-factual and partisan argumentation, and this is embittering. The important question however is how we should handle this defeat. Tromsø Olympics 2014. Tromsø Olympics 2018. Tromsø Olympics 2022... Although I do appreciate steadfastness, I do not want Tromsø to be known as the town which bid for the Olympics over and over again and failed. All realistic assessments indicate that this train has left the station. It did so along a very questionable track, but it has left. The time has come to look ahead, towards new challenges. I refuse to enter the barricades to fight against an Olympic hosting in Oslo. That would serve neither Tromsø nor the region well. It is not constructive, and may give us a reputation which we don't deserve.*²⁸³

Although the Mayor described the process leading to the withdrawal of Tromsø's Olympic bid as flawed and based on prejudice, reproducing a story about the process being undemocratic, he claimed that any further struggle for an Olympic bid from Tromsø would be fruitless and counterproductive. In the letter to the editor, the Mayor also drew on a story about elective belonging in making a point out of his own Oslo-background, saying that Tromsø had spellbound him when he first arrived in the town. The Mayor's acceptance of Oslo's Olympic candidature was met with some criticisms, but in social media many actors, including leading proponents of Tromsø 2018, endorsed his position. One important exception was a Conservative municipal councillor who said that he was still embittered by the lack of support shown by the Southern sports establishment towards Tromsø's bid. In an interview with *Nordlys* the councillor argues that leading political and sports actors had played a dirty game in order to stop the Olympic project, and that their attitudes were murky. He concludes that the wounds have not healed, despite what some people might think (*Nordlys*, 31.5.2012).

²⁸³ Det som felte Tromsø var i hovedsak usaklig og vikarierende argumentasjon. Det er bittert. Det store spørsmålet er imidlertid hvordan vi skal håndtere nederlaget. Tromsø-OL 2014. Tromsø-OL 2018. Tromsø-OL 2022... I utgangspunktet har jeg stor sans for standhaftighet. Men jeg vil for enhver pris ikke at Tromsø skal bli kjent som byen som gang på gang søkte OL og mislyktes. All realisme tilsier at dette toget har gått. Det gikk langs et meget uryddig spor, men det gikk. Nå er tiden inne for å skue fremover - mot nye utfordringer. Jeg nekter å stille meg på barrikadene for å kjempe mot et OL i Oslo. Det er verken Tromsø eller landsdelen tjent med. For det første er det ikke konstruktivt. Derneft kan det gi oss et stempel vi rett og slett ikke fortjener. (*iTromsø*, 26.05.12: 62)

Rather than fight against Oslo's candidature, the Mayor stated that he wants to focus on "new challenges", such as the hosting of the 2014 Chess Olympiad, a large although somewhat less glamorous event, which Tromsø bid successfully for in the aftermath of the Winter Olympic demise. He also mentioned other potential sports events as important to focus on, and he noted that Northern Norway has many things going for it:

*Fisheries, metal resources, petroleum, businesses, knowledge, bright heads: you name it – we got it!*²⁸⁴

The emphasis put on these resources and on new challenges by both the Mayor and by actors who supported him in social media, indicates that many of the involved actors are now preoccupied with new conflicts and new political projects. As discussed in chapter 4, the Olympic project can be understood as an assemblage of different stories, interests and actors. After the Olympic bid was cancelled, the specific assemblage of stories and interests that made up this political project has not been sustained, and today there are new assemblages involving some new and some old stories and actors in new ways. Current political debates concerning increased petroleum activity in the Barents Sea, and Tromsø's possibilities in attracting some of the economic investments and industrial activities connected to this, is one poignant example of how some of the place stories of the Olympic debate have been put to use in new ways by new and old actors. In debates about petroleum investments in the North, stories about the need for regional development are used to negotiate and contend stories about climate change and potential environmental hazards, and Tromsø's role has been described both as a possible regional motor for this development and as a exploitative centre which tries to keep all potential investments to itself.

Another example of reassemblage can be seen in relation to the public controversy in 2011 over a proposed inscription of Tromsø into the Sami language administration area. The Sami language inscription would mean that Sami was to become an official language alongside Norwegian in Tromsø. The most visible symbolic effect of this would have been that all official signposts, letterheads and other artefacts were to contain the Sami name for Tromsø Municipality, *Romssa suokhan*²⁸⁵, alongside the Norwegian *Tromsø kommune*. Other

²⁸⁴ Fiskerier, metall, petroleum, næringsliv, kunnskap, kloke hoder: you name it – we got it! (iTromsø, 26.05.12: 62).

²⁸⁵ Romssa is the accusative and genitive form of Romsa.

consequences of an inscription in the Sami language administration would have been increased rights and funding for Sami language education, and some use of Sami in the municipal administration. On the surface, such a symbolic and practical inclusion of the Sami language in Tromsø could be seen as a natural step given the prominent place of the Romsa name and the use of stories about Tromsø as a Sami town in relation to the Olympic bid. However, as discussed in chapter 5, many actors questioned or rejected the Olympic project's use of Romsa and their description of Tromsø as being also a Sami town. The inscription of Tromsø into the Sami language administration area was proposed by the Labour party. The proposal was controversial, and led to public protests from both politicians and activists. In letters to the editor in the two local newspapers, a number of different stories about Tromsø's heritage and identity were drawn upon to argue against the inscription. One writer drew on the town boy story and an interpretative repertoire of roots and traditions to claim that the Sami language inscription would be "a betrayal of history without any links to the truth about the population of Tromsø town and our culture".²⁸⁶ Another writer referred to a cosmopolitan story about Tromsø in arguing against the inscription, stating that "Tromsø is an international town with many nations, with Norwegian as the main language and Norwegian place names. Let us remain so."²⁸⁷ A third argument used against the inscription was the question of municipal spending, exemplified in a letter from a central Conservative candidate who argued that the financial implications of the proposed inscription had not been sufficiently clarified: "[It seems] more than likely that an inscription would cost tens of millions of kroner every year."²⁸⁸

Despite the protests, the inscription of Tromsø into the Sami language administration area was passed by the municipal council two months before the 2011 municipal election. The Conservatives and the Progress Party voted against the proposal, and especially the Progress Party made their rejection of the Sami language administration a central point in their election campaign. A few months after the election, in which the Conservatives became the largest party and formed a new majority together with the Progress Party, the inscription was annulled. Many commentators have claimed that the Sami language proposal was the main

²⁸⁶ Det som nå skjer er et historiesvik uten virkelighet i sannheten om Tromsø bys befolkning og vår kultur. (*Nordlys*, 07.02.2011)

²⁸⁷ Tromsø er en internasjonal by med mange nasjoner, med norsk som hovedmål og norske stedsnavn. La det forbli slik. (*Nordlys*, 14.02.2011)

²⁸⁸ [Det er] svært mye som taler for at en innlemmelse vil koste kommunen flere titalls millioner kroner årlig. (*Nordlys*, 24.2.2011)

reason for Labour's poor results in the Tromsø elections compared to the party's overall national performance. There were also many voters who claimed in interviews and in letters to the editor of the local newspapers that they had switched their loyalty from Labour to the Conservatives because of the Sami language issue, although other factors may of course also have influenced on the result.

In what ways, if any, may the controversy over the proposed Sami Language Inscription be explained by the fate of the Olympic bid three years prior? One might speculate that the failure of the bid to some extent had created an impression of the sitting local government as weak and unable to deliver, and that this had influenced on Labour's results in the election and the municipality's subsequent withdrawal of the inscription, but this is difficult to assess based on the analysis in this dissertation. I would however provisionally suggest that the failure of the Olympic project might have affected the political standing of some of the place stories that were included in the Olympic assemblage, among these the Romsa story about Tromsø being a town where Sami culture and the Sami language should play a visible role. The prominence and visibility of Sami symbolisms in the Olympic bid may have caused some kind of "backlash". For Tromsø-inhabitants who did not identify with these symbols, the Sami language proposal may have been considered even more of a provocation because of the way that the Sami culture had already been promoted during the past few years. As part of a relatively popular Olympic proposal the Romsa connection was difficult to argue against, especially for the Conservative politicians who supported the bid. The regional emphasis of the Olympic project may also have made the story about a Sami co-hosting more plausible or acceptable to many political actors as well as to the general Tromsø public. After the Olympic project failed, the Romsa story became disconnected from these other connotation. I would argue that this made it easier for actors to focus on the more ambivalent and outright negative stories related to Sami politics, and that this contributed to the vigorous resistance against the Sami language inscription.

8.3 Place stories in place politics

According to Flyvbjerg (2001), the aim of case studies is to produce context-dependent knowledge that enables learning. A paradigmatic case is one that is able to "highlight more general characteristics of the societies in question" (Flyvbjerg 2001: 80). What general characteristics has this case study highlighted? And to what extent can my analysis of the

Olympic debate in Tromsø inform and inspire new ways of looking at place politics? In this section I will elaborate on four arguments that I draw from this case study: Place stories are mobile, and enable knowledge and experiences to travel across space and time. Place stories are also versatile, and can be used in different ways to do different kinds of discursive work. Approaching place politics through place stories is particularly useful because place stories combine interests, identities, propinquities and connectivities. And finally, the political relevance of place stories is based on their function as discursive resources for political action.

The mobility of place stories

The place stories that were used in relation to the Olympic debate in Tromsø should be understood as context-dependent, but not context-bound. Just as places are open and multiply connected to other places, place stories draw on knowledge and experiences from other places and about other places. They are retold and reconstructed in different ways depending on the discursive context in which they are told, and through this mobility contribute to the ongoing social construction of place across both time and space. The mobility of place stories means that the stories told in relation to Tromsø's Olympic debate and the analysis of how they were used and what political work they did will be relevant also in other contexts. Also, as discussed in the previous section, the stories about Tromsø's failed bid have become part of the interpretative repertoire of actors within and beyond Tromsø, and different actors may use these stories in different ways.

Olympic stories are a poignant example of how place stories are not context-bound. The highly mediated nature of the Olympic Games have contributed to producing and spreading many stories about what it means to be an Olympic host and what kind of effects a hosting may have. In the case of Tromsø's Olympic debate both proponents and opponents drew on stories about other Olympic hostings. Vancouver and Lillehammer were most frequently used as reference points, possibly because of their geographical and temporal affinity to the imagined Tromsø hosting, but also other host towns were mentioned. The potential mobility of Olympic stories was also drawn upon in arguing for the proposed Tromsø hosting, in claims about a Tromsø Olympics as a showcasing opportunity for environmental adaptations and technology, and for indigenous rights. These themes are in themselves examples of mobile stories that have been told in relation to other Olympics, for example in Sydney 2000 (Garcia 2007) and Vancouver 2010. As discussed by Gold (2007) in relation to Athens 2004, the Olympics also draw on a historical repertoire about urbanity, heritage and civilization.

Other examples of mobile place stories which influence the stories that are told and considered plausible by local actors can be found in movies, TV-shows, tourist commercials, books, magazines and news media. These are all sources of collective place stories that actors use as discursive resources in their tellings and interpretations of Tromsø's potentials and limitations. As are personal stories about travelling or living in other places, and experiences that have been described by other actors and retold in the context of the Olympic debate. Academic or public policy stories about place and regions travel too. Consider for example Richard Florida's (2003) arguments about Creative Cities that have become very popular especially among public policy-makers. While none of the actors in the Olympic debate referred directly to Florida's work, the stories about regional development drew on an interpretative repertoire of technology, talent and regional cooperation that can be understood as a variation on Florida's emphasis on Technology, Talent and Tolerance as important factors in determining the competitiveness of cities. Other academic theories about regional economies may also have contributed to the interpretative repertoire of the regional development stories, for example Michael Porter's (2000) work on clusters could be seen as echoed in stories about the importance of interregional subcontracting and buying of services. Similarly, actors' stories about Sami culture and the Sami people being used as an exotic icing on the Olympic cake seem to draw on an interpretative repertoire from postcolonial theories, and as discussed in chapter 7, stories about Tromsø Romsa 2018 tended to draw on discursive resources from governance and network theory.

The versatility of place stories

Place stories are flexible, and can be told in many different ways and used to perform many different kinds of discursive work. The same story can be used to argue different political positions, as shown for example in my discussion of the cosmopolitan story about Tromsø. The story about Tromsø as an international and solidarity-oriented city was drawn upon both in arguing against the Olympic hosting and in arguing for it, and as shown in the former section it was also used in the discussion about the proposed inscription in the Sami language administration area as an argument against the inscription. The flexibility was partly a result of how other stories were used in combination with the cosmopolitan story. Actors drawing on an interpretative repertoire of large international corporations exploiting local resources, and on stories about the IOC as corrupt, referred to the cosmopolitan story in arguing against giving these corporations and the IOC influence on Tromsø's development and local politics.

This was contrasted by how actors drawing on stories about the need for greater international visibility and the propensity of attracting tourists used the cosmopolitan story as an argument for why this would be both possible and beneficial for Tromsø.

In her discussion of social conflicts and processes of transformation in the London Dockland's, Massey states that "there are no rules of space and place" (Massey 2005: 163). By this she means that one cannot a priori assume that actors protecting local rights or fighting against external influences are "good", or that globalizing forces are "bad". To paraphrase Massey, I would argue that there are no rules of place stories. Stories about local belonging, rights and traditions can be used to protest against gentrification-processes pushing low-income residents out of their rented accommodations, but the same kind of stories can also be used in marketing the area to prospective new residents, and they can be used in rejecting immigration or policies to protect ethnic minorities. This emphasis on the versatility and flexibility of place stories is also an argument for the usefulness of focusing on discursive *practices* rather than on discursive structures as enabling and limiting frames of meaning. Returning to Allen's description of power as a relational effect, the political potential of place stories should be understood as a relational effect of how stories are used, and not as an inherent quality of the stories themselves.

The role of place stories in negotiating and producing identities and interests, propinquities and connectivities

Place stories link together descriptions, "facts" and taken for granted knowledges in order to make sense of the social and physical amalgamations that make up a place. Because places can be understood both as locations and locales, and as symbolic and emotional entities, place stories often tend to combine interpretative repertoires of identities and interests. Studying place politics through place stories is thus one way of responding to Agnew's (1989) well-known triple conceptualisation of place as location, locale and sense of place and his challenge that political geography should take all of these into account. In making sense of multiple and changing borders and affinities, place stories may also draw on different repertoires of propinquities and (dis)connectivities in various combinations. Through my discussion of the place stories used in relation to the Olympic debate in Tromsø, I have argued that place stories combine politics of identities and interests, propinquities and connectivities. I have also shown how politics of identities and interests are co-constituted in actors' stories

about place. Claims about identity are for example often used together with statements about interests, while stories about interests can be used to discuss and negotiate understandings of identities. Place stories are thus a useful way of approaching the intersections between economic inequalities and cultural differences that have been highlighted by McDowell (2004) and others. It is important to note that while place stories have a *capacity* for linking identities, interests, propinquities and connectivities in different ways, this does not mean that all place stories do link all these different aspects of place politics together. The point is rather that the different conceptual divisions that we may use to study place politics are not necessarily followed in actors' stories about place. My suggestion is that in looking at how actors use place stories, and asking what political work these stories do, we can approach place politics as an ongoing negotiation of identities, interests, propinquities and connectivities. I would also emphasise the important role of personal stories about identities and belonging in negotiating place politics of interests, propinquities and connectivities.

Based on my analysis I would argue that despite its efficacy in demonstrating the specific challenges of place politics, Amin's (2004) conceptual division of relational place politics into politics of propinquity and connectivities may be less helpful when it comes to understanding the reciprocal relationship between politics of identities and interests, propinquities and connectivities. In his discussion of the two, Amin describes politics of propinquities as having to do with the distribution of public goods and bads within place, as well as local definitions of borders, rights and belonging. Politics of connectivities on the other hand are defined as having to do with the relations between a place and actors beyond that place, and Amin's discussion of these relations typically focus on economic relationships. As argued by Marston, Jones and Woodward (2005) such divisions of conceptual labour between propinquities and connectivities are not unusual: "There seems to be no end of examples in which economic macro-isms are articulated alongside their attendant 'global spaces', while (minor, reproductive?) social practices are cordoned off in their respective localities" (Marston, Jones & Woodward 2005: 421). This tendency to focus the discussion of connectivities on the politics of interests means that politics of identities related to questions of citizenship, multiscalar borders and (inter)national authorities are easily overlooked.

The main problem, however, with discussing some issues as politics of propinquities and others as politics of connectivities, is that the construction, reconstruction and negotiation of politics of propinquities and connectivities are implicated in and influenced by each other in so many ways. The politics of propinquity regarding distribution of local municipal services is

for example deeply embedded in the politics of connectivity, for example when it comes to national tax transfers from the state, and with regards to potential local tax revenues from prospective investments from multinational or national corporations. And questions about identity and belonging are not only relevant for understanding aspects of the politics of propinquity, but are also used in and influenced by negotiations of connectivities and responsibilities. As shown in chapter 5, stories about belonging, although obviously important to politics of propinquity, is also very much about what kinds of connections that may be claimed for a place. John Allen's (2011) metaphor about the topological twists of power may perhaps be a better way of envisaging the ways that distances and proximities are twisted and folded as a result of political practices in place. Place stories can be understood as a medium of such topological foldings. Amin's conceptual division sets politics of propinquiries apart from politics of connectivities, but in Allen's vocabulary they can be brought together in unexpected ways. Corruption scandals in the IOC can for example become part of the local political struggles over procedures in the municipal council.

The politics of place stories

I started this dissertation with stating that place stories are political, arguing that telling stories about the past, present and future of a place contributes to the ongoing construction and reconstruction of power, borders and identities. Having explored and deliberated the place stories used by actors involved in Tromsø's Olympic debate, I will now restate this claim, and explain why place stories make a difference to the politics of place.

Place stories are discursive resources used, produced and reproduced by actors in order to understand, relate to and act upon a socially constituted social and material world. While discursive practices can be seen as transient, often ambivalent and always contextual, these practices draw on and work through established discursive structures, and in their flexible production of meaning in the moment they also contribute to reproducing and creating new structures of meaning for the future. As a discursive resource, place stories are also a resource for political action. As discussed in chapter 2, Allen (2003) distinguishes between resources and power, noting that it is the utilization of resources to bring about certain results that produce power as a relational effect. The argument of this dissertation is that stories about exclusion and inclusion, identities and interests, the near and the far away, are resources that

can be used in different ways in efforts towards producing power and towards producing place.

One important political effect of place stories is that they contribute to setting the premises for political debate and work as a map both of the past and of the future. Different stories or understandings of the situation at hand enable different political projects, different political positions and different practices. What kind of political projects are thinkable through the stories available, and what stories can be plausibly told to articulate new political projects? Through place stories political actors can imagine future courses of action, but as has been stressed throughout this dissertation, the outcome of political action is not given. If actors find existing stories' interpretations of place inadequate for grasping the social situation "on the ground", stories are likely to be rearticulated and retold in new ways, producing new discursive maps of place.

8.4 In conclusion: Whose stories, whose place?

No one owns stories. They can be centripetal or centrifugal, they can be used for many different purposes, and therefore there are no ready-made rules of place stories. As argued by Bakhtin (1981), the meaning of a word or of a story "is always half someone else's. (...) It exists in other people's mouths, in other people's concrete contexts, serving other people's intentions" (Bakhtin 1981: 293-294). The structural effects of discursive practices are not always knowable or easy to predict. But as I have tried to show through my discussion of the Olympic debate, the telling of stories is a productive practice through which actors can influence on the understandings and meanings of place. Which stories are told and made relevant for place politics also contributes to establishing whose interests are important and legitimate, and ultimately, whose place a place may be.

9 References

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9.3 Newsmedia sources:

Newspaper articles, editorials and letters to the editor:

- Nordlys* 13.05.03: Several pages
Aftenposten 13.05.03: 41
VG 13.05.03: Several pages
Nordlys, 13.05.03: 2
VG, 08.07.03: 34
Nordlys 11.09.03: 14
Nordlys 10.11.03: 34
Nordlys 09.01.04: 9
Nordlys 11.04.04 (webpage only)
Nordlys 19.08.04: 16
Nordlys 25.09.04: 4
Aftenposten 12.10.04: 31
Aftenposten 14.07.05: 10
Nordlys 08.12.05: 39
Nordlys 21.01.06: 54
Nordlys 24.01.06: 44
Aftenposten 09.09.06: 32

²⁸⁹ http://multimedia.api.no/www.tromso2018.no/archive/02266/Troms_Romsa_2018A_2266135a.pdf

Nordlys 16.09.06: 34
VG 13.01.07: 2 (Sports Extra)
Aftenposten 13.09.07:22
Aftenposten 31.01.08: 25
Aftenposten 10.06.08: 26
iTromsø 26.05.12: 62
Nordlys, 31.5.2012: 6-7
Nordlys, 07.02.2011: 50
Nordlys, 14.02.2011:54
Nordlys, 17.02.2011: 58
Nordlys, 24.2.2011: 51

Television documentaries

NRK Brennpunkt. *Bak lukkede dører* (Behind closed doors.) Broadcasted 19.02.2008
<http://www1.nrk.no/nett-tv/klipp/340069> Viewed 06.02.12.

Appendix 1: Interviewees in numbers

I conducted 24 interviews with 24 Tromsø inhabitants who had been involved in the public debate. I conducted 3 test interviews with altogether 8 interviewees, of which one was with a couple and one was with a group of friends. The tables below contain numerical descriptions of the interviewees, including on what basis they were recruited and their inscription in various descriptive categories. I also conducted 3 test interviews with 8 interviewees. The test interviewees are not included in the general numbers, but put in brackets as they may otherwise create a somewhat skewed impression of the public debate. There were for example a lot of the interviewees from the test interviews who were in the age group between 30-39 years old, while the majority of the interviewees from the public debate were older than this.

Recruited as	Number of interviewees
Tromsø 2018-employees	4
Members of No to the Olympics	6
Participants at public planning meeting	6
Representatives of other organizations, employees of Tromsø municipality, local politicians and other actors who had engaged in the public debate	8
(Personal acquaintances)	(8)
In total:	24 (32)

Gender	Number of interviewees
Female	10 (14)
Male	14 (18)
In total	24 (32)

Age group	Number of interviewees
< 30	1
30-39	2 (9)
40-49	9 (10)
50-59	4
> 60	4
Age not known	4
In total	24 (32)

Attitude to the Olympic project	Number of interviewees
In favour	9 (15)
Against	11
Ambivalent	4 (6)
In total	24 (32)

Inhabitation status in Tromsø	Number of interviewees
Born and raised in Tromsø	9 (13)
Moved to Tromsø from Northern Norwegian municipalities	10 (12)
Moved to Tromsø from municipalities south of Nordland county	5 (7)
In total	24 (32)

Ethnic identification	Number of interviewees
Sami	3
Kven	1
None stated	20 (28)
In total	24 (32)

Appendix 2 Translated sample of interview guide

Ingrid M Kielland, UiTø: "Citizens constructing place: Olympic stories in Tromsø"

Interviewguide, participant at public meeting

1. Questions about the interviewee

Background variables: Age, gender, family, work.

Organisational membership and activity: Are you a member of any organisations? Are you active in any of these?

Political membership and activity: Are you a member of any political party? Are you an active member?

Could you say a little about your Tromsø attachment: Are you born and raised in Tromsø or have you moved here from elsewhere? Have you lived in any other places than Tromsø?

Where in Tromsø do you live/have you lived before? Do you consider yourself a Tromsøværing?

2. Tromsø municipality's public meeting

Why did you decide to participate in this meeting?

How did you experience the meeting/what was your assessment of the meeting?

Have you been to any other meetings about the Olympic project?

3. Questions about the images:

I have chosen some pictures used by different actors in the Olympic debate which I ask the interviewees to comment on. Could you say a little about your associations around each image?

4. Questions about the Olympic bid:

What was your attitude to Tromsø's bid for arranging the Winter Olympics when the idea was first launched in 2003? Have you had the same opinion all the time, or has your attitude changed?

What were the main arguments that you based your opinion on?

Which (if any) arguments that were contrary to your opinion did you think were good or relevant?

What is your opinion about the expenses related to an Olympic hosting?

What is your opinion about the environmental consequences of an Olympic hosting in Tromsø?

Tromsø 2018 also had a Sami profile, both through the name (Tromsø Romsa 2018) and in the application document. Do you yourself have a Sami background? Do you consider Tromsø as a Sami town? In which ways (if any) do you think an Olympic hosting would have affected Tromsø's Sami identity?

5. Questions about the bidding process

What is your opinion about the Sports' Board's decision to withdraw the application for a state guarantee?

Who do you think would have had anything to gain or lose from a continued bidding process towards hosting the Olympics, and if it was successful, from an Olympic hosting in Tromsø?

Who do you think may have gained or lost anything from the process from 2003 until now?

6. The Olympic vision and the future

How did you envision a Tromsø-Olympics in 2018? How do you think an Olympic hosting in Tromsø would have affected you personally?

How do you now envision Tromsø in 2018 – without the Olympics?

What do you think about a possible future bid for the Olympics in 2022,2026 etc.? Is the Olympic project of Tromsø over for good? Should it be?

7. In conclusion: Are there any other things you would like to add?

Appendix 3: Images used as prompts in interviews



Image 1 Sourced from Tromsø 2014 proposal document. Copyright Ola Røe.



Image 2 Sourced from Tromsø 2018 website. Copyright Yngve Olse Sæbbe.



Image 3 Sourced from No to the Olympics' counterstatement. Copyright: Mads Gilbert.



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