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***Arctic Olympic Magic and Liquid Natural Gas –
New Representations of Nature in the North***

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Abstract:

From arctic olympic magic to liquid natural gas – new economic initiatives in Northern Norway use a variety of images and imaginaries of northern nature as base or support for new types of business activities. The aim of this paper is first, to examine how different representations of nature are used to develop economic activities in Tromsø and Hammerfest, and second, to discuss some implications of these representations with regards to local ownership and participation in different development projects. Theoretically we will make use of Sarah Whatmore's (2002) perspectives on nature as representation, and we will use Ash Amin's (2004) discussions of local democracy and regional development as a focal point for our own examination of the relationship between new representations of nature and new local development initiatives in Tromsø and Hammerfest.

Introduction:

Imagine Tromsø, Northern Norway, in February: Heavy grey clouds shroud the majestic peak of the "Tromsdalstind" and other mountains from sight, and the charcoal-coloured fjord lies in disarray with white wave-tops. Icy rain is falling at a 45° angle, bent by an all-embracing northern wind. The main roads are iced and slippery, and the minor roads are filled with a 30 cm deep layer of slushy ice and snow. The city is mostly covered in snow, which is hard and crystallized, and polluted by asphalt-dust from the roads and other debris. In town people are walking with their heads down, covered in hooded jackets or shielded by forbidding umbrellas. Nobody is talking to each other, everyone singularly intent on reaching their indoor destination. Spectacular arctic magic? Or perhaps better described by the slogan inscribed on the floor of the new town hall – We shall overcome!

Some might say that this representation of Tromsø is one-sided and tendentious, and perhaps deliberately negativistic. Although the description of climatic conditions and how they are weathered by the inhabitants might be fairly accurate – and are in fact written on a day which was pretty much like that – there are of course other things to be said for Tromsø in winter time. The weather is sometimes fairer, with tall white mountaintops overlooking an island covered in soft and sparkling new snow, surrounded by blue fjords, and inhabited by smiling people who engage in friendly conversation while sipping their freshly made take-away espressos in the town main street. Our purpose in discussing these different images of the town is exactly to illustrate how people, places and natural conditions may be represented

in many different ways, and furthermore to show how different representations may have different implications for the way we relate to these places and conditions. In the following pages we will discuss how “nature” is represented in certain ways by various political and economical actors in Tromsø and Hammerfest to promote different kinds of economic investments. Representing life in a small northern town as arctic magic, or fossil fuel from the bottom of the Barents Sea as “natural” gas, may create new business opportunities in a region where many traditional industries have long been in decline. However, recognizing that the words and images we use to think about nature and places are important for our perceptions of developmental opportunities as well as ownership, identity and sense of place, we want to examine how these new representations of the North interact with other representations, old and new, and what the implications of these may be.

Representations of nature and region

Our starting point in writing about economic development and images of nature is Sarah Whatmore’s (2002) perspectives on nature as representation. Whatmore rejects the notion of a “lost wilderness”, a nature outside human intervention, as well as the idea of humans as outside nature. She insists instead on regarding humans together with other species (animals as well as plants) as both biologically determined creatures with some inherent characteristics, needs and features, and as socially constructed or represented through language, art and science. Using a number of different cases she shows how the representations of for example the short-snouted alligator by science, business interests and the fashion industry has important bearings on the preservation, captivation, rearing and industrial use of the alligator as a species as well as on the life chances of individual alligators. The representations are thus an important factor in determining the alligator, but on the other hand representations may not be truthful to the inherent characteristics or needs of the creature. The representations are not the only truth about the creature, and in the case of misleading representations there is always the possibility that nature can “strike back”, as Whatmore shows in her discussion of the Mad Cow Disease following the meat industry’s wrongful representation of grass eating cows being able to prosper on bone meal-based fodder.

Whatmore demonstrates clearly that how we represent various aspects of nature, be it natural resources, species or the human race, have important bearings on political and ethical issues such as property rights, sustainability, identity and belonging. Representing nature, in language, images, law, art or discourse, is therefore always a question also of representing interest. Svein Jentoft (1997) shows this when he compares the kind of fishing regime called

for when picturing the Northern ocean as a “tragedy of the commons”, to the regimes possible when using a different metamorphose, the “comedy of the commons”. Whereas the “tragedy of the commons” calls for private property rights to the fish resources, for example through a strictly enforced quota system, the notion of a “comedy of the commons” may open up for a fishing regime based on local fishing rights with cooperation between the involved fishermen to find the best solution for the entire community. Our notions of nature and the “natural” is both the base and the fence our imagination of what is possible or advisable, and will thus influence not only our business initiatives but can also affect local democracy and local economic development in a wider sense.

Politics of place and representation of nature

In every day talk, as well as in much political debate, places and regions are most often defined by territorial insides and outsides. This common sense perspective on place has been challenged, and for many social scientists replaced, by a relational sense of place in which a place or region is defined not by borders but rather by its relations and connections (Massey, 1993). As Amin (2004) argues, it is difficult to imagine areas of social life that are not folded into spatially stretched circuits of organization/flow, involving money, trade, work, consumption, information, knowledge and power. Based on this argument it is reasonable to believe that regional aspects of any kind cannot escape the connections, meanings and influences that in some way are defined by what some may call outsiders or surroundings. Amin states that a politics of place has to work with the varied geographies of relational connectivity and transitivity that make up public life and the local politics in a city or a region. We would like to emphasize that local life is shot through with these influences, and that it from a normative point of view always should be a variety of arguments from stakeholders.

The question whether politics of place should be based on raw material commodity chains, or tourism based on sustainable fisheries or agriculture, is best answered through new ways of thinking about dialogue as a tool for regional politics. We find it constructive to look for programs or ways of opening up and facilitating phases of dialogue between different actors that may lead to diversities of point of view. Amin (2004) believes that the result of this process will be a regional or a local “inside” constructed through public debate over particular political programs or visions of the good life. These processes should be open for both proximate and distant actors – belonging to different places and therefore secure that not only the locals in one single local community could agree upon one already defined direction for a

place. In this understanding of different politics of places, contesting models of regional economy or the well being for one place should be communicated. If a process like Amin (2004) introduces should be used as a starting point in defining new directions for place politics, issues such as judgements over economic worth would have to be based on public scrutiny of alternative models of economic well-being. These elements above create the need for discussing and negotiating what kind of regional economy is desired in a region or a place.

How nature is being represented is a vital element in this discussion. There are many models of economic practise, each with its own spatial connectivities and each with its own particular local implications. At the same time these models all together includes a different set of policy solutions and actors in order to maximize local returns. A growth model based on transnational corporations producing commodities and taking advantage of natural resources like petroleum or fish, may require a certain kind of regional politics, coupled with certain desires from local business actors. On the other hand, a growth model including sustainable tourism combined with aquaculture may lead to different requirements and priorities when it comes to regional politics and demands from local actors. The need for competence and human capital will differ, and also there will be diversity in the field of priorities in building up the infrastructure and services in a city or region.

Hammerfest and Snøhvit

The city lies 70° 39' 48" north and achieved its town status on the 7th of July 1789, making it the oldest town in northern Norway. The town was founded because of its natural harbour, something which is equally important today for Hammerfest's economic foundation. Despite its geographical position, Hammerfest has maintained its international connections. The city played an important role in the Pomor Trade with the former Soviet Union and the fishermen and polar hunters used the harbour in Hammerfest as a base for deliveries during their activity in the Barents Sea. The Snøhvit area comprises Snøhvit, Albatross and Askeladd fields, which lie in the Hammerfest Basin of the Barents Sea about 140 kilometres north-west of Hammerfest in northern Norway. Adopting new technology has allowed Statoil to achieve the first offshore development in the Barents Sea. Without surface installations, this Snøhvit project involves bringing huge volumes of gas to land for liquefaction and export from the plant. The construction started in the first half of 2002, with contractual gas deliveries scheduled to commence on 1 October 2006. There are expected to be 350 new jobs in Hammerfest as a result of the construction, including 160 at the gas plant. The deliveries from the plant are expected to last until 2036.

The Natural Gas

On a national level, relatively great resistance towards the Snøhvit-construction was expressed from different milieus. Political and economical arguments against the construction questioned if and how the petroleum and industrial development in Hammerfest, would be able to fuel regional development with sufficient strength to achieve an expected level. The arguments against the construction were most of all loaded with environmental issues like pollution and major discharge, and these elements' negative effects on the global agenda. It seems to be unquestionable that most of the discharge from the construction contains CO₂ and that the total emission would reach a level of 860000 tonnes each year. This is of course a great challenge that global economic actors have to face, and at the same time realise that there is no technology available at the moment to reduce the amounts of discharge. However, a challenge of this character is global and cannot be reduced to local solutions or problems. It is clear that Snøhvit seems to be controversial in these aspects, and that the construction itself contribute to the fact that Norway have serious problems reducing the amounts of discharge which ratifying the Kyoto-protocol commit the nations to do. Thus, the political counterparts in Norway had some rather intense debates in advance of the decision to develop Snøhvit. The classic conflict between growth and protection became highlighted in Norwegian politics, and for us it seems rather obvious that how nature is presented in relation to Snøhvit, was an important element that – based upon other arguments – was vital to the final decision. We believe that this is also the case regarding the local support from the inhabitants in the region of northern Norway. It is thus important to emphasize how the representation of Snøhvit did produce local and regional goodwill regarding these elements of natural gas as a substitute for fossil fuel represented by the main operator Statoil. It seems like an elegant rhetorical point – the transition of fuel from being fossil becoming natural when Statoil cool the gas down and ship it to markets on the continent. Our point here is to throw lights upon the fact that the different representations of nature produce different effects on the debate and discussion of the phenomenon. Fossil fuel has a lot of negatively connotations, on the other hand, natural gas produce cleaner and pure thoughts in people minds. The driving force behind this choice of representations thus produce one determinant understanding of the field pollution and discharge – on the one hand it is being produced pictures of diesel and oil as fuel and on the other – pictures of natural gas and environmentally friendly alternatives grows up which includes Snøhvit and Statoils work on Melkøya. Based on this it is important for us to underline that we don't have the intention to give the explanation of why Snøhvit became a

reality, or focusing on strategies behind the decision, but rather to throw light over different representations of nature.

Municipalities, local governments, business life and the politicians in the Vest-Finnmark region have deeply concentrated on the development regarding to Snøhvit. This has led to the fact that Hammerfest is growing up to become the centre in Northern Norway regarding petroleum, and it has also led to the fact that Hammerfest is put on the map after several years with recessions on several dimensions. Already there have been several positive impacts on the municipality. The construction has generated both an increase in the population and new employment opportunities in the region (Eikeland 2004). The economy in the municipality has been strengthened, and increase has been documented both in foreign and internal investments of projects embedded in Hammerfest. Some of the job opportunities created in the municipality, has also led to an increase in the amount of people with higher education moving in. Even people from Hammerfest that earlier has moved out of town, are now moving back. The most important issue regarding the effects that is created in relation to the construction, is challenging to measure in exact numbers, but is a tendency or what we might call the general view regarding “hopes and thoughts” about the future. In this context we would like to accentuate the positivism and the belief in a bright future for the municipality – as a tendency that represent a sharp contrast comparing the situation in the municipality few years ago and before Snøhvit became a reality. We defend that there surely exist a dominant view in the municipality where the construction and the development in the Barents Sea regarding petroleum activity, seem to be vital in explaining why people claim this very positive and hopeful prospects of the future. One might of course ask whether this development would have been identified in Hammerfest even without Snøhvit. But we believe that based on how the development did move along in Hammerfest before Snøhvit and along several dimensions, it is reasonable to believe that Snøhvit has represented vital power to the machines that create regional economic development.

All these elements discussed above have one thing in common. They have arisen in either direct or indirect relation to the construction, and they have given the municipality vital challenges and possibilities that Hammerfest never has seen before. Snøhvit represented as natural gas and environmental friendly energy is thus credited as a positive and healthy development regarding the discharge challenges, and the construction is also represented as healthy economic development for the regions in Northern Norway. On the possibility side it is obvious that the local government stands in a position that draws distinction between Hammerfest municipality and other Norwegian municipalities. The increase in income

because of property tax is estimated to 98 millions Norwegian kroner each year, and is a direct result of Statoils establishing themselves on Melkøya outside the city centre.

Representation of “Snøhvit Liquid Natural Gas” has thus created possibilities that go beyond and reinforce rhetorical points applied by the media and the oil companies.

Establishing the construction outside Hammerfest has both been important and necessary to achieve growth and prosperity regarding the local economy in the short term. At the same time it is important to be aware of the problems that could become visible when both the local government and the business life in the town use a large amount of available resources and energy on one purpose – to develop the municipality as competent and capable in delivering services and skills to the petroleum industry, and maximize the local extended effects in relation to this industry. Starting out with the elegant quote from Jentoft’s book “The comedy of the commons”: *Staring to long with one eye, makes the other eye blind*, we will in the following argue that concentrating on one special way of doing business may implicate a risk of losing other possibilities and development routes in communities. Our prevailing view is that a large quantity of attention along one dimension, might cause too much restriction on other ways of developing areas, cities or territories. A representation of Hammerfest focusing and concentrating on the petroleum economy, shapes a relatively one-dimensional picture of Hammerfest when it comes to industry and employment. Such a strong focus on one specific dimension may lead to a single priority in questions about the future and choices to be taken for the development for the society of Hammerfest. Both media and politicians are highly concentrated on the importance of developing local skills and local firms that can deliver the services needed in the petroleum economy. We find it important to point to the fact that this attention and increase in the local economy, also may have effects on the human capital that makes the priorities and that key actors in the municipality may obtain one dominant and specific knowledge.

Thus we believe it is pressing that these dominant economic interests must be held back or reduced in some way – not because we are opponents regarding economic development - but rather because we wish to communicate the need for opening up for diversity and including different interests in the discussion of what kind of places Tromsø and Hammerfest should be in the future. This claim is in the line with i.e Amin (2004 et al). In the context Hammerfest and Snøhvit we are afraid that strong growth along the petroleum axis, may create hindrances for other types of development and potential areas of development in other sectors or business areas. Relative huge amounts of attention given by central actors in the municipality regarding needs for future skills, might have the power to define what kind

of direction competence should take. The need for competence in areas like construction, building, electronic systems and other petroleum deliverance systems has created comprehensive demand for human capital serving those fields of knowledge. In contrast to this, the local government and business life's requirements for pursuing a diversity of areas in economic development like winter tourism or further developing of aquaculture combined with tourism, might not have been priority the last years. The implication may be a lack of differentiated growth along a diversity of dimensions. The point about tourism and aquaculture is quite interesting when we are elaborating the elements of representing nature. It is clear that there are some different social constructions underlying regional development, whether we talk about natural gas or tourism and aquaculture. Relating to tourism and how to create an image facilitating the need for a solid economy, is depended on – among other factors – to what degree representing nature seems profitable in one way or the other. One could imagine that representing the northernmost town in the world surrounded by the arctic ocean and small fishing villages with focus on local practices and heritage, would be one step in the direction of developing – if not a counterpart – then at least a different economic model. If the place politics to a certain degree decides to go for a model like this, then we probably will see that some other representations of nature also would be added. You will be localised in an area dominated by the fjords and the mountains surrounded by aurora borealis and the Sami people with all its authentic behaviour. This includes reindeers walking around in the city centre encircled by tourists and locals expressing their hospitality which Finnmark is characterized by. However, the exact description of the relation between locals and Sami people is far from friendly. Locals protest against the Sami people and their reindeers walking around in the city, eating flowers and spreading dirt everywhere. This fact and in particular the debate in Finnmark nowadays concerning who should have the overall land rights, including both Norwegian legislation and Sami administration – throws lights over how different groups have different understanding of the right to use nature and ownership to areas – whether preserving or make use of the same area too develop business. Further, the representation above could be facilitated by the crystal clear fjords coloured in pure gold of the midnight sun while you are sitting in a steaming outdoor hot tub. After being exposed of these impressions, you could reflect on those images while you are sitting with the bonfire, preparing the fish you just caught and after that you are going to bed in a lavvu or a hotel made of ice.

Let us return to fossil fuel. Representation of natural gas and Snøhvit as environmental friendly energy, has reached out to the youths in Hammerfest. A minor field study, carried out

by students at the Department of Planning and Community Studies interviewing youths in the community last year, indicates several interesting points. (referanse!). First, it is important to note that – regarding the future and where to go after finishing school - Hammerfest earlier represented an inconceivable alternative for these groups of people. Our material have a small tendency that we could interpret as Snøhvit having made the youth realize that some interesting possibilities may in fact arise in Hammerfest. It is of course important to bear in mind that youths in this age-group varies to an extreme degree when they are asked these kinds of questions. The most important finding for our argument was however that the youth very elegantly questioned – rather appropriated – the degree to which jobs in the petroleum industry would tempt them to return after being well educated, or whether these jobs may tempt them to even stay and not leaving the municipality at all. They communicated that other fields of interest, such as advertising, media and journalism were more tempting. Could it be that the potential for development that central actors communicate out to the people regarding this sector, is not compatible or susceptible for the youth around Hammerfest? Representing nature and one aim after development in one sector might thus implicate aspects that are best heard by listening to the human capital that exists in the community – included the youth.

At the same time it is most probable that representing Hammerfest as an industrialised town based on developing the petroleum and delivery sector, also will lead to attraction of one special labour force to the municipality. Related to Snøhvit, it has been possible to notice a change in the composition of the male and female structure in Hammerfest. The community has in earlier phases created relatively great numbers of typical female jobs (hospital and fish industry) and has therefore also given the municipality a competitive advantage in head of other municipalities. The petroleum industry is dominated by men and especially when the construction phase delivered most of its labour force, Hammerfest was characterized by a sharp increase when it comes to men visible in the municipality. We are also able to notice some changes in the civil parts of Hammerfest, like i.e going to a pub and noticing a lot of men gathering in groups, speaking other languages and giving every visible signs that they work at the construction.

As the discussion above indicates, there appear to be both possibilities and implications regarding representing nature and the consequences these representations create. How we relate to these representations is influenced by representations that are communicated by central actors who play important roles in a current place. We have shown how rather unique possibilities for Hammerfest came into existence based on the representation of nature as Liquid Natural Gas. These representations are nevertheless against and competing with

other representations that until now has not been realized. Maybe a representation of Hammerfest and the Northern coastline with winter or summer tourism combined with experienced-based aquaculture, could have created comparable growth and prosperity and development? Our point is not to indicate one definite or precise politic regarding those questions, but rather to request an open dialogue and arenas where people can meet and claim their opinion about a place and its further development.

Places` development is among other factors determined by economic interests, and by virtue of this it is important that a place is developed along lines that people who live in these places can relate to and agree upon. If a place or some stakeholders are about to organize processes like this, it is necessary to ask the following: under what conditions is an attractive place formed? Places attractiveness has both to do with its identity and image – how people experience the living conditions in a place and how other people look at the place they are living in. The representation of nature is of significant importance in this process. How a place is represented, that it is or is not considered as physical well functioning, and that it fills some qualities people living there appreciate, seems evidently to be important elements when a place attractiveness is experienced. Thus, Hammerfest in this context must develop to be a safe and good society to live in – with the inhabitant voices included – and it have to be developed a cultural arena with content for people living there. We believe in an opinion that a place or a regions quality, to a certain extend is just as important – if not even more important – than the new jobs growing up as a result of representing nature one way or the other. This involves that if Hammerfest should develop to be a more attractive place to stay in or too move to, arenas that facilitate contribution from a diversity of opinions and suggestions from the people living in Hammerfest have to be developed. Only in this way the municipality can agree upon one route or a diversity of routes deciding upon what kind of regional developement the town should pursue. We believe that a place or a product can not be developed or develop alone, but are rather in favour of thinking about this as a process that require participation and suggestion – as interaction between people, projects and organizations. Thus, in developing places or regions one way or the other we believe in negotiations about and around the power to define representation of nature, and we also find it favourable thinking about these processes should include people from a diversity of groups. In Hammerfest, the representation of nature has given a long-desired fuel to the private business life, and the focus from the local government is now how to manage bringing place-development to a level where place uniqueness seems to be the desired end.

Tromsø, the “magical arctic town”:

Tromsø is Northern Norway's largest town, with a population of 61,000. Although this amounts to a rather small town in many parts of the world, Tromsø is host to a large number of public and private institutions, which make it the regional centre of a large geographic area. The university, established in 1972, together with the regional university hospital and the polar institute has provided jobs for highly educated workers and continue to draw young students as well as professionals from the surrounding areas and from other parts of Norway and abroad. The age-group from 20-50 makes up a substantial part of Tromsø's population. Tromsø has a reputation as a cultural city, with a high number of cafes and nightclubs as well as cultural events such as the international film festival, a number of concerts and happenings. According to city planner Jan Einar Reiersen, Tromsø scores high on indicators such as number of hotel guests and conference attendants each year compared to other large cities in Norway. Several large-scale public investments, together with Tromsø's function as consume-capital of the region, has contributed to a steady growth in the city's population and job opportunities over the last decades. However, Reiersen points out that as many of the largest public projects now are concluded, Tromsø will need other kinds of growth inputs in the years to come, if the city is to retain its position and avoid population stagnation or decline.

The proposal which was put forward in the spring of 2003 by a group of politicians and businessmen that Tromsø should apply for the hosting of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games, can be seen both as an attempt to develop new business opportunities based on the the city's present and potential tourist industry, and as a bid to achieve fresh public investments in the regional infrastructure. The Olympic initiative is also a continuation and reinforcement of other initiatives to promote Tromsø as a tourist attraction, with a dual focus on the unique arctic environment of the city and its cultural vitality and warmth. Whereas the Olympic bid has been frozen for the time being by the Norwegian government's refusal to back a proposal, other events such as the hosting of the so-called Mandela concert in June 2005 as well as various promotional publications and advertisements continue to depict Tromsø as a city marked by magic arctic nature and warm human culture. While this might seem a benign and uncontroversial representation for the inhabitants of Tromsø, critique has been raised, especially against the idea of hosting the Olympic Games. A group was organized soon after the proposal had been put forward to oppose an application. In November 2004, after the responsible minister Valgerd Svarstad Haugland had signalled that she would not support the proposal, a survey showed that 50 % of Tromsø's population were opposed to Tromsø hosting the games, whereas only 39 % were in favour (Nordlys, 20.11.04).

One of the most controversial issues in the debate about the planned Olympic Games was the organising committee's suggestion that the city's landmark, the Tromsdalstind-mountain, would be used as a ski track for the alpine competitions. Siw Ellen Kraft (2004) shows how various groups argued against these plans on the ground that the Tromsdalstind was a sacred mountain in traditional Sami mythology. Through oral testimony, it was established that Sami reindeerherders had used to pray to the mountain when moving their flocks, and that they would not walk onto the mountain because of its sacred status. Following this evidence, the Norwegian Sami Parliament opposed any plans of building solid structures on the mountain, and the organising committee abandoned their plans for the Tromsdalstind. Kraft discusses how the proponents' use of a "magical" discourse in describing Tromsø's potential as an Olympic venue in this case was challenged and defeated by an alternative magical discourse, one in which the use of a sacred mountain as a sports venue would in effect desecrate the peak and reduce its value. Some might say that the champions of the Tromsdalstind primarily were concerned with finding a useful weapon against the Olympic proposal, and that the issue of sanctity would not have been brought up had it not been seen as a valuable rhetoric to thwart the committee's work. On the other hand, the argument about Tromsdalstind might actually be seen as one of the controversies which led a majority of Tromsø's inhabitants to reject the proposal. For the non-Sami population, the peak did not have any religious or ethnic significance, but the idea of a ski track on the mountain was opposed not only by the Sami. In a number of newspaper articles and letters, citizens claimed that the mountain was a valuable source of recreation and relaxation to them, one which inspired love as well as identity. Furthermore, it was said that any commercial use of the Tromsdalstind would reduce its value for the people. Our conversations with friends and acquaintances in Tromsø about this issue confirm the impression that the idea of a ski track on Tromsdalstind became a symbol of an unwanted intrusion on Tromsø's large friluftsområder. The resistance against commercial use of the Tromsdalstind could be read as a resistance against a commoditisation of the natural environment around Tromsø, an environment which is largely free and open for public use, with little or no hindrance by fences or other constructions. In their presentation of Tromsø as host city for the Winter Games, the planning committee had made extensive use of the imagery of wild and untouched nature which is to be found not only in close vicinity of the city centre, but even within the boundaries of the city, in the form of natural parks and free areas. The extensive use of this nature for recreational sports and excursions by the population of Tromsø was also an important point in the committee's argumentation. While the citizen of Tromsø probably would endorse such a

representation of their city and of themselves, there is a difference between the use of these images for building identity and pride and using them to promote tourism and economic investments. Packaging the city's physical and human environment for sale as an arctic magical experience, means turning the qualities with which the citizens identify into a commodity. As emphasised by M and M (2004), the critical feature of consumption is that it is reserved for those with the necessary resources to consume. Turning public places, such as a mountain or a natural park into a commodity for top athletes or wealthy tourists, may easily be seen as a threat of exclusion by the citizens who have used these areas freely. Even if local citizens are not to be charged for the experiences that one sells to outsiders, the construction of these experiences as a commodity for some may reduce their value as free and "sacred" for all. The fact that 50 % of the population voiced opposition to the Olympic proposal could thus to some extent be read as an intuitive rejection of a commoditised representation of Tromsø's nature and its citizens.

Apart from the debate about Tromsdalstind, the number of unsolved municipal tasks was an important point for many of the opponents of Tromsø 2014. For many citizens it seemed unconceivable how the town mayor and most of the leading municipal politicians could endorse a project which would involve a massive public investment, given the fact that the town budget had been severely strained for several years. The decade prior to the launching of Tromsø as host city had seen several public outcries following municipal decisions to close down nursing homes or to cut down on teaching resources, and several much-deserving projects, such as the building and rehabilitation of municipal schools, have been delayed or postponed. The committee's assurance that money for the Olympic Games would not be taken from the municipality's other commissions, but would rather consist of fresh money, money which would otherwise not be coming to Tromsø, did not reassure the public. It seemed certain that at least some of the expenses would have to be covered by the host city itself, and that even the preparation of a proposal would involve siphoning some resources from the municipal budget. Concerns about the mundane municipal tasks of schooling, nursing and caring were perhaps for many citizens more relevant to their everyday lives than the prospect of a magnificent arctic feast in years to come. The planning committee's use of spectacular photos of the town and the surrounding areas may actually have served to underline the differences between the proposed Games and the everyday realities of the town which the inhabitants knew. As described in the introduction, not every day in Tromsø is postcard pretty, and the routine lives of people depends more on whether

there is enough money left on the budget for road clearance to ensure that you can get to work on time on a snowy morning than on the future possibility to celebrate an athletic event.

Preliminary Conclusion

In this draft paper we have elaborated some possibilities and implications of the representations of nature which are currently used to develop economic activities in Hammerfest and Tromsø. In Hammerfest there was relative comprehensive support in the municipality in favour of developing Snøhvit because of the possibilities the project could create. In advance and during the phase of construction it was arranged meetings for inhabitants in Hammerfest where information about Snøhvit and the extended effects was communicated. The meetings were also an arena where people could ask questions, claim their disagreement or defend their support to the project. Though media, politicians and business actors all together communicated strong support in favour of the construction, we may ask to what degree the actual contribution from inhabitants represented final suggestions emphasized by Statoil. However, the meetings contributed to a feeling in the municipality of being asked and consulted in this important issue. In Tromsø we observed elements of the opposite. We find it obvious that inhabitants did not identify themselves with the magic and arctic project as the Olympic vision was represented by the steering committee. We believe that the lack of participation, local democracy and transparency created a feeling of being held outside this image- and business project. People to some degree felt alienated and we find it reasonable to believe that these elements did produce some of the local resistance we observed in the wake of the Olympic vision. Thus, developing economic politics for places is a complicated issue that includes several elements. Based on the examples highlighted in this draft, we would like to promote processes that include dialogue between a multitude of actors discussed on arenas for people from diversity of groups where they have the possibility to develop, defend and support their proposition.

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