

The role of Petroleum in Portraying and Perceiving Stavanger



Master's thesis in Human Geography

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Preface

Attempting to grasp the influence of the petroleum industry on the identity of Stavanger has been a great challenge, but mostly it has been great fun. As we move forwards towards a low-carbon society, understanding the places perhaps most intrinsically connected to fossil fuels is a vast, but crucial task. Without understanding how fossil fuels can contribute to the identity of places, the creation of places without fossil fuels will be faulty, at best.

First of all, I would like to thank all those who participated in the data production of this study. The life of a master student is never boring when one has such interesting informants. Also thanks to Ingrid and her family, who opened their home for me during my many, many, field trips to Stavanger.

A big thanks to my supervisor, Håvard Haarstad, for continuously reminding me why this topic is interesting and relevant. This thesis would not have been the same if I did not have him, and the entire Spacelab team, keeping me focused and curious. The entire staff at the institute of Geography deserves a thanks for putting up with numerous discussions on the importance of oil in the Stavanger region.

I would like to thank all those who have put up with me and helped me getting through the writing of this thesis. I wish I could mention all of you, but I'll have to settle for the highlights: If it hadn't been for Mamma and Pappa, I would have been evicted from my apartment and starved to death. Thanks to Oda, Anna and Emmanuel for reading through the entire thesis - correcting conjugation errors and boosting my confidence. Thanks to Malou for endless discussions (some about our thesis', but most about life in general). And, lastly, a big thanks to Tormod, who ironically made my thesis better by helping me forget about it.

To all of you: This thesis is half yours.

Marikken W. Wathne, 15.05.2017

Abstract

This master thesis explores the influence of the petroleum industry on the place identity of Stavanger, a Western Norwegian coastal city frequently called ‘the oil capital’. It is based on interviews and focus groups including petroleum workers and people involved with regional image building in Stavanger municipality. This thesis explores the role of the petroleum industry in narratives on the past, present and future identity of Stavanger. This is conceptualised through a merged framework, where place identity is seen as both being constructed by the perceptions, feelings and meanings humans attach to places (*sense of place*) as well as the more structural and institutional place branding strategies (*constructed place identity*). A stated objective is now to alter Stavanger’s image, from the oil capital to the energy capital. This thesis shows how the new image is failing to gain resonance in the narratives of the petroleum workers, and suggest two possible solutions: The depolitisation of the image change and the lack of novel content in the ‘energy capital’ image. It also shows how the change in identity is largely presented as non-conflictual, non-political and non-sacrificial.

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1. Introduction

The petroleum industry is strongly rooted within the Norwegian society, and especially within the region of Stavanger, being located on the Norwegian West coast. The industry's positive impacts on local and national economy is widely recognized, and Stavanger is commonly known as the 'oil capital' due to the important part it has played in hosting this industry.

During the latter decades, one can however argue that the extraction of fossil fuels has increasingly entailed negative associations. It is becoming widely recognised how the combustion of such fossil fuels lead to the emission of greenhouse gases, which, in turn, are altering the climatic processes on Earth. The 20th century has witnessed the emergence of a global environmental movement advocating for the mitigation of human impact on the climate. International agreements are being made to address the issues of global warming and voices are calling out for a transformation from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources. Fossil fuels are excluded from future imaginaries, and renewable energy is arguably gaining popularity.

Within this global context, the Stavanger region is attempting to change its reputation. From being widely known as the oil capital, it is now a stated objective of the local authorities that Stavanger become 'the energy capital'.

Within this context, this thesis seeks to explore the role of the petroleum industry in shaping narratives on the past, present and future identity of Stavanger. To which degree is Stavanger seen as intertwined with the petroleum industry? And is this image perceived as changeable, or is Stavanger's identity as the oil capital perceived as prevailing?

To explore this, this thesis has explored the narratives of workers currently and previously engaged in the petroleum industry in Stavanger. They have been asked to elaborate on the role of the petroleum industry for Stavanger, and whether they perceive the region as capable of moving beyond this image. This is based on a humanistic approach to place identity, where a sense of place is seen as being developed from the feelings, meanings and experiences people connect to places.

Adding to the humanistic perspective, this thesis has included the narratives of key people involved in the regional branding of Stavanger. Here, it is attempted understood how a place identity in Stavanger has been constructed, and is now attempted re-constructed.

2. Research questions

Within the context briefly explained in the introduction, which will be further elaborated on in the coming sections of this thesis, this study seeks to understand the role of the petroleum industry in portraying and perceiving the Stavanger region. My research question is the following:

What role does the petroleum industry play in narratives on the past, present and future place identity of Stavanger?

To further explore this topic, three sub-questions have been formulated:

1. *How can the petroleum industry be seen as formative for Stavanger's identity?*
2. *What role does the petroleum industry play in future imaginaries of the Stavanger region?*
3. *Are the linkages to the petroleum industry seen as limiting or enhancing possibilities to move beyond the image of being an oil capital?*

Underlying these assumptions is, arguably, a belief that at some point, Stavanger will need to decouple from the petroleum industry. As we will see in the coming chapter, the petroleum industry has been a crucial part of the identity of Stavanger. It was highly sought upon to make the industry establish in Stavanger, and when it did, it largely shaped the region. However, as will be further explored in chapter 4, we are beginning to understand the consequences the burning of fossil fuels has on our climate, and global discourses are now calling out for a green shift where fossil energy sources are abandoned at the expense of renewable energy sources. Bringing the global to the local, this thesis seeks to explore attitudes to the bond between Stavanger and the petroleum industry, attempting to link it both to the global discourses on climate change, as well as the highly local discourses on place identity. Chapter 5 contribute by adding some empirical examples which demonstrate the issues a region may have when closely connected to one singular identity marker, or when attempting to hold on to an industry which might be seen as expiring.

This thesis is based on theories on place identity, place branding and sense of place, which will be further elaborated on in chapter 6. Here, various theoretical approaches to understanding

human-place bonding is explored and put in a global and contemporary context. Chapter 7 will explain the methodological approach to exploring the research questions, especially explaining how the methods of focus groups and in-depth interviews have been applied. The following three chapters explain some of the key findings. These chapters are centred around one research question each: The first (chapter 8) explore the vast impact the petroleum industry has had on the Stavanger region, the second (chapter 9) outline rationalisations expressed when discussing the future of Stavanger in relation to the petroleum industry, and the third (chapter 10) discuss whether the tight coupling between Stavanger and the petroleum industry was seen mainly as an obstacle or as a facilitator when moving on to become something more than the ‘oil capital’.

The experience from Stavanger may be seen as both highly specific, and at the same time somewhat generalizable. Norway and Stavanger as locus for the discovery of oil have, indeed, had its particularities. Even so, experiences from this region may be an important contribution to other areas largely dependent upon oil, or other fossil resources. There are certainly changes (both concrete and attitudinal) occurring in our societies regarding fossil energy sources. I believe studying the manifestation of such contemporary changes in Stavanger can provide a framework for understanding how other regions largely based on fossil energy, or other singular industries, may respond to similar changes.

The changes discussed in this thesis are happening right now. Hence, this thesis seeks to produce novel knowledge which can merely be created in this exact temporal and spatial setting. I argue that today’s Stavanger is an interesting locale for research. As it is becoming increasingly recognised that a shift towards a low-carbon world is necessary, experiences from the locales where these changes are *actually* taking place becomes crucial. I believe it is of great importance to understand how changes occurring in the energy industry influence how we feel about, and experience, places that are seen as key nodes within such energy systems. Only then can we begin to understand the social consequences that a transition towards a low-carbon society will have.

3. Stavanger and ‘the oil’

“*Stavanger has become the oil capital of Norway*”. This is how Per Stangeland opens his book ‘What is happening to Stavanger [Hva skjer med Stavanger]’ from 1980 (Stangeland, 1980, p.9). Stavanger has been especially important in the Norwegian petroleum adventure, and the oil industry has made its impacts on the western-Norway coastal region, including giving it the label of being ‘*the oil capital*’. However, prior to this, Stavanger had multiple industrial identities. What is recurrent is Stavanger’s tendency of having a unilateral industrial focus. When an industry become big in Stavanger, it has generally dominated the region - everyone place their bets on the same horse. The petroleum industry can in this regard be seen as the latter of several epochs where the region has been highly dominated by one single industry.

3.1. The herring, shipping and canning capital

The first period of economic growth in Stavanger can be dated to when vast amounts of herring came to the shore outside Stavanger in 1808. Stavanger flourished as a herring city and experienced a massive population growth - from 2.400 inhabitants in 1800 to 14.000 in 1860. The cultural life in Stavanger was highly characterised by religious groups. The Norwegian Missionary Society was founded in Stavanger in 1842, and the missionary school in 1849. In 1859 the first association for complete temperance was founded here (Gjerde, 2002, p.9-10).

From the 1850s, shipping developed as a new dominant industry in the region. It became of significant size, and the disappearance of herring fish in 1870 did thus not have a disastrous impact on the region. It was worse when steam ships began taking over for sail ships in the shipping industry from 1882. However, towards the late 1800s, a new industry established in Stavanger: The canning factories. This industry had roots from both the herring industry as well as the shipping industry. Rapidly, Stavanger developed to be the factory city, with 70 canning factories as well as subcontractors being located in the area. This allowed further population growth, and by 1920, Stavanger’s population had reached 44.000 (Gjerde, 2002, p.10).

The canning epoch clearly made its impact on the city structure: Many small wooden houses were built in the city centre to house the inflow of vast amounts of low-paid workers. Hence, Stavanger had a characteristic of being the country’s largest small town (ibid.).

With the end of the First World War, the canning industry struggled as the demands for canned food decreased. The same was the case for the shipping industry, and the shipyards, whom previously had planned to expand, were struggling. At this time of distress, the first oil explorers came to Stavanger (Gjerde, 2002, p.10). After the Second World War, the shipping industry had improved its position slightly by building larger ships, but the competition from

the east was still highly noticeable. The canning industry was in severe stagnation as modern freezing technology improved and reduced the need for canned food. The graphic industry, having grown alongside the canning industry to supply it with specialised labels, stagnated with the industry that had created demand for its graphics. At the beginning of the 1960s, average income in Stavanger was about 20 percent lower than the national average, and the city ranked as number 17 in income (Gjerde, 2002, p.11-16). The region was in need of a new industry.

3.2. The petroleum industry enters Stavanger

In 1962, companies like Esso, Shell and Phillips began seismic explorations in the North Sea, and in 1965, the first drilling permissions were given. As the oil companies were given concessions to drill for oil on the Norwegian shelf, they were required to establish Norwegian subsidiaries as well as supply bases on Norwegian grounds, from where they were to run the petroleum activity. There were no further specifications as to where in Norway these should be, but many chose to establish their bases in Stavanger.

To attract these multinational companies and have them established in Stavanger, much work was done by local enthusiasts. From the companies, there was demand for office buildings and factory sites, and as foreign experts moved to Stavanger they demanded schools, offices, houses etc. Facilitating for this was thus an important task done by many corporate and municipal agents. The former mayor Arne Rettedal, ship owner Torolf Smedvik and politician Konrad B. Knudsen were three of the major forces in making the Stavanger region attractive for petroleum companies (Gjerde, 2002, p.16-20).

Rettedal was the first mayor of Stavanger after its merge with the neighbouring municipality Madla, as well as parts of Hetland, in 1965. He was a civil engineer and an entrepreneur and had many visions for Stavanger. Gjerde argues that Rettedal brought the practical work style of the entrepreneur into the politics: He was a man of action (Gjerde, 2002, p.16). One of many examples of this is when Rettedal heard that Phillips considered establishing their supply base in Farsund, about 120 kilometres south of Stavanger. Rettedal wanted Phillips to settle in Stavanger, and during a trip to the US, he visited the company's New York office to learn more about their plans in Norway. During the visit, Rettedal found that the areas for supply bases themselves were important, but that housing, schools, communications and culture also were elements of large importance to the company and needed to be considered when attempting to attract such companies. When the leader of the exploration activities in Phillips Petroleum Company Norway moved to Stavanger in 1965, he was met by

Rettedal at the airport, housed at Hotel Atlantic, and his children began in a Norwegian school. Phillips established their supply base in Dusavik shortly after (Gjerde, 2002, p.16-22).

Another story that highlights the importance of certain key individuals in the early phases of the petroleum industry establishing in Stavanger, was in the building of the ‘oil hill’ [Oljeberget] at Slåtthaug. Stavanger was initially lacking housing offers to petroleum workers. In 1966, the municipality received a request from drilling company Ocean Drilling and Exploration Co. (Odeco), that needed 18 family houses for their employees. Company representatives were shown around in an area in Madla where a housing project was planned. Municipal employees explained the entire process and how it was estimated to take at least one year to complete the housing project. The Odeco representative said: “I like the place, the houses and the price, but not the time”, and explained how he needed the houses done within four months. Rettedal immediately agreed to this time schedule. Leaving the area, deputy mayor Per Barkved shook his head and said: “We’ll say as the old hag from Setesdal: you can’t both promise it and keep it”. But Rettedal kept his word. Planning and cost calculations were scrapped, flamethrowers were used to defrost the soil and multiple building processes occurred simultaneously. Five months after the initial contact was made, 15 American families moved into their new houses in what is now commonly known as the ‘oil hill’ (Gjerde, 2002, p.26-28).

In the 1960s the petroleum industry had little impact on Norwegian everyday life and society. Few Norwegians were employed in the exploration activities, and those involved mostly did the dirty work and received the lowest salaries. The Norwegian involvement in these activities, even if minor at the time, laid the foundation for further developments of the Stavanger as a locus for petroleum activities.

3.3. Oil discovery on the Norwegian shelf

In 1958, the Norwegian geological survey wrote a letter to the foreign ministry of Norway stating that: “One can dismiss the possibilities of the existence of coal, oil or sulphur at the continental shelf along the Norwegian coastline” (Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, 2016, Ask, 2009). Many companies still attempted to find oil, but until the end of 1969, their efforts had not been rewarded. December 23rd, 1969, everything changed. Phillips had planned to drill one last time before giving up on finding petroleum on the Norwegian shelf, when they finally struck oil (Underthun, 2013, p.123). They found Ekofisk, the first viable oil discovery on the Norwegian shelf. Initially, the enormous discovery came as a shock in Norway, where it was not expected that Norway would be an oil exporting nation (Gjerde, 2002, p.31).

As it became apparent that petroleum would be an important resource for Norway, the Norwegian government felt a need to be more active in the management of the newly discovered resource. The government secretly bought stocks in one of Norway's largest industrial groups, Norsk Hydro, increasing its ownership from 47 to 51 percent. Norsk Hydro was one of the companies involved in exploration activities, and when Phillips made the Ekofisk discovery, Norsk Hydro got a share of 6,7 percent. This was due to a deal between Phillips and Petronord, a group consisting of Norwegian oil exploration companies, where the aim was to spread risk in petroleum exploration activities by sharing the profit of potential discoveries. Even a percentage of 6,7 percent resulted in a large income, and this capital laid the foundation for the establishment of a separate division for petroleum activities in the company (Gjerde, 2002, p.31-32, Ryggvik, 2010).



Picture 1: Phillips confirms oil findings in the North Sea. Newspaper article displayed at the petroleum museum.

After the discovery of Ekofisk in 1969 and the declaration of its viability in 1970, one began to understand the role petroleum would have in Norway. In 1971, the Norwegian government presented 'the ten oil commandments', which were to be the beginning of a holistic Norwegian oil policy. Here, national governance and control over the newly discovered resource was established as a goal, and state involvement was seen as crucial for the fair distribution and handling of the revenues from the petroleum industry (Gjerde, 2012). *Inter alia*, the commandments stated that Norway should be self-sufficient on petroleum, that all petroleum resources would be landed on Norwegian soil, and that the oil

revenues should facilitate for other Norwegian industries. Petroleum activities were taxed with as much as 78 percent, and foreign companies were required to train and engage Norwegian companies, rather than merely relying on foreign companies with pre-existing knowledge and competence. In this way, a Norwegian petroleum industry was to be constructed and sustained. Furthermore, the political, administrative and the commercial functions of the petroleum industry were to be divided between the department of industry, a petroleum directorate and a governmental oil company (Gjerde, 2002, p.32-33, Underthun, 2013, p.123-124, Ryggvik, 2010). One can argue that such a politics of petroleum was suitable for its time. More state-led policies had support in the 1960s and 1970s. The oil commandments display a governmental control that would arguably not be implemented today. As the 1960s and 1970s were characterised by a strong belief in the state, today's societies can rather be seen as having moved

towards post-politics: An era where government has been replaced with governance, and values such as democracy, citizenship and inclusion have been changed for technocratic solution, consensus and market-oriented approaches (Kenis and Lievens, 2016, p.3).

Table 1: The ten oil commandments (Norwegian Petroleum Directorate, 2010)

1	National supervision and control must be ensured for all operations on the NCS [The Norwegian Continental Shelf].
2	Petroleum discoveries must be exploited in a way which makes Norway as independent as possible of others for its supplies of crude oil.
3	New industry will be developed on the basis of petroleum.
4	The development of an oil industry must take necessary account of existing industrial activities and the protection of nature and the environment.
5	Flaring of exploitable gas on the NCS must not be accepted except during brief periods of testing.
6	Petroleum from the NCS must as a general rule be landed in Norway, except in those cases where socio-political considerations dictate a different solution.
7	The state must become involved at all appropriate levels and contribute to a coordination of Norwegian interests in Norway's petroleum industry as well as the creation of an integrated oil community which sets its sights both nationally and internationally.
8	A state oil company will be established which can look after the government's commercial interests and pursue appropriate collaboration with domestic and foreign oil interests.
9	A pattern of activities must be selected north of the 62nd parallel which reflects the special socio-political conditions prevailing in that part of the country.
10	Large Norwegian petroleum discoveries could present new tasks for Norway's foreign policy.

3.4. Stavanger rises as the oil capital

There was a bipartisan consensus that national sovereignty over the petroleum resources was crucial, so there was no substantial controversy in establishing a petroleum directorate and a national oil company. Neither were there many debates on how these institutions would be organised and run. Where they were to be located was, however, highly contested (Gjerde, 2002, p.33). Intensive lobbying was done in order for Stavanger to gain position and status as the oil capital (Gjerde, 2012, p.77). In September 1971, the municipality first initiated the lobbying towards becoming the oil capital but as Gjerde (ibid.) argues, in practice it already was. Since the first lobbying in 1971, it was a stated aim for Stavanger to locate the services of the petroleum directorate and the state-owned oil company in Stavanger.

Three cities were considered as hosts for these two pillars within the petroleum industry: Trondheim, Bergen and Stavanger. Early in the process, Stavanger took a proactive role in attempting to be the host of these institutions, claiming that the city already was an oil city



Picture 2: "Stavanger is the spot" was the slogan for making Stavanger the oil capital. Picture taken at the petroleum museum.

(Gjerde, 2012, p.79). In meetings with national authorities, the local government offered available areas for office spaces and factory buildings. Stavanger's pre-existing oil milieu was also used as an argument for establishing the petroleum institutions in this area (Gjerde, 2012, p.81).

Stavanger was in a favourable position. Many oil companies had already established in the region, and there were sufficient office spaces and industrial sites available.

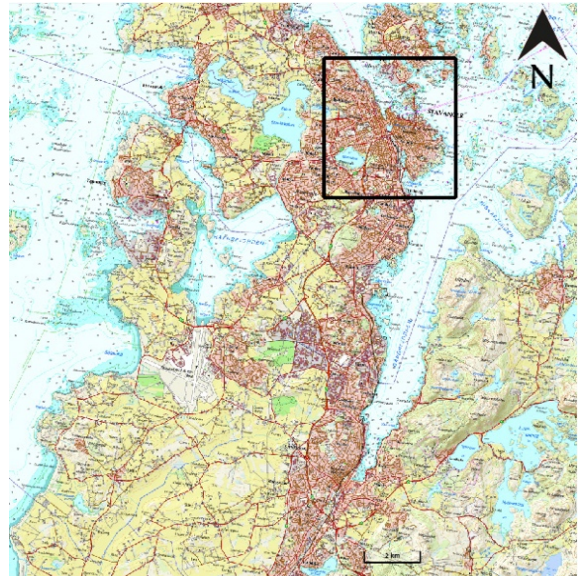
Companies and competence had already agglomerated in the region, and served as an argument to strengthen Stavanger's position as the oil region. In the lobbying, a main argument was that a further agglomeration would be positive for knowledge production. The Norwegian competence on petroleum activities was still restricted, and by gathering all the knowledge on this topic in one area, it could more easily be taken advantage of by the Norwegian companies (Gjerde, 2002, p.35). In November 1973, national government released a recommendation where 6 out of 7 members in the committee voted for locating the department and the oil company headquarter in Stavanger. The arguments for this were the pre-existing milieu and reputation of Stavanger as an oil city (Gjerde, 2012, p.82). The lobbying continued after this, convincing national politicians that Stavanger was the spot. The localisation was to be decided in Parliament June 13th and 14th 1972 (Gjerde, 2002, p.37-40). During the argumentation rounds, politician Thorbjørn Berntsen from the labour party argued that due to its proximity to existing petroleum activities, Stavanger would be the best out of the three alternatives: "Do not let the state oil company begin with the handicap of being localised in sites which are at a safe distance from the areas where oil activity is taking place and will take place in the years to come", he argued (Gjerde, 2002, p.40-41). June 14th, the Stavanger alternative gained a clear majority in the Parliament vote, and Stavanger was established as seat for the directorate and the governmental oil company, later known as Statoil (ibid., p.41).

Becoming the oil capital clearly impacted the Stavanger region. New oil fields were developed outside its coastline and much of the production processes occurred centrally in the Stavanger region. Thus, continuously new work places were created. Migrants from near and far came to settle in the region, the population grew with approximately 1000 inhabitants

annually, and 1000 dwellings was built every year. Rapidly the region expanded, and Stavanger was no longer a village, but became an urban area of substantial size (Gjerde, 2002, p.63-65).



Picture 3: Map of Stavanger anno 1938 (Kartverket, 2017a).



Picture 4: Map of Stavanger anno 2017. Marked area show map area from 1938 (Kartverket, 2017b).

The industry also led to a generally improved economic situation in the region. Some narratives argued that the price levels were too high, and made life difficult for those not employed in the petroleum industry. For the government, however, the increased tax revenues facilitated multiple projects, and communications were drastically improved. A helicopter base was established and the airport at Sola increased substantially in both size and number of departures. Hotels flourished and were frequently full. The Stavanger district college out-examined its 50 first petroleum engineers in 1974, and international schools appeared in multitude. In the cityscape, oil rigs were a common sight as they were towed to shore for maintenance. Gjerde explains how an American visiting Stavanger saw an oil rig anchored in the city centre and exclaimed: “You’ve been lucky, finding oil this close to shore!” (Gjerde, 2002, p.65). All in all, the epoch of being the oil capital certainly left its mark on Stavanger.

3.5. Economic decline

The petroleum industry is, however, highly volatile, and has historically been characterised by booms and bursts. Stavanger, being the power centre for petroleum activities in Norway has thus followed these conjunctions closely. How global incidents can have local consequences in Stavanger by altering the oil price has been noticed several times in Stavanger’s history. This was for example seen when Iraq re-entered the oil market in 1998, after having been shut out since the Kuwait war in 1990-1991, leading to an increased supply. Mild winters and the

setback of the Asian crisis led to a reduced demand for petroleum, and the prices dropped to below 10 dollars a barrel (Gjerde, 2002, p.100). The economic downturn had many consequences and solutions: Several of the large oil companies merged, such as Exxon and Mobil becoming ExxonMobil. Many jobs became redundant, and in one year (from 1998 to 1999), 12.000 people lost their employment. In 1999, there was, for the first time, a net emigration from Stavanger. However, the crisis quickly stabilised, and soon everything was back to normal in Stavanger: With more companies establishing in the region and increasingly larger profits being made (Gjerde, 2002, p.100-103). It did, however, show how the interconnectedness to the global petroleum economy could make global events manifest locally.

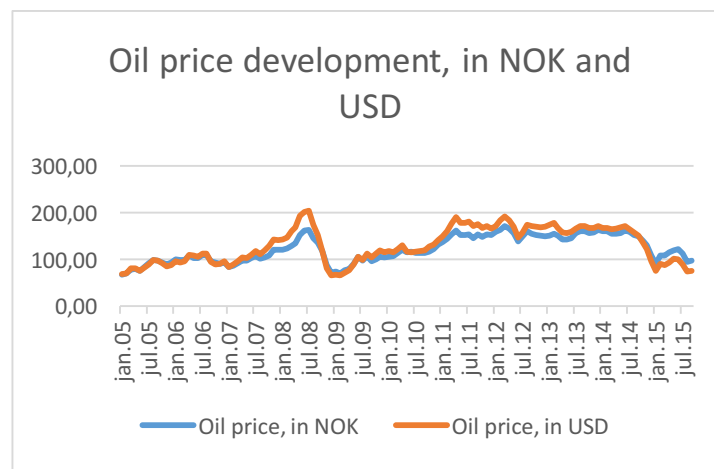


Figure 1: Oil price developments, from 2005 to 2015 (Korlyuk et al., 2015).

In 2014, a new crisis struck Stavanger. The oil barrel price declined dramatically (see Figure 1), falling from 171 US dollars in June 2014 to merely 75 US dollars in January 2015 (Korlyuk et al., 2015). The rapid drop in oil prices was arguably caused by reduced demand due to a weak growth rate in China, and moderate growth in Europe, as well as increased supply (Mælum and Engebretsen, 2016). The increased supply can be seen as resulting from large-scale shale oil production in the US. Over the latter years, this production has rocketed and resulted in the US becoming practically self-sufficient on energy. Following this increased production, the US opened for oil exports in December 2015, repealing a 40-year-old law prohibiting exports. Also, the sanctions on Iran, banning oil exports, were lifted in 2015. Expectations of more Iranian oil entering the markets might have influenced the prices. The OECD, the coalition of large oil exporting countries, could have mitigated the price drop by reducing production, but as they attempted to regain lost market shares, they decided not to do so (Mæland and Bergh, 2014).

Such global events clearly impacted Stavanger. In April 2016, 5 percent of the population in Stavanger were unemployed. This percentage had been well below 2 percent between 2011

and 2014 (see Figure 2). The increased unemployment was felt in all sectors, but most severely within industrial work, construction and engineering and ICT (Fadnes, 2016).

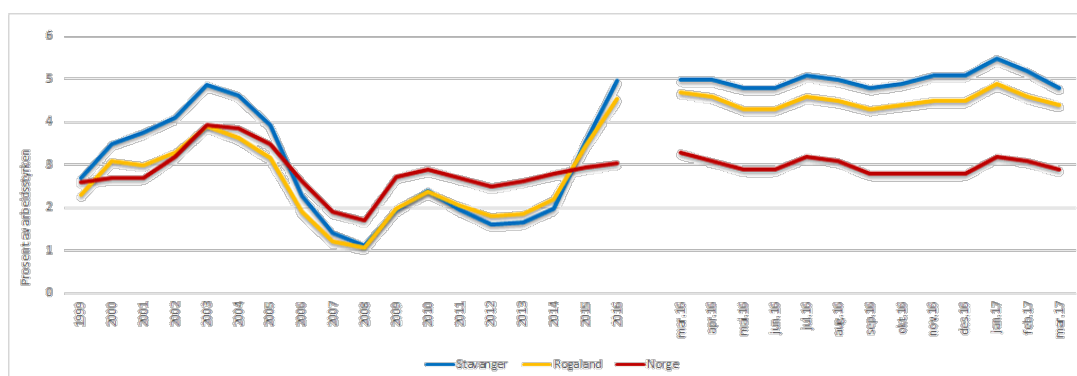


Figure 2: Unemployment, percent of work force, in Stavanger municipality, Rogaland county and in Norway, 1999 - March 2017 (Stavanger-statistikken, 2017).

3.6. Changing times, changing identity

There are plenty of narratives portraying the petroleum industry as a key influence on the identity of Stavanger. For example, journalist and politician Aslak Sira Myhre explain how growing up in the oil capital meant continuously checking the oil prices to see whether they had changed. For the people of Stavanger, like Myhre, knowing the barrel price was not merely a fun fact: it was decisive for whether the industry would continue its expansion, and thus the chances of the fathers in the region having work in the construction of the platforms (Myhre, 2010, p.7). The petroleum industry permeated life in Stavanger. Myhre recalls screenings of documentaries on the petroleum industry at his childhood schools and how they were taught how dinosaurs and ancient forests came to be the petroleum that in modern times contributed to the wealth creation in Norway. He shows how the most precious thing one



Picture 5: Having a bottle of oil on one's mantelpiece was common

could have on the mantelpiece was a small bottle of oil extracted from the near-by oceans (Myhre, 2010, p.9). Petroleum was not merely an energy source. It was a central part of day-to-day life. The petroleum shaped the identity of the region and those living in it.

With the increased focus on environmentalism, Myhre argues that oil as an identity marker changed content. From being a black, concrete matter extracted

from the ocean shelf and providing work for people in Stavanger, it became something entirely different:

The actual life with the actual oil [...] is almost non-existent in the Norwegian discourse [...]. This lack of knowledge about the actual oil has given space for a different kind of oil. An abstract oil, a purely theoretical magnitude which has nothing to do with the carbon-based raw material that my entire city was determined on extracting from the ocean floor. This oil merely exists in the debates and has only two characteristics; it destroys the environment and creates a repulsive wealth.

Aslak Sira Myhre (2010, p.15)

This view on petroleum as a concept which is changing content, can be related to sociologist Erik Fossåskaret's understanding of identity as *associative fields* (Fossåskaret, 2009). Here, a concept is given its meaning and identity by the mental maps arising individually and collectively in association with the concept. The oil was previously associated with pride, money and oil bottles on mantle pieces. However, such associative fields do not have stable meanings - they might change hue over time. As Fossåskaret argues, the "oil capital has long been an honorary word [...]. The oil capital meant power and money, friends in Houston and a glamorous life with relaxed commuting between 'Jan's Food and Winery' and network-building golf weeks in the Bahamas" (ibid.). The label of being the oil capital will endure in the Stavanger region for many years, but the meanings ascribed to this term might very well change, Fossåskaret argues: The associative field of being the oil capital can change hue. He further claims that fossil fuels already have lost its resonance, and that it "will increasingly more prominently be associated with Co2 and the United Nations' Climate Panel, starving polar bears, arid glacial rivers in the Himalayas and vulnerable low lying areas in Bangladesh. Fossil fuels is not an honorary word" (Fossåskaret, 2009, p.2).

3.7. 'Oljå'

The industry's linguistic impact is one domain where one can arguably see its importance, and whilst the focus of this thesis is not idioms, some comments must be made about the term 'oljå' [oljo:]. Directly translating into 'the oil', this Norwegian term is widely used in Stavanger. Being employed within the petroleum sector is labelled as working 'i oljå' – whether you are a manager or working the deck of a supply boat. The term thus gives a common label to all employed in this industry. The term might also be understood as a familiarising of the industry. Translating it is not easy, but it could be described as having a *cosy* ring to it. The term makes the petroleum industry sound like something known. Being said in Stavanger dialect, it bears a subtext of being local at core: It is reminiscent of belonging to the Stavanger region.

4. Climate change and the green shift

Our global reality is highly affected by a changing climate. By now, it is well-known that our climate is changing and that human activities leading to greenhouse gas emissions are the primary reason for these changes. Thus, this thesis will not spend much time elaborating on this (Lindegard et al., 2014, p.28-29, Rosa et al., 2015, p.32). The changes in our climate are already noticeable: Temperatures rose with 0,86°C from 1880 to 2012, and each of the last three decades has been warmer than the preceding (Lindegard et al., 2014, Rosa et al., 2015, p.32).

The full consequences of the climatic changes are uncertain and depend on the measures taken to reduce emissions. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that if the temperature increases with 4°C, it will lead to highly severe, and possibly irreversible, effects. Regardless of our actions, the climate will continue to change. It is thus crucial that we adapt our societies to a future with a different climate, the IPCC argues (Lindegard et al., 2014). However, “we cannot adapt to all of the changes in the world that we are creating with today’s development in emissions. Therefore, it is necessary that the emissions are being greatly reduced during the coming decades” (Lindegard et al., 2014, p.28).

4.1. Global discourses on a green shift

Global discourses are now highly concerned with identifying means of reducing human impact on our climate. Transformations to low-carbon societies and adaptation of our existing societies in accordance with the changing climate is seen as necessary and emergent (Lindegard et al., 2014, p.28-29). Transformation implies a more radical shift of underlying structures than a transition, which can occur gradually (Pelling, 2011, see for example p.50-51). These will, however, here be used interchangeably.

The public is becoming increasingly aware of the climate changes, and the concern for climate change is generally high (Caniglia et al., 2015, p.271-274). This has been relatively stable during the latter decades, but as more people have learned about climate change, both the understanding of its causes and levels of concern have risen. Across the globe, we now see the manifestation of the concern over climate change through various organised efforts, advocating that measures should be taken to mitigate the effects of global warming. Even if these organisations vary greatly in size, objectives and whom they attempt to influence, one can clearly identify an environmentalist movement working for action being taken in respect to climate change. This has resulted in climate change becoming a major political issue (Caniglia et al., 2015, p.235). Through international agreements, world leaders agree to comply with the goal of limiting warming to 2°C. To comply with this goal, Co2-emissions needs to be

reduced, and the level of Co₂ in our atmosphere must be stopped at a level between 430 and 480 parts per million (Lindegard et al., 2014, p.29).

At the same time as an environmentalist movement has grown forth, a countermovement has, too, emerged. Organised climate change denial is a large obstacle to the social mobilisation advocating for reduced greenhouse gas emissions (Dunlap and McCright, 2015, p.320). Some also argue that the climate knowledge and projections

are too uncertain to cause us to reduce, or stop, petroleum activity, or that reducing oil extraction would merely lead to an increase in coal extraction (see, for example Wærness, 2015). As chief economist in Statoil, Eirik Wærness argues (ibid.): “Imagine the Co₂-emissions Europe would have had if 40 years of Norwegian exports of gas rather had been covered by coal”. As we shall see, this is a common perception also amongst the petroleum workers.

4.2. The changing political climate of climate politics

As we have seen, climate change has been put on the agenda as public concern has increased. However, the politics of climate change can be seen as having changed. Kenis and Lievens (2016, p.2) argue that contemporary climate politics has three tendencies: Firstly, attempts at making international climate agreements have successively failed. Even the Paris agreement of 2015 arguably joins the rank of thin agreements with lack of substantial commitment. Secondly, the climate problems are being reframed in market-oriented terms. Narratives argue that a ‘double fix’ can improve both the economy and the climate, and the ‘green economy’ discourse is becoming increasingly recognised – arguing that economic growth can be combined with economic gains (see also Holgersen and Malm, 2015). Thirdly, Kenis and Lievens argue that climate politics are becoming increasingly depoliticised. There is a tendency towards approaching the climate crisis with consensual, managerial and technocratic approaches (Kenis and Lievens, 2016, p.2). Within this context, cities are now becoming sites for technocratic solutions, governance approaches and city marketing, elements which are referred to as *post-political*. This leads to changes in the cityscape, Kenis and Lievens (ibid.) argue. Local authorities are less concerned with implementing policies to steer society, and more concerned with finding technical, cooperative solutions and creating images and narratives where climate change is not merely a problem – but also a potential gain. This is exemplified through the



Picture 6: Information on Anthropocene climate challenges has reached the petroleum museum.

Belgian city Leuven, which has set a goal to become carbon neutral by 2030. Here, climate change is expressed as not merely being a burden, but also a unique opportunity. As Kenis and Lievens (2016, p.10) argue: “Materially, not so much has changed, but in the case of Leuven, important symbolic changes have taken place: climate neutrality has become key to the city’s self-image, as a result of which critical local issues, discussions and agendas are (re)framed”.

The arguments made by Kenis and Lievens are in accordance with Swyngedouw, who claims that even if the climate issues are politicised (put on the political agenda), the contemporary public sphere is highly depoliticised (Swyngedouw, 2010). He argues that:

This post-political frame is structured around the perceived inevitability of capitalism and a market economy as the basic organizational structure of the social and economic order, for which there is no alternative. The corresponding mode of governmentality is structured around dialogical forms of consensus formation, technocratic management and problem-focused governance, sustained by populist discursive regimes

Erik Swyngedouw (2010, p.215).

Thus, the climate issues are attempted solved through consensus, agreements, negotiations of interests and technocracy. There is no real political room for disagreement, Swyngedouw argues (Swyngedouw, 2010, p.227-228).

This combination of the climatic issues being increasingly put on the political agenda, combined with a post-political public sphere, provides an interesting setting in which it will be interesting to examine the fossil fuel industry and its impact on the Stavanger identity.

4.3. Manifestations of the green shift in Stavanger

Historically being the oil capital, Stavanger municipality has recently changed its strategy. On conferences, speeches and on the municipality’s web page, the region is no longer called an ‘oil capital’, but rather an ‘energy capital’. Speeches from the Stavanger mayor show this term have been used since 2012, and in a variety of settings: in opening ceremonies for new students at the University of Stavanger to corporate dinners with representatives from actors such as the petroleum directorate, the Norwegian Oil and Gas Association (Helgø, 2012, Helgø, 2013).

On their web pages, the municipality clearly states that ‘Energy, climate and environment’ is one of their main objectives (following 1) Health and welfare and 2) Education and knowledge, and followed by 4) Urban art and 5) Governance and democracy) (Stavanger kommune, 2017). It is here argued that Stavanger, with ‘its position as an energy capital in

Europe' (Stavanger kommune, 2017), will seek to take an active role to solve the global challenges related to energy, climate and environment. The objective is to build on the pre-existing competence in hydropower, oil and gas, as well as the knowledge of strong, technical milieus in the region, to gain an advantage in energy, climate and environment. These concepts will be included and involved in a Smart city-perspective (ibid.).

The objective of becoming a Smart city is stated in several of Stavanger municipality's documents and speeches, and is rooted in the Triangulum project. The Triangulum is a EU initiative aiming at developing new innovations for smart cities and societies, with the three pilot cities Stavanger, Manchester and Eindhoven (Seehuus, 2017). One of the most visible measures taken to develop Stavanger as a Smart city, is perhaps the Nordic Edge conference, being held annually in Stavanger. The conference is held at Stavanger Forum, one of the largest areas for conferences and exhibitions in Norway. Being the largest Smart city-event in the Nordics, the conference invites more than 100 speakers from Norway and abroad and host a large-scale exhibition displaying "new technological solutions that will make cities and communities smarter and greener" (Nordic Edge, 2017).

Smart city is a concept that has gained momentum over the last years, and is highly popular amongst city administrators, all though there is little consensus on what exactly it entails. 'Smart city' should be seen as a multidimensional approach to improving life in the cities, by embodying smart technology into the daily lives of people living in, and visiting, the city (Dameri and Rosenthal-Sabroux, 2014, p. 1-3, 10). By applying more technological solutions, the urban life and the energy efficiency in the cities can be seen as improving (ibid.).

In Stavanger, such a focus on energy, climate and environment in a smart city is regarded to be both a strength for the regional industries, as well as contributing to finding solutions to global climatic problems (Stavanger kommune, 2017). The strategies for becoming a smart city is to develop and use technologies that help reduce emissions, and to make it easier for the inhabitants and companies in Stavanger to make climate neutral choices. One strategy is also to "further develop the regional competence on energy production in order to boost green energy, whilst simultaneously make the extraction of non-renewable energy resources the most environmental friendly in Europe" (Stavanger kommune, 2017). Thus, the aim is both to develop new, green, energy technology (based on existing competence), but at the same time continue existing energy production and improving this.

Measures are seen as being taken in Stavanger in the meeting with climate changes and the discourses advocating for addressing these issues. Such issues have been put on the agenda in Stavanger, and can arguably be seen as having shaped how the region seeks to presents itself.

5. Specific and lasting identities: Lessons learned

As seen, it is a stated goal of Stavanger to change its image – from being the oil capital to being the energy capital. To gain a better understanding of the situation in Stavanger, this thesis will here show two examples which can shed light on the topic of places and identifying traits.

Place identity is often perceived as something which can rapidly change. It is also argued that place identities are rarely understood equally by all inhabitants in a place. However, some empirical examples demonstrate how a place's identity can also be, in practice, something more dominant and lasting. Detroit, US, has linked its image close to the automobile industry, an identity which can be seen as having been stable for decades. This identity marker had implications for the region – also as the automotive industry changed characteristics. The city can arguably be seen as linking its image to 'the automotive capital' and remaining to be so – also after the associative field (the meaning and content) of the automotive industry changed.

Another empirical example show the danger of not moving on. In Malmö, Sweden, the place identity was closely linked to industry, and particularly shipping. Even after this industry became less viable in Sweden, the municipality attempted to hold on to this industrial element, leading to a loss for the city. Holgersen argues that Malmö reproduced yesterday's city, and continue to do so today. These two examples will be outlined further here, as the experience from these two regions can prove to be of high value for Stavanger.

5.1. Lasting identities: The Detroit case

“This was once the capital city of capitalism, the great roaring furnace at the very centre of America's rise to world power and greatness”, journalist and author Peter Hitchens wrote about Detroit in 2011 (Hitchens, 2011). Illustrated with pictures of a decaying metropolitan, Hitchens' article explain how the once great industrial automotive city is turning into a ghost town after the global shift where industries such as the car manufacturing had been relocated to other geographical areas, mainly in Asia (Hitchens, 2011). Detroit is frequently considered to be the car capital, having been at the forefront of car production in the 20th century and hosting major car manufacturers such as Chrysler, General Motors and Ford. However, during the 20th century, deindustrialisation led to the relocation, downscaling and closure of plants and whole industries both in the US and in other western countries. Detroit and the automotive industry too saw a major displacement of jobs and capital to Asia (Shor, 2016, p.85).

The decline of the industry in Detroit has taken its toll on the identity of the city. Detroit is infamous for its bad reputation, and as Curran (2013) experienced, many people considered to be both smart and articulate, avoided stating their Detroit origin when asked where they

were from. Rather, they would express being from the state of Michigan, disassociating with the area of Detroit itself. Long-term negativity has been associated with the city, characterized in part by high crime rates, segregation, urban decay and poor public schools (Curran, 2013). This degradation of the Detroit area might be seen as an incapability of moving beyond the previous image as the automotive capital. As the industry was relocated from Detroit, the city lost its main income source, and without other viable alternatives, the situation in the city deteriorated into what Detroit can be seen as today: a dying, melodramatic place (Hitchens, 2011).

The example from Detroit thus shows how being closely connected to one identity, or associative field, might come to mean something else for the city that it initially did, if the content of this associative field changes. This perspective can be useful to include when moving on to examine Stavanger and its connection to the petroleum. By being closely connected to the identity of the ‘oil capital’, Stavanger run the risk of the associative field of ‘the oil capital’ changing its content, meaning and association, and thus Stavanger might come to mean something else, merely by not changing.

5.2. Reproducing yesterday’s city: The global shift in Malmö

Showing to the Swedish city of Malmö, Ståle Holgersen demonstrate how failing to keep up with global trends may result in big losses for regions. Holgersen explain how Malmö used to be an important industrial city. Malmö was primarily characterised by textile and clothing, foodstuff and metal industry, but after the decline of these industries from 1950 to the 1970s, Malmö grew as a shipyard city, with the shipyard Kockums as highly influential on the city’s (self)image. The city was clearly industrial – both in image, economy and workplaces (Holgersen, 2015, p.234-236). After facing economic decline and a period of attempted rescue by the Swedish government, the shipyard was closed in 1979. Following the closure, however, debates centred around what the next large industry establishing in the area would be. Thus, even with the global shift of industry to other countries, one did not let go of the idea of Malmö as an industrial city. The Swedish government later made a deal with Saab where the car manufacturer would establish ‘the world’s most modern car factory’ in Malmö, but after merely three years in business, the factory closed (Holgersen, 2015, p.236-237).

Malmö was one of the cities in Sweden suffering the most after what is commonly known as a global shift as a *spatial fix*: the movement of production to countries and regions with cheaper inputs (especially labour) to increase profit (Holgersen, 2015, p.233). Arguably, Malmö was hit hardest due to its failure to readjust to the changing global situation. Stigendal

(in Holgersen, 2015, p.237) argues that Malmö got stuck in a low technological industry because of four factors: Traditions, power, mentality and interests blocking new initiatives.

Malmö's history is comparable with Stavanger. Like the industrial sector disappeared from western countries during the first global shift, one can argue that petroleum is about to disappear – not due to a relocation of production, but because of the growing realisation that it is harming our planet. Here, Stavanger might be seen as becoming stuck in the petroleum industry due to the same elements similar to those brought up by Stigendal: by the region's tradition, history, identity and mentality being interconnected to the petroleum industry. Also, power structures and interests may see it as beneficial to maintain the existing focus.

Dannestam (in Holgersen, 2015, p.238) argues that the establishment of the car factory in Malmö can be seen as a “confirmation of the belief in the principle of having large and strong industrial companies as the basis of prosperity and progress for a city”. As will be demonstrated in part 9.2, similar narratives are expressed in Stavanger. Billing (ibid.) similarly argues that years of progress had inebriated Malmö, “and when the first signs of the party was over, Malmö clung stubbornly to the dream about the industrial city”. This is also relatable to the Stavanger case, where the region arguably can be seen as to cling on to the petroleum industry, well after it can be argued that it is time to leave it behind.

Holgersen argues that, just like in the 1990s, Malmö is now continuing to reproduce *'yesterday's city today'*. After the final economic crash of the industry, Malmö re-established as a post-industrial city, with focus on knowledge, culture, capital and communication. However, the global economic downturn in 2008, followed by a national economic crisis in Sweden in 2012, has taken its toll on the city once again. However, the city is full of optimism, manifesting in the building of additional post-industrial elements in the area (Holgersen, 2015, p.238-240). New hotels, more high-class architecture, shopping malls and concert houses are being built, and Holgersen argues that Malmö municipality has “met the crisis by building more of the same” (Holgersen, 2015, p.242). Even if Malmö municipality argue that the policy of the city has shifted to address its social problems, Holgersen argues that this is not the case: The city is merely continuing along the same path as it has since the 1990s, and the emphasis on social sustainability is merely rhetoric (Holgersen, 2015, p.240).

This section has demonstrated how certain regions have had place identities closely attached to certain elements, such as Detroit and its close interlinkage to the automobile industry and Malmö with its bonds to the shipping industry. Stavanger can learn from both of these empirical cases. The example from Detroit shows how such a sole identifier can leave the region drained if the identifier is to disappear or relocate. Hence, it can be seen as a large risk to place

all the bets on one single horse. In Detroit, this had catastrophic consequences: leading to increased criminal activity and a deteriorated regional image. The example from Malmö shows how it can be critical to keep up with the global shifts. By not moving on from the industrial age and the identity it created for Malmö, the city might have suffered economic losses. Had the city more rapidly understood the global trends of the global shift, this could have been avoided. These are all valuable lessons as we move to examine how the close attachment to the petroleum industry might play a role in shaping Stavanger's future.

6. Conceptualising places and place identity

To further understand how Stavanger as a place is seen as being influenced by the petroleum industry, there is a need to take a step back and further examine the concept of *place* to see how this can be conceptualised theoretically. Geographers have largely been concerned with both the conceptual grasping of places, and to understand how humans relate to, and give meaning to places. We can identify two main strands of thought here. The first emphasise identity as something being given to a place by the experiences and perceptions of the individuals experiencing it. The other sees place identity as being constructed and implemented from above. The main difference between these two approaches lies in the identification of the drivers of *place identity creation*. The identity of a place can be understood as something being built from above, through strategic choices and branding, or as a collective understanding of the place at the individual level. This thesis operates in the interface between the two, arguing that the identity of Stavanger is a process shaped by both portrayal and perception of what Stavanger's identity is, and should be.

The terms used to describe place identity and human-place bonding are many, and in literature they often overlap. Many approaches to understanding place identity are generally inconsistent in their terminology. This thesis will separate between '*sense of place*', being the humanistic, individual-centred approach to understanding place identity, and '*constructed place*', which will be used in addressing the constructionist approach to place identity building. '*Place identity*' should be seen as a more general term, encompassing the two former terms.

In order to study the place identity of Stavanger, it is firstly important to examine the concept of *place*, and how it can be understood within a contemporary, global context. There are several ways of understanding place and space in geography, especially as our world can be seen as becoming increasingly interconnected and interrelated. Here, some of the main strands of thought on this topic will be presented. The aim here is to lay the conceptual grounds on which the Stavanger case, and the *place of Stavanger*, could be understood.

6.1. Global places

How can we grasp and conceptualise places? This is an issue with which many geographers have been concerned (Aure et al., 2015, p.15). Agnew explains how the concept of place often has been wrongfully used to mean the same as space. *Spaces* may be understood as mere locations on a geographical grid, such as coordinates on a map, being discrete, measurable and objective areas. This definition has, however, been criticised for being too simplistic (Parker and Doak, 2012, p.158). *Places*, on the other hand, are something beyond this (Cresswell, 2012,

p.110-113). In addition to being a mere locational point, *places* also concern how we *experience* and *relate* to places (ibid). Agnew suggests a tripartite conceptualization of places that seek to highlight the broader meaning of the concept. First of all, places should be seen as settings where actions occur and social relations are constituted. Drawing on the work of Giddens, Agnew calls this aspect of the place concept for *locale*. However, such locales cannot be seen

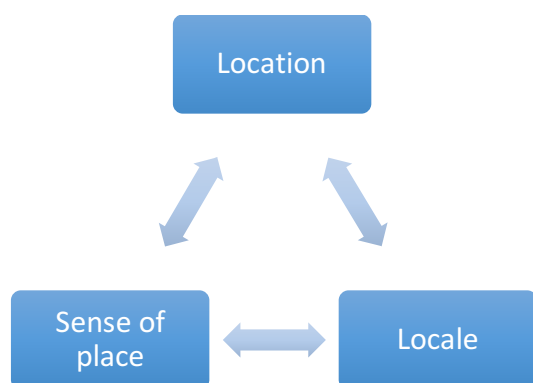


Figure 3: Agnew's tripartite understanding of place.

as existing in a vacuum – they are, indeed, fixed entities within a larger geographical area and social and economic processes at a larger scale. This aspect is called *location*. The third constituent part of the term, *sense of place*, is seen as the ‘structure of feeling’ that one can find in a place. This concept will be further elaborated on in the next part of this chapter. Agnew argues that the location, the locale and the sense of place should be seen as three complimentary dimensions of places (see Figure 3: Agnew's tripartite understanding of place) (Agnew, 1987, p.26-28). Hence, places are to be seen as both the physical environment, the activities taking place within the area, and as the meaning ascribed to it by humans (Parker and Doak, 2012, p.166).

Doreen Massey adds to this. She claims that how we understand places vary over time, both because the world itself changes, and due to the fact that people's understandings, and thus *representations of places* vary. It is crucial to understand places, as these understandings influence debates on development, conservation and rights. Simultaneously, grasping places conceptually might never have been more difficult than today (Massey, 1995, p.46). A traditional notion of places has been as discrete entities, having developed separately and being defined by distinct characteristics. This can be seen in terms such as things being *out of place*, implying that it does not fit with the previously established characteristics of the place (Massey, 1995, p.46-48, Massey, 1994). This view has been challenged with globalisation. Since the industrial revolution and the improvement of communications and transportations tools, the world has undergone drastic changes. We are living in an increasingly globalised world, here seen as characterized by time-space compression, convergence and increased flows of capital, people, culture, knowledge, ideas, etc. (Massey, 1995, p.46-48, Massey, 1994). In this new reality, you can have closer friends in distant countries than in your own neighbourhood, and cultural elements come from quite different cultures. Clearly, this has implications for

understandings of places and of *the local*, perhaps especially in places being highly involved in industries with an international character, such as Stavanger and the petroleum industry.

In such a globalised world, there are various views on what the place and the local come to signify. David Harvey (in Massey, 1995, p.50-52) argues that the current globalisation can make people feel like their places become invaded as different cultures, norms, people, industries etc. enter and alter what was previously known. This can, in turn, lead to these places no longer feeling secure and stable. Before we proceed on this train of thought, it should be noted that the novelty of this phenomenon is highly temporally and culturally specific. This invasion of different cultures is not something new, this has happened across the globe for decades. But today it not about Tanzanians drinking Coca Cola and listening to Spice Girls, but about inhabitants of ‘first world countries’ eating enchiladas and seeing people of different heritage in their neighbourhoods (Massey, 1995, p.50-52).

Even if being culturally and temporally specific, these changes *do* present something new, which also influences our perceptions on places. Harvey argues that such insecurities lead to a renewed interest in identifying the essences of our places. He sees the search of defining the meanings of places as an attempt to find safety and stability in a messy world. For example, the defining of certain elements of a place identity can be seen as providing security by including what the place *is*, and exclude what it is *not* (Massey, 1995). Examples of this might be seen in contemporary Norway (*inter alia*). A large flow of migrants from African and Middle-Eastern countries during the latter years has been occurring simultaneously as the growth of nationalist movements. As the current Norwegian minister of migration and integration, Sylvi Listhaug said: “Here [in Norway], we eat pork meat, drink alcohol and show our faces” (Tjernshaugen, 2016). This can be seen as what Harvey refers to: Attempting to identify the essence of Norway in order to establish security and stability, in it presenting a notion of who belongs to this place, and who does not (*ibid.*). Likewise, there might be an objective to define Stavanger strongly, and to find its essence as to find security in the local when the global is perceived as chaotic. In this view, “place and locality are foci for a form of romanticized escapism from the real business of the world” (Massey, 1994, p.151) , and thus it can be seen as *reactionary*, as it reduces places to be inward-looking and disconnected from change and dynamism.

Massey argues, however, that the view presented by Harvey has some problems. She claims that the time-space compression does not necessarily lead to feelings of insecurity and instability. She is also critical to how the perception of places as discrete units seems to require the drawing of boundaries around them to clarify what is *included in* and what is *excluded from* the place, a task that seems impossible in a world where places and spaces seem to be

disconnected. However, insofar as people still need some sort of attachment, the local and the sense of places is still of great importance. Rather than this reactionary view, she suggests to keep an idiosyncratic view on places – but without seeing places as reactionary (Massey, 1994). Thus, she argues that globalisation requires our conceptualisation of places to change, but not how Harvey proposes. Connecting sense of place to globalisation, Massey argues that we need to see places in a wider geographical context if we are to understand sense of place today. First, she argues that places should not be seen as static, but as processes. In a world characterized by flows and processes, places cannot be seen as a frozen picture, but as being continuously in movement, changing its identity as the different flows and processes change. Secondly, places cannot be seen as discrete units. When people have connections all over the world, and communities can be seen as existing independently of geographical locations, one can no longer (if one ever could) draw a line around a place and expect to delimit it from what is *not* part of the place. Thirdly, places cannot be seen as having discrete and unique identities, but rather as having multiple identities being constructed, deconstructed and re-constructed continuously. The dominant image of a place's identity will be contested by various agents, and will not be fixed, but change over time (Massey, 1994, p.121). Lastly, places are important and unique. Many argues that the uniqueness of places is becoming less viable and important, but Massey dispute this view, arguing that attachment to places is still vital (Massey, 1994) .

Based on this, Massey points to the 'throwntogetherness' and 'elusiveness' of places, and argues that they are influenced by elements both temporally and spatially distant. "This something which might be called there and then is implicated in the here and now", she says (in Berg and Dale, 2015, p.32). A place is not a place per se, but is created by its connections in space and time:

Both personal identity and the identity of those envelopes of time-space in which and between which we live and move (and have our 'Being') are constructed precisely through that interconnectedness

Doreen Massey (1994, p.122)

Criticism to the view on places as static and discrete is not new. In fact, some argue that conceptualising places as closed entities with unique characteristics is not only wrongful now, but that it has *always* been wrong. Places have never been closed units, they have always been connected to elements in other parts of the world (Massey, 1995, p.64-65).

This thesis will draw on the conceptualisations of places as dynamic, processual entities with close international connections. Thus, Stavanger cannot be seen as a closed entity with one true and clear identity, but rather its identity should be seen as processual and multifaceted. Within this understanding, the various individuals, or segments of individuals residing and working in Stavanger region may differ in their conceptualisations of what defines Stavanger as a place and gives the region its identity.

However, Massey's view on places and place identity could also be seen as overly focused on the dynamism and instability of place's identity. In regions such as Stavanger, it is arguable that some identities are more widespread and lasting than others, and that changes in these identities do therefore not occur naturally and rapid. Attempting to construct new identities might also be hard, as dominant identities can be highly intertwined within the understandings of the place.

6.2. Sense of place

Many have attempted to grasp the relationship between humans and places, with differing results. The many approaches to this might be explained by scientists' differing ontological and epistemological views, which in turn shape their perceptions on human-place bonding. However, as Kyle and Chick (2007, p.210-211) argue, there are many similarities between the various conceptualisations on the relationship between humans and places. Generally, theorists take one of two approaches here: seeing place identity as being constructed at a systemic level (constructed place identity), or as perceived and created at the individual and collective level (sense of place). To understand how the sense of place can play a part in shaping the place identity of Stavanger, it is crucial to gain an understanding as to what this entails, and how it can be seen as being established. This part will examine both the physical and less tangible aspects of the human-place bonding processes that can be seen as sense of place.

6.2.1. Sense of place: Physicality or a social construction?

In leading a seminar in human geography, I asked the students to describe the qualities that gave the city of Bergen its *sense of place*. This was here defined as what gave Bergen its characteristics, or *what made Bergen Bergen*. Alongside cultural heritage sites such as the infamous dock, the Fløibane funicular railway and the University, most students responded that the hiking milieu and active people were defining elements of the Bergen sense of place. When discussing these elements, they were explained to be closely linked to the mountains surrounding Bergen. Thus, the sense of place in Bergen was seen as given by both physical

objects as well as the less tangible meanings and experiences given to these physical objects. The sense of Bergen was seen as being both socially constructed as well as rooted in actual, physical elements. Without being aware of it yet, these students were very much in line with an important aspect of sense of place: its social construction and its physicality.

The concept of sense of place stems from humanism, and humanist researchers such as Tuan and Hummon are especially known for stressing the subjectivity of the sense of place concept. Tuan is one of the most well-known scientists within humanistic geography, a line of thought based on *existentialism* and *phenomenology*. Existentialism argues that humans themselves are the active driving force in giving meaning to their lives, rather than a superior power [i.e. God]. Phenomenology is concerned with finding the essence of objects or phenomena. As Cresswell puts it, a phenomenologist would be concerned with identifying the *horsiness of a horse*, to be able to distinguish it from a donkey or a zebra (Cresswell, 2012, p.111). Bringing this view into geography, humanists have been concerned with identifying what constitutes a place, and considering humans as the main agents in shaping and perceiving this (ibid.). Following Cresswell's passion for neologies, one could say that humanistic geographers try to identify the *placeness* of a place for the individuals experiencing it.

Tuan draws upon this when attempting to describe how humans make the Earth into a home, and argues that humans interact with places in order to give these places a sense of place. Tuan uses the image of an animal to describe the concept of place. When an animal walks through nature, from time to time it will pause in order to fill existential needs such as to eat, drink, mate or rest. The locations where the animal pauses will become places: they are given importance, significance. Adding to this notion from the non-human part of the world, the humanist will ask which *emotions and thoughts* may be given to a place by the humans experiencing it, which could not be given to the place by an animal. To exemplify this, Tuan describes the processes of birth and death; events to whom humans give great importance, but which animals do not spend time lingering over:

To pragmatic animals, locations have value because they satisfy current life needs. A chimpanzee does not wax sentimental over his past, over his birthplace, nor does he anticipate the future and dread his own mortality.

Yi-Fu Tuan (1976, p.269)

Here, we can find the differentiation between *place dependence* and *place identity*. One can argue that pragmatic animals have mere place dependence, whilst humans may give

particular meanings to places, beyond being locations for filling one's existential needs. Places, in the humanistic sense, can vary in size. An old armchair can be filled with emotions and childhood memories, and hence it may constitute a place. Likewise, an entire nation-state can be a place given meaning by the usage of symbolism (Tuan, 1976, p.269).

Like Tuan, Hummon argues that the emotions that humans attach to places are crucial for understanding the sense of place. Hummon (in Kyle and Chick, 2007, p.211) sees the concept as both involving an interpretation of the environment, as well as an emotional reaction to it. In day-to-day life, the emotional reactions to places are dominant, and when we speak of places, we often use a language filled with sentiment, emotions, values etc. (ibid.).

Hence, in most research on sense of place, the view that it is socially constructed dominates, for example by humanists as those mentioned above. Thus, multiple places can be constructed within a space, as the places are given sense by the individual people inhabiting it. The theoretical approach to sense of place does, however, include the physical attributes of the place. Even if partially involved in Hummon's argument above, it can be argued that the physicality of the sense of place concept has been given little importance in theoretical and empirical work. Stedman (2003, p.671) argues that, indeed, social constructions are important for our understandings of places, but they hardly come from nowhere. Arguing that human experiences with a place also is highly determined by the physical attributes, Stedman asks: "Are we likely to attribute 'wilderness' to a suburban shopping mall?" (Stedman, 2003, p.673). The role of the physical environments is often excluded from work on sense of place, for example when Tuan suggest that physical environments are mere 'blank spaces' when there is absence of human experiences, or in the work of Greider and Garkovich, arguing that "of course, humans reside in a natural ... world that is there ... but this world is meaningless. Meanings are not inherent in the nature of things" (in Stedman, 2003, p.672).

Integrating the role of the physical means expanding the understanding of how meanings are given to places by recognizing that the physical environment can influence sense of place. This influence can be direct (sensing and moving through the physical features itself give meaning to a place), through underpinning the symbolisms, and thus meanings, we give to places, or by enabling or constraining the experiences through which we create meaning (Stedman, 2003, p.673-674). The understanding that the physicality of environments also plays an important part in the creation of a sense of place is important to consider if we are to, for example, change the physical attributes of a place or understand how the alterations of the physical outlining of a place might have altered its sense of place. If sense of place

underestimates the role of the physical environment in meaning creation, we might fail to consider the influence physical changes can have on our experience of places (ibid.).

Adding to this, Kyle and Chick (2007, p.211) argue that social connections are crucial to experiencing place. Meaningful experiences with people we are close to increase the value and meaning ascribed to places. Places are therefore better understood as symbolic context to which we ascribe meaning through interaction with the environments and other humans, rather than as “collections of universally defined physical attributes” (Kyle and Chick, 2007, p.212).

In sum, then, sense of place could best be understood as the experiences and meanings given to places by humans, largely through interaction with each other. These experiences and meaning can, in turn, be shaped by the physical outlining of the place.

It should be clarified here that the terms sense of place and *genus loci* often overlap in theories on place identity. According to Parker and Doak (2012, p.162-166), *genus loci* can be seen as a narrower term than sense of place. Directly translating into the ‘spirit of place’, it embodies the physical and symbolic values in a place. For example, changes in the physical landscape of a place might influence its *genus loci* as it alters important elements and thus the meanings one attach to these elements. Sense of place should be understood as something broader than this, adding emphasis on emotional attachment and reactions to places (ibid.).

6.2.2. Sense of place becoming a *sense of self*

As outlined above, human-place relations are often perceived as based on both a functional need for the attributes of a place, as well as the emotional ties made to this area. This emotionality of place experiences is often believed to increase as we spend more time in the physical areas (Kyle and Chick, 2007, p.212). The individual and collective experiences with places may, in turn, become so strong that they reflect on the personal and collective identity of the people inhabiting these places (Rose, 1995, p.88). As we give meaning to places, one can argue that we give meaning to ourselves. Through defining our place, our individual and collective identities are shaped and reinforced. By being a member of this place, we can distinguish ourselves from outsiders. The closer ties we have to the place, the closer the identity of the place will be attached to our own identity (Kyle and Chick, 2007, p.212).

Within a geographical context, several identities and attachment may exist: One can have a sense of belonging to one’s neighbourhood, school district, municipality, or other place based ‘systems’ that one associate oneself with (Curran, 2013). By this view, Stavanger could have several identities, and to people closely attached to the region, these identities could be so strong that they also reflect on the identity of the individuals residing in the area. In other words,

regional images might influence the self-definition of the people residing in the region. One should not, however, make the mistake to see such a self-definition by place definition as the mere identifying trait for a human. As Paasi (in Zimmerbauer, 2011, p.244) argues, several other factors influence peoples self-definition, such as age, gender, religion or class. Thus, the image of the place can be seen as being one of several aspects influencing peoples' self-definition. A resident of Stavanger is called a '*siddis*', but being a siddis is likely to be one of one's many characteristics. It is likely that being a mother, a Sikh, an environmentalist or a librarian are as important for one's definition of one self, if not more.

6.2.3. The power in place identity

Rose argues that emotions about places can be connected to identity in three ways: one can identify with a place, identify *against* a place, or *not* identify with a place. The first include the feeling of belonging, and can be experienced at various scales. Here, qualities and attributes of your circumstances make you feel comfortable or at home, and is linked to how you define yourself (Rose, 1995, p.89-92). Identifying against a place can be the contrasting of oneself from something or someone one experience as different. This can for example be seen in how *Orientalism* has been portrayed as exotic and strange in the western world (Rose, 1995, p.92-96). Not identifying with a place might be due to a lack of emotional connections to the place, or that another identity feels stronger (Rose, 1995, p.96-97). For example, in the Norwegian coastal city Bergen, a famous saying is "I am not from Norway, I am from Bergen". Here, the identity of being from Bergen can be seen as being more important than being from Norway, and thus Bergen-identity "trumps" the Norway-identity. The articulations of a place identity can take multiple forms. It can be shaped by the built landscape, portrayals in media, policies, advertisements or through everyday conversations (Rose, 1995, p.97).

Rose further explores three common explanations for such a place identity: That it is natural, that it is constructed by underlying power structures, and that it is a part of the politics of identity (Rose, 1995, p. 97-104). The view that sense of place is natural can be seen as a quite humanistic approach to sense of place. Here, it is seen as a natural human attribute, or an instinct, to give meaning to places, as it is necessary for human survival. The two other approaches to sense of place are more concerned with the structural elements of the creation of sense of place. Rose uses the concept of sense of place in this discussion, but as the approaches concerns more structural elements, they should here rather be understood as regarding the constructed place identity.

These two see place identity not as something created naturally, but on the contrary, as an active action. Here, one can construct place identity as to establish “a social difference by establishing spatial boundaries”, and thus establish who belongs, and who are “*the Other*” (Rose, 1995, p.103). Places can also attempt to create an identity or alter their display as to perceive favourable. In order to appear favourable, development corporations and local councils have spent large amounts of money to shape their appearance to the outside world. When such great efforts are put into creating an attractive place identity, other, alternative, interpretations of the place might be overshadowed. The structural powers of capital can thus dominate how a place is portrayed, which might not be the identity local communities see as representative, or even right. Empirical examples show how such disparity of representations of place identity and feelings of sense of place can lead to protests from the local community, or particular segments of the local community (Rose, 1995, p.98-102). From rose’s argument, we can see how the identity of a place can be constructed both through a sense of place, and through the construction of a place identity. This thesis has, until now, focused on the humanistic approach to sense of place, and will now move on to explore how a place identity can be constructed.

6.3. Constructed place identity

The previous part showed how place identity can be constructed at the individual and experiential level, through the establishment of a sense of place. It also demonstrated how such a sense of place can be rooted in the physicality of places, be reinforced by social interactions, and reflect on personal identities of those residing in the place. However, other theorists see place identity as, to a larger degree, being implemented from above. This part will therefore examine closer how place construction processes can work as to shape the identity of a place.

As seen in part 6.2.2, individual or collective understandings of the identity of a place might become a feature of the identity of the people living in these places (Rose, 1995, p.88). But such an identity need not only be created through such subjective feelings and experiences. Rose (ibid.) argues that identity creation is also embedded in larger structures of social relations. As John Eyles puts it: “Experience (...) is not seen as an adequate basis for the construction of knowledge. The existence and importance of structures, mechanisms and forces beyond immediate observation must be accepted” (in Rose, 1995, p.89). Drawing on the argument made by Eyles, Rose argues that place identity must be seen as more than something occurring at the personal level. Indeed, a sense of place is highly personal by emphasizing the feelings and meanings given to the place by humans, but these feelings and meanings are also shaped by the circumstances in which we find ourselves, being the social, cultural or economic context. Also,

a lot of work is done, and a lot of money is invested at the structural level to influence such feelings and meanings (Rose, 1995, p.89, Parker and Doak, 2012, p.156-157).

This section seeks to understand some of the ways in which place identity can be created at a more institutional and structural level, arguing that the building of a place identity can be a highly strategic process, involving power, emotions and interests. The building of such a place identity can be seen as both directed outwards – as a means of promotion and attracting investments, tourists etc., or as directed inwards – in order to create a collective identity (Fossåskaret, 2008). Though these have both similarities and contradictions, they will here both be included in the concept of *place construction*.

6.3.1. Planning for place identity

Constructing place identity can be seen as being of particular interest in today's society. The concept of regional identity has been widely used for decades, and has traditionally referred to the cultural and natural characteristics of bounded spaces, or how people within such entities identify with them (Paasi, 2013). However, it is now argued that the concept has gained importance through the rise of 'New Regionalism'. Within an increasingly globalised world, global capitalism is seen as operating independently of national borders. Within this fluid reality, new regionalism gives regions the role as catalysts for economic development, and the promotion of a regional identity is thus regarded as vital to enhance regional competitiveness (Zimmerbauer, 2011, Paasi, 2013).

Within this context, it can be seen as crucial to brand regions as to 'sell it' on the international market. Such marketing need to find the core values that can be connected to the place. These can be of historic, cultural, geographic, or economic nature. For planners, this means that they are no longer merely shaping the physical design of the area, but also the place identity (Fossåskaret, 2008). Studies show that the 'product', being the physicality, is not the crucial aspect here. Rather, the characteristics of the place is what makes it attractive in the market place. The building of an identity can actually be more crucial to the survival of a region than altering the spatial design of the area per se. Fossåskaret here uses the example of Stavanger, arguing that Stavanger is not an environmental capital, rather the opposite. However, through altering the image of the region, a new mental framework is created. When the region offers ambitions that fit into the contemporary concerns related to climate, it can blossom in its new image, even if not having *really* changed (ibid.).

Place and the making of places has, in planning, generally been seen as how to manage change in certain areas, or how to build new areas which might boost place identity. Here, a

place identity has often been seen as something static and imposable, and a common critique of planners and designers regards how characteristics or place identities are attempted to be 'frozen' or imposed on areas by marketing or top-down master planning (Parker and Doak, 2012, p.161). This might be seen as what Rose addresses as underlying power structures shaping place identity. The place identity can here be imposed by designers and planners to obtain some set objective, without necessarily having support in local or grass root communities. Different elements of a place might prompt different understandings – and thus place identities. Planners and other actors may selectively draw on certain elements of the place as to establish the desired identity, and with the means available this image can become the dominant representation of a place (Parker and Doak, 2012, p.161-162).

In the previous section, and generally in literature, a place identity is mostly perceived as something good – positive feelings humans attach to their places or happy memories attached to physical attributes. Thus, in building place identity through planning, the aim is to connote (positive) feelings to the area by designing and arranging elements of it. However, a sense of place can also be seen as something negative. Parker and Doak (2012, p.165) argue that a negative sense of place occurs when there is a lack of positive feelings or a lack of connection to the area. An area can feel sterile or exclusionary to all or some of the people who experience it. An aim of planning may also be segregation or division of people, or to make social differentiations based on physical boundaries (Parker and Doak, 2012, p.166-167). Arguably, a sense of place can also be directly negative by the place having negative connotations. This can, inter alia, be seen in the former automotive capital Detroit, now ridden by economic decline and increasing crime rates. A negative identity can also be seen in the Norwegian city of Moss, which for a long period of time had the strong smell of cellulose from a large plant as its perhaps strongest identity marker (commonly known as the "*Moss smell*"). Even long after the factory has been shut down, Moss is frequently associated with this smell.

Even in the more structural view on place identity as being constructed, human emotions and feelings plays an important part. Zimmerbauer argues that building regional identity is highly emotional, as it is grounded in the humanistic concept of a sense of place. Thus, constructing a place identity is largely about creating a sense of belonging to, and identifying with, the region amongst the people residing there. At the individual level, the regional image is to make humans feel emotionally attached to a place, and recognize what they perceive to be unique characteristics of the place (Zimmerbauer, 2011). Thus, a place construction can be seen as construction of a sense of place amongst the individuals in the area. Whilst this is based on humanism and the ideas of Tuan, the construction of a regional image does not merely occur at

the individual level, but rather at the collective level, as the understanding of the region is more or less shared by an entire community (Zimmerbauer, 2011).

6.3.2. Placing emotion in place promotion

Place promotion also includes the mobilization of emotions as to build identity. As Bennett (2013, p.2) argues, “emotion is everywhere in place promotion”. Conducting her studies in East Durham, a former coal mine field in the UK, Bennett exemplifies how those involved in place promotion in this area were concerned with engineering emotions. This was done through strategies such as using key actors (or ambassadors) showing excitement for the area, or creating future imaginaries which did not include the industrial history, but envisioned a post-industrial, high-tech, shiny future (Bennett, 2013, p.3). In East Durham, this was first done in an aggressive, outward-directed manner, in a competition for investments in a post-industrial era. Later, a more ‘warm sell’ was applied, where the memories and experiences attached to the place were played on in order to build positive experiences of the region amongst the locals as to change the place identity. This might be seen as a softer approach, but as Bennett argues, “there is nothing soft about emotionally literate capitalist practices involving the manipulation and engineering of emotion for economic gain” (Bennett, 2013, p.3).

6.4. Creating identity through encounters: The generalised other

Place identity can largely be seen as comparable to personal identity. When people speak about the identity of a place they are closely affiliated with, their arguments hold similarities to how people reply when asked about personal identities. Therefore, this thesis also needs to briefly include a perspective from psychology and people’s perspectives on their ‘selves’ as to understand different narratives concerning the identity of the Stavanger region.

The similarities between understanding a place’s identity and understanding one’s own identity might be related to Kyle and Chick’s argument (in part 6.2.2), arguing that as people feel closely connected to a place, they identify themselves by identifying the place. It may also be due to the close bond between humans and places: We exist in places, and therefore our conceptualisations of places are inseparable from our understandings of ourselves.

Connecting place identity to personal identity opens up an entirely new body of theories and literature which might be applied to place theory – a vast task that by no means is possible to incorporate in a thesis of this limited range. However, one theoretical approach from psychology is of especial importance in understanding the establishment of a place identity: George Beed’s theory on self-understanding.

Invited to explore on the topic of city identity in a management forum, Erik Fossåskaret argued that our understandings of ourselves, both as a person and as a city, is created through interaction with others. We express ourselves on short and long scale, on purpose and by instinct, intentional and unintentional. These self-expressions are met with responses from our circumstances, and based on the reactions we receive we adjust our own behaviour. “Every day, for our own self respects sake, we invest a lot of thought in maintaining an acceptable image of ourselves in relation to important others. We see and understand ourselves in the others, as in front of a gnarled [ruglete] mirror” (Fossåskaret, 2009).

This is based on ideas from sociologist, philosopher and psychologist George H. Mead, who sees identity as resulting from social processes (Mead, 1934, p.135-164). One’s identity, or one’s *self*, is not ascribed by birth, but rather develops from social interactions and social experience. The self, being a mere social construct, varies according to social settings, Mead argues. Without social processes, the self would not exist at all. Subsequently, we can have various ‘selves’, and the social relations decide which self we are to be. The totality of social processes, and thus the various selves which can occur within these social processes, make up the complete self (Mead, 1934, p.142-144). This self is created by the social stimuli one gets from others. This is done in three ways: Firstly, through language, where one interact with others and adjusts gestures through others’ responses. Secondly, by *plays*: Here, one takes on the roles of others as to develop one’s own self. Thirdly, by games: Here, one must understand the wider rules and attitudes one faces in society, and adhere to these (ibid. 152-154).

This view on identity and the self can be seen as having parallels to places and the identity of places. Like the self being constructed through interactions with others, the identity of places can be seen as social constructs, being constructed by the responses of outsiders. Thus, the identity of Stavanger can be mirrored through how others perceive Stavanger.

6.5. Altering place identity

In the previous sections, we have seen how the identity of a region can be shaped by actors on a systemic level, or how a sense of place can come ‘from below’. However, to understand the situation in Stavanger today, we also need to understand how a place identity can be altered.

In altering place identities, planning plays a crucial role. Parker and Doak show how planning activities have the creation of a place as a stated aim by shaping the perceptions, meanings and values that humans attach to places (Parker and Doak, 2012). This can be seen as an interaction between the physical environment (natural and human made) and humans. Through controlling and managing people and environment, a shared, specific and distinctive

identity can be created. A wide range of factors work simultaneously to construct places, amongst them policies, economic decisions and environmental concerns. The joint experience of land uses, physical forms, social and cultural significance produce meaning, and thus planning can influence meaning by shaping the physical environment (ibid.). As argued by Stedman earlier in this chapter, the physicality influences the place identity. As the physicality of a place is largely built by planners and local communities, one can see these actors as having a great impact on place identities. As Parker and Doak (2012, p.165) argue, “physical elements can ‘rupture’ continuities of place”.

Such strategies done in planning might influence people’s perceptions on places. Comparable to what is here termed a place identity is what Urry calls *place myths*. These are described as “collections of symbiotic meanings” (in Stedman, 2003, p.682). Urry argues that such place myths are not eternal. If the physical environment change, it might no longer support the constructed place myths. Thus, one can see that as the physical environment changes, *the sense of place might no longer make sense*. Relph’s argument (ibid.) is similar, in that he argues that a certain place identity can only be maintained for as long as it is plausible. Changing conditions might make it difficult to hold on to the place identity, as the physical setting is disconnecting from its previous meaning. The place’s identity might be held on to by social actors by the use of various mechanisms, such as the role of memory in shaping current identities. Relph argues that such meanings are often closely connected, so that the threat to one meaning could pose a threat to a whole set of meanings (ibid.). From this, we can see that the sense of place is vulnerable to changes in the physical environment. If our environment is seen, as suggested by Stedman above, as underpinning the symbols we use to attach meaning to our surroundings, and then these underpinnings erode, it might leave a sense of place with no ‘real’ attachment.

In Stavanger, the place identity might be seen as closely linked to the petroleum industry. The industry has led to both physical changes in terms of new buildings, the blossoming of new areas, more capital inflow to the region resulting in a higher architectonic standard etc. The industry has also shaped the emotional and experiential sense of place, leading to a more international place with new attitudes, feelings, self-perceptions etc. When employing the theoretical stances of Urry and Relph as to attempt to grasp the symbolic and emotional attributes and the physical attributes underpinning them in Stavanger, the physical environment will not merely consist of the buildings, nature and structures in the region, but also elements such as restaurants, people (as the industry has led to a large degree of in-migration), and high quality infrastructure. The physicality of the oil capital will thus be attempted grasped in all its

physical manifestations, some of these blurring with the more social, cultural and emotional aspects of the industry.

When attempting to understand a changing Stavanger, the combined view of planning strategies and a sense of place should be included. Thus, attempting to move away from being the oil capital, one can ask whether planning processes shape personal experiences of Stavanger's sense of place, and *vice versa*.

6.6. An intersectional approach to place identity

This chapter has highlighted how a place can be understood as both a physical location, a locale for social interaction and as having a sense of place: meanings and feelings attached to the place by humans. The sense of place of an area is one way of conceptualizing a sense of place. Here, the place identity can be understood as created at the experiential level, by individuals giving meaning to places through individual and collective experience.

The construction of a place identity can though also be seen as important in place making processes, and there is no doubt that the branding of places has been of great importance for both municipalities and business in several regions. This thesis operates in the interface of these two approaches to place identity. As Fossåskaret argues, "Those seeking to build an identity has only little control over the associative field of our identity-building" (Fossåskaret, 2009). Thus, seeing place identity as merely created through individual experiences, or as only being constructed from above, would fail to address the topic properly. These should be united to gain a fuller picture.

Here, the identity of a place will be understood as being created in the intersection of how a place is promoted and how a place is perceived – an identity both including a structural view where power and agents shape an intentional image of Stavanger, but also a concept of identity where individuals and their perceptions of the place are given equal importance.

7. Methodology and research design

Examining the place identity in Stavanger with the outlined theoretical approach has had methodical implications. This thesis has required careful consideration of both methodical (regarding methods) and methodological (regarding methodology) issues. The research design has largely shaped the methodical and methodological outlining of this paper, by shaping underlying attitudes, choice and sampling of interviewees and the actual methods.

This chapter will first outline the research design of this thesis. Further, the process of selecting informants will be described before sampling strategies, operationalisation of the research question and the process of applying the chosen methods in field will be described. Subsequently, the considerations in analysing and presenting the data will be presented. All research projects have limitations, implications and challenges, and this research is no exception. This will be discussed in the latter part of this chapter.

7.1. Research design

A research design involves the relationship between theory, methods and analysis in a research project (Clifford et al., 2010, p.7). Such research designs are influenced by several elements, some of which are chosen by the writer (such as the methods employed or the approaches used), and others which are external, and thus shaping the project whether the writer might desire so or not (such as budget or time limitations) (ibid., p.6). In this study, the external limitations have mainly been time and budget limitations. What has shaped the research design besides this, has largely been choices done along the way. These will be outlined in this chapter.

7.1.1. The case study

What happens but once might as well not have happened at all. The history of the Czechs will not be repeated, nor will the history of Europe. The history of the Czechs and of Europe is a pair of sketches from the pen of mankind's fateful inexperience. History is as light as individual human life, unbearably light, light as a feather, as dust swirling into the air, as whatever will no longer exist tomorrow.

Milan Kundera in Thomas (2010, p.575).

This study has applied the case study approach as to examine the role of the petroleum industry in narratives in Stavanger. This is done as this topic is seen as highly intertwined with its context, and to gain a holistic understanding of a phenomena, the case study approach is

well-suited (Busch, 2013, p.56). As the quote from Milan Kundera's '*The unbearable lightness of being*' points out, our reality and the phenomena occurring within it can be seen as highly fluent and ungraspable. This quote therefore highlights some of the main critique directed at the case study method, as it points to the limitations of studying particularities. Even if popular, the case study approach has been criticised for being too specific for any generalisations, and thus a weak scientific research method. Yin (in Thomas, 2010, p.575) even show how this method is often stereotyped as "a weak sibling among social science methods".

This is valid also in this setting. The Stavanger case can arguably be seen as one-of-a-kind, as no other region is just like it. A critique can therefore be that one cannot generalise from any findings. However, this critique is only valid if one considers generalisability as the goal of all research. Data produced in this project might not be generalizable, as no case is exactly like Stavanger, but the case study can produce exemplary knowledge. The data produced in this research might identify and explain processes that are important in the Stavanger case. It can therefore inform theory, without being directly applicable or comparable to other cases. Thus, the case study method can create explanatory concepts that aim not to generalize, but to analyse complexity in a less tangible manner (Thomas, 2010, p.575).

The case study which serves as the basis for this research began in September 2016 and continued until March 2017. During this period, I performed two focus group interviews, eight follow-up interviews, six in-depth interviews and some field observations. While spending longer periods of time in Stavanger I have discussed the topics of interests with both informants and people not directly involved in this thesis, something which has added to the understanding gained on the topics under discussion. Having a case study approach to this question has been chosen to see the issue in a more holistic manner. Here, several methods have been applied to gain an adequate understanding of the human-place bonding in Stavanger. In addition to the strictly methodical choices, however, designing this research involved deciding on whether the research was to be intensive or extensive, if it was to use qualitative or quantitative methods and which variables to include in the data production. These choices will now be elaborated on.

7.1.2. Abstraction of research and implications for method

The most basic distinction of research designs is between extensive and intensive research. Underlying this distinction is Sayer's theory of *events*, *mechanisms* and *structures* (Clifford et al., 2010, p.10-11). Sayer is positioned within the critical realism strand of thought, and without necessarily adopting this methodological approach, Sayer's theory provides a good basis for understanding many aspects of scientific research. Events observed in the world can here be

seen as reflecting underlying mechanisms, which in turn are shaped by structures in the world. The more a research is based on observations of events per se, the more concrete it is. If the research is largely based on interpreting the interconnectedness of events, mechanisms and structures, the more abstract it is. Extensive research produces data from large samples, aiming to obtain 'representativeness' and identify underlying regularities or processes. The aim is often to find an underlying pattern, or 'truth' which is blurred by 'noise'. This noise is attempted eliminated by including a large sample (ibid.). Intensive research strategies are more concerned with exploring one, or a few cases, to more detail. One here seeks to explain more thoroughly the operations at work in a social or physical system. This intensive research is normally at a higher level of abstraction than extensive research. The research of this study is clearly intensive, in that it seeks to thoroughly investigate the Stavanger case to identify some of the processes and drivers at work here. It could have been interesting to approach this topic in a more extensive manner, but an important aim of this study is to explore attitudes, feelings and emotions. This is not easily done in large quanta, and thus an intensive study has been considered to be more appropriate.

Whether a study is extensive or intensive can be decisive on whether the data collected should be qualitative or quantitative. Whilst quantitative methods include measurements and numeric analysis, qualitative methods are a wide range of techniques attempting to describe, decode, translate, or by other means reaching an understanding of the meanings of phenomena. Here, the goal of the research is to interpret the participants' view of the world (McGregor and Murnane, 2010, p.421). Had the methodology of this research seen one, objective reality as existing, it would have been appropriate to employ methods measuring, observing and analysing the place identity in Stavanger as to approximate an external truth (Mansvelt and Berg, 2010, p.334, Clifford et al., 2010, p.5, Inkpen and Wilson, 2013, p.86). This is, ultimately, an ontological question where one asks what can be seen as truly existing, as opposed to what can be seen as being socially constructed (McGregor and Murnane, 2010, p.420). As Inkpen and Wilson (2013, p.86) argue, we can experience our reality as being objective and real. Here, one could assume that as our methods and theories improved, our understanding of the reality would improve. With such improvements, we would come closer to a complete understanding of reality by continuously gaining a '*truer*' picture of it. On the other side, social constructionism sees our reality as a product of human thought, and not as external and objective (Burr, 2015, p.222). Hence, objects or categories are not seen as existing per se, but as being constructed by certain social arrangements (Cresswell, 2012, p.281). This study does not assume that one true reality exists, but rather sees our reality, and hence the identity of

Stavanger, as constructed through experience and interactions. Hence one can argue that a plurality of knowledges exists, and that our reality is being shaped individually and collectively by experiences with our surroundings. For the research design, this implies the inclination of employing qualitative methods, seeking to understand perceptions, attitudes and experiences of the lived environment (Winchester and Rofe, 2010, p.5-7).

The choice of producing qualitative data also had implications for the choice and operationalisation of variables. Variables are the characteristics of the units (the informants) that are interesting for the research. In extensive research, it is often difficult to include many variables, and therefore such studies are often quantitative. Intensive research may include more variables, by being interested in a wide scope of the characteristics of the informants. Thus, qualitative methods might be the most useful (Aase and Fossåskaret, 2007, p.22). The choosing of variables is a means of constriction as to ensure one does not produce an overly amount of unnecessary data (Busch, 2013, p.58). This was an important consideration in the planning of the interviews, as the goal was to produce the necessary and desired data in the best thought way. As this research is largely based on focus groups and the topics addressed in these, the variables were largely shaped by the informants themselves. However, if addressed topics did not fit within the research topic, the informants were not encouraged to continue debating these. Likewise, topics not addressed by the informants themselves, but which seemed relevant, were often brought up for them to discuss.

7.1.3. Logic in reasoning: Inference

In a research design, it is crucial to consider the logic in reasoning, meaning how one reaches conclusions and produce knowledge based on the data. Perri 6 and Christine Bellamy argue that the methodology of a study is about how, and how far, our research design allows us to draw inferences to conclusions in order to fulfil the purpose of the research. In other words, how one reaches conclusions and statements based on the data material (6 and Bellamy, 2012, p.11-12).

In research, it is often necessary to draw conclusions about a larger population (N) based on a smaller sample (n), as a phenomenon might be too large to study or if we do not know its full extent. We might also need to do research based on indicators, or proxies, because the phenomenon cannot be studied directly. For example, one cannot observe the place identity in Stavanger directly, and thus one needs to interpret based on indicators. In this study, such indicators have involved how the petroleum workers explain the petroleum industry as having impacted Stavanger or the strategies employed by Stavanger municipality to gain status as the oil capital. Thus, all knowledge production essentially involves inference. Inference can be seen

as ‘1) The process of making claims about one set of phenomena that cannot directly be observed, 2) on the basis of what we know about a set of things that we have observed [theories] where 3) the choice of research instruments depends on a theory of how these instruments work’ (6 and Bellamy, 2012, p.12-13). Thus, the inference both involve theoretical, methodical and methodological questions. The *warrant* of a study is the degree to which the inference allows us to state something about the things we cannot study directly (6 and Bellamy, 2012, p.13).

The two main logical means of reasoning, *induction* and *deduction*, were shaped by old epistemologists such as Kant and Locke, whom were concerned with describing the logic of, and defining appropriate norms for, knowledge production processes (Gupta, 2015, p.25-27). The logic in reasoning has an influence on research by shaping elements such as the opinions, conclusions, insights, and judgements done (McGregor and Murnane, 2010, p.421).

Deductive and inductive reasoning derives from natural sciences, and is largely based on logically reaching conclusions and generalising by studying the particular and making generalisations in the form of theories and laws (Inkpen and Wilson, 2013, p.95, Gupta, 2015, p.29, Cresswell, 2012, p.40). This logic has been replicated in social sciences, where it has been claimed that generalisation is essential to developing theory (Cresswell, 2012, p.40). However, as Thomas (2010, p.576) argues, generalisation in social sciences is not obtainable as “its value will always be limited by the sheer contingency of social life and human agency” (ibid.). The circumstances for the research will never be completely replicated, and thus it is not possible to know under which conditions the generalisations hold. Thomas (ibid.) argues the role of *looser generalisations* in science is often not recognized. We should thus not expect generalizations in social sciences to be bullet proof, but instead describe every day, common induction as “inference to the best explanation”, or *abduction*.

Abduction can be understood as the development of theoretical ideas drawn from more tacit and everyday generalisations. This recognizes that one cannot, without errors, generalise about human interrelationships. Instead of generating theories, abduction generate ideas and concepts that hypothetically can explain the case study data (Thomas, 2010, p.577). Abduction is thus well-suited for qualitative data production by the case study method, such as this project.

7.2. Selection of informants and preparing field work

7.2.1. Informants

The research questions and objectives of this study have had clear implications for the methods used. Attempting to find the sense of place in Stavanger, it was rapidly recognised that the study needed to include qualitative methods attempting to understand how individuals perceived the

region of Stavanger in relation to the petroleum industry. Here, an initial idea was to perform individual, in-depth interviews as to thoroughly explore the meaning and feelings related to this topic. However, human-place bonding is perhaps not best understood as occurring at the singular level, but rather as being collectively understood or created. Pile (in Bennett, 2013, p.2) argues that emotions and affects (also regarding places), move between people. Hence, feelings of place identity and characteristics can be seen as best understood through examining how they are portrayed and expressed *collectively*. Thus, performing focus group interviews was regarded the best-fit approach as to gain a better understanding on how a *shared* sense of place in Stavanger developed at the individual level.

Many informants could have been included in these focus groups, and many were considered. However, in exploring the degree of linkage between the petroleum industry and the image of Stavanger, an unstated goal was to see whether a future without the petroleum industry was possible to envision, especially in the larger context where topics such as energy transformations and the green shift are gaining acceptance and popularity. Thus, it was found to be interesting to include informants who were likely to highlight, perhaps exaggerate, the role and importance of petroleum in the human-place bonding processes in Stavanger. As people employed within the petroleum industry are perhaps the most embedded within this industry, they were seen as a good sample for exploring this topic. These workers are intrinsically involved in the petroleum industry, and might therefore provide important insight. Being employed within an industry will, in one way or another, increase one's commitment to the industry. The employees within the petroleum industry are a large group, however, and the sampling needed be specified further.

Two groups of petroleum workers were included in the study, due to certain attributes they possessed which were regarded as interesting. The first group consisted of petroleum workers involved with the early phases of the Norwegian petroleum adventure, working off shore as early in the Norwegian petroleum history as possible, and at least pre-1990. The aim here was to explore viewpoints on how Stavanger was affected by the discovery of the petroleum, and by the growth of the regions identity as the 'oil capital'. These pioneers were seen to have knowledge on how the petroleum industry had shaped the region over time, and it was believed that workers with many years of experience within the industry would be able to provide insight on gradual changes that had occurred in the perceptions on Stavanger as a place. They were also included because they had spent their entire careers in the petroleum industry, and thus were believed to be prone to stress the importance of it.

The second group of petroleum workers were engineers of less than 35 years of age whom had finished their education and been employed in the petroleum industry within the last eight years. These were included because they had chosen to work within this industry, also after its economic volatility and environmental consequences were well-known, which could give them an interesting perspective on the topic.

A goal here was to find informants whom were still employed within this industry, but this served to be difficult. The petroleum industry was, at the time of this research, characterized by heavy lay-offs. Young employees were often the first ones to lose their jobs, or they were too busy working to have time to participate in data production. One of the informants in this group had recently accepted a severance package and was therefore no longer an employee within the industry. Even if initially seen as a sampling 'error', this informant can also be seen as an advantage for the research project. During the focus group, she seemed to speak more freely about topics such as climate change and working conditions, and thus challenged the ones still employed in the industry. This is not necessarily due to the fact that she was no longer employed within the industry (it might have been a mere personality trait), but her employment status might have been an influential factor.

In attempting to gain an understanding on how the petroleum industry had been included in the image building processes in Stavanger, the main aim was to include employees within Stavanger municipality whom had been engaged in work where the region was to be branded, given an image and 'sold'. This part of the thesis was based on in-depth interviews with what was seen as few, but carefully selected, key actors. The interviewees involved the mayor of Stavanger, the current head of planning in Stavanger municipality and the political leader of the Municipal Board of Urban Planning (Kommunalstyret for Byutvikling (KBU)). These informants were seen as central actors in understanding how petroleum had been included in the image building processes in Stavanger. They possessed knowledge on both early branding strategies and the contemporary situation. I also conducted interviews with a senior researcher at the petroleum museum, whom had, in addition to working on the museum, been involved in the writing of several books on Stavanger and the petroleum industry. Also, two sociologists employed at the University of Stavanger were interviewed. These had spent much of their academic careers studying the impact of petroleum on Stavanger. The information from these researchers has been of high value for this research, as they have vast and thorough knowledge on the topic. These should be considered as key informants, being informants with wide-ranging expertise whom can link the researcher to the community and topic being researched (Dunn,

2010, p.109). Thus, their inputs have inspired a great amount of the perspectives presented in this study, without them being included as informants *per se*.

Defining the actors involved in the image building of a region is not an easy task, and while I believe that also private companies have played a part in this image building, I feel that the interviewees included for this part of the thesis possessed great knowledge on the topic and were able to inform the thesis adequately. Preferably I would have included more informants to highlight the issues regarding the construction of place in Stavanger, and several others were considered, but some of these were not available, and some were found not to be as relevant for the study as those involved.

Table 2: Informants

Informant	Attributes	Participation
Lennart Rosenlund	Professor in sociology, University of Stavanger	Key informant
Erik Fossåskaret	Professor in sociology, University of Stavanger	Key informant
Kristin Øye Gjerde	Senior researcher at the Stavanger petroleum museum	Key informant
A1	< 35 years. Engineer. Had recently accepted severance package	Focus group
A2	< 35 years. Engineer in Subsea7	Focus group and follow-up interview
A3	< 35 years. Engineer in Statoil	Focus group and follow-up interview
A4	< 35 years. Engineer in Baker Hughes	Focus group and follow-up interview
B1	Employed within petroleum industry since 1980.	Focus group and follow-up interview
B2	Had worked in petroleum since 1971. Retired.	Focus group and follow-up interview
B3	Had worked in petroleum since 1973. Retired.	Focus group and follow-up interview
B4	Had worked in petroleum since 1971. Retired.	Focus group and follow-up interview
B5	Had worked in petroleum since 1966. Retired.	Focus group and follow-up interview
Anne Skare	Head of planning in Stavanger municipality	In-depth interview
Kari Raustein	Head of the municipal committee on urban development (KBU)	In-depth interview
Christine Sagen Helgø	Stavanger mayor	In-depth interview

7.2.2. Sampling strategies

The petroleum workers interviewed for this master's thesis have been sampled mainly by snowballing, where I initially made contact with some workers whom further led me to reach out to others. It should be noted that this method has its implications, as the first informants might refer me to people they are closely connected with. As people closely connected may portray similar attitudes and experiences, this might have had implications for the results (Bradshaw and Statford, 2010, p.75). The initial strategy for locating petroleum workers was to contact the two main labour unions for petroleum workers, SAFE and Industri & Energi [*Industry & Energy*]. To some degree, this proved useful, and several of my informants were reached due to this approach. Some petroleum workers were also contacted through friends and family in Stavanger or through other organisations, such as an organisation for pioneers in the petroleum industry. The sampling has attempted to target petroleum workers whom also have a close connection to Stavanger as a region, either by being from the region or having lived there for a substantial amount of time. This has been done in order to access workers whom have a personal connection to the area. To some degree this proved useful, but as I understood that gathering a sufficiently large group of petroleum workers was difficult, this requirement became less important.

The informants included in the exploration of the image construction in Stavanger have largely been found by tips from acquaintances with knowledge of the field, such as my professors and the informants themselves. When including this perspective in my study, I was advised to contact the planning authorities in the region. During this interview, the crucial role played by the mayor of Stavanger in identity construction processes in Stavanger was highlighted. The role played by the mayor in promoting the region, both nationally and abroad, also became evident when I attended various conferences addressing the topics of energy transformations, Stavanger and the petroleum industry.

7.3. Operationalisation and preparation

In preparing for my field work, a key task was to operationalise the research questions as to find which methods to use, which questions to ask and whom to ask to gain an adequate overview of my topic. Recalling Sayer's theory (in Clifford et al., 2010, p.10-11), seeing observed events as at a lower level of abstraction than underlying mechanisms and structures, one can argue that everyday conversations are normally occurring at a lower level of abstraction than theories, research questions and hypotheses: The mechanisms and structures of a society

is often not reflected on by individuals in their everyday speech. In research, it can therefore be crucial to transform, or operationalise, the research questions in order to make them researchable at a lower level of abstraction. When collected, such data can, in turn, be transformed into a higher level of abstraction, as will be discussed in part 7.5.

Operationalisation involves creating ‘everyday questions’ to produce data on the research questions. It is not necessarily a good approach to ask the informants about to which degree their future imaginaries of Stavanger pertain the element of the petroleum industry. The concept of place identity may also be too abstract to start a fruitful discussion. The operationalisation of the research questions in this thesis therefore involves approaching the concept of place identity in various manners to have the informants reflect on this topic. Those informants who have been included in this study due to their professional or academic involvement in place-building processes in Stavanger have been considered to have more knowledge on such topics than the petroleum workers, and thus regarded to be capable of discussing this at a higher level of abstraction. But here, other formulations have also been used as to limit the possibilities of us using the same words whilst discussing different topics. With the petroleum workers, even more consideration has been put into translating concepts such as image building and sense of place into a more daily lingua. In order to explore their views on place identity and sense of place, they have been asked to describe the characteristics of Stavanger or to imagine the region without the existence of the petroleum industry. Another useful tool has been to ask them to reflect on how others perceive Stavanger and the petroleum industry. This is based on Mead’s theory on the generalised other, as explained in chapter 6.4., claiming that identity happens in the meeting between the individual and its surroundings.

In operationalising these research questions, an element to consider has also been the possibility of the informants not expressing their full and honest opinions on the topic. Being highly involved in the petroleum industry, it might be conflicting to discuss its harmful effects on climate and economy, and there is a possibility of them 1) not wishing to admit to the true problems of the industry, or 2) not wishing to express these understandings. They might also have the fear of any negative comment about the industry might have a self-fulfilling element: If one says that it is a crisis, it might become a crisis.

7.4. Applied methods

To examine both the image construction and development of a sense of place in Stavanger, this study has seen it as crucial to build upon various forms of data. This is what is often called triangulation, where several perspectives or data sources are included as to maximise the

understanding of the research question (Longhurst, 2010, p.106). To gain a holistic picture, the methods have included interviews with actors seen as playing a part in the image construction in Stavanger, as well as researchers with interest in, and a great amount of knowledge on, this topic. This is seen in comparison to (as well as complimentary to) the experiences, feelings and meanings of the petroleum workers. Here, feelings, knowledge and meanings have been explored both singularly and collectively.

As stated above, this thesis is largely based on in-depth interviews. These have, however, been of various characters: Some interviewees have been interviewed due to their personal experiences and perceptions, whilst others have been included due to their professional role. Also, when interviewing the petroleum workers, the methods have been focus group interviews and individual follow-up interviews. They have therefore been interviewed both in groups and individually, and the varying settings might have influenced their statements. Considering this, one can say that this study is mainly based on interviews, but it would be too simplistic to regard these interviews as equal. An interview is not an interview.

7.4.1. Focus groups

Der skal ikke stor Skarpsindighet til, forat indse, at naar to Mennesker drøfte en Ting sammen, maa der komme mere ud deraf end om hver tænkte alene for sig.

Alexander L. Kielland, *Garman & Worse* (1880, p.114-115)

It does not require any extraordinary acuteness to perceive that when two people make an attempt in common to thoroughly understand any subject, they are more likely to be successful than if each were to work for himself

Alexander L. Kielland, *Garman & Worse* (1885, p.92)

In examining the experiences and emotions petroleum workers attach to the Stavanger region (the development of a sense of place in Stavanger), focus groups have been an important method. Focus groups are informal group discussions normally consisting of 6-12 people and lasting for about 1-2 hours (Longhurst, 2010, p.105). In this research, due to the problem of finding enough participants, the focus groups were smaller than what Longhurst proposes.

The rationale for using focus groups was multidimensional. Focus groups may serve as a well-suited method if one seeks to explore a topic of which one has little or no knowledge, as such focus groups allow for topics previously unknown to the researcher to emerge in the discussion (Longhurst, 2010, p.106). When the participants talk amongst each other about the research topic, the researcher can get insight into what language is being used. This might clarify which words one should use or how to address certain issues. I saw this is a major advantage, as a researcher new to the field of the petroleum industry.

Secondly, focus groups are well suited for exploring which themes the petroleum workers *themselves* perceive as important. The researcher acts as facilitator, and has some steering power over the conversation, but mainly, the topics addressed in focus groups are raised by the participants themselves (Longhurst, 2010, p.105). This can create an environment where the participants are able to address the issues they find the most pressing and obvious, without being given specific themes to discuss.

A third strength of the focus group method is its ability to address conflictual topics without being alienating. Many critical questions could, if asked by the researcher, be alienating to the informant. As the question arises from other group participants, however, it might be less so. This implies that agreement, disagreement, negotiations, confrontations and criticism are crucial parts of a focus group, which will not be achieved through an individual interview (Kidd and Parshall, 2000, p.294). These three strengths have been part of the reason for including focus groups as a means for data collection in this study.

In conducting focus groups, it is often recommended to compose groups of people with the same, or similar age, ethnicity or gender (Greenwood et al., 2014, p.2). The goal here is to have the focus group simulating a group of friends or people who have something in common and therefore feel comfortable discussing the topic with each other (Longhurst, 2010, p.105). As argued by Kidd and Parshall: “focus group participants relate their experiences and reactions among presumed peers with whom they likely share some common frame of reference” (Kidd and Parshall, 2000, p.294).

According to this, I composed two focus groups with what one may see as homogeneous compositions. The first focus group (FGA) consisted of more educated, younger workers, whilst the second focus group (FGB) consisted of petroleum workers who had worked off shore pre-1990. The aim of the homogeneous group compositions was to establish a safe ground for exploration and discussion of the theme. One can, of course, also compose more heterogeneous focus groups as to provoke differences and conflicts, but such heterogeneous groups are often not advised (Greenwood et al., 2014, p.2), and according to the rationale of this research

homogeneous group compositing was seen as most expedient. The aim was to explore how experiences, concerns and beliefs are expressed differently within different segments of the petroleum workers, by having them discuss it with 'their own'. One should note that even as focus groups are a means to create a situation more similar to a natural situation than the one-to-one interview, these groups are constructed, and does not reflect the real world. As the focus groups are created and managed by the researchers, they are still, very much, controlled. Hence, one cannot be sure of how natural the discussion really is (Morgan, 1997, p.8-9). Similarly, Sim (1998, p.349) argues that these social settings are highly specific, and thus produce *situated accounts*. One cannot know whether the same arguments would be represented in a different social setting (ibid.).

The focus groups were conducted in two different locales: one at a local café/bar called *Sting*, and the other one at the café of the cultural centre in Sola municipality, being located in geographical proximity to the work places of several of the younger engineers employed within the industry. These locations have been decided on after discussions with people affiliated with the area, as well as informants themselves. What has been of large importance is to find locations that have been easily accessible for the participants, as a goal when conducting focus groups should be to find informal settings that are easily accessible to those who are to participate (Cameron, 2010, p.161). *Sting* café is located in Stavanger city centre, and was therefore first believed to be a good location for both focus groups. For FGB, consisting of mainly retired workers, this was a suitable venue. However, as the younger engineers are mostly working in the areas of Tananger and Forus, located 16 and 11 kilometres outside Stavanger city centre, respectively, FGA was relocated to the café at Sola cultural centre. The cultural centre is located between Tananger and Forus and thus provided a more appropriate locale for uniting these engineers, highly preoccupied with the temporal aspect in participating in this data collection. Both *Sting* café and Sola cultural centre, I believe, provided relatively neutral settings for the group interviews, which is something one should consider when conducting such interviews (Longhurst, 2010, p.109).

As argued by Sim (1998), the role of the moderator and the recording method is crucial to the data produced through the method of focus groups. The moderator's personal skills and attributes significantly influence the data produced. Conducting focus groups for the first time, I might have lacked experience and confidence, which could be important for data production by this method. However, as Cameron (2010, p.162) argues, some of the skills necessary for being an adequate focus group moderator are skills often pertaining to those with less

experience: The ability to listen, to think on your feet and an interest in the topic of discussion are perhaps more important than experience with the method.

One can argue that the data produced from such group interactions, or the *group productivity* is both the groups collective results as well as each participant's individual results from the group discussions (Sjödin, 1991, p.10). As argued by Sim (1998), analysing data stemming from such focus groups is not an easy task. As the group dynamics are shaped by its participants, these shape the data produced. Hence, whether or not dissonant views and perspectives are expressed might vary according to the group members. Some focus group participants might arise as what Sim (ibid.) calls *thought leaders*, and as they are more articulate and dominant than others, their viewpoints might be overly expressed. Participants with less confidence or articulate skills might refrain from expressing alternative views. Thus, a silence in a focus group might, by the moderator, be interpreted as agreement, whilst there might, in fact, be alternative views that are not being expressed (Sim, 1998).

The follow-up interviews with all focus group participants were a mean of dealing with such issues as those presented by Sim. In both the focus groups, it became evident that some of the group members took on the role as thought leaders, whilst others were quieter. In follow-up interviews, all group members were asked about their experience of the group interview and given the opportunity to express alternative opinions. In some of these interviews, the participants commented on statements and attitudes of other group members, expressing their agreement or disagreement with these.

7.4.2. Interviews with petroleum workers

Following the focus groups, semi-structured interviews with the petroleum workers whom had participated in FGA and FGB were conducted. Semi-structured interviews are frequently used, and are useful in that they provide a set frame for the interview while simultaneously allowing for diversions from the planned topics and questions (Dunn, 2010, p.110). The main objective for following up the focus groups with semi-structured interviews was to explore individual narratives outside the group setting to see whether they changed. Therefore, the interviews were structured as to find out whether the informant felt that (s)he got to express her/his opinions in an adequate manner, reflections on other standpoints expressed during the interview, if (s)he felt anything was too emphasized or downplayed, reflections on other participants, etc. These interviews were however also used to discuss topics that were *not* covered in the group setting, as especially proved to be the case with FGB (this will be further discussed in part 7.6.1).

One could also have conducted the interviews prior to the focus groups, and I acknowledge the strengths this could have. By talking to an informant prior to the group interviews, one could get ‘purer’ meanings and opinions (if one can argue that such a thing really exists). Discussions and debates might occur during the group interviews that make the individual informants adapt or change their expressed meanings, according to the reactions of others. This can be seen as what Mead refers to as humans adjusting their own behaviour according to responses from others (in part 6.4). Performing the individual interviews prior to the group interviews could, however, also have some disadvantages. If an informant was aware that the facilitator of the group discussion knew her/his view on a certain topic, (s)he might be more prone to demonstrate and defend this view in the group. For example, if participating in a discussion on climate and fossil fuel extraction, well aware that the facilitator knows one’s disbelief in climate science, one would perhaps be more likely to oppose climate change.

My aim of these interviews was to get an insight into how the informants experienced the group interviews, and to give them an opportunity to elaborate on their thoughts from the focus group. Therefore, performing the in-depth interviews after the focus groups was the most appropriate order of sequence. This could have been done differently if one had alternate motivations and aspirations for the data collection. It would also be interesting to perform interviews both prior to, and after the group interviews, but this would take up a lot of the informant’s time, and hence it is likely that many would have chosen not to participate.

7.4.3. Interviews to explore image building strategies

To explore how the petroleum industry has been strategically used in the image building of Stavanger, I conducted several interviews with people with knowledge on this topic, as elaborated on in part 7.2.1. Though the informants in this group were few, they were strategically chosen due to their expertise on the field. These interviews were also semi-structured, and adapted to the areas of expertise of the individual informants. Main topics for these interviews involved strategies for image building, perceived gains and losses of promoting Stavanger as the oil capital, reasons for promoting Stavanger as the energy capital, the difference between ‘oil capital’ and ‘energy capital’, and future imaginaries. Here, the informants were interviewed due to their professional, rather than their personal, status. The conversations would often spin into debates where the informants spoke as private persons rather than from their professional stand point, but these statements were then not used as data material in any other way than adding to general knowledge on the field – such as everyday conversations with other people not included in my sample.

7.4.4. Observation

To a certain degree, data in this thesis is also based on observation and participant observations during my field work in Stavanger. During more than ten visits to Stavanger, with varying dwelling time, I have had various discussions with locals, as well as observations in the city centre and surrounding areas. This has provided an additional familiarity with the region and the residents here, which has proven to be highly valuable grounds for my project. Included in this observational data I include the participation on the *Nordic Edge Expo* in Stavanger Forum on October 6th and October 7th 2016. The theme here was “Smarter Cities – Smarter homes”, and several of the talks included the role and future imaginaries of the Stavanger region. Data from such observations are not included directly in the data material, but has played a large part in building a greater understanding on the topic and on the region in general.

7.4.5. Secondary data

Much of my empirical work has been supplemented by the use of secondary data. As argued by Paul White (2010, p.62), such secondary data is information that has already been gathered for other purposes. The secondary data used in this thesis is of various types. I have included several academic articles, especially on the topics of image building, sense of place and place identity. In addition to this, I have used statistical data, especially to highlight the recent history of economic decline in the Stavanger region.

Secondary data can be used for three purposes in research: As context, as comparison or as a basis for analysis (White, 2010, p.68-74). When used for context, secondary data aims to describe the characteristics of the object under scrutiny. When used for comparison, it involves the testing of a previously conducted study in a different temporal or spatial setting. Lastly, secondary data can itself be used as basis for analysis (*ibid.*). In this thesis, secondary data has mainly been used in the first of these aspects. To elaborate on the context for the contemporary situation in Stavanger, secondary data has played a key role. However, the secondary sources reporting from Detroit and Malmö prove as comparable cases.

7.5. Data: Processing and Presentation

7.5.1. Analysing and interpreting data

A goal of doing field work can be seen as getting access to ‘backstage’ actions and expressions – the actions and expressions the informants grant you after you establish trust. However, to become data, the observations done in field need to be transformed into being *data*. Data can be seen as conceptualised observations, and involves the process of categorising observations

in the categories the researcher finds appropriate (Aase and Fossåskaret, 2007, p.36, 111). In this process, the researcher is highly present, and thus one can argue that data is not *gathered* or *collected* by the researcher, but rather that it is produced by the researcher in the face of the informants. The researcher plays an important part in categorising such observations, and thus in producing the data material (Aase and Fossåskaret, 2007, p.111).

Categories can be seen as mental containers within which one places observations and utterances. However, one should not assume the existence of a universal matrix of categories that are equally used and understood. Such categories can vary greatly between people. As Aase and Fossåskaret (2007, p.111-113) argue, categories can be seen as being a function of the observed object, the biological senses of the observer, the mental abilities of the observer, and culture. The object itself does not naturally belong to a certain category. Based on this, one can argue that people with reduced biological senses (sight, hearing, etc.) or mental disabilities can interpret observations differently than other people within the same culture. Aase and Fossåskaret argue, however, that different cultures are the most likely reason for people to group observations in different categories (*ibid.*).

Doing field work within the same, or a similar, culture might be an advantage, as the categories of the researcher would resemble those of the informants more than if the researcher and informants came from entirely different cultures. However, the same categories may as well differ within the same cultures. Mental and physical abilities are aspects that might shape the categorisation of observations (a person in a wheelchair would probably categorise physical objects differently than an able-bodied person). But also other factors such as age, gender or religion may shape our categorisation process (Aase and Fossåskaret, 2007, p.111-114).

Grouping observations into categories is a highly human process, and is a way of making the world more organised, sensible and graspable. Without categorisation, the world might seem like one big chaos. Hence, the process of categorisation is necessary. We should, however, be aware of how people's categories may vary and attempt to understand the categorisation of our informants. One should strive to use the categorisations of one's informants, rather than one's own categories in the processing and analysing of data.

In interpreting data, Aase and Fossåskaret (2007, p.116-119) argue that four considerations should be made by the researcher in order to address the categories of the informants: Firstly, the researcher should consider which categories the informants use. These may vary from the categories of the researcher. Secondly, the scope of these categories should be considered. For example, people might have different perceptions on what to include in categories like 'racism' or 'feminism'. One may see a conservative immigration policy as being

racist, whilst others reserve the term for actual discrimination based on race (ibid.). Thirdly, one should consider how the informants *sort* their categories. In the Stavanger case, one could see oil production as sustaining a demand for petroleum, *or* one might see the demand as leading to the production of oil. Lastly, people can sort different observations in different categories. One observation may be put in one category by the researcher, but in another by the informants (if a boy pulls the pony tail of a girl in his class, is it bullying or flirting?) (ibid.).

In this research, much of the categorisation processes has been observed during the focus groups, which provided an adequate setting for such exploration. By witnessing the informants debate and discuss the topics of interest, it was to a certain degree possible to observe how they categorised observations and utterances. This is, however, not an easy task, and whether it has been done well enough in this study can, of course, be discussed.

An interesting remark concerning the informants' categorisation is how the regional and the global scale were frequently mixed in their narratives. When asked questions about *Stavanger and the petroleum industry*, the informants commonly replied with narratives regarding *the world and the petroleum industry*. Thus, at times, it was hard to remain the regional focus that was the intent of this study. This is interesting in that it might reflect an underlying understanding that Stavanger was not to diverge from global trends. Thus, for as long as the petroleum industry exists globally, it will exist in Stavanger. Due to this, some of the narratives explored in the latter chapters of this thesis can be seen as being of a more global than regional nature. One should thus be aware that even if discussing global issues, these are largely presented as directly connected to the regional context of Stavanger.

7.5.2. Translation

Being a Norwegian doing field work in Norway removed some of the challenges related to translation in this research project, as both the interviews, transcribing and coding was done in Norwegian. However, the Stavanger dialect does differ from my eastern Norwegian dialect, and some meanings and signifiers might have passed by unnoticed. To be accessible to a wider audience, this decision was made to write this thesis in English, and thus a main challenge was the translation of quotes and expressions from Norwegian to English. A common strategy in translation is to aim for 'concept equivalence', meaning that the concepts should be meaningful, also when translated into another language. This can be called 'foreignising translation' and attempt to translate the meanings of statements and utterances rather than the words per se. If one chooses a more verbatim translation, or what can be called a 'domesticating translation', one would more directly attempt to translate the statements word by word (Smith, 2010, p.161-

164). In writing the findings of this research, the foreignising translation method has been employed, attempting to translate the signification of the statements uttered during the focus groups and interviews. Of course, this can lead to errors, as misinterpretations might occur. However, many Norwegian concepts and saying would not make sense if directly translated into English, and thus finding equivalent concepts has been considered to be more valuable and useful.

The concepts of ‘oil’ and ‘petroleum’ are frequently mixed in discussions on the petroleum industry in Norway. Where one might argue that ‘the petroleum industry’ involves both gas and oil, whilst ‘the oil’ merely includes the latter, this is often not the case. Conversely, the term ‘the oil’ might just as easily involve both oil and gas in everyday language, whilst ‘the petroleum’ might be used to describe the oil activities. In this thesis, ‘the petroleum industry’ is attempted used for oil and gas activities, whilst ‘the oil’ refer to oil activities. However, as this thesis is largely based on opinions and expressions, it is not necessarily easy to determine whether these concepts entail the same for the informants of this thesis as for me. Hence, one should consider that these terms might be unprecise and often overlapping.

Regarding language, it should also be mentioned that some of the petroleum workers, especially the older ones, can be said to have a particular way of expressing themselves. Whether this is due to lower levels of education, having worked in rough, male-dominated environments, or whether it was merely their personalities is hard to tell, but the language used during the focus groups and individual interviews was, at times, quite direct (and often directly vulgar). In presenting the data, this has not been down scaled or refined, but rather it has been attempted preserved as to give the reader a feeling of the demeanour of these informants.

7.6. Methodological implications

7.6.1. Challenges in the field

The main challenge in conducting the field work for this study, posing a challenge from the very beginning, was the difficulty finding suitable and sufficient informants. Having chosen on the two desired segments of petroleum workers, many approaches was done in order to reach informants within these two groups, but with varying success. The petroleum workers employed pre-1990 were mostly retired, which was assumed to be a positive thing, as they would have more time available to participate. However, many informants within this segment had moved abroad after finishing their professional career, or were no longer alive. Also, two informants cancelled on the day of the first focus group, one having forgotten about the event and the other having to go to the hospital. The challenge of reaching adequate and sufficient

informants within this group was however easier than with the younger petroleum workers. Initially wanting to interview those who were still employed within the industry, there was an immediate challenge that there was not an abundance of these. Many employees of companies with whom I was in touch explained how young, relatively recently employed workers was a group that had, to a great extent, been laid off early on in the crisis. When reaching out to those who fitted with the group requirements, it also became evident that these were highly concerned with spending their hours wisely, or that they had too much work to be able to take time to participate. Thus, a main challenge was attendance. The focus group method further enhanced this, by requiring that all informants were available to meet at the same time and place. Some could not attend the focus group, but proposed to attend the individual interview, but as these were meant as complimentary methods, the attendance in both was considered to be necessary.

Some challenges during the focus groups and interviews regarded positionality. Being a young woman and a student might have impacted the attitudes the informants had towards me, as well as the data produced, to an unknown degree. Several remarks were made that would perhaps not have been made if my positionality was different. This was especially the case with the older petroleum workers. The example below occurred during the latter phases of FGB:

Author: What about Stavanger in the future?

B4: We do have the University of Stavanger, you dear child.

Being called a dear child [kjære barn] would probably not have occurred had I been older (or male). One can argue that this is merely semantics, but it might also have shaped the research data in other ways, for example by influencing what information the informants shared.

Another methodological challenge made itself evident quite early, as I had trouble making one of the informants understand which topics I addressed, and vice versa. In addressing the topics of the research, this informant would continuously redirect the conversation into other, less relevant topics for the study. These would often be slightly conspiratorial theories or incoherent reasoning. We clearly had different categories in which we placed observations and experiences, which deteriorated the data production process. Having this informant in one of the focus groups made facilitation especially difficult. Prior to the focus groups, the decision was made to take a passive role during the group discussions, in line with the objectives of this research. The goal was that the informants themselves were to address the topics they found important, before I eventually addressed topics that had not been brought up. With one

informant continuously misunderstanding the topics addressed and redirecting the conversations to irrelevant subjects, the discussions in this group were less effective than planned. This was also commented on by other informants in follow-up interviews.

It could have been more efficient to engage more actively as a researcher in steering the conversation to avoid this problem. Here, one could have asked more direct questions, interrupted discussions when being off-topic, etc. In retrospect, it is evident that many of the topics discussed during the focus group could just as well have been discussed in the one-on-one interviews afterwards (or not at all). Often, the topic was deflected by the informant mentioned above, which made the entire conversation centre around a different topic than what had been brought up. This could perhaps have been avoided, if the informants had been asked to write down a couple of key words individually before plenary discussions. Then, even if the topic would change when this informant spoke, it would be re-addressed when moving on to the next informant.

7.6.2. Quality of method

In any study, the methodical choices will impact the quality of research (Busch, 2013, p.61). Thus, to ensure good research, some key concerns must be addressed. The two simplest measures of a good research design is the reliability and the validity of a study (6 and Bellamy, 2012). The reliability of a study regards the data quality, whilst the validity is a question of inferential quality (Zumbo and Rupp, 2004, p.77).

Reliability is related to whether we can trust the data that have been produced (Busch, 2013, p.62). In quantitative research, this refers to measurements, whilst in qualitative research, it mainly relates to how the data is coded. For the system of coding to be reliable, the same data should yield the same codes every time. Thus, reliability is the degree to which a study is repeatable: If the research is performed under different circumstances (a different researcher, different temporal or special context, different instruments applied), will the result yielded be equal? (6 and Bellamy, 2012, p.21, Drost, 2011, p.106). The reliability of a study can be attempted tested in various ways. For example, one can change the time or context where the research is conducted and compare the results. One can also change measurements or test different things in one half of the sample than in the other half (6 and Bellamy, 2012, p.21, Drost, 2011, p.108-112). Ensuring reliability is, however, difficult in qualitative case study research like this one. The conditions for the research are not possible to duplicate exactly, and the outcome will probably vary if the research is repeated. It is also arguable whether reliability is always a goal. The tests mentioned for ensuring reliability are often hard to perform in

qualitative case study research. Another means of ensuring reliability is, however, by what is called internal coherence. Here, one theme or topic is approached in several ways to ensure that the questions being asked are coherent with how it is perceived by the interviewee. By asking more, but similar questions, one can attempt to ensure that what one addresses is what the informants perceive as being asked (6 and Bellamy, 2012, p.21). In the focus groups and interviews done, this was done both intentionally and unintentionally. The same topics were also addressed both in the focus groups and the follow-up interviews, and one can argue that this contributed to internal coherence, and thus the reliability of this study.

Unlike reliability, validity is concerned with the degree to which our statements approximate the truth (6 and Bellamy, 2012, p.21-22). Here, we can differentiate between construct and conclusion validity, as well as internal and external validity. Construct validity concerns the degree to which a research truly captures the content of concepts measured through the codes used to operationalise it. Concepts such as place identity or sense of place are not straight-forward concepts, and thus it must be considered whether questions asked to discover viewpoints on such phenomena does, in fact, produce data on these topics. In this research, the operationalisation of such concepts has been thoroughly considered and discussed with both co-students and professors to ensure that the interview guides involved questions that were considered to address such concepts. However, it is not easy to know whether or not such vague concepts could have been addressed differently (ibid.).

Conclusion validity regards the warrant we have to make conclusions and arguments based on our data. As discussed in part 7.1.3, warrant is '*the degree to which the inference allows us to state something about the things we cannot study directly*'. If arguing that people in Stavanger see the place identity as being intrinsically tied to the petroleum industry, there must be arguments supporting this in the data material. Conclusion validity regards the extent to which this is the case (6 and Bellamy, 2012, p.22).

Internal validity concerns our warrant for inferring that an outcome has a particular causal factor – meaning to which degree our data actually supports such an assumption of causality. External validity, however, addresses the degree to which we can assume that our findings would hold in other circumstances. Thus, a low degree of external validity would reduce our ability to generalise from the study. Generalisability regards to which extent the data produced from this study can be applicable to other situations (Busch, 2013, p.62). Thus, in cases which are similar to Stavanger, the findings from this study might be valuable, but which features are of importance here, is not easily definable.

7.6.3. Ethical considerations

All research should behave ethically, and this research is no exception. Iain Hay (2010, p.36) argues that conducting research, geographers need to behave ethically in order to protect the rights of individuals, communities and environments that are either involved or affected by the study. Ethical conduction of research also helps creating a favourable climate for research. Conversely, had this study been experienced as offensive or disrespectful by the petroleum workers, they might have resisted participating in other studies in the future. Some of the petroleum workers had, in fact, been involved in other research projects similar to this one earlier on. Had these projects not been conducted with good ethics, the workers might have resisted being a part of this project (Hay, 2010, p.36).

To ensure an ethical conduction, research projects should consider three factors, Hay argues (2010, p.38): Justice, beneficence and respect. Thus, as a researcher, one should ask whether the research project is just, whether it is doing good and whether it is being respectful. In certain studies, the mere bringing up of a topic might enhance concern, anxiety or fear experienced by the informants. In researching flood hazard perception in the US, Bob Kates discovered that some of his questions would make the informants more concerned. Street elevation measurements even made citizens concerned that their homes were taken away from them. Thus, one can argue that the research, intending to do well, in fact did harm (ibid.).

Like the increased fear arising from the study of flood hazard, a study on the crisis in the oil industry and the changes in Stavanger may lead to increased concern. The more people are addressing the crisis, the more 'real' it might become. It might enhance views that 'outsiders' see Stavanger as a crisis-ridden area. Also, asking petroleum workers if they feel bad for being a part of the oil industry (although not framed in this way, it might be understood like it), might cause them to actually feel bad about it. Asking them whether they see it as problematic that their job and the identity of Stavanger rests on the petroleum industry, might make them concerned. Such issues were considered prior to conducting the field work in this project. Much attention was put into not being offensive or claiming that, by being a part of the petroleum industry, these people were essentially a part of the climate problem. I assumed that these were attitudes many employed in the petroleum industry had faced during their careers, and thus questions were prepared carefully to appear as value-neutral as possible.

In this study, the identity of the informants has, to the fullest extent possible, been kept anonymous. All the petroleum workers have been given codenames, and there are no means of connecting real names and codenames. They have also been informed that they have the rights to withdraw from the study at any point, without further reason. One of the petroleum workers

availed themselves of this opportunity, and thus one of the planned follow-up interviews was not performed. The researchers and the employees working with regional branding in Stavanger municipality are, however, named in this study. These informants have been included in the study due to their particular positions, and thus anonymity would be inexpedient. Anonymising the mayor of Stavanger or the head of planning would be impossible without also excluding their position and their validity for this research.

All audio recordings done for this research project have been kept safe and unavailable for outsiders.

7.6.4. Positionality as shaping research

Producing data through qualitative methods has its challenges. It is important to consider the role of the researcher in the research, as this study is done under the assumption that data cannot be seen as objectively existing, but rather as being produced and shaped through the lens of the researcher. This is in accordance with general qualitative research, which gives particular importance to the reflexivity of the researcher her/himself. In quantitative research, the objective can be seen as excluding or denying the role of the researcher in the research and merely measuring the frequency of phenomena, whilst the researcher in qualitative research is expected to include her/his own reflections, insights and biases to demonstrate how subjectivity might have played a role in the research project (McGregor and Murnane, 2010, p.421). The importance on including the researcher in research draws on feminist theorists such as Haraway, Harding and Rose, whom argue that the context within which knowledge and data is being produced, matter. To include one's own perspective, background and context increases the validity of the data produced (Cresswell, 2012, p.157-158).

Margaretha Järvinen argues that in an interview, both interviewee and interviewer present themselves in a certain manner: The interviewee will seek to present her/himself in a matter regarded as appropriate for the situation. The interviewer will seek to present a version of her/himself as a serious researcher. The data produced through interviews can thus be seen as constructed through a negotiation in this social encounter – not as backstage information the researcher might extract by gaining trust (Järvinen, 2005, p.30-31).

How the researcher can seek to present her/himself in a certain matter in front of the interviewee can be seen from Beverly Mullings research in Jamaica (Mullings, 1999). As Mullings explain, the way in which the researcher presents her/himself is highly influential on the type of data being produced. Mullings, being a black woman with Jamaican/British heritage doing research on Jamaica's information processing industry, experienced how she could

present herself in various ways in order to attempt to create what she called *positional spaces*. Mullings described such spaces as filled with a level of trust and feeling of cooperation, within which information could be shared freely. In order to create such positional spaces, the researcher needs to present her/himself as trustworthy and impartial (Mullings, 1999, p.340).

For my research, topics as those discussed by Järvinen and Mullings become highly relevant. When approaching people situated within the Norwegian petroleum industry, it is likely that the data produced is created by the social encounter. As Bakhtin put it, the word is “half someone else's” (in Marsh, 2007, p.40). Being a young, female student conducting the interviews solely, it became important to present myself as a serious researcher. This was especially important in the group interview with older men. A worry prior to this interview was not being taken seriously, and measures were made as to attempt to avoid this. What I experienced as having an effect here was the demonstration of my knowledge on Stavanger’s history. Also, I shared the information that my ancestors came from Stavanger and were involved in both the herring and the shipping industry, which seemed to gain me some respect and help establish what Mullings describe as positional space. However, my position still very much shaped this research situation, as explained in part 7.6.1.

Identifying myself as highly involved in the climate debate surely had implications for the data produced in this paper, and involved carefully preparing certain aspects of my field work and data production. For example, as is taught in several courses of methodology, for recording interviews, it can be wise to use one’s mobile phone, as this is an element which can easily ‘blend in’ with the environment. The interviewee can thus easily forget that a recording is being done, and therefore be more likely to speak freely (Dunn, 2010, p.119-120). However, my phone was a ‘Fairphone’ decorated with a sticker from a youth organisation working for a more sustainable environment. Placing this phone on a table in order to record an interview could be influential on the type of data produced, and would hardly present me as an impartial researcher. I thus used a discrete tape recorder instead of my mobile phone. That being said, removing the actual, physical symbols of partiality and positionality from the locale of the interview does not automatically create a neutral platform from where true or ‘real’ knowledge may be extracted. There might still be metaphorical ‘stickers’ influencing the data produced.

Initiating this research, I did not realise the full extent to which my positionality was an influence. However, over time it became apparent how it permeated the entire process: From defining the research questions to the presentations of the findings. As mentioned, I have a background from the environmentalist movement, and have made choices in my personal life to reduce the impact on the global climate. This led me to (without being fully aware of it)

assume that all people will, as soon as they faced global discourses on climate change, alter individual behaviour as to reduce their contribution to such problems. Thus, it was interesting how people would work in the petroleum industry and support the image of being an oil capital, even after knowing the climatic consequences of the fossil fuel industry. It was assumed that they would have some sort of an internal conflict over it. This assumption is, of course, fundamentally wrong. Many people are fully aware of the problem of climate change, but separate it from their work life. There are also several arguments supporting the combination of a green lifestyle with employment in the petroleum industry, as will be seen in chapter 9. Thus, in conducting this study, an important, yet challenging, task, was to leave behind my own categories and viewpoint and see the world through the eyes of my informants. Of course, this is not easily done, and my categorisations and conceptualisations are still very much likely to be influenced by my background. This is, however, something I have been highly reflexive on throughout this project.

8. Petroleum as identity builder

Having elaborated on the methods and theories drawn upon in conducting this research, the following three chapters will present the key findings of this research project as to shed light on the research questions. These findings will be discussed in accordance with the relevant theories and literature presented above. This chapter will be directed at exploring the first sub-question, being how the petroleum industry can be seen as formative for Stavanger's identity.

To explore how the petroleum industry can be seen as shaping identity construction processes and the establishment of a sense of place in Stavanger, this chapter will first present views on how the industry has shaped both physical and less tangible aspects of the Stavanger region. Here, the impacts the industry had on Stavanger once it established in the region will be addressed. Subsequently, the current crisis and its influence on identity in Stavanger will be explored. This chapter will end by exploring the strategies for including the petroleum industry in Stavanger's image – and, later, excluding it.

When discussing how the petroleum industry has influenced Stavanger, the temporal aspect is not easily determinable: One cannot set a clear date for when the petroleum industry began to influence the region, and perhaps even less for when this reached a saturation point or a state of *maximum* or *complete* impact. Being asked on how the industry had an impact on the identity of the region, most informants immediately began to discuss the period from the 1960s and 1970s, up until the pre-crisis period.

The petroleum industry having impacted Stavanger was evident in all narratives, and especially amongst the petroleum workers. As one argued: "I don't know what we would be without the petroleum". Several highlighted how the petroleum industry had enabled the cultural, social, physical and educational development of the region. For example, it was seen as determinant for the building of the university in the region. Thus, the petroleum industry was seen as shaping the region both physically, and by altering what is here seen as the sense of place. Amongst the municipal representatives, the industry was also regarded as having been crucial for the shaping of the Stavanger region's identity. Here, it was largely highlighted as having contributed to the increased living standards of the residents in the region, as well as facilitating the conservation of important historical elements in the city, and the development of new ones, due to increased tax revenues.

The impacts of petroleum on Stavanger will be highlighted further in the coming sections, examining closer the direct effects of the increased wealth, as well as physical and mental changes in Stavanger.

8.1. Becoming the oil capital

Key to all the changes discussed in this part is the increased capital flows that came to the region as the petroleum on the Norwegian shelf was found, and Stavanger developed as the petroleum capital. Underlying all influences on the physical environment and the sense of place was the understanding that petroleum industry led to increased wealth. Thus, all of the changes brought up by all informants had the underlying assumption that they were *indirect effects*. The direct effect was the increased capital flow to the area, which in turn had consequences on the built environment, and the sense of place in the region. By all informants, the industry was seen as the main driver of the region's economy, determining the success of the entire regional economy. Thus, as the petroleum industry was seen as highly volatile, the general economy became highly affected by its fluctuations. As the mayor Sagen Helgø said: "The oil industry is highly cyclical, and so Stavanger becomes very dependent on the economic fluctuations. It rises and it falls. I'm not surprised by what is happening now".

The capital inflow in the region was explained as affecting both at the societal level and the individual level. The informants involved in image construction processes in the municipality were often more eager to highlight the elements at the societal level. From all of the three informants, the increased capital to the region was portrayed as key to fund renovation and conservation projects, meaning that much of the maintenance of historic elements in the region came from the new industry. Here, the increased capital inflows were seen as both making possible the restoring of elements such as the concert venue Tou scene and the wooden houses in the centre, as well as facilitating the building of new elements. Here, the concert house, the leaning tower of Jåttåvågen and the Alexander Kielland-monument were mentioned. All in all, what was highlighted was the positive impact the capital inflow had on the region's spatial design by making possible the restoring of old elements alongside the building of new important, and aesthetically pleasing, elements in the region. As head of planning Anne Skare argued, the history of Stavanger is visible through its facade – where old wooden houses stand alongside the new architecture of petroleum company headquarters and hotels.

The capital inflow was also seen by the employees in the municipality as having impacted society at large by increasing general living standards and welfare services in the region. The mayor was especially concerned with this, arguing that even with the current crisis in the industry, the impact it had on Stavanger was unprecedented. "It's been a fantastic development for Stavanger, and even if many people have now lost their jobs or quit in the oil industry, I see this as an enormous increase of living standards for the city", she argued. Sagen Helgø presented the petroleum industry's role in increasing the economic status of Stavanger as

unmatched. Referring to how she believed outsiders saw Stavanger, she explained how the increased wealth had played a role in image building processes. “This is also related to image. People are rich, they can afford a lot. I believe that’s how people see Stavanger”, she said.

Amongst the petroleum workers, and especially the older group, the petroleum industry was presented as a determinant for all of the development in the region. Especially on the individual level, it was seen as having relieved the inhabitants of Stavanger from poverty and made possible the ownership of large houses, cabins and fancy cars. It was also seen as having increased the rental and housing market prices, and improved the regions infrastructure, schools and kindergartens. The industry was also seen as boosting cultural life through sponsoring various activities, such as concerts and sport events. The younger petroleum workers also argued that the money generated from the petroleum industry had played a major role in shaping the region, but they were more prone to mention elements such as the emergence of high quality hotels, restaurants and shops. They also argued how the industry had permitted a life style characterised by parties and economic abundance. Thus, the older petroleum workers were more prone to argue how Stavanger pre-petroleum was suffering from a poor economic status, and presented a Stavanger without the petroleum industry as a depressing site. In the younger workers’ narratives, the weak economic situation of the past played a less prominent role. In their narratives, it might seem that Stavanger pre-petroleum averaged in economic levels, and that the region was made extravagant by the establishment of the industry. This might, of course, be due to the fact that since they are younger, the workers in group A have not experienced the period of economic stress in the region, as opposed to the older workers.

8.1.1. Petroleum as altering identity

As seen in part 6.2.1, a sense of place can consist of both physical elements as well as meanings and feelings attached to our surroundings. When discussing the identity of Stavanger with the informants, both physical and less tangible elements were brought up. The physical manifestations of the petroleum industry came early to mind in all interviews. Here, the building or expanding of regional centres or the construction of symbolic elements were highlighted.

The older petroleum workers were more prone to mention physical changes that had occurred in the region than the younger. This is likely to be because they themselves experienced these developments in the physical environment whilst the younger informants were not born to experience many of these. The older workers especially mentioned geographical areas of the region when discussing the physicality of the petroleum industry’s development. The industrial areas of Forus and Jåttåvågen, as well as new or extended

residential areas such as Slåtthaug and Sandnes were seen as being developed merely or mostly due to demand from the petroleum industry. The younger workers were more eager to express how they saw the industry as having led to a more urban city. The increased size of the city lead



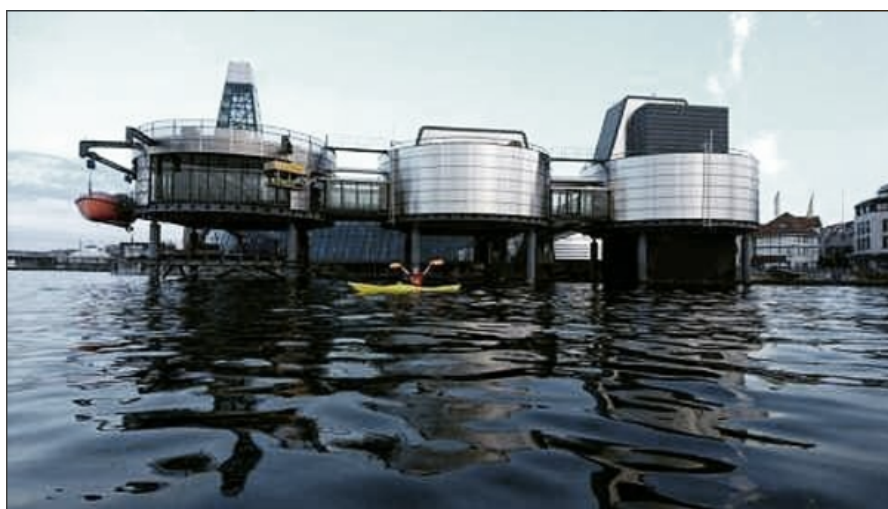
Picture 7: The leaning tower of Jåttåvågen, made as to demonstrate the skills of the engineers working with the condeep constructions.

to it having more alternatives – in food, shopping, restaurants etc. and thus making it a more attractive area for settling down. The younger workers thus resembled the older ones in seeing the petroleum industry as highly influential for the regions physical development, but more than the physical changes *per se*, they emphasized how physical changes also changed what can be seen as the *sense of Stavanger*. Here, the physicality cannot be seen as discrete, but must be seen as influencing, and being influenced by, the sense of place in the region.

Amongst the municipal employees and researchers, the new or expanded regions in or

around the city were also brought up early in the debates on how the petroleum had impacted Stavanger's physicality. Especially the researchers (Gjerde, Fossåskaret and Rosenlund) were rapid to mention the expansion/establishment of areas such as Rosenberg, Tasta, Storhaug, Slåtthaug, Sandnes and Randaberg. Gjerde argued that the growth of the petroleum industry led to a more decentralised city structure in Stavanger. Slåtthaug was perhaps the area most frequently mentioned

by the informants in general, something that is likely to relate to the fact that the Oil Hill [Oljeberget] was located here. The spectacular story related to how the politicians in Stavanger managed to build



Picture 8: The petroleum museum is located centrally in Stavanger, and is designed to resemble an oil rig.

houses to the American settlers here in the 1960s (as discussed in part 3.2) could explain why the example easily come to mind amongst the informants whilst discussing physical elements of the petroleum industry.

More than with the regional expansion per se, several of the municipal employees were concerned with highlighting the impact the industry had had on the cultural and historical elements of the regions' physicality. For example, they mentioned the building of symbolic elements such as the leaning tower of Jättåvågen, the oil museum and a monument of the Alexander L. Kielland-platform which capsized in 1980. They also emphasised how the income from the petroleum industry permitted the conservation and restoration of historic city elements, as mentioned above.

Anne Skare highlighted the role the petroleum companies themselves had in making Stavanger the oil capital, and showed to how several company headquarters established in Stavanger, alongside the petroleum directorate. "That's also a sort of branding: Here is the oil capital", she argued. Skare added that the industry influenced the cityscape as the supply boats moored in the docks in the city centre when not offshore. The mayor also highlighted the role of the companies themselves in making Stavanger the oil capital. By locating both headquarters and supply services in Stavanger, the image as an oil capital was secured, she expressed. The municipality had merely had a facilitating role.

The physical expansion of the region was explained by all informants as caused by industrial growth and population growth, in turn resulting from massive in-migration to the region. This in-migration came both from other areas within Norway, as well as from other countries, which was seen as a major element in shaping the sense of Stavanger. The building of houses and openings of hotels and restaurants was also a visible attribute of the in-migration and industrial development, seen as being caused by a general regional expansion. Thus, the industrial development was overall seen as boosting the region per se, and hence leading to a larger city with better infrastructure and more urban institutions. For example, the concert house and the expansion of the University of Stavanger were mentioned whilst discussing the petroleum's influence on the region.

These physical changes were frequently explained as having impacts on less tangible aspects in the region, such as by in-migration or making the region larger and more vibrant, as discussed above. In the narratives of the petroleum workers, the industry was seen as radically altering Stavanger. Stavanger pre-petroleum and Stavanger post-petroleum were presented as different worlds.

When discussing the physical expressions of the petroleum industry, the older petroleum workers were the ones mentioning the most elements having changed. This might be due to the fact that they experienced these changes first handedly, as they were the only informants residing in Stavanger at that time in history. This group saw Stavanger as having changed drastically when the petroleum industry first established and grew in the region. What was first addressed was how the city centre of Stavanger suddenly became a locus for pubs and restaurants.

B6: Well, the most visible changes were all the pubs that began to appear [...]. And there were things we weren't used to, like drink tables the size of football fields, where you could serve yourself as you pleased [...]. Something happened in the demeanour [...]. That's how I felt. Like we had entered a new era.

[...]

B2: And restaurants. They [the Americans] ate out a lot. Norwegians didn't eat out in those days.

B4: Our habits were eating meatballs and mushy peas on Sundays. And going to church.

These descriptions of Stavanger are of high contrast to how the pre-petroleum era of the region is depicted. A Stavanger previously dominated by religious sects, modesty and temperance movements turned into an urban city with a blossoming nightlife and urban costumes. The informants explained how they felt that Stavanger rapidly became internationalised, diversified and Americanised. A flow of work migrants from mainly Texas and Louisiana also meant new customs, and the Stavanger population were introduced to new cultural elements such as take away food, spices, large pieces of meat, golfing, long hair, large belt buckles and plaid shirts.

B4: They wore plaid shirts and cowboy boots with crocodile leather. Or 'shit kickers', as we called them. And there were many wannabees who mourned being Norwegian, because they wanted to be Americans.

As can be seen from the quote above, the newcomers were virtually idolised, and the customs they brought with them were embraced. Basketball and American football became popular sports and people started celebrating Halloween. The supplies in local shops increased as the new residents demanded different produce.

B4: The merchandise in the shops changed. We started steaking T-bone steaks, and I had never seen such a piece of meat before. And we ate chili until the sweat poured.

The increase of migrants from other countries also led to people in the Stavanger region increasing their linguistic abilities. Many of the older petroleum workers explained how they learned English earlier and more fluently than people in other Norwegian regions.

B2: All of the reporting and everything was in English. It was a different world. We spoke English, even Norwegians together, dreamt in English ... And it was no Oxford-English, far from it!

Rather, the petroleum workers were taught to speak English with the accents and expressions of Coonans (people from Louisiana). But still with this distinct dialect, they explained how they saw their English skills as superior to people not from Stavanger. The informant quoted above mentioned people such as former Prime ministers Jens Stoltenberg and Thorbjørn Jagland, and laughed whilst imitating their English, characterised by a strong Norwegian accent.

The cultural elements were not merely seen as positive, however. All the petroleum workers describe an industry influenced by excessive drinking, both being an unnecessary cause of expenses, but also leading to alcoholism and troublesome personal lives. The older workers had several stories of people spending their entire pay on the local pubs, sometimes leading to separation from families, suicides, deaths or diseases.

In the arguments of the younger petroleum workers, the negative impacts the petroleum industry had on the regions' sense of place are fewer. The industry was seen as having led to a 'Champagne-factor' in the region, permitting employees and others to enjoy lives full of restaurant food and expensive alcohol. The petroleum was seen as key for the development of a certain lifestyle, but rather than seeing the negative aspects of this, the younger petroleum workers described it as fun, even if being a bit 'over the top', especially for employees within the industry.

A4: When I started [...] we were probably out eating every second month, if not more, to celebrate every [oil] well. We used to be around 30 people going out to eat with the complete wine menu and a nine-course dinner. We were well accustomed!

[...]

A2: Those days were fun, though. At one point, we had weekly or monthly celebrations at [a local pub], where you could drink as much beer as you wanted. Those were different times.

In the narratives of the younger petroleum workers, the establishment of the petroleum industry and the wealth that followed it gave the region an extra dimension which was considered to be highly positive. As one of the younger workers explained, residing in Stavanger was seen as attractive due to the region being large and urban, attributes seen as having followed the petroleum industry. “Stavanger without the oil? I think it would be very small. What would the city contain?” he asked. When asked if he would still have chosen to study and live in Stavanger if the industry had not been agglomerated here, he responded that he probably would not.

What was common amongst the majority of my informants was to highlight how the development of the petroleum industry, and especially the large income of capital to the region, changed the demeanour of the Stavanger people. The city planner, Skare, saw the boost in confidence as stemming from improvements in the general economy and thus improvements in schools, infrastructure and general living conditions. When you send your children to the best schools and the municipality is always at the forefront with delivering services of high standard, “it does something with your self-confidence”, she argued. The planners also displayed narratives where the petroleum was seen as increasing pride and making western Norway an equilibrium to Oslo in the east. As Raustein said: “We can walk with our heads high in Oslo. They sit there and make drawings of each other, while we have been out and extracted this oil”.

Amongst the petroleum workers, phrases such as “petroleum put the West coast on the map” was frequently used, and in the narratives displayed, people in Stavanger were described as hard working, as opposed to the elite in Oslo who merely moved money around without getting their hands dirty. As one informant said when discussing people in Oslo: “They make money without getting their hands dirty, without anything ... With their Porsches and ...”. Thus, one can identify a strong identity arising from *not* being from Oslo. It was common to

make a distinction between ‘people from the West’ and people from Oslo. In such narratives, people from Stavanger were portrayed as working heroes, whilst people in Oslo were seen as rich snobs working in finance.

The older petroleum workers eagerly introduced me to a common saying in Stavanger. This saying argue that before the petroleum came, one would say “*I am from Stavanger – do you mind?*”, almost as one would excuse one’s very presence. After the development of the petroleum industry, however, one began saying “*I am from Stavanger - what do you want?*”, with the underlying assumption that now someone from Stavanger was important – someone not to be bothered. This reflect the increased self-confidence, status and pride the people from Stavanger felt after becoming the oil capital. Amongst the older petroleum workers, this saying was presented with pride, as they had become a force to reckon with after becoming the oil capital. As many of them mentioned, “The petroleum put Stavanger on the map”.

Whilst not referring to the specific saying, the younger petroleum workers also said that they believed outsiders saw people from Stavanger as smug. When asked to see themselves from the eyes of outsiders, they responded with labels such as ‘know-it-all’s’, ‘petroleum kids’ or ‘spoiled brats’. They clearly distanced themselves from the characteristics as they believed outsiders made about them, arguing that they were untrue, or at least exaggerated.

A2: It seems like everyone thinks people working in the oil make millions of kroners annually, which is far from the case.

A1: Like we are big shots

[All informants express agreement]

[...]

A3: There was a TV show some time ago called ‘Oil kids’ or something like that, where they showed stereotypical spoiled brats [...]. That’s how I think people see us [...]. We are the oil kids, right. We are the ones who grew up with parents who led lucrative lives in the oil, and we sort of had it all handed to us. And that’s not the case.

A4: No. No.

A1: We worked hard.

A4: Yes. But we have good lives, of course.

This increased self-confidence, or pride, was amongst the older petroleum workers not portrayed as something negative. Rather, it seems like it was a saying perceived as amusing, more than factual. However, Erik Fossåskaret, being one of the only informants not from the Stavanger region, expressed how such attitudes could be troublesome and uncomfortable for outsiders such as himself. He explained the ‘new’ attitude of Stavanger as being in large contrast to that of the past. Where Stavanger people used to be modest, they had come to be “cocky”, with “big, flashy egos”. “They felt like they should be met with personal respect because this is the region that created wealth to put food on the table for Norway”.

8.1.2. A region of oil workers

What was highlighted by all informants was how, at the individual level, the increased economic standards improved life styles through increasing employment and wages. Many people were offered jobs, and the informants often explained how “everybody knows someone who works in the petroleum industry”, or listed the many family members who were also involved in “*the oil*”. The high wages offered by the industry enabled a generally high life style, where people employed in the petroleum industry generally could afford items such as large houses, cabins and expensive cars, as well as having the funds to eat out and travel frequently. Such high wages drew a vast majority of the relevant work force into the petroleum industry. Several of the informants involved in the industry, both older and younger, explained how their initial goal was not to work within the petroleum industry. However, as the wages were much higher than in other sectors, the choice was easy. This *black hole-effect* of the petroleum industry even made people stay away from the Stavanger region. One informant explained how a friend avoided moving to Stavanger after finishing a degree in chemistry. She feared that “with her competence she would be dragged into the petroleum industry, and she wanted to work with medicine. She stayed away to not end up in the petroleum industry”.

More than this, however, many of the informants expressed a view where everyone was seen as employed in petroleum, directly or indirectly. As leader of the municipal board of urban development, Kari Raustein, argued, “Everybody works with petroleum. Even if they claim they don’t”. She added: “If anyone in Stavanger says out loud today that they don’t live off

petroleum, it's only because they haven't understood it. Hairdressers, driving teachers, everything lives of oil in this city".

The petroleum workers expressed similar attitudes, and a common narrative was how everything was 'built up around the petroleum industry' in Stavanger, and consequently suffered as the petroleum industry faced an economic decline.

A2: Restaurants and nightlife are having a hard time now as well.

A4: They're bound to be, I guess.

A2: And taxies, if you talk to taxi drivers they say that business is declining drastically. Hotels are declining, restaurant I think are declining ...

A3: Yes, everything is built up around the oil, so it's only natural that they feel it too, the repercussions.

This narrative was also visible amongst the older workers, where many of the municipal services were presented as existing mainly to serve the petroleum workers.

B4: Of course, the petroleum industry led to ... you need kindergartens, you need schools, you need the entire infrastructure.

The petroleum industry was thus first of all seen as a major force in attracting skilled labour due to its wages. But this industry was also portrayed as keeping alive the entire region and all those working in the area, those being drilling engineers, taxi drivers or teachers. In being seen as the industry keeping the entire region alive, one could also argue that the petroleum industry would – if going down – pull the entire region down with it.

8.2. Exaggeration of petroleum's role

In exploring narratives on how the petroleum industry had shaped Stavanger's identity, none of the informants claimed that the industry's impacts had been irrelevant for the region. How, and to which degree it had been an identity builder was however conceptualised differently, as seen above. However, some viewpoints saw the identity shaping role of the petroleum industry as exaggerated.

By some, it is claimed that even if having been of great influence, the role of petroleum in shaping Stavanger's identity is exaggerated. The two professors in sociology interviewed both presented this view. As Lennart Rosenlund replied when asked how the petroleum had changed Stavanger, "it has done the same as any other economic engine would have done". Had another high-tech, profitable industry with ties to the global economy been established in Stavanger, the outcome would perhaps not have been very different, Rosenlund argued. "There is nothing particular about the oil", he claimed, but added that the materiality of the oil industry is slightly different than what one could expect from other industries: "Like that fact that it happens at sea. That causes certain effects, being on the water. A mechanical industry, the shipyard ... Its ripple effects are perhaps different than what IT could have, for example". Thus, the petroleum industry was seen as manifesting differently than other industries could have, but had a similar industry established, its effects would be likely to resemble. There was nothing that made the petroleum industry stand out from other industries which were mechanical and technology intensive.

Fossåskaret expressed similar opinions. He argued that since the discoveries of petroleum on the Norwegian shelf, "Stavanger has undergone great changes, and the most substantial changes are perhaps independent of the petroleum. Still, the petroleum is used as an explanation for everything". Fossåskaret believed many of the region's elements would have developed independently of the petroleum industry's presence. Rather than merely the petroleum industry, he argued that one could see the entirety of Stavanger's history as influencing the current identity. Drawing on Stavanger's religious and conservative history, Fossåskaret argued that the historical links still influence the region. For example, a higher proportion of young couples in Stavanger get married than in other areas, as cohabiting while unmarried can be associated with adultery and sin (Fossåskaret, 2006).

Multiple elements can thus be seen as influencing Stavanger's identity, many of which are not stemming from the petroleum industry. When the petroleum industry was established in Stavanger, the region was not a blank sheet. Rather, it can be seen as already having been painted by various historical layers: The religious history, the poverty of the canning period, the shipping identity, and various others. As Fossåskaret claims: "If the city had been built up from zero, the oil would have had a larger impact".



Picture 9: The layers of Stavanger are not equally displayed in its presentation, Fossåskaret argues. This picture, from Stavanger city centre, show how a sign saying: “Jesus, the light of the world” [emphasised]. Just like this sign is now hidden behind hotels and shops, Fossåskaret argues that one could argue that Stavanger’s religious history has been hidden behind the new industry.

These historical layers of the Stavanger painting are however rarely highlighted in the official presentation, Fossåskaret claims: “In the presentation of Stavanger, the history is not really offered”. If branding a region is seen as a sales project, Stavanger having the identity of a modern conference region is a better sales pitch than the historical

identity of sect-like religions, poverty and a layman culture. The historic images of the “‘flock of black umbrellas on their way to the chapeau’ does not fit in the image building that is to make Stavanger a trendy, medium-sized city on the outskirts of Paris” (Fossåskaret, 2008). Thus, whilst other Norwegian regions use their historical identities to promote and “sell” their regions (such as Trondheim branding itself as the Middle Age city, or Tønsberg being the Viking city), Stavanger strategically exclude their history from its presentation, and rather highlights the present and future possibilities.

Such a limited view on the petroleum’s influence on the region was, however, uncommon amongst the other informants in this study. Many of the elements Fossåskaret argued would have appeared in Stavanger regardless of the petroleum industry was seen by the petroleum workers themselves as determined by the industry. When asked how the petroleum industry has shaped the Stavanger region, several mentioned elements such as the concert house, the development of communication tools (i.e. the railway), and the expansion of the airport at Sola.

B2: Stavanger used to lie here alone. It wasn’t until the 1950s that we got the railway [...]. Stavanger today is not what it was. Today we have communication with the outside world, international business [...]. Stavanger is something substantially different than before.

Author: But much of that development would perhaps have occurred without the petroleum as well?

B2: No.

Narratives presenting other historical elements as identity shaping to comparable extents to the oil were also uncommon. However, one of the older petroleum workers displayed a similar narrative. He even objected to the statement that Stavanger was the oil capital, and emphasized how this was merely a tabloid presentation of the region, mostly displayed by the media. When discussing how the Stavanger region had been branded, he continued to oppose to the presentation of Stavanger as the oil capital:

Author: Trondheim is the middle age city, Tønsberg is the Viking city, and Stavanger is the oil city ...

B4: No. Stavanger is the shipping city.

Author: But do you believe that's how most people think about Stavanger? As the shipping city?

B4: Well ... They are without a true sense of history, but I don't give a shit about them.

He further argued that “This [Stavanger being an oil region] is an intermezzo, and any city’s development consists of several intermezzos. I believe that Stavanger is more known as a shipping city”. That being said, he did not disregard that the petroleum industry had played a massive role in shaping Stavanger, and especially in approving the technical skills in the region. What he did was contest that it was a defining element for the region’s identity.

The theories of Rosenlund and Fossåskaret, as well as informant B4’s view on petroleum as less influential on Stavanger’s image, diverged from the narratives of the remaining informants. As demonstrated in the part above, they saw the petroleum industry as being highly influential for Stavanger’s image.

8.3. The (con)temporary crisis

In discussing the current crisis with the informants, it was unanimously defined as the economic downturn due to the declining oil prices. Hence, in defining the crisis, no one mentioned elements such as green shift or climate change. The reason for the crisis, as mentioned by all informants, was how the activity level had been too high for too long. Salaries and levels of employment had been sumptuous and the efficiency levels too low. The underlying ideas mentioned by all – petroleum workers and other informants – was the need to make the industry more efficient and less wasteful. “We were just throwing money out of the window”, one of the

younger workers argued. An older worker explained how “Nothing can grow forever. The petroleum industry is no exception”. Some of the informants also mentioned the increased US production of shale oil, having led to increased supply on the world market, and thus declining barrel prices. The previous economic levels in the industry were seen as having enabled inefficiency and waste. In an increasingly competitive market, the Norwegian industry needed to improve to remain competitive. The current crisis was, however, seen as to be a short-term bump in the road. The informants believed in the industry’s abilities to restructure and continue to increase efficiency, and saw it as being capable of, and likely to, continue for an unknown amount of time, even if not at the same level as before the crisis initiated in 2014. When challenged on how long it would take before Stavanger was no longer the oil capital, responses varied from 30 years to when the reservoirs were empty, or “never”.

The crisis was in many ways seen as altering the identity of Stavanger. Most of the petroleum workers explained how it reduced, or reversed, some of the impacts the petroleum industry had initially had on the region. Thus, the crisis was not perceived as leading to a fundamentally new situation in the Stavanger region, but rather it was seen as going back in time, to a period where the industry was less excessive. As one of the older workers explained it, one could “remove the top”, meaning those years where Stavanger had lived beyond their means, and look at Stavanger 10-15 years ago to see what the region would be now. “We are only back to basic [...]. If you remove those years where the activity level took off, you’ll get an idea [of how it will be now]. Stavanger existed then too”.

The main topics addressed when discussing the ways in which the crisis was seen to alter the place identity of Stavanger was how it worsened the region’s economic situation, changed the social and cultural scene and altered how outsiders perceived the region.

8.3.1. Hard times for the oil capital

One of the changes first mentioned by the petroleum workers was the large scale lay-offs in the industry, leading to out-migration and an increased amount of people having to rely on welfare services. Just as the industry’s establishment in the region had attracted work force from near and far, and employing a vast amount of the Stavanger residents, the effects of the crisis was now widespread. “Everyone knows someone who lost their job”, one of the younger petroleum workers explained. Having been like a tide, lifting people into wealth and employment, the decline of the industry now reversed, leading to unemployment and economic insecurities for many. In discussing the crisis, the young petroleum workers initiated a discussion on welfare rights and benefits when unemployed, a topic they seemed to have been reflecting on, and were

familiar with. This might reflect an insecurity in regard to their own employment status. However, the younger petroleum workers stressed how the consequences could have been worse. “It’s like we were a bit prepared for this, because you don’t hear about those insane catastrophes where people really... where it really stings”, one of the younger petroleum workers said. It was also highlighted how the welfare state took care of those losing their jobs, which was perceived as reducing the sense of desperation in the region.

The older petroleum workers argued that as the industry had grown to its current size; the impacts of the crisis were much larger than during previous crises. Still, they showed less preoccupation with the unemployment rates. One of the informants argued that the unemployment levels were not alarming: “There has been some lay-offs, some unemployment. But look at the unemployment in Spain; 30 percent. We whine over 3%. Fucking bullshit”. But even if the unemployment rates were not mentioned as a concern, the older workers did show concern with how the crisis influences people’s economic situation.

B5: There are many tragic fates due to this, with people having mortgages on houses, and might have to leave both their homes and cars and boats ...

B4: There are many of those.

The municipal employees also stressed how the crisis changed the region by leading to unemployment. Sagen Helgø explained how the unemployment rates in Stavanger now were approximately 5,2 percent. “In a global perspective, that’s not a lot. And in a historic perspective, it’s not a lot. But then it still is a lot, because we used to only have 1,9 percent”, she argued. Skare and Raustein also saw the unemployment as problematic. “At first, we saw an enormous number of lay-offs, it was depressing. And then it was our neighbour, our spouse – we started to know all these people losing their jobs (...)”, Raustein argued. She was, however, concerned with seeing the unemployment as an opportunity, rather than a sheer loss. Arguing that Stavanger needed to develop other industries alongside the petroleum, she saw Stavanger as having “good opportunities, because we have competence available. Our engineers are available and the rare dying to start with something new”.

8.3.2. The social and cultural scene

Apart from the economic and occupational security of employees in the petroleum industry, the crisis was seen as impacting several societal aspects in Stavanger, especially the restaurants,

cultural activities, hotels, taxis and the night life. This was mentioned by all of the petroleum workers. Even if being perceived as struggling due to the economic crisis, however, restaurants and the nightlife was generally seen as doing okay. Especially the young workers highlighted how people still used the restaurants and bars in Stavanger. However, the urban culture was described as soberer. “There is still life in the city, but you don’t put three bottles of champagne on the table anymore”, one argued. When it came to cultural activities, these were seen as in decline, as they lost financial support from oil companies whom no longer had the funds available for such CSR initiatives. However, where the older petroleum workers saw this as merely negative, the younger petroleum workers saw the decline of petroleum sponsored cultural activities as giving room for other cultural offers. Thus, the city was still seen as being vibrant and attractive. Perhaps even more so than before.

A4: I feel like there is more drawing me to the city centre now. Like East Stavanger, Fargegaten [the colour street]. There has never been as many people in the city than it is now. People use the offers that exist.

A2: But does that have anything to do with the petroleum?

A3: Well, I guess not ...

A1: They have been given the opportunity now, to show off. Because people don’t just go to the free events provided by the oil.

A2: Oh, yea. That’s a good point. Instead of going on a team building event on a Thursday ...

A4: You rather find something to do yourself.

8.3.3. Outsiders’ perspectives

In asking the petroleum workers how the crisis influenced the identity of the region, what was mentioned early was the changed view on Stavanger by outsiders. The crisis influenced the pride of the people in Stavanger, as well as the perceived perceptions from outsiders. Where previously, the petroleum workers were met with assumptions on wealth and a high life style, they were now more frequently met with questions of unemployment and crisis. “Now people are like “are you OK?””, one of the younger petroleum workers explained, adding that since

the crisis had endured for many years now, he was used to meeting such attitudes from outsiders. He also highlighted how big lay-offs in the oil industry no longer made the news. If other large companies faced lay-offs, it would be on the front pages of the national papers, but the lay-offs in the petroleum companies were no longer sensational, he argued. “It has become so commonplace that it is not newsworthy anymore”, he claimed.

The older petroleum workers stressed how they believed outsiders to not sympathise with Stavanger during the crisis period. One of the older petroleum workers argued that “many say that Stavanger deserves it, because they have felt superior”. Another of the older petroleum workers expressed similar views on outsiders, and especially on how the media did not have pity with the region: “There is something called envy. One of the seven deadly sins. And it’s easy for the tabloid press and the private press to throw some crap at these people that perceivably swim in money and champagne”.

When discussing how the crisis was perceived, however, most informants stressed how outsiders were exaggerating the economic downturn in the Stavanger region. Narratives argued how outsiders previously tended to have an exaggerated view on how much money they made within the industry. Now, the exaggeration was on the effects of the crisis. From their perspectives, the image of Stavanger displayed to outsiders was one of crisis and “blood flooding in the street”, a quote made by hotel magnate Petter Stordalen in 2015 (Kongsnes and Seglem, 2015), which was often referred to during the interviews. Newspapers and media were here seen as creating and fuelling a negative image of the crisis-ridden Stavanger which did not match reality. The informants argued how the crisis had not breached Stavanger, and how the impacts were less than one could have expected.

The crisis can also be seen as reduced the level of pride in Stavanger, which was seen as being perhaps overly strengthened during the region’s rise as the oil capital. When discussing the saying “I am from Stavanger”, which changed from “do you mind?” to “what do you want?”, the older petroleum was asked how this saying would be today. One of them argued that: “Now we are only from Stavanger”.

Thus, the petroleum industry can be seen as having shaped the identity of the Stavanger region by improving the economic situation, changing the physical outlining of the region and increasing the pride in the region. These aspects were displayed as changing the sense of Stavanger – making the region more attractive, more respected, more internationalised and more urban. These were attributed attached to the place through experience and emotions – such as being able to lead a certain life, surrounded by people with the same high life style. Or by being met with respect and admiration, sometimes even envy, from people not situated in

Stavanger. It was a feeling of being more international, more familiar to the global than others. The petroleum clearly became a central part of being from Stavanger. In talking to Sagen Helgø, she explained how the Norwegian broadcasting corporation made a news story on a sign being put up in Stavanger. The sign was to show the oil barrel price, and the reporter asked people on the street about what they thought about this sign. “People found it completely natural that the oil price was to be put on display”, Sagen Helgø recall. But what the news report also showed was that people in general had quite a good idea on what the barrel price was. “I don’t think they would have known that any other places. That says something about how important the oil price and the oil industry are. It’s the reputation of the entire region”, Sagen Helgø added.

Thus, the identity of Stavanger can undoubtedly be understood as having changed by the establishment of a large petroleum milieu in the region, and all that came with it. This identity can be seen as being attached to the region by individual experiences and meanings: Like when the older petroleum workers were able to buy T-bone steaks at the local shops or when the younger petroleum workers felt ‘people like them’ were displayed as spoiled brats in TV-series’.

However, many of the changes can also be seen as not merely deriving from experience.

8.4. Petroleum as a branding strategy

Becoming, being and moving away from being the oil capital can be seen as an identity construction strategy. Here, the inclusion and the exclusion of the petroleum industry in the region’s identity need not merely be annotated by meanings and experiences, but can be a strategic move made by central actors involved in regional branding. This part is based mostly on interviews with Kari Raustein, Anne Skare and Christine Sagen Helgø, all of whom playing important parts in the branding of the Stavanger region due to their jobs in the Stavanger municipality. Also, arguments presented by the researchers Fossåskaret, Rosenlund and Gjerde have added to this section.

These informants all argued that since the establishment of a petroleum industry in Norway, it had been a clear strategy from the politicians in Stavanger to attract this industry and become the oil capital. They also acknowledged that this branding had clear benefits for the region. Mayor Sagen Helgø argued that what characterises Stavanger as the oil capital is the vast amount of petroleum related industries in the area - from the large oil companies to the smaller supply services. “Most large [oil] companies have their headquarters in Stavanger. Many cities have some oil industry, but Stavanger has the entire chain; bases, suppliers, oil companies' headquarters”. Other characteristics Stavanger had gotten due to being the ‘oil

capital' was mentioned: the oil museum, the growing population and their increasing educational level, resourceful migrants, a more international milieu, economic and geographical growth, pride and "putting Western Norway on the map". No negative consequences of being the oil capital were mentioned.

8.4.1. Strategies for branding the oil capital

When discussing strategies for becoming the oil capital, the informants displayed similar, but still conflicting answers. In general, it was a strong belief that what had caused Stavanger to become the oil capital were the strategies and actions of previous politicians and municipal employees, especially Arne Rettedal and Konrad B. Knudsen. As when Skare was asked whether it had been a clear strategy from the municipality to becoming the oil capital, she replied: "Yes, it was, right from the beginning. And it was due to the hard work of some foresighted politicians". Thus, the politicians of the past were displayed as having bent the rules a bit to *get the work done*, and get the petroleum industry to settle in Stavanger. The unconventional methods, such as lobbying and avoiding bureaucracy, were here seen as key. As Kari Raustein said, "I don't think Rettedal would have been able to do what he did through political forums today".

Apart from these years of work, mainly seen as done by Rettedal and Knudsen, the strategies and initiatives of the public were downplayed. The municipality was not described as important for the branding of the Stavanger region. Rather, this was seen as something having occurred naturally as one oil company settled in the region and the rest followed. As Raustein argued when asked on how Stavanger municipality had worked to attract oil companies: "Statoil began, and from there it happened naturally. It's important not to overregulate".

As seen from Raustein's argument, the role of the municipality was of most importance when securing Stavanger as locale for the petroleum industry. After that, its role was mostly seen as to stay out of the industry's way. This is perhaps the most evident strategy of being the oil capital: leave it to the companies themselves. Sagen Helgø was perhaps clearest on this, arguing that "what has been important for Stavanger, in terms of its reputation, has first of all been to be the city that facilitated for the petroleum industry". In the initial phases of the establishment of the petroleum industry in Stavanger, this was done by Rettedal and Knudsen bending the rules. It was also seen as being done by the industrial organisation Greater Stavanger, and the company Forus Næringspark [Forus Industrial Park], making the Forus area attractive for businesses.

The role of the municipality did thus mainly consist of making establishment in the region attractive and easy. Beyond that, the construction of Stavanger as an oil capital was mainly seen as the task of the oil companies themselves. Skare argued that one way the companies did so, was by their physical presence in the region: “The oil companies have been important for the branding. They built many great buildings both at Forus and in the city”. As the initial institutions established, much of the industry followed, Raustein argued: “A lot was done by Statoil establishing in the area”, she explains, adding that following this, many other companies wanted to be in proximity to Stavanger.

Author: So, one can say that it has been a natural development?

Kari Raustein: Yes. In the beginning, I see it as having developed naturally. And this is a key element: That we don't overregulate.

However, what was apparent in the interviews was the focus on “up-talking” the Stavanger region. This was displayed, both by Sagen Helgø and Raustein, as the main branding strategy of the municipality.

As Sagen Helgø answered when asked on Stavanger’s strategies for using the petroleum industry in branding the region, “Stavanger has used the term ‘oil capital’ since the beginning, from Arne Rettedal's days and until today. We are the oil capital of Europe”. Raustein have a similar narrative, saying that the main strategy of including the petroleum industry in branding Stavanger has been to “use ‘oil capital’ as outward branding”, for example in international cooperation, networks and conferences. Skare adds to this, arguing that Stavanger has nourished cooperation with cities abroad, especially Aberdeen and Houston. ”We have contact at all levels, even between music bands and scouts. We have Texas-days here and in Houston. Before Christmas, our deputy mayor was in Aberdeen to light the Christmas tree. So, it’s an extremely close cooperation”, she says, arguing that Stavanger has always *looked to the West*.

Thus, when discussing their own role in building Stavanger as the oil capital, the informants involved in branding mainly draw attention to two elements: The facilitation for petroleum companies, as well as not getting in their way, and the positive and frequent mentioning of Stavanger as the oil capital. As the literature on place branding and regional branding stress the importance of branding one’s regions in the global reality, one could have expected more, and clearer strategies. However, even if few, these strategies seem to have been extensively used through the development of Stavanger’s reputation. In the interviews with

Sagen Helgø, Raustein and Skare, several events were brought up, such as the annual hosting of the ONS conference, cooperation and traditions as those mentioned by Skare above, and the Greater Stavanger organisation working to promote the region.

8.4.2. Branding an identity beyond oil

In all interviews with those involved in planning Stavanger's identity, the climatic issues and the implications such issues have for the regional identity in Stavanger was addressed, in addition to the economic drop in the petroleum industry. Sagen Helgø, Raustein and Skare all mentioned the climate changes as part of the reason for why Stavanger now needed to change directions from oil capital to energy capital. When asked when the strategic move to change this image was made, Skare argued that it was two-dimensional: "It began when the oil prices dropped. The economy was the main reason. But climate as well. And everyone has known that the oil wouldn't last forever. When the economy dropped, we were pushed to think differently". Arguing that the economy has been the main reason for the shift, Raustein too argued that "The Paris agreements probably underpin it". Like Raustein and Skare, Sagen Helgø too addressed the dual reason for changing image from oil capital to energy capital. "We see how things such as transformation and the green shift are incredibly important, and I totally agree. And we do have our commitments regarding the Paris agreement and climate. But I think that this downturn ... many see it as the end. But it isn't. That is important to highlight".

Thus, the general perception was that both the economic downturn in the petroleum industry and the climate changes were reasons for the shift in the promotion of Stavanger. Regarding the climate changes, what was generally highlighted was the international agreements made to mitigate the effect of these, and Norway's responsibility for complying with these goals. However, what differentiated the energy capital from the oil capital, was partly unclear. Rather than implicating a shift *away* from something, the term was, by all these informants, addressed as a *widening up* of the concept of oil capital. Thus, rather than meaning anything *else* than the oil capital, 'energy capital' was to mean something *more*.

Author: What distinguishes 'energy capital' from 'oil capital'?

Sagen Helgø: That you think about energy in a broader sense, and include renewable energy (...). The term 'energy' may include so much. So, I believe in incorporates the green shift and the transition we are now in.

Kari Raustein had a similar answer to the same question:

Raustein: Now, we are not going to only think oil and gas. We have so many other ways of using energy than oil and gas now, so this is a natural development.

“I don’t think the content will be very different,” Anne Skare argued, claiming that competence, innovation, an international market would continue to be buzz words in the region, even with the image change. “So, it’s just a new word”.

Hence, the shift in branding was not meant as excluding fossil energy sources and the presence and importance of these in the region. It was rather a rebranding done to also include energy sources which were seen as gaining importance, focus and recognition globally. It was also a rebranding that can be seen as being highly ambiguous and forward-looking. Discussing the energy capital-concept, Sagen Helgø presented this as something Stavanger *wished to be in the future*, more than something Stavanger *was* per now:

Author: What was the intention behind the shift [in the branding of Stavanger]?

Sagen Helgø: It was because we see that it’s a concept capturing more of what we want to be than merely petroleum (...). I am not sure how conscious it was or why it became that way, but now it has reached the state where I use it; always, no matter what.

The branding of Stavanger was thus concerned with branding the region based on what it could be, rather than what it was in its current state.

In addition to highlighting this fact, one can from the statement made by Sagen Helgø above, identify another key element of the branding of Stavanger: The importance given to discursive practices. Not unlike when Stavanger became the oil capital, the shift in its image was largely seen as created by changes in how the region was framed and portrayed in discourses. This was also highly visible when discussing the contemporary branding strategies for becoming the energy capital. Sagen Helgø was quick to explain how she no longer address Stavanger as the ‘oil capital’: “The last years we have increasingly used the term ‘energy capital’, because it has a wider scope, and it’s a much better term in a period of transition, as the one we are currently in. So, it fits better”, she argued.

This discursive importance in rebranding the region was especially highlighted by Raustein and Sagen Helgø. When asked how one now works with promoting Stavanger as the energy capital, Raustein explained that:

We're talking about it both on inhalation and exhalation; I'll tell you that (...). We're very, very proud of our city, we are proud of our region, we are proud of what we've achieved. And everyone feels this - this pride. That makes it natural to talk a lot about all the new things occurring. Like when I go to my neighbour and tell them about ongoing projects, or attend NRK Rogaland [local news], speaking about driverless cars and its possibilities. And the mayor standing on the podium at a conference saying that we are not sitting here whining in Stavanger. We have rolled up our sleeves, because now we must look ahead, right? All these things jointly are what is marketing Stavanger now.

In addition to being presented as the main strategy for becoming the energy capital, such promotion was largely presented as the *sole* strategy for the image shift, as can be seen from the interview with Sagen Helgø:

Author: How do you work to promote Stavanger as an energy city?

Sagen Helgø: We use it [the concept] in all ways: In speeches, reputation, how I profile Stavanger no matter where I am, as does Stavanger municipality and our business development company Greater Stavanger, the industry organisation ... I believe practically everyone uses it as an important part of building reputation.

Author: Okay, so how you talk about it ...?

Sagen Helgø: Yes, as well as in films, commercials ... We don't use the word oil capital anymore.

The municipality's role was, as seen above, restricted to how Stavanger was presented. The actual shift towards becoming greener was seen as being driven by the companies themselves. Raustein explained that:

In all the oil industry premises, new projects are being initiated which will make us modern and climate friendly, in compliance with what is important for our globe. And because we have so much competence, we believe that we will succeed in this [becoming the energy capital]. That makes it crucial that we also market ourselves as such.

The goal was clearly to brand the region as something that was more in compliance with global objectives of reducing emissions and transforming societies to become less dependent on fossil energy. But it was clear that in the new image of being the energy capital, there was also room for oil and gas activities. Sagen Helgø, Raustein and Skare all argued that petroleum would hold an important role in Stavanger's industrial life for an unknown period of time. Sagen Helgø said that:

It is important to highlight that we will live off petroleum activities for 50 more years. We are now establishing Johan Sverdrup [a large oil field], which is a major project, and we have more like this one which haven't been established yet. So, the oil age is not over.

Similarly, Raustein argued that: "We will have the oil, and it will be an important industry for another 50-100 years. But something else must come in addition to it".

In this narrative, the fossil future of Stavanger is undoubted, it is established and determined. The renewable addition is expressed as something that would preferably occur by the hand of the companies, adding to the petroleum industry. Like Sagen Helgø said: "We will continue with oil and gas activities in the future, and for at least 50 more years. But then we also want to be leading on transitions and the green shift, and use the knowledge and competence and technology and international networks and everything we have to transform".

The tight connection between Stavanger and the image of being the oil capital, was, however, not seen as problematic in a global context where the petroleum industry arguably face more opposition. Neither was it seen as an obstacle to building an image as a green region. These issues will be further elaborated in chapter 11.

8.5. Summing up: Petroleum as formative for Stavanger's Identity

This chapter has highlighted various aspects in which the petroleum industry can be seen as having been formative for Stavanger's identity, both as the industry established in the region and in regard to the current crisis. Many effects of the petroleum industry have been pointed out, but what is noteworthy is how the particularity of its materiality is rarely mentioned.

Lennart Rosenlund, arguing that an IT industry would probably manifest differently in the region, addresses this, but simultaneously the manifestation of the petroleum industry is not presented as differing from the manifestation of a potential alternative industry with similar traits. Anne Skare, arguing that the supply boats shaped the cityscape in Stavanger as they moored in the city centre is also one narrative where one can see the particularity of the manifestation of the petroleum industry. However, these are the only times this aspect of the petroleum industry's establishment were brought up.

Although it is sometimes argued that the role of the petroleum industry in shaping Stavanger's identity is exaggerated, the narratives of the petroleum workers generally does not support this view. The establishment of the petroleum industry in Stavanger is presented as having led to major changes in the place's identity, especially by bringing wealth and employment to the region. This, in turn, attracted many skilled workers, who brought with them new customs and traditions. The workers' language skills improved and their pride increased. Becoming the oil capital meant changes in the region: Both physical and less tangible ones. These were often connected. The growth of the petroleum industry in the region was for example seen as manifesting in more restaurants and pubs in the city centre. Their importance was, however, beyond the mere physical influence: Their presence was a symbol of new values and life styles in the region. Stavanger life was increasingly characterised by wealth, a high life style, champagne and parties arranged by the oil companies. As the region's identity changed, the sense of being from Stavanger changed. Becoming the oil capital put Stavanger on the map, it made the siddis people a force to reckon with. Narratives tended to describe people from Stavanger as more hard-working than people in Oslo.

From the identity construction perspective, the branding of Stavanger as the oil capital was largely credited to the major oil companies. All though the role of key actors such as Arne Rettedal and Konrad B. Knudsen was acknowledged, the informants working with the regional branding of Stavanger largely argued that the companies had made the region what it was today. The municipality was seen as having two main functions in this regard: facilitating for the oil companies (and not getting in their way), and 'talking up' the region, both within the region and in networks, conferences and cooperation abroad.

As Zimmerbauer argued (in part 6.3.1), building regional identity is highly emotional, and consists of creating a sense of belonging to, and identifying with, a place. A successful regional identity make people emotionally attached to the place and make them recognize certain aspects of the place as unique. Zimmerbauer argues that place identity might be altered through planning. By altering physical elements, people's emotional connections to the place

might be changed. Becoming the oil capital was physically manifested in several elements in the region: the oil museum with its large property centrally in Stavanger centre, the petroleum directorate, large buildings belonging to oil companies and symbolic elements such as the leaning tower of Jåttåvågen and the Alexander Kielland-monument were underpinning the region's identity as the oil capital. Rhetoric measures were also being taken to establish Stavanger as the locus for petroleum activities, and the term 'oil capital' was frequently used. In this regard, the regional branding of Stavanger as the oil capital can be seen as a success. It seems the image of being the oil capital has been largely accepted and incorporated by the people residing in the region. The petroleum workers displayed pride and personal affiliation to the image of being the oil capital. As mentioned, the municipal representatives themselves did not see the local authorities as playing as large of a part of this branding, but rather gave credits for this development to the oil companies themselves. It can be discussed to which extent this identity has occurred due to planning and which role has been taken on by the companies.

By the petroleum workers, the current crisis was seen as reversing many of the changes brought about by becoming the oil capital. It led to a decline in wealth, employment, night life and 'champagne factor'. The saying "everyone knows someone in the oil" changed to "everyone knows someone who lost their job". The experiences of being from Stavanger changed, as did the reflections from outsiders in the meeting with Stavanger and people from the region. The petroleum workers were less often met with pride and admiration when presenting themselves as being from Stavanger and working within the oil. Rather, questions of the crisis and employment arose. As George Mead argues, such changed responses to Stavanger could lead to the Stavanger identity as changing. However, this seemed not to be the case amongst the petroleum workers. They loyally stood by the image of being the oil capital, arguing that outsider's perspectives were too exaggerated, or that the industry would soon regain its position – at least partially. The identity of Stavanger as the oil capital thus seemed to be enduring.

In the face of economic decline and discourses on climate change and green shift, the planners clearly attempted to rebrand the region. However, the shift from 'oil capital' to 'energy capital' was vague, and the content unclear. Recalling Zimmerbauer, a change in place identity can be brought about through planning, but this is likely to require local authorities which are more prone to steer a development and alteration in the identity of the place than what is the case in Stavanger. The municipality did not mention any changes in the regions physical outlining initiated as to promote the new image. It can seem as the new name of the region was not filled with much novel content, at least not by the municipality. Largely, it seems like these

image building tasks were given to the industry solely. It was expected that the companies in the region would take on the leading role in turning Stavanger's image, as long as they were given the prerequisites to do so. Whether this strategy is successful or not is yet to see.

The rhetoric approach to altering a place identity might suffice. Like Bennett argues in part 6.3.2, image construction processes are highly emotional. The municipal employees actively promoted Stavanger as the energy capital through discursive moves such as speeches and promotional material. This might be an important part of changing the experiences and feelings people attach to the region, and therefore the region's identity. It did, however, not seem to have been anchored in the perceptions of the petroleum workers. They did not see any other industries as being 'natural' for Stavanger to host, and even if they believed that the oil industry would be accompanied by something else in the future, they found it hard to imagine what this would be.

9. Rationalising decoupling or continued coupling

This chapter will further explore narratives on the future of petroleum, especially in the Stavanger region. The goal of this chapter is to explore the second sub-question, being which role the petroleum industry plays in future imaginaries of the Stavanger regions. Are the linkages to the petroleum industry seen as limiting or enhancing possibilities to move beyond the image of being an oil capital? When addressing this topic, the informants tended to equalise the continuing of petroleum as continuing petroleum activities in Stavanger. In other words, they did not express the option of Stavanger diverging from major global trends in energy production. Conversations on whether or not Stavanger would continue to be the oil capital and the reasoning for this thus often took a global or national turn. What began locally spun into discussions on whether the world would continue to extract petroleum and whether Norway was to play a part in this.

Whether Stavanger was to continue to be the oil capital or not was a recurring topic throughout my field work. The municipal representatives were clearly preoccupied with labelling Stavanger as the *energy capital*, encompassing more than the merely oil and gas. The petroleum workers, however, saw the image as the oil capital as enduring, and seemed to see few real alternatives. However, even if labelling the region with the oil capital term or not, all informants saw the petroleum industry as continuing to be an important industry in Stavanger for a long period of time. There were no real arguments calling out for an immediate decoupling of Stavanger and petroleum.

The continuance of petroleum activity is, however, under criticism from many global discourses, as seen in chapter 0. These can be seen as in direct conflict with the actions of the petroleum workers and the focus of the Stavanger region in general. When addressing the more problematic aspects of the petroleum industry during the interviews, various rationalisations appeared as to justify the continuous oil involvement. The narratives mentioned most frequently will be presented here, and includes a) seeing petroleum as decisive for capital inflows, b) seeing petroleum, at least Norwegian petroleum, as non-problematic, c) deflecting responsibility for the climatic consequences, d) solving the problem by changing the scale and, e) presenting the environmental movement as naïve and unrealistic. Before examining these, the arguments arguing for, or presenting as a possibility, the deflection of Stavanger and the petroleum industry, will be presented.

9.1. Decoupling petroleum and Stavanger

Based on the close connection to an industry that could be argued to become less economically viable and less desirable for the future, one could expect to see a fear of becoming outdated in Stavanger and therefore a need to decouple the region from this industry. Like Detroit, that for too long was hanging on to an industry that arguably belonged to the past, Stavanger can be seen as in risk of becoming outdated by clinging on to the petroleum industry.

During the group interview the young petroleum workers, the comparison of Stavanger and Detroit did occur. This was linked to how outsiders were believed to imagine Stavanger, and was presented as being an excessively negative imaginary:

A2: They imagine Stavanger to be a disaster area. When you read the news, it seems like everything is declining.

A3: Everyone is on anti-depressives

A2: Yes. Like it's the new Detroit

A3: Yes, I was just about to say the same

A2: Burned out cars in the streets and ... well, not exactly like that.

Even if presented as a caricature of Stavanger as seen from the outside, this argumentation also shows that the comparison between Stavanger and Detroit was imaginable amongst the younger petroleum workers. This was not, however, coupled with a view that the petroleum industry was to be decoupled from the Stavanger region. When asked whether it was imaginable that Stavanger would stop being the oil capital at some point, the answers were the following:

A4: No.

A2: At least not any time soon.

A1: What would we be then?

By and large, the decoupling of Stavanger and the petroleum industry was a non-topic, both amongst the petroleum workers and the additional informants. Stavanger was, for the foreseeable future, going to remain coupled with *the oil*. The tendencies towards calling for a decoupling of the region and the industry were restricted to narratives arguing that such a decoupling was necessary sometime in the (distant) future. Several informants argued that the decoupling was necessary, whilst simultaneously seeing it as unfeasible per now.

Amongst the older petroleum workers, this perspective was most clearly pronounced by the informant B4, who saw the petroleum industry as highly damaging. “Oil is not an industry on which we should build our country” he stated, arguing that the extraction of oil was a violation of both nature and humans, and that it needed to stop. This was a radical statement compared to the other informants, but the temporal aspect resembled. He did not see this transition as happening anytime soon. “As long as an oil capital exists, it will be called Stavanger. And this will last for many, many more years”, he argued. The informant A1, identifying as an environmentalist, had similar views. Here, it was seen as a goal to become sustainable, and how “smart people from the petroleum industry should begin to explore alternative solutions”. At the same time, A1 did not see a diversion from petroleum as something that would occur before there was no petroleum left, and argued that “We need to find something else, because soon there will be no more petroleum”. Thus, the need to diverge from fossil fuel activity was more related to a future imaginary where the reservoirs were empty and we had no other alternatives than seeing it as necessary to diverge now as to reduce emissions.

The municipality employees did not argue for a decoupling of Stavanger and the petroleum, but rather to the adding of something more to the contemporary Stavanger. This was also demonstrated in part 8.4.2. Hence, seeing Stavanger as moving from the oil capital to the energy capital, oil was not seen as disappearing from the Stavanger region, but rather alternative energy sources were seen as diversifying the industrial content of the region.

When the petroleum workers were debating alternative identities for the future Stavanger, some alternatives were mentioned – often in the form of new industries. These were mostly seen as being in addition to the petroleum industry, however. Stavanger was no longer to “stand on one foot”, but it was seen as beneficial to diversify industrial activities. The older petroleum workers saw Stavanger as becoming large on food, aquaculture, alternative energy, service jobs and tourism. However, none of these were seen as able to replicate the success of the petroleum industry. The imaginaries of the younger petroleum workers resembled the propositions of the

older, perhaps being more prone to mention knowledge intensive alternatives. These included shipping, aquaculture, health care, green technology, hydropower and wind power.

The municipal employees were largely unanimous in presenting Stavanger's strategy as to focus on innovation, technology and entrepreneurship to become a smart city or an energy capital. The head of planning did not agree that this was a good strategy, and rather saw Stavanger next 'big thing' as being the wood house city. Both the head of KBU and the mayor, however, eagerly described how Stavanger would be the hub of the development of new technologies that were to be used in the green shift and in creating smarter cities.

By the majority of the informants, technology and competence from the petroleum industry was seen as liberated by the crisis and thus applicable in other areas. The movement from petroleum to something else, and something more, was to be done by building on the competence built through the petroleum industry.

Therefore, not letting this competence slip was seen as crucial by many informants. Those employed in the municipality, the researchers and the younger petroleum workers all highlighted this. Many skilled workers being unemployed was generally seen as an advantage, but only if they were encouraged to remain in Stavanger and contribute to the development of Stavanger beyond the oil capital. Some arguments displayed a fear that these would move, and thus result in a mere loss for the region. Raustein argued that "the challenge now is to not lose this competence. That they don't move from Stavanger (...). We are implementing measures to make sure they stay in Stavanger", she argued, showing to unemployment measures [*tiltakspakker*] from the government and additional education to facilitate job change. The municipalities had also initiated several new construction projects in a Keynesian approach to increase employment, and Raustein argued that keeping people working was "good for the soul, good for keeping competence, and we actually get a lot of work done". She also implied that as the conditions within the petroleum industry improved, those who had previously been employed here could quite easily return to their previous jobs. "Then, it is possible to re-access these people. The competence has then been kept here [geographically]", she argued. On this point, the mayor, Sagen Helgø, differed slightly in opinion, arguing that she was convinced that "all of those who are now losing their jobs in the petroleum industry, are not going to return to this industry. They will move on to other industries. This transition, and to make use of this competence, that is now crucial". These differing statements might shed light on different views on how lasting the current crisis was perceived to be, and how necessary an actual transition was.

Amongst the younger engineers, concerns were made as to how the competence from the petroleum industry could be transferred to non-petroleum industries. Drilling was seen as to be able to be used in tunnelling, but apart from this, the transferability of petroleum knowledge was not evident. At a general level, they were positive to the competence from the petroleum industry being redirected to work in renewable industries: “People having worked in the petroleum industry, who are smart, can begin to look at other solutions”, one argued. Another argued that the Stavanger region had a major advantage by having “a lot of competence within technology which can be applied in other areas, if we’re just forced to do so”.

However, they did not see practically how their skills could be employed outside the oil. There was also no reason for green industries having their geographical rooting in Stavanger, as they did not have a comparative advantage in any such industries. Discussing what Stavanger could be after petroleum, one of the informants suggested hydropower:

A2: But there is no reason for such an industry to be located in Stavanger. Or ... there is the competence...

A4: We have the competence ...

A2: ... Of the people living here and working here, we do. But not geographically. It’s not like Stavanger has ... I don’t know if we should have wave power or wind power, or ...

In general, most of the informants argued for continuing the petroleum industry. However, the narratives on the time and amount that the petroleum industry should remain involved in the region, varied. Many mentioned that the petroleum industry should be supplemented by other industries, and thus not remain such a large part of the economy.

In the focus group with the older petroleum workers, the participation of green industries and the aquaculture industry in ONS 2016 was brought up, and the participants were asked: “Is Stavanger moving away from petroleum?”. One response stood out: “You can’t change attitudes overnight, unless you can lobotomise or something like that. Because this is so rooted in us ... that energy equals oil and gas”. This view was challenged by others, who argued that the dominance of non-fossil energy sources would occur naturally as the development made them economically favourable.

Most of the informants saw a continuous coupling of Stavanger and petroleum as both necessary and realistic. The ongoing crisis was seen, even if severe, as being relatively

temporary, and most informants believed that if means were taken to make the petroleum industry more efficient, it would be able to last for decades to come. However, the general perception was that the petroleum industry in the future would differ from that in the past in two regards: time and degree of dominance. With exception of one (B3), all informants saw the petroleum industry as time limited. They expected the petroleum industry to end, just not *right now*. The second difference was the degree of dominance they perceived the petroleum industry to have in the coming years. Even when reminded about Stavanger's industrial history as an area which rarely diversify its industrial focus, it was expected that other industries would grow to accompany the petroleum industry as the new industrial identity of Stavanger.

There was also a common perception amongst the workers that if the prices were to rise to a high level, the petroleum industry would return to its state pre-2014, and all alternative industries would be disregarded.

In the coming sections, I will present the main rationalisations amongst the informants when arguing that Stavanger could not move away from petroleum. At least not per now.

9.2. No petroleum, no prosperity



Picture 10: Picture taken on the Norwegian museum of petroleum, referring to a perceived dichotomy of climate or prosperity.

A common view amongst all informants was that a country without petroleum is a country with less prosperity. Many viewpoints presented oil as synonymous with capital inflows, and how, if we chose to be green, that also meant a deselection of wealth and the life standards the wealth had brought to Norway.

Amongst the informants involved in the image construction in Stavanger, the petroleum industry was regarded a major influence on the Norwegian society due to the capital generation. Stavanger was seen as the provider of such wealth for the entire country, and perhaps not being sufficiently acknowledged for the effort done in order to ensure economic stability for the entire country. The money generated by the industry was seen as a reason for *not diverging*, as the potential profit would lead the industry to continue its search for profit. However, it was also seen as a *means for diversion*, by providing the capital necessary for such a transition. This aspect will be further highlighted in chapter 10. Thus, the people involved in image building processes were more prone to see possibilities beyond oil.

They imagined futures where Stavanger would gain advantages in other areas, and thus the economic loss of a change of direction was not that evident in the narratives of these informants. The petroleum workers were more likely to see a future without petroleum as less positive.

Both groups of petroleum workers presented the Norwegian society as we know it today as unimaginable without the petroleum industry. The money generated here was seen as decisive for many of the elements that had developed in Stavanger specifically and in Norway generally: The Stavanger concert house, the Government Pension Fond Global with its [more than] 7 billion kroner, the welfare state and “everything we surround ourselves with”. *What would the society look like without petroleum?* several of them asked, shrugging their shoulders as if implying that the answer was a sad replica of today’s society. “Norway wouldn’t be Norway”, one said.

One can identify narratives in today’s society which both recognise that holding on to petroleum for too long could actually put our economy at risk (i.e. Ramnefjell, 2016), and which see green technologies as a potential new honey pot (i.e. Jaren, 2015). However, amongst the petroleum workers there was a clear dichotomy between petroleum and wealth on the one side versus greenness on the other. Renewable energy or alternative income sources for the region were not seen as being able to compete with the petroleum in regard to capital inflows. As one informant said: “You can’t both be green and at the same time have a lot of money. You have to choose your battles”.

A common viewpoint presented by the petroleum workers was that criticism of the petroleum industry was made possible by our wealth - which, in turn, was caused by petroleum. If we were less well-off, we wouldn’t have the choice of challenging the role this industry played in our societies. The statements largely presented a view that *you wouldn’t bite the hand that feeds you unless you’re already quite full*. In accordance with this, the voices calling for a green shift and the phasing out of petroleum would vanish if the economic status declined. As one informant argued: “If society becomes desperate [here: economically], the green shift goes out the window”. His narrative also demonstrated it as natural for people to put money over climate, as it had a more direct impact on their daily lives:

A2: We are rich, we are in a good situation, and that makes it easy to consider those things [halt petroleum activities]. But if you are in a more desperate situation and have the choice between doing something that isn’t so great for the environment, but it earns you money, contra

not doing anything, people would generally chose having more money and being able to lead a better life, even if it harms the planet.

Conversely, we can in this narrative also identify the view that technologies and industries related to a green shift was not actually perceived as a viable alternative to petroleum, or as any source of large capital inflow at all. This was rather seen as an idea we now had the possibility of entertaining, due to our oil richness.

Hence, oil extraction was not seen as something desirable to stop, at least not per now. Being equal to money and welfare, a green shift also represented a shift away from these qualities. Converting to green technologies was thus portrayed as something having to be done out of a good conscious, as it was not profitable. Greenness was connected to ideology, and would ultimately count less than money. As one informant put it: “As long as people make money and are doing well, they don’t care about it [global warming]. I believe that it’s the money that controls everything, rather than ideology”.

The beliefs expressed here can be seen as similar to narratives in Malmö (in part 5.2), when the Saab factory was established even after one arguably could have understood that a global shift in production was occurring. The establishment of the car manufacturer was seen as a “confirmation of the belief in the principle of having large and strong industrial companies as the basis of prosperity and progress for a city”. Not unlike this, the narratives presented by the petroleum workers argued that the large and strong petroleum companies were, ultimately, seen as the basis for the prosperity and progress in Stavanger. This role could not be overtaken by a green industry.

9.3. (Norwegian) petroleum is not that bad

There were several narratives where the discontinuing of petroleum activities on the Norwegian shelf was displayed as either irrelevant or negative to the global climatic issues. All informants expressed attitudes that if Norway didn’t extract oil, it would not make a difference in the big picture, or it would actually result in a negative carbon balance. The general attitude was that after all, petroleum isn’t that bad, and especially not *Norwegian* petroleum.

Amongst the informants involved in the image construction in Stavanger, this perspective was especially highlighted by the mayor, who stressed how a reduction or discontinuance of Norwegian petroleum activity would ultimately be negative for the climatic problems we are facing. The main argument here was that Norwegian petroleum is cleaner than many of its alternatives. Reducing the amount of Norwegian petroleum would thus not be wise.

“On the contrary. It would lead to the opening of a new coal plant somewhere else, or the usage of petroleum which has been produced without such a high focus on the green [environmental aspect]”, she argued. What was repeated was how Statoil has the cleanest oil production in the world, and played an important role in promoting greenness in the petroleum industry. “I believe the degree of pollution would be higher, and it would be less focus on it [sustainability] than with Norway involved”.

The same arguments were used by the petroleum workers themselves. Here, the younger petroleum workers were more prone to use the argument where Norwegian petroleum was cleaner than petroleum from other places, even if the narratives on Norwegian petroleum being the cleanest mainly involved descriptions on how clean and green the production sites were. Workplaces within the petroleum industry were described as green, disconnecting it from the global consequences (which will be further elaborated on in part 9.5). Both the younger and the older petroleum workers compared petroleum to coal and argued that an eventual reduction of petroleum would result in a corresponding increase in coal production, and how the outcome thus would be, in sum, negative. Thus, the production of Norwegian petroleum was, in sum, seen as positive for the climate. “Norwegian petroleum is the best. If you remove the best, someone else will merely produce more”, one argued.

Some arguments presented by the petroleum workers also displayed how they saw the petroleum industry *per se* as not being problematic, or as not being the main source of the problems harming the environment. Some of the older petroleum workers had statements disregarding petroleum as a major threat to our planet. As one said “Human beings have burned things since they stole the fire from the God in Greek mythology. They burned coal, forests... What is wrong with petroleum? That’s fuel too”. Another expressed that he was pro green initiatives, but that he didn’t believe that “oil is what will destroy the world”.

9.4. Deflecting responsibility.

Amongst the majority of the informants, one could identify arguments deflecting responsibility. Here, the main problem was not the petroleum industry *per se*, but other elements were given the responsibility for the climate crisis. The two things mentioned here were population growth and (increased) consumption. Population growth was merely mentioned by one of the older petroleum workers during FGA. Discussing the reasons for the climate crisis, he referred to how “the prognoses show that in 30-40 years, I believe, we will be 9 billion people on Earth. That’s thought-provoking”. This was quickly followed by another participant joking that “at that point, you won’t have to consider us”, and the argument wasn’t discussed any further.

The narrative of petroleum industry merely filling the demands from society, was however widespread amongst the statements of both older and younger petroleum workers. As one younger employee stated: “It’s the usage of oil in driving cars and such. It’s not the extraction *per se*. That’s not particularly polluting”, thus deflecting the responsibility onto the consumers, and particularly people driving cars. The older workers also emphasized consumption as the source of the climatic issues. As one argued: “I don’t think... Well, it’s the consumption that causes the problems. Because we spend an awful amount of money on things we don’t need. Why do we have fifty pairs of shoes? We can only wear one”. Another argued that the level of oil activities was, ultimately, decided by the general population through elections. “We will never return to how it was. Never. Never. But that is something which is decided on by the government and the politicians. And by us, through elections. So basically, it is the population of Norway that is deciding whether or not we should have an oil industry, and how much of it we should have.

Albeit less frequent, argumentations where the demand from the Norwegian population was the reason for the oil activities also occurred in the narratives of those involved in image building in Stavanger. Raustein argued that contributing with large proportions of the state incomes, a crisis in Stavanger would eventually “paralyze the entire country”. Here, one can also identify a narrative where the petroleum industry is sustaining the demand created by our current life style.

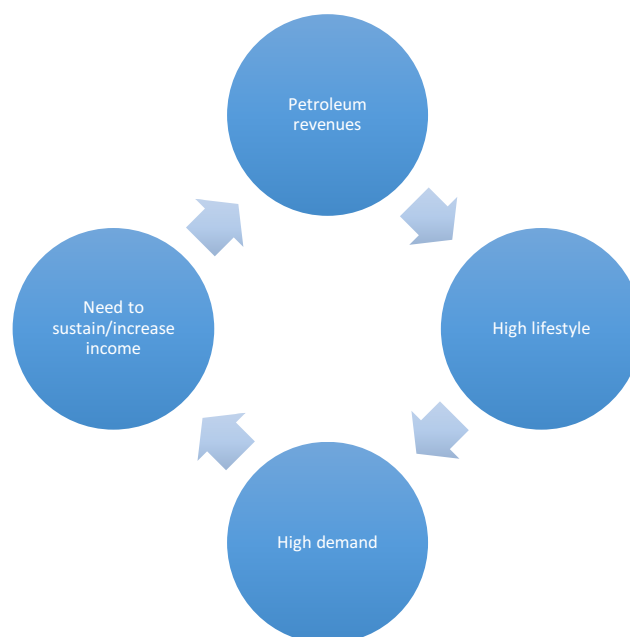


Figure 4: Narratives on demand and petroleum activities. Here, the life style in our society, created by petroleum wealth, needed to be sustained by continuous petroleum activity.

Thus, the mere extraction of petroleum and the people involved in this (the petroleum workers themselves) were not seen as the ‘bad guy’. Rather, this industry was seen as filling a need created by the increased consumption of an increasing population. If we wanted to maintain the living standards of today, petroleum was necessary. We therefore either needed to accept a decline in living standards, or accept the continuing of petroleum activities. This became evident through narratives such as the following:

A3: If you look at the big picture ... Co2 emissions aren't good. They aren't. But are people going to stop flying?

A2: We can't go back to the Stone Age and live like that

Sagen Helgø: People think that the petroleum industry is really dirty, but it isn't. And the world needs energy, and I think it's important that Norway is at front here

Raustein: If people don't want a petroleum industry, they must stop using the petroleum

Here, the argumentations of the informants display narratives where the petroleum industry exists as to fill a demand for petroleum. And in doing so, the industry attempts to be as clean and green as possible. As one argued “we produce petroleum, which is not environmentally friendly, but the process itself isn't too bad”.

9.5. Changing scale to solve the problem

When the interviews and focus groups directed into the topic of climate change, a common discursive move done by practically all informants, intentionally or not, was to change scale in rationalising the greenness of their actions. Thus, confronted with global issues such as climate change, the interviews tended to be directed towards the local scale and how concerned the petroleum industry, and the informants themselves, were with green initiatives. Conversations on issues such as Co2-emissions and climate changes were thus twisted into regarding issues such as local waste management, recycling and re-usage.

The younger petroleum workers were especially prone to do this. When climate change and green perspectives were brought up, it was mainly countered by arguments claiming that individual impact on the environment was small, both at the workplace and at the private level. Firstly, it was commonly argued that the petroleum industry was highly preoccupied with

environmental impacts. It was argued how it was an '*extreme focus*' on recycling on the platforms, where towels were re-used, one attempted to avoid washing things too often, use "what they had" instead of ordering new items, and cleansing whatever polluting items before releasing it. "I think you waste a lot more as a private person than you do working in the industry, because the focus is extreme ... all the way down to details: where do you recycle a toothpick? It's at that level", one of the younger workers explained.

There was also a clear divide between the 'dirtiness' of the industry itself and the greenness the individuals working within it were concerned with in their private lives. It became especially evident when one of the younger petroleum workers argued that: "One needs money to live, and then each takes their own measures at home to weigh up for it. Or, perhaps not weigh up for it ...". Even if the view that private greenness could weigh up for the involvement in a 'dirty' industry was to a certain degree retracted, several of the younger workers displayed this scalar approach to discussing environmental concerns. "I can live green and work within petroleum at the same time", one argued, showing to measures taken at the individual level, such as cycling to work, recycling and using the same coffee mug for an entire day.

At times, the arguments seemed almost defensive; something noted by one of the younger petroleum workers and brought up in the follow-up interview. "It seemed like A3 didn't like the discussions on the negative aspects of the petroleum industry. "I don't know if she was offended or annoyed by discussing the negative impacts of petroleum ... Because it's ... It is what people live off. One does not talk too much about the negative aspects of it".

However, this dichotomy between personal greenness and the dirtiness of the industry sometimes cracked. One of the younger workers explained how seeing documentaries on climate change would leave doubts and uncertainty about the involvement in this industry. "I've seen documentaries demonizing the petroleum industry and I thought "I can't work here anymore; I need to find another job". But then some time passed and it all went back to normal. And I like my job". Another argued that "I have always been an environmentalist. I sort all trash and ride a bicycle. So, I have felt the double standards in regard to working within the petroleum industry. But one also needs to acknowledge the positive impacts the petroleum industry has had".

The separation of local and global greenness was also evident amongst the older petroleum workers. Rather than personal environmentalism, these brought up how the industry used to be much dirtier, but how it had developed to become much cleaner. One of the informants said that he could say too much about global warming, as he didn't know that much about it, but:

When I started, we didn't have any waste containers on the rigs. We threw it all in the ocean. And then we had one container on which we had removed the bottom and replaced it with solid netting. There, we threw all the paper and such. When it was full, we just added diesel, and lit it. And then we would just swing it out from the rig with the crane and hold it there while it was burning. And when it was finished burning, we dipped the entire container in the ocean. In that way, what hadn't been burned went into the ocean. That was our practice.

Thus, improved waste management on the rigs was seen as an environmental improvement. It can, however, be argued that this was more of a local environmental initiative, rather than addressing the global causes. Another of the older petroleum workers explained how the legislation on dumping of waste products changed:

B3: There wasn't any talk of anything green back then. But I remember there came some regulations on the dumping of drilling fluids. When I was in the North Sea, that usually went directly into the ocean, but there was later made some requirements that we were careful with what we released into the ocean. It started small, but it wasn't anything like today back then.

Perhaps more surprisingly, the people involved in the branding of Stavanger did the same discursive move in discussing the impacts of the petroleum industry on the climate. Both Sagen Helgø and Raustein were quick to point out the cleanness on the production sites in discussions that initiated with addressing climatic issues.

Sagen Helgø: To me, it's important to highlight that Norway and Statoil and the Norwegian companies are at the front when it comes to producing oil in the most sustainable way (...). We have always been at the front of becoming greener in the oil industry as well. Everyone should take a trip to the North Sea to see how things work, because many believe that it's a very dirty industry, but it isn't.

Similarly, Raustein argued that “it used to be dirty work to work at a platform, but it has become a lot better, cleaner”.

Such narratives as those explained in this section, might be seen as an aversion to discuss topics at a larger scale. They might also arise from misunderstandings. A third alternative is that they are grounded in poor understandings of the climatic challenges, and thus a confusion

of global climate issues with local climatic impacts. The coming section will address narratives on climatic challenges, exploring the degree of knowledge with this demonstrated in the interviews, and the narratives expressed by the informants when discussing the environmentalist movement and energy transition.

9.6. Narratives on climatic challenges and the environmental movement

The goal of this chapter has been to examine the role of the petroleum industry in future imaginaries of the Stavanger region, and as a final comment something needs to be said about the narratives addressing climate change and the environmentalist movement. It should be noted that the informants were not exclusively asked to elaborate on their knowledge with the processes driving our global climate and how these are changing. Nor were they asked about how they perceived so-called environmentalists. However, during the interviews, many comments were made that highlights the attitudes towards climate change and the seriousness given to such issues, as well as interesting portrayals of environmentalists, or ‘the green movement’.

First of all, it was evident that many of the informants had a good understanding of the climate crisis and its severity. Perhaps the group least expected to express agreement and understanding with such issues were the older petroleum workers. This was, however, based on weak stereotypes, which were disproven in field. The informant B4 has already been mentioned, being highly critical towards the petroleum industry due to its implications for both people and the planet, and going so far as to argue that we would have been better off not discovering oil. Amongst other things, he argued that the petroleum was a “natural resource that is a treat to our climate, regardless of your name being Carl I. Hagen [former leader of the progress party] or Rasmus [referring to Rasmus Hansson, the leader of the environmental party]. Even if the climate criticism was perhaps most harshly expressed in the follow-up interview, he also addressed these issues in the focus group, while discussing the industrial future of Stavanger.

B5: Aquaculture and fisheries are big industries in Norway.

B4: And I have faith in it.

B5: And it's becoming larger. But they have an environmental problem there, and they need to address it, or they too will fail.

B4: But I think that is easier to handle than climate gas emissions.

Another of these workers also expressed narratives where the petroleum was seen as harmful to the climate. Saying that he clearly saw green technologies as taking over eventually, he opposed to arguments that the petroleum, like other energy sources, was merely natural.

B5: Yes, but you know. It's the straw that breaks the camel's back. It has become so much of all of this now. We need to reduce it.

Apart from this, the older workers were less prone to discuss climate change, and even when brought up, they deflected the topic (often multiple times as the topic was attempted addressed). It seemed like some were unwilling to talk about it, or found it less interesting or important to discuss than the economic changes. Two of the older workers seemed to find it less interesting than discussing the economic situation, and thus when they were asked to discuss 'changes' in the industry, they tended to steer the conversation in the direction of economic changes. Two of the other older petroleum workers were hard to get talking about climate, seemingly due to lack of knowledge. When pushed, one said that "it has become a lot of focus on those environmental stuff", before changing topic. The other claimed he couldn't say anything about these issues, knowing so little about them: "I don't know what to answer. It shows that something is off, I guess", was all he had to say about the issue. Thus, the knowledge of the climatic issues varied largely within this group. The perceived severity of them was hard to unravel from the narratives expressed. None directly expressed climate denial, but such opinions might have hidden behind not wanting to discuss these issues.

The younger workers seemed to have more information about the climate change, and all of these informants expressed knowledge on the issues. However, the issues were perhaps not considered to be of high severity. As one of these informants said, "I think you've made a poor choice, if you see it [the petroleum industry] as the offender, and continue to work with it every day". Thus, the informant did perhaps not see the petroleum industry as a large contributor to the climate changes. However, what was more recurrent with these informants was legitimising Norwegian petroleum activity despite the consequences known, which is also mentioned in the previous parts of this chapter.

A3: Of course, you can't argue that petroleum is good. It's not green in that sense, you can never say that. But I think a lot of people choosing to live very green are not living as green as they think. And I don't think the world is ready to live that green yet, because we don't have the alternatives.

Those involved in branding and image building in Stavanger also seemed to have a high understanding of the climate changes. As mentioned earlier, however, it seemed like the most crucial aspect of the climate change was the *politics* of climate change. Thus, the concepts were included in Stavanger's strategies and policies, but perhaps more due to international strategies and reputation reasons than due to the actual emissions. One of these informants also expressed that she saw it as a shame the Stavanger was blamed for the climatic consequences, revealing a lack of knowledge and/or belief in the occurring changes.

Being blamed for the climate challenges ... There are still many debates on what climate challenges we have. Are we facing warmer times or are we going towards an Ice Age? But regardless, there are some things we are going to protect our planet with, and I definitely see the technology as is what will help us in the future.

Few demonstrated such a lack of understanding of the climate crisis. However, climate change was rarely a topic any of the informants were eager to discuss, and they often became more hostile and defensive when such issues were brought up.

When discussing the green movement and the people engaged in this, characteristics such as being naïve and unrealistic were often used. 'Green' people and politics were described relatively uniformly and as pertaining certain characteristics. These resembled in the narratives of both younger and older petroleum workers. "The green, the environmental party, go to the extremes. What would Norway be without the oil? What would we do without the oil? Would it really be better without the oil created wealth?" one of the younger petroleum workers asked.

The older workers too saw the environmentalists as unrealistic. When asked whether the image of the oil was now deteriorating, one of these informants argued that it was. "But you can blame that on these environment-people whom haven't yet understood ... they think that time is standing still and that you can merely turn off the oil and turn on a wind mill".

Another narrative presented the petroleum as of high importance to our society, and the environmentalist movement as a threat to this, whom would shut it down as soon as possible.

B5: The green [the environmentalist party] would like to turn of the taps today if they could. So, of course, we have these issues with green energy and the environment, which of course works against what the oil stands for. But ... Like I've said before, the oil is so important to the world that we will need it for immemorial times in the future.

Amongst those involved in image branding, such portrayals of the environmental movement as unrealistic or naïve did not occur. However, the environmental movement was partly seen as exaggerating Stavanger's offender role. Raustein expressed how Stavanger was "blamed for the climate challenges". Both Raustein and Sagen Helgø, however, argued how people in Stavanger mostly felt proud of having been the oil capital.

9.7. Summing up: The oil in future imaginaries

This chapter has shown that the oil holds a strong position in the narratives presenting Stavanger's future, both amongst the older and younger petroleum workers, as well as for those working with image construction processes in Stavanger municipality. Even if the petroleum industry is generally perceived as harmful and as something Stavanger cannot continue to be coupled with forever, it is presented as likely to endure in the region for an unforeseeable future.

One can argue that there exists a dissonance between the oil industry as a negative impact on our planet versus how it leads to personal, national and regional income. There are several narratives presented by the petroleum workers as to rationalise around this dissonance and explain why Stavanger cannot decouple from the petroleum industry, at least not *per now*.

One common narrative presents the petroleum industry as equivalent to income. This narrative was common amongst my informants, and ultimately saw a change away from the petroleum industry as synonymous with a declined economic situation in Norway. Here, the possibility of renewable energy eventually gaining a better economic position than fossil fuels was not mentioned, neither was the possible economic loss from holding on to the petroleum industry for too long. As the cases from Detroit and Malmö showed (in chapter 5), this can be an actual problem. Not recognising that an industry is going towards an end, but rather attempting to maintain its position caused an economic downturn in Malmö, and not shifting from such an industry in decline lead to a deterioration of the image in Detroit. These are aspects not included in the petroleum workers' narratives, other than being mentioned as examples on how outsiders exaggerate the view on the crisis-ridden Stavanger.

The second narrative presented in this part present oil as a better alternative than other alternatives (specifically coal), and present Norwegian petroleum as cleaner than other

petroleum. This is also what is shown in the statement made by chief economist in Statoil, Eirik Wærness in part 4.1, where he asks the readers to “Imagine the Co2-emissions Europe would have had if 40 years of Norwegian exports of gas rather had been covered by coal”.

The third narrative in this chapter deflected the responsibility for the emissions from fossil fuel extraction, arguing that the industry existed due to a demand from the general public, and not the other way around. Commonly here, it was argued how people are unaware of the crucial part petroleum plays in our society.

The fourth narrative argued that the petroleum industry and the people working in it were ultimately very green, perhaps more so than people not working in the petroleum industry.

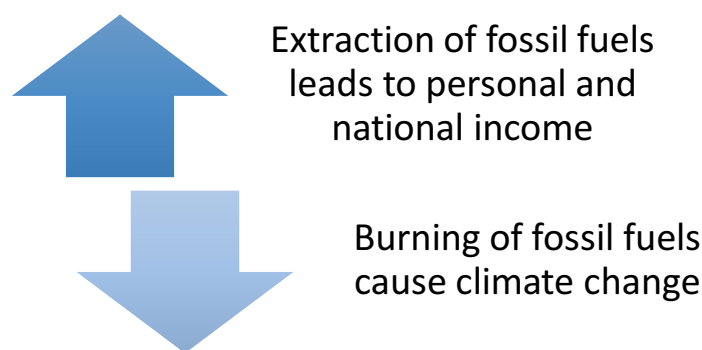


Figure 5: Rationalisations address the conflictual aspect of fossil fuels: Its combustion leads to global problems, but its extraction leads to personal and national income.

The narratives of the petroleum workers thus largely imagined the continued coupling of petroleum and Stavanger. Stavanger was seen as to be under strong influence of the petroleum industry for at least 50 more years. Any imaginaries presenting petroleum as disappearing from the Stavanger context any faster than this was perceived as unrealistic and naïve. This is what is shown in part 9.6, where narratives ridicule the environmental movement as having an unrealistic perception on how (and how fast) we can diverge from fossil fuels.

The environmental movement also had this naïve, unrealistic characteristic in the narratives of the municipal representatives, but not amongst them all.

Even if also expressing narratives such as those mentioned above, the people involved in branding and image construction processes in Stavanger were more prone to see a diversion of Stavanger and petroleum as probable than the petroleum workers. However, these employees did not display future narratives of Stavanger where the oil was completely absent. The petroleum industry was seen as enduring for at least 50 more years, but as being supplemented by other industries.

10. Shackles or a stepping stone to transition?

Initiating this project, one hypothesis was that by being ‘stuck’ in the oil capital-image, it would be hard for Stavanger to become something else. Especially could it be difficult to attempt at a re-branding to an image which can be seen as quite contrary to what Stavanger has been during the last decades. Watching a movie where Rowan Atkinson did not play Mr. Bean, but a serious investigator, gave associations to Stavanger. The region that has for decades been soaked in oil was to become green. Would it be taken seriously with this new role? One hypothesis was that if the Stavanger region is so closely connected to oil, fossil fuels and emissions in people’s minds, branding it as the ‘energy capital’ or as being particularly green could be perceived as being fake, or as a fraud.

Fossåskaret agreed that such image shift might be difficult for Stavanger to pull off. However, not changing image was seen as far riskier, as the prevalent image in Stavanger was arguably tied up to an element [the oil] which is losing its positive connotations. As Fossåskaret said:

Stavanger may gain a rather poor reputation as the one who, quite assertive, extracted oil and ignored the global challenges. (...) [Being the oil capital] might be a burden. When kids ask: “What did you do, mom, when the world was going under? When we had reached 3 degrees?” And she’ll say: (...) “I was amongst the last people working in the oil”. It won’t be heroic.

Fossåskaret argued that the content of being an oil region was changing, and that Stavanger easily could find themselves stuck in another image than what they aimed for by being the oil capital. Once being considered a positive identity marker, Fossåskaret argued that the petroleum industry was likely to be considered an expiring form of energy, perhaps more so than Stavanger acknowledges. “There won’t be much to gain from having such an image”, he predicted. Thus, *not* conducting a shift away from this image could arguably be a major challenge for Stavanger:

Especially because they did not, at any point, opt out of the oil industry. Stavanger never said: “we realise that this is a major global challenge, so now we will do all we can to stop the extraction of oil and gas”. You know? Long after everyone else have seen that this is being zeroed out, Stavanger do what they can to promote the oil. That could result in the drop being even larger.

Thus, changing the image of Stavanger so that it is no longer perceived as synonymous with the oil industry can be seen as do or die for the region's attractiveness. This section will thus briefly address such a shift, asking whether the image of being an oil capital was perceived as an impediment to such an image change, or if it rather was seen as giving Stavanger an advantage.

The initial hypothesis in this paper was that the image of being the oil capital could make it difficult for Stavanger to be taken seriously as an agent within renewable energy. Hence, it could be seen as a shackle, holding Stavanger back from such a development. This logic might derive from a categorisation where 'oil' (as a part of fossil energy) and 'renewables' are seen as opposites, as they perhaps would be in a 'climate'-category. However, if the category is not climate, but rather competence and technological advancement, 'fossil energy' and 'renewables' might not at all be seen as opposites: but rather as naturally following each other as joints in a chain.

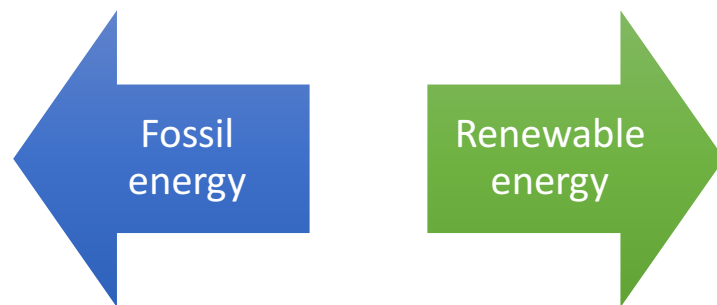


Figure 6: If one categorises arguments with 'Climate' as the denominator, fossil energy and renewable energy may be seen as opposites.



Figure 7: Categorising arguments with 'Competence and technology' as denominator, renewable energy can be seen as a natural successor to fossil energy

Amongst my informants, the latter argumentation was clearly most common. The people involved in the re-branding of Stavanger were especially clear in their arguments: Stavanger's history as an oil capital was merely positive for its future as an energy capital.

Raustein was continuously challenged on this, but staunchly stated that she saw this as being “a natural transition. The oil has given us the wealth necessary for actually finding other solutions”. Not merely applying for Stavanger, but for the entire nation, Raustein argued that Stavanger had “built resources for Norway, making us capable to take action towards becoming more climate-friendly”. Thus, the capital gained from the petroleum industry was seen as facilitating the shift in both content and branding in Stavanger.

Sagen had similar narratives. She eagerly stressed how the competence and technology that had developed in Stavanger was crucial when the region now was to become the European capital of energy:

I am very optimistic, because I believe we have a large advantage, and I believe that Stavanger will be at the front when it comes to technology and competence and being a smart city. So, I imagine Stavanger turning from focusing on oil and gas towards having more energy on energy in general.

In the narratives of those involved in the place identity construction in Stavanger, being the energy capital was largely combined with the concept of being a Smart city. As Sagen Helgø argued, the Smart city objective of using smart technology to improve the urban life made it a natural element within the energy capital.

In addition to capital, competence and technology, those involved in image construction processes mentioned knowledge and the new university of Stavanger as advantages in moving from oil capital to energy capital. Having ‘put Stavanger on the map’ was also seen as an advantage in such a shift. Thus, the elements that, largely was seen as having been brought to the region due to the petroleum industry, was now seen as part of what would push Stavanger into its new era. “New solutions will come from Stavanger, based on the fact that we have had the oil industry and that we have the competence that we have. So, it’s natural that Stavanger will be the energy capital”, Raustein argued. Towards the end of my field work, Stavanger received a ‘renewable fund’ which seemed to enhance this belief. “It was a highly important symbolic action to place that renewable-flag in Stavanger”, Sagen Helgø argued.

When discussing the future of Stavanger, the petroleum workers were mostly uniform in that they saw the petroleum as prevailing in Stavanger for many decades to come. However, and somewhat surprising, the older petroleum workers were more likely to see Stavanger as ceasing to be the oil capital than the younger workers. Prior to the field work, this was expected to be the other way around. However, when challenged on how Stavanger would be in the

future, these older workers were more prone to argue that the 'oil age' was a passing image which would be replaced in the future: and thus, that the image of Stavanger would also change. As long as there was an oil capital, it would be Stavanger, but in their narratives, this was likely to slowly, but surely be phased out during the coming 30-100 years. Following this, the image of Stavanger was seen as changeable.

B2: It's already declining. We're already down (...). But you have to consider, with the existing installations. What will we do with those? We can't stop. We can't stop Statfjord, Ekofisk. They are there. And they will be active for 20-30 years more, at least. But what we can do is stop searching for more oil.

B4: I imagine it will take 30 more years to shake it off.

B5: Green energy will take over, of course.

The younger workers struggled to see real alternatives to the petroleum, and consequently, Stavanger being anything else than the oil capital was hard to imagine.

A4: I believe we are locked in the idea that this [petroleum] is what we will do. At least for now.

They largely saw the petroleum industry as prevailing until the reservoirs were empty:

A3: There are still opportunities, as long as there exists something that is possible to produce, I think the industry will still be standing.

A4: Yes.

A3: And with new technology, you can extract things you previously weren't able to (...). And maybe it will be reduced, considering how things are going in that direction, but there are new discoveries and ...

A4: New technology and cost reductions that makes it profitable.

A3: Yes, it becomes more efficient.

It should be noted that the younger workers too saw the image of Stavanger as changeable. However, it was argued that this would only be done if the industry was forced to do so. This could either be as the reservoirs were empty, or by new policies making it necessary to make such a transition. Thus, they saw coercion as necessary. “If pushed to do so, the industry will perhaps be able to adapt”, one argued.

The young petroleum workers also mentioned how young people are now advised to choose something else than oil.

A4: What has turned is this trend that everyone ... Well, the parents are now advising their kids to do something else that merely that ‘oil stuff’. Youths are encouraged to think greener (...). Before, people were talking about the oil no matter where you turned. Now, you can see that this is changing.

In this narrative, the black-hole effect of the petroleum industry was definitely displayed as losing its magnetism.

Thus, the older workers were more likely to see the petroleum industry as being disregarded by choice, whilst the younger were more prone to see its end being caused by the resource being depleted, or by oil activities becoming unattractive due to new policies. Consequently, the older workers expressed less difficulty imagining Stavanger being something else. When asked what Stavanger would be in the future, some answers were the following:

B4: This isn’t an oil capital, it’s an energy capital. And what they spend money on now, is the development of alternative energy. And here, the oil industry has been a crowbar. It has been the honey pot where everyone has served themselves and developed technology which is now being adopted [to develop renewable energy sources].

B5: I think it will be the energy capital, if we play our cards right. It’s strong competition on from Bergen and Oslo, but I think Stavanger will ... We have a lot of knowledge in this district.

B2: The best would be if we could spend our oil revenues to turn the energy. And that is what Statoil is doing today.

B4: A lot of things are being done to counter [the destructiveness of fossil fuels]. Stavanger is in many ways turning towards renewable energy, and is using the oil as memento for that transaction.

They were also more prone to seeing Stavanger develop to gain the position as the energy capital of Norway. When the topic of the green shift first arose, and the older petroleum workers were asked how such a shift would have implications for Stavanger. One of them answered immediately: “Stavanger? We’re the ones who are going to do it, for fuck’s sake”.

Hence, whether or not Stavanger would be able to move beyond being the oil capital – towards becoming the energy capital – was conceptualised differently amongst the older and younger petroleum workers. Perhaps the older workers, having experienced Stavanger without the oil in the past, was more likely to imagine a Stavanger without the oil in the future, whereas the younger workers had never experienced a Stavanger without the influence of the petroleum industry, and thus were less likely to imagine a future where the region was not coupled with the oil industry.

Considering how Stavanger’s image as an oil capital could influence its future as an energy capital, the petroleum workers were relatively uniform: The oil history was merely an advantage for the region as it would now move towards becoming an energy capital. Like Sagen Helgø and Raustein, the petroleum workers also addressed knowledge, technology and competence as the three pillars that Stavanger would build on in becoming an energy capital.

A3: Stavanger has an enormous competence within technology, as one continuously as worked towards a goal. We just have to figure out where there is demand, which direction we should take. I believe that no matter what, Stavanger will continue to be technology. That’s what we’re good at, so we have to use that in moving forwards.

When discussing the possibility of Stavanger moving away from petroleum, this employee said that:

A3: In the long run, it’s possible. I have to choose to believe that we can change. We are adaptable. So, we shouldn’t disregard Stavanger as a technology city or region. But perhaps not 100 percent oil. Perhaps 10 percent oil and the rest spread over other elements. But I believe technology is what we should build on. If not, it’s a shame. We have built up a lot of competence, so it’s a shame if all is to be forgotten.

10.1. Summing up: Shackles or stepping stool?

This chapter has explored the narratives seeing Stavanger's image as an oil capital as an impediment or an advantage if the region is to change its image from being the oil capital towards being the energy capital.

Firstly, this image change is not equally conceptualised amongst all informants, and it is clear that the younger petroleum workers are more prone to seeing Stavanger's prevailing image as highly durable. This might be due to the fact that they have never experienced a Stavanger which is not under the strong influence of the oil industry, and thus such a future can be hard to imagine. The older petroleum workers are more inclined to see Stavanger's image as altering (although it is seen as highly naïve to expect this change as occurring abruptly).

Disregarding the temporal aspect of the change from 'oil' to 'energy', the petroleum workers are relatively uniform: At one point, the Stavanger region will move beyond being an oil city, and the history of being an oil capital is merely an advantage in this move. Through its experience with 'the oil' and the knowledge and technology developed within this industry, Stavanger is in a good position to become the national centre for energy – more generally. The informants do have some issues imagining exactly which industries would be suitable, and why Stavanger would have an advantage in hosting these. However, the buzzwords are clearly competence, knowledge and technology.

The same goes for the municipal employees working to re-brand the region. Here, the image as an oil capital is merely seen as an advantage, and the region's history with the oil is exactly what makes Stavanger suitable for becoming the energy capital. Even when pushed to explore how Stavanger's image as an oil capital can work against objectives of becoming the energy capital, they do not express any ways in which this is plausible. Thus, the transition towards becoming the energy capital is largely presented as a non-conflictual, non-political and non-sacrificial process. Building on pre-existing competence, knowledge and technology, Stavanger is predicted a sliding transition into the new image as an energy capital.

As Kenis and Lievens (2016) argue (in part 4.2), contemporary climate politics have the tendencies of 1) failing to reach adequate international agreements, 2) proposing that the climate problems and the economic problems have a double fix (through green economy), and 3) depoliticising the problem. In this new political context, cities become locales for technocratic solutions, governance approaches and city marketing.

This is highly visible through the narratives presented by those involved with regional branding in this chapter. First of all, technology is largely presented as the solution to climate issues. Arguments claim that climatic issues will be solved by drawing on the knowledge,

technology and competence from the oil age. By doing so, Stavanger will naturally make a transition into an energy age characterised by high-tech elements in a 'Smart city'. Thus, the solution is largely technical, and requires little political action. This also relates to the governance approach, which is also apparent in Stavanger. The employees concerned with the rebranding of Stavanger go far in arguing that their role as local authorities is merely to facilitate for the companies, as well as to talk positively about the Stavanger region as an energy capital. Thus, this shift in Stavanger is mainly done rhetorically. Material and physical changes are harder to identify than discursive moves in changing the region's symbolic elements and self-identity.

The emphasising of the restricted role of the local authorities in this rebranding process demonstrates a view that the shift towards becoming an 'energy capital' is not first and foremost seen as political. Conversely, becoming the 'oil capital' largely was. The local authorities played an important part in establishing this image. Now, the main effort is seen as being done by the companies themselves. This fits well in a political reality where state management does not hold the strong position it once did. It should also be mentioned that two of the informants (Raustein and Sagen Helgø) are politicians in right-wing parties in Norway. The political right is, and has been, more prone to advocate for market-centred solutions.

The city marketing-element highlighted by Kenis and Lievens can arguably be seen as the rebranding of Stavanger from 'oil capital' to 'energy capital'. The climate issues (and the closeness to one of the industries causing it) is here largely represented as an opportunity, rather than a problem. The informants' narratives present a Stavanger which will gain economically by developing competence on renewable energy sources.

11. Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to highlight various ways in which the petroleum industry has played a role in the portrayals and the perceptions of Stavanger, in narratives of the past, present and future of the region. A large effort was made by key actors in Stavanger in order to make Stavanger become the oil capital. The establishment of the industry in the region influenced both physical elements as well as Stavanger's identity, which is evident from the narratives of the petroleum workers. The 'oil capital' seems to have been a strong identity, being reinforced by both historical elements (such as the history of Arne Rettedal pushing to build the houses in the 'oil hill' in four months), physical objects in the region (such as the oil museum, the Alexander Kielland-monument and the leaning tower of Jättåvågen) and less tangible elements (high life styles, pride, 'champagne factor'). This place identity is both constructed through individual experiences, meanings, feelings and opinions (a sense of place), and through attempts at constructing Stavanger's identity.

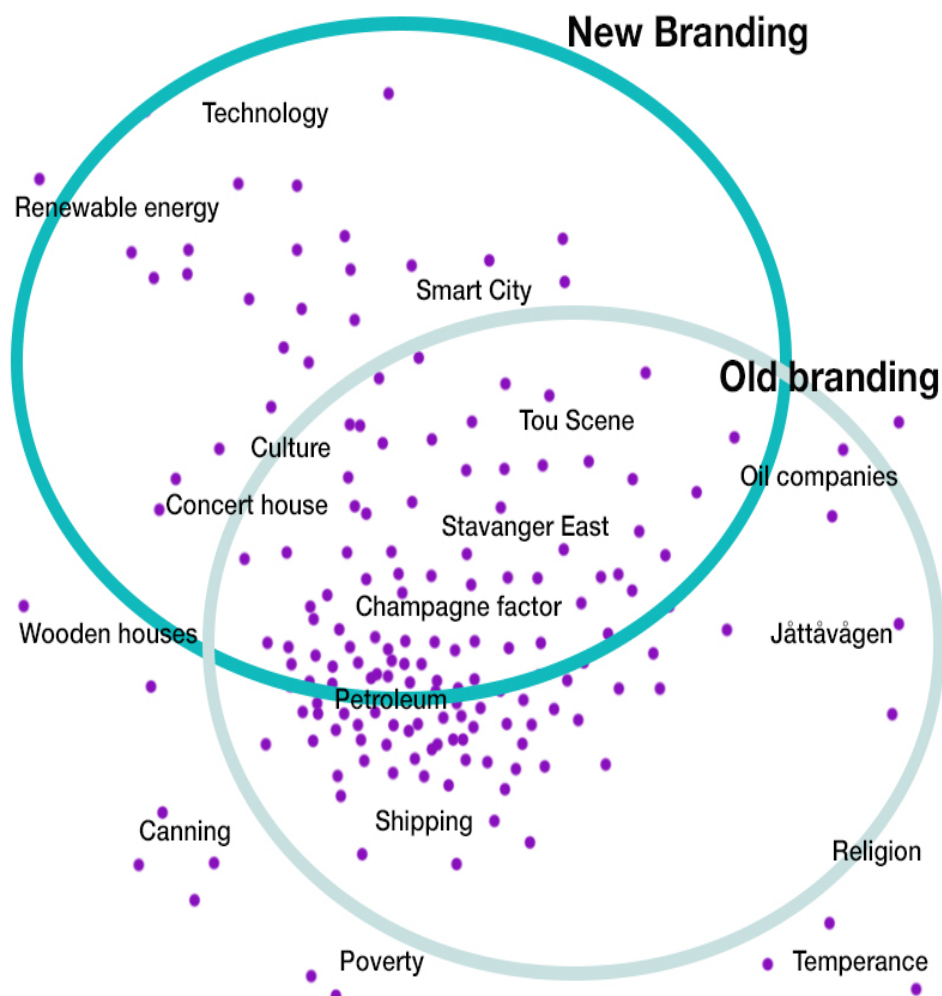


Figure 8: The place identity in Stavanger can be understood as being configured by both individual perceptions (purple dots) and attempts as constructing the place identity (blue circles). This model is not based on statistics, and should merely be understood as a visualisation of how the complimentary role of sense of place and image construction in Stavanger.

As Figure 8 shows (note that this figure is not based on data material, but is meant as a mere illustration), the place identity in Stavanger can be seen as shaped by both individual perceptions (purple dots) and the construction of place identity (blue circles). These do not necessarily overlap: There might be a gap between how individuals perceive the identity of a place, and how those attempting to build the place's image wish to construct it. On the figure, this can be seen from where the purple dots are outside the blue circles. Individual perceptions might even be radically different than the majority of the perceptions on the place's identity. One example from this specific case may be the one informant who opposed to Stavanger being the oil capital: a characteristic most other informants saw as central to the region.

Like the circles being drawn as to include and exclude certain elements, one can argue that in Stavanger, the image of the oil capital that has been constructed included and excluded certain elements. For example, the layman culture, poverty and the religious history were not included in the image of what Stavanger wanted to be. Similarly, with the current objective of moving away from the image of being the oil capital, one can argue that the constructed image of the energy capital strategically include some elements, while excluding others. Elements such as renewable energy or being the Smart city is not identified as part of the Stavanger image by the petroleum workers, but is strategically included in the image construction. Individual perceptions might thus be in accordance with such constructed identities, or they might not be. The narratives of the petroleum workers largely indicate that their perceptions of Stavanger are more in accordance with the prevailing image than with being the 'energy capital'. Such changes in perceptions would be interesting to map over time, as to see whether they altered.

Chapter 4 showed how climate change has led to a large-scale global movement advocating for measures being taken against the emission of greenhouse gases. This has resulted in the climate being put on the political agenda; both internationally, where agreements such as the Paris agreement are being made, as well as locally, for example by playing a part in shaping the objectives of Stavanger municipality – shifting the equilibria away from petroleum. Arguably, climate change being put on the political agenda is part of why Stavanger is now aiming to becoming the energy capital, leaving the image of the oil capital behind.

Being the oil capital, and attempting to alter this image to being the energy capital has had many implications for the Stavanger region. Three tendencies are especially interesting, and will be explored here: 1) The depoliticisation and rhetoric focus of the image change in Stavanger, 2) the rationalisations around the dissonance of fossil fuels, and 3) the narratives seeing the transition towards becoming the energy capital as painless.

11.1. Image construction as a depoliticised and rhetoric move

The ‘new image’ in Stavanger is attempted constructed in a quite different manner than how the ‘oil capital’ image was constructed in the mid- and late-1900s. Where political measures largely were taken to establish Stavanger as the oil capital, contemporary branding strategies are highly depoliticised. The informants involved in image construction processes in Stavanger restrict their role facilitating for the industry. Thus, the new image is by and large seen as being constructed by the private sector, rather than the public.

The shift is also largely restricted to rhetoric. Both Sagen Helgø and Raustein argue that the main strategies used to provoke such a change in image is in how they speak of the region. There is not much novel content in the ‘energy capital’ term. Neither is there a focus on changing physical elements in the city to support or encourage the new image. What is highlighted is the importance of not using the term ‘oil capital’ when speaking of Stavanger. This is a highly different strategy than when Stavanger first became the oil capital. When the Stavanger region became the oil capital, this was supported by strong political figures, going to the extremes to attract the industry: heating the ground with flamethrowers to build houses for immigrant petroleum workers and visiting company headquarters to prevent them from looking beyond Stavanger when searching for supply base locations. In contemporary Stavanger, the changing image is seen as best being established by addressing Stavanger as the energy capital and “staying out of the industry’s way”.

This might be an adequate way of changing the region’s image. After all, image building is highly emotional, and how Stavanger is promoted in speeches and promotional material can be important for changing the region’s image. However, this can also be seen as contrary to what theories on regional branding advice. These largely claim that in the global competition over investments, it is important that places ‘brand’ and ‘sell’ themselves. As seen, Zimmerbauer largely argue that a means of constructing an image change is by changing the physical elements in a city. As the physical and mental elements are closely connected in the creation of a place identity, this identity can be influenced by altering the place’s physicality. In Stavanger, this is not an activity taken on by the municipality.

All though this thesis has not had the capacity to profoundly explore the political differences between Stavanger in the mid- and late 1900s versus today, this might be an important element in such different strategies for regional branding. In the post-war decades, the state had a stronger position in the Norwegian society than today. Thus, it might be seen as more natural that strong politicians actively engaged in influencing the industrial content and thus the image of Stavanger. As the contemporary political milieu favours market-oriented,

depoliticised and consensual approaches, a strong governmental control like the one we saw in the mid- and late-1900s would perhaps be more unexpected than the weak governmental control displayed through these narratives. Additionally, the political leadership in Stavanger today is right-winged, which might further encourage market-oriented solutions and practices.

Whether this market-led approach resonates with the objective of changing Stavanger's image is too soon to tell. However, when considering the narratives of the petroleum workers, it seems that the strategies of the politicians in Stavanger might be too shallow. The 'new Stavanger' promoted by those involved in image construction in Stavanger seems partly incoherent with the Stavanger imagined by the petroleum workers. Especially is this true for the younger petroleum workers. They see Stavanger as prevailing as the oil capital for as long as there exists an oil capital, and fail to see green industries where Stavanger would have an advantage. The reason for this might be the depoliticisation of the image construction, or the focus on rhetoric. One can argue that the term 'energy capital' has little clear new content, nor any physical elements grounding it in the region, and might thus be seen as an empty signifier. Even if the planners attempt to alter the image, the main identifier in Stavanger is still the oil.

11.2. Rationalising the dissonance

The dissonance between the economic gains and the climatic consequences of fossil fuels in the Stavanger case is interesting. On the one hand, the extraction of fossil fuels is seen as leading to increased wealth, whilst simultaneously, the climatic consequences (as well as the fact that it is a finite resource) brings a notion that this is an industry with which we, at some point, need to stop. Even if (seemingly) aware of the climatic consequences, the petroleum workers do not hold future imaginaries of Stavanger where the oil is absent. Various rationalisations are made as to why Stavanger and the petroleum industry cannot be decoupled, at least not per now.

The most common were narratives seeing petroleum as synonymous with income and wealth, seeing Norwegian petroleum as better than petroleum from elsewhere (and at least better than coal), deflecting the responsibility of the extraction onto those demanding petroleum products, and showing to the greenness of the industry at the local scale. What was recurrent here, was how narratives frequently mixed Stavanger and 'the world'. Thus, Stavanger was not seen as diverging from fossil fuel extraction if this was not a global move. Even if not stated directly, this can be interpreted as a view that Stavanger would not opt away from the petroleum industry as long as it was viable at the global scale. Those presenting a decoupling of the petroleum industry and Stavanger (and thus the world), were largely represented as naïve, unrealistic and as not being rooted in reality.

The rationalisations expressed by the petroleum workers might show signs of place identities being more enduring than one can read from the theories of Massey (in part 6.1). Clearly, elements of a place can change, and people might have various and shifting perceptions of what the place's identity entails. However, such place identities might also be more enduring than the theories of Massey propose. The narratives of the petroleum workers present Stavanger's identity as the oil capital as being highly enduring.

It should be noted that such changes in image might be occurring in Stavanger. By sampling informants highly involved in the petroleum industry, this thesis wished to explore whether the people who are perhaps most intrinsically involved with the petroleum industry perceived what can be seen as a shift *away from it*. However, these might be of the last ones to accept and adapt to such a change in identity. Thus, even if these informants did not present narratives seeing the petroleum industry as decoupling from the Stavanger region, others might.

11.3. Transition without trouble

A third aspect of interest in the exploration of the petroleum industry and the influence it has had on the image in Stavanger, are the narratives presenting the coming transition in Stavanger. Especially is it interesting how this transition is presented as non-conflictual, non-political and non-sacrificial.

Arguably, the global discourses on climate change and the environmental movement advocating for a green shift can be seen as the main reason for the objective of changing image in Stavanger. Elements such as the climate change, the Paris agreement and new energy sources are mentioned by the people employed in Stavanger municipality as to why measures were taken to change the region's image. The economic crisis is also mentioned as an element here, but the branding change occurred prior to the current economic crisis in the petroleum industry.

When this transition is discussed, it is noteworthy how unproblematic it is presented. One can argue that the Stavanger region has suffered largely due to the current economic downturn. Yet, a change of the region's image is seen as something that will occur naturally. It is largely presented as a technical fix done by the companies, drawing on pre-existing knowledge.

Whether this shift will occur as naturally and easy as the narratives suggests is too early to tell. Massey do argue that such identities are multiple and dynamic, and hence one can argue that the Stavanger image can be rapidly, and relatively easily, changeable. However, as other data material from this research has shown, the identity of Stavanger as the oil capital might be more enduring, and thus, seeing a shift away from this as non-political and non-sacrificial might be too simplistic.

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