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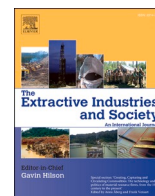
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Original article

## Experiencing (in)securities in northern Norway: Narratives of emotion and extractivism

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## ABSTRACT

The role of emotions within extractive industries has been acknowledged and embraced in recent years, though security studies research on it remains limited. This article argues that to better understand narratives of everyday security, the role of emotions should be acknowledged. I focus on an Arctic locality in northern Norway, and on local experiences and emotions surrounding everyday securities and insecurities of having an oil and gas production site nearby. The Arctic oil and gas industry is important economically for local communities; however, it also accelerates global climate change. The article scrutinizes interviews collected from local people and concludes that security narratives are complex and conflicted, portraying various stories about having the petroleum industry in one's neighbourhood. The narratives express concern and worry for the environment while expressing gratitude to the economic benefits of the industry. The Arctic communities have been tied to the global oil and gas market while being forced to find new means to cope with the change. Contributing to the wider discussion on the local security impacts of extractivist projects, as well as further developing the concept of human security, I argue that the role of emotions cannot be ignored.

## 1. Introduction

Security, understood in a broad manner, is a subjective and contextually specific experience. The experiences of security and insecurity are dependant on the nature of the threat, but also on what we value and cherish (Hoogensen et al., 2009; Hutchison, 2013; Wibben, 2011). With respect to resource extraction, the relationship between security and emotions becomes especially evident. Arctic oil and gas developments have been the focus of governments, environmental organizations and the petroleum industry during the past few decades. The fossil fuel industry is an important economic driver for several local communities; however, it also accelerates global climate change by allowing for more Arctic oil and gas exploration, with important environmental consequences (see, e.g., Arctic Council, 2017). Furthermore, the Arctic is warming thrice as fast as the rest of the world, bringing further challenges (AMAP 2021).

Drawing from discussions in feminist security studies and the idea of human security, in addition to the emerging literature on the connections of extractivism and emotions, this article looks at Arctic oil and gas production and its local-level implications. The aim of this paper is to explore the role emotions could have within human security discussions

in the Arctic, thereby enriching the concept and its analytical value. The article addresses the following two questions: *How does local oil and gas production impact one's sense of security (human security)? How do emotions play a part in this process?* Having an extractive industry close to one's place of residence fundamentally impacts everyday life, namely human security (see, e.g. Hoogensen et al., 2009; Stammer et al., 2020; Stuvøy, 2011). Acknowledging criticism of the ambiguity of human security, the paper explores the role of emotions within human security in order to sharpen its utility. Emotions increasingly form an integral part of security studies (Åhäll and Gregory, 2013; Hutchison, 2013; Van Rythoven, 2015). However, a persistent belief in emotions as irrelevant and non-objective, a notion embedded in *realpolitik*, is still rather visible (Hutchison, 2013; Sultana, 2015).

In this article, the term *emotion* is used as an umbrella (following Gonzalez-Hidalgo and Zografos, 2019), which includes for example affects, feelings and moods, "in which humans perform their feelings and build their relationships to and in socio-natures" (Gonzalez-Hidalgo & Zografos, 2019, 3). As emotion is part of the everyday vocabulary, whereas affect isn't (Schmitz and Ahmed, 2014) I utilize the conceptual term of emotion in this article, as it is focusing on the everyday aspects of oil and gas production. By acknowledging the emotional dimension of

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all resource-related activity, also the discussions on human security and extractive practices should incorporate the social, deeply political, and emotional nature of resource environments (see, e.g. [Weszkalnys, 2016](#)).

The geographical focus of this article is northern Norway, especially the towns of Hammerfest and Akkarfjord in Finnmark, along the coast of the Barents Sea, where I regularly spent time for a period of two years. I travelled from one small village to another intending to understand the coastal culture and people's way of life. The research material consists of interviews conducted with local people during the spring of 2020. I analyse the interviews using narrative analysis ([Moulin, 2016](#); [Wibben, 2011](#)). The interviews revealed key narratives concerning local experiences and emotions in relation to the everyday securities and insecurities of having an oil and gas production site close to one's home. Unlike studies focusing on resistance and opposition to extractivist or other projects (see, e.g. [Benjaminsen and Svarstad, 2008](#); [Caretta et al., 2020](#); [Lassila, 2020](#)), the narratives here are not divided into 'opposing' and 'supporting', and the complexity and, in a sense, the illogicality of the narratives are presented and accepted as they are. The analysis shows that the narratives created by the local people are complex and conflicting and that emotions have a role within the creation of the narratives. Emotions are crucial in defining what is perceived as a threat and what is not – the industry provides economic security and serves as a source of pride for local people, while simultaneously it is the cause of anger and worry about the environment. Furthermore, the securities and insecurities surrounding local extractivist projects have a spatial as well as temporal nature. The experience of the industry varies according to the relationship with the land, the timeframe in question, as well as depending on the multiple epistemologies and cosmologies (see, e.g. [Wilson and Stammler, 2016](#)).

The article proceeds as follows. First, it provides a brief overview of oil and gas exploration and extraction in the Barents Sea and the local communities. Then, it introduces the concept of human security and proposes the need to incorporate emotions more firmly within the concept, especially concerning natural resource extraction. Next, the article discusses the research method and materials, the narrative analysis employed as well as the interviews conducted with local informants. In combining narratives, human security, and emotions, the article continues by presenting the main narratives identified from the interviews, utilizing emotions as a starting point. Finally, the article discusses the key findings and draws some important conclusions.

### 1.1. Background: Barents oil and gas

The Arctic imaginary as a resource frontier has remained dominant both within national and international spheres ([Dale et al., 2019](#); [Kangasluoma, 2020](#); [Kristoffersen and Langhelle, 2017](#)). This becomes especially apparent at the local level, where fossil fuel production takes place. Norway is a small Nordic country, with an important oil and gas industry. Even though the country is strongly pushing a green-friendly image, the fossil fuel industry still remains at the core of Norway's economy. Norway is home to the world's northernmost oil fields, and during recent years, the Government of Norway has also issued a record number of new licenses for production as far as north as 74° latitude ([Norsk Petroleum, 2020](#)). The push for Arctic oil has not been warmly welcomed by all. Several environmental organizations, together with members of civil society, have questioned the economic viability of drilling so far north and called attention to the catastrophic environmental consequences if an accident should occur at those latitudes.

This article focuses on the experiences of people living in the area surrounding Hammerfest: both the city of Hammerfest and a small town called Akkarfjord. Hammerfest is a small city in the county of Troms og Finnmark, in northern Norway. Akkarfjord is a small town on the island of Sørøya, north of the city of Hammerfest. Before the construction of the Snøhvit gas field and Melkøya processing plant, Hammerfest was struggling economically. With large out-migration and an economic deficit, the city was happy to agree to the proposed petroleum projects

([Loe and Kelman, 2016](#)). The city of Hammerfest has a population of approximately 10,500 people, roughly 1200 of whom work in the oil and gas industry either directly or indirectly ([Loe and Kelman, 2016](#)). In the Barents Sea region, like in the rest of Norway, all oil and gas activities occur offshore out at sea. The first oil and gas site discovered in the Barents Sea was at a site named Snøhvit. The field is located in the open sea 140 km north of Hammerfest. Operations began in 2007. The field, which mainly produces natural gas, is operated by Equinor. From Snøhvit, the liquefied natural gas (LNG) goes to the processing station at Melkøya via subsea pipes. Melkøya is located just outside Hammerfest. From Melkøya, the LNG is transported throughout the world with carriers and tankers. Another field, Goliat, is also rather close to Hammerfest, 85 km to the north (in the sea). Goliat is an offshore platform, with production having started in 2016. Goliat produces both oil and gas, currently mainly oil though. It is operated by Vår Energi, a Norwegian subsidiary of the Italian multinational oil and gas enterprise ENI. Another field in the Barents Sea, Johan Castberg, is scheduled to open in 2023. ([Norsk Petroleum, 2020](#).)

Earlier studies on Hammerfest and Snøhvit have examined the different stakeholders involved and the role of corporate social responsibility within the petroleum industry, noting the different stances and attitudes towards the local industry ([Loe and Kelman, 2016](#)). While this paper shares several similar findings with earlier studies, it offers a rather different viewpoint on the topic of oil and gas in Hammerfest and its surroundings. Examining the affective side of resource extraction, while addressing the concept of human security and foregrounding the role of emotions related to it, this paper presents a more holistic approach to local perceptions of Arctic oil and gas production. The chosen approach allows to understand the role affects/emotions have within all (political) life, as well as to expand the understanding of the different dimensions of resource extraction ([Lempinen and Lindroth 2021](#)).

## 2. Security, emotions & natural resources

### 2.1. Arctic (human) security

The rethinking of the concept of security, strongly influenced, for example by feminist scholars (see, e.g. [Enloe, 1993](#); [Tickner, 1992](#)), has resulted in expanding and investigating alternative conceptualizations of security (see, e.g. [Hoogensen et al., 2009](#); [Robinson, 2011](#); [Padrtova, 2020](#); [Wibben, 2011](#)). The shift from concerns connected solely to military security to a broader understanding of security has been a long and bumpy road. One way of challenging and questioning the state-centric security approach was to place the individual at the centre, resulting in formulations of the concept of human security. Originally defined in an UNDP report from 1994 including food, environment, economic, community, personal, health and political security – human security concerns more than just physical security: 'it perceives a holistic relationship to socio-economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing, where an individual can freely maintain and develop' ([Hossain, 2019: 9](#)). Human security is a fluid, contextual-specific concept that is based on people's perceptions of their fears and vulnerabilities ([Human Security Unit, 2009](#)), one that adopts a 'bottom-up' perspective.

Human security has been considered a form of soft security, as opposed to traditional hard, military security. The concept itself has been argued to be gendered ([Hoogensen and Stuvøy, 2006](#)). However, adding gender to human security does not necessarily mean focusing merely on women, though feminist perspectives can be used to 'develop human security as an epistemological perspective for security studies' ([Hoogensen and Stuvøy, 2006: 209](#)). Scrutinizing human security from a feminist standpoint makes it possible to question the dominant understandings of security, focusing on the security questions and assumptions laid out by individuals. Gender approaches to security have been prominent and important in the development of the concept; however, in this paper the focus on gender means taking feminist

epistemologies and methodologies into account when addressing the question of security, hence, placing the individual as the beginning of security (Hoogensen and Stuvøy, 2006), alongside with the acknowledgement of the emotional dimensions of both the interviewer and interviewees (Penttinen 2019).

In the Arctic context, security has been and still is, an important issue. From matters of nuclear security during the Cold War to more recent efforts at promoting environmental security and cooperation, the Arctic has been at the forefront of security threats and discussions of all kinds (Heininen and Exner-Pirot, 2020; Padrtova, 2020; Hoogensen Gjørsv et al., 2020). Despite its twentieth-century history of 'hard' security, or perhaps because of it, human security has been an important concept in Arctic research in the last decade or so, and extremely influential in shaping security discussions (see, e.g. Hoogensen et al., 2009; Hoogensen Gjørsv et al., 2014; Hoogensen Gjørsv et al., 2020; Hossain and Cambou, 2019). The Arctic is not a homogenous area – the securities and insecurities of the people living in the area are not necessarily similar. The lived experience in concerning fossil fuel production in Finnmark in Norway is rather different from, for example, the situation in the Komi Republic in Russia (see., e.g. Stuvøy, 2011). The core issue with human security approaches in the Arctic is *whose security is at stake* (Stuvøy, 2011, see also Wibben, 2011). The issues surrounding Arctic oil and gas production are interconnected at the local, regional and global levels, and hence 'the influence of state and regional security interests on oil and gas extraction cannot be divorced from its economic, environmental, and human security impacts' (Hoogensen Gjørsv, 2020: 70).

Since its origin, the concept of human security has received a large amount of criticism. The loudest critiques have had to do with its ambiguity and vagueness, with critics claiming that it says all and nothing at the same time (Buzan, 2004; Paris, 2001). In addition, human security is fundamentally a very anthropocentric concept: it is concerned with the security of people, of humans, as the word suggests. Environmental security has been an important part of human security in the Arctic for many years now (Heininen, 2014; Sam-Aggrey and Lanteigne, 2020), and is becoming even more relevant now with climate change. However, environmental security is usually addressed from the human point of view, where the environment is considered as an element crucial for human survival (Greaves, 2016) and not for the intrinsic value of the environment itself. Given the current global climate crisis, could, or rather should, we shift to a more planetary notion of security? Drawing from indigenous ontologies, could the concept be extended to also include the ocean, the fish, and the fells? This shift would surely require embracing ontological diversity and breaking free from the Western dichotomous human-nature division, that is, challenging the epistemological ignorance of Western science. Closely connected to this idea is the notion that in discussions of human security in the Arctic, the voices of Indigenous Peoples (and especially women) are fundamentally absent (Kuokkanen and Sweet 2020), a point of neglect that should be reconciled in the future.

## 2.2. Emotions and natural resources

The role of emotions within (human) security should be integral, I argue. Emotions define what we humans consider relevant, what we value (Penttinen, 2019), and what we value defines what we perceive as a threat (Hoogensen et al., 2009). Security concerns, though, are different for different people, partly due to socio-economic status, geographical location, and the nature of the threat – but also because people's values differ. Combining emotions with human security is a rather novel approach. However, a study by Öhman and Thunqvist (2016) brings together human bodies, technoscience, and emotions when looking at dams, hydropower safety, and human security in Sweden. They argue that it is crucial to address the embodiment, the lived experience of people, in addition to politics of emotion (Ahmed, 2014) when assessing political decision-making concerning dams and

legislation. They approach the connection between human security and emotions within the context of dam politics from a feminist technoscience perspective, providing a brilliant starting point for enriching the discussion on emotional human security.

Emotions have received increasing attention in social sciences as criticisms of the emotion versus reason dichotomy has intensified (see, e.g. Crawford, 2000, 2013; Hutchison and Bleiker, 2014; Lempinen and Lindroth 2021; Sejersen and Thisted 2021). A so-called 'emotional turn' has occurred (Hutchison and Bleiker, 2014) within international relations and beyond, however, emotions have been at the centre of feminist theorizing for a long time (see e.g. Åhall, 2018). Emotions, in environmental conflicts and elsewhere, have often been dismissed as irrelevant in relation to other more important issues (Sultana, 2015). Philosophically speaking, emotions have for a long time been associated with the private domain (also, emotional women), whereas reason and rationality reside in the public domain. The traditional take has been to disregard emotions as standing in opposition to 'objectivity', 'facts', 'materiality' or 'rationality' (Gonzalez-Hidalgo and Zografos, 2019). Paying closer attention to emotions does not come at the expense of objectivity, but instead enriches understandings of the issue at hand. Sultana (2011, cited in Gonzalez-Hidalgo & Zografos, 2019:3) notes that it is important to consider 'emotions as part and parcel of power relationships, [since] environmental conflicts are also emotional conflicts'. Studies in several fields have been increasingly linking emotions to environmental issues, for example in the form of emotional political ecology (for an overview, see, e.g. Gonzalez-Hidalgo & Zografos, 2019), forestry (Buijs and Lawrence, 2013), fisheries (Nightingale, 2013) and recently increasingly related to extractivism (Lempinen and Lindroth 2021; Sejersen and Thisted 2021; Weszkalnys 2016). The affective dimension of natural resource extraction has been brilliantly discussed for example in the form of *resource affect* (Weszkalnys, 2016).

Following Sara Ahmed, a pioneer in the politics of emotion, I am not so much interested in what emotions are, but in what emotions do (Ahmed, 2014). I find emotions crucial to understanding why people perceive some issues (local fossil fuel production) as having either positive or negative impacts on their everyday security. Emotions matter when seeking to understand the complexity of human experience. Elin Penttinen writes 'emotions matter in terms of how humans make evaluations about what is relevant and how they perceive, react or respond to the world around them', emotions are culturally conditioned and not just expressed in private (Penttinen 2019:8). Emotions are often connected solely to individuals. However, emotions should rather be understood as deeply social and cultural phenomena, which are structured within particular environments (Penttinen, 2019; Hutchison, 2013). Emotions are a crucial part of social life (Crawford, 2000, 2013) and crucial in how people conceive of (in)security (Hutchison and Bleiker, 2014). Even as the role of emotions within political processes has been largely acknowledged and accepted, the problem lays in defining emotions and devising theories on how they affect political processes. Some of the challenges in studying emotions have to do with how to 'theorize the processes through which individual emotions become collective and political' (Hutchison and Bleiker, 2014: 491). As Ahmed (2014) notes, the surfaces or boundaries between *I* and *we* are shaped by our emotions and how we respond to objects and others. Within the scope of this study, I am more interested in the micro-level, in individual emotions. However, I do acknowledge that the individual and collective levels of emotional reactions towards the oil and gas industry cannot and should not be separated at all times, as individual emotions often evolve into collective emotions, blurring the division between private and public (Gonzalez-Hidalgo & Zografos, 2019; Hutchison, 2013).



### 3. Method and data: narratives as a way of making sense of the world

#### 3.1. Narrative analysis

The experiences we have and the emotions we feel shape how we comprehend the world as well as what kinds of narratives we create. I utilize narrative analysis to understand what kinds of stories are told by different actors about the role and impact of the local oil and gas industry. Narratives are described as ‘a way of making sense of the world around us’ (Moulin, 2016: 138), as the ‘main form of social life’ (Czarniawska, 2004: 21) and as ‘essential because they are a primary way by which we make sense of the world around us, produce meanings, articulate intentions, and legitimize actions’ (Wibben, 2011: 2). Narratives are used not only to make sense of the world around us, but also to invent a sense of order for the world (Wibben, 2011). Similar to the concept of human security, narratives ‘aim at reclaiming the importance of everyday life to understanding global processes’ (Moulin, 2016: 145).

Narratives can be defined as stories that follow a certain direction of action and include one or several actors (Svarstad, 2009, as cited in Tumusiime and Svarstad, 2011). Therefore, narratives are stories that have a beginning, middle, and end (Benjaminsen and Svarstad, 2008, drawing from Roe, 1991, 1995). Narratives are dependant on society, culture, and one’s own experiences – narratives are not just subjectively made up stories (Czarniawska, 2004). However, ‘thinking of experience as narratively constructed alerts us, on one hand, to the conceptualization of experience itself as narrative and, on the other hand, to the variety of narratives telling us what kind of experiences to expect’ (Wibben, 2011: 44). Narratives can be approached at the individual or collective level. In this study, the point of interest is the individual level, while still recognizing that the border between the individual and collective is not necessarily a clear one (see, e.g. Svarstad, 2009; Tumusiime and Svarstad, 2011). As a research method, narratives help to understand the different stories being told in society, and through such stories, to comprehend how people make sense of the world around them. For a story to become a narrative, the ‘accounts of specific cases are framed by the narrative producers within a wider discourse’ (Benjaminsen and Svarstad, 2008: 51), including, for example, the discourse on continuous economic growth via fossil fuel energy.

Narratives of security have been crucial in feminist security studies, which differ from the traditional ‘grand’ security narratives in international relations (see, e.g. Mehta and Wibben, 2018; Wibben, 2011). Whereas traditional security narratives aim to ‘establish an authoritative narrative’, feminist security narratives, which are often based on personal narratives, approach matters of security differently (Wibben, 2011: 100). In addition, feminist and critical security studies have underlined the importance of addressing the silences in traditional security narratives (see, e.g. Mehta and Wibben 2018: 49). Often, what is not being said, the silences, is just as important as what is being said (Mehta and Wibben, 2018; Wibben, 2011). Identifying the silences also brings attention and a certain responsibility to the researcher and their positionality: Thinking of experiences as narratives highlight the role of interpretation (Wibben, 2011).

#### 3.2. The interviews

The data consists of twelve interviews with people living in Hammerfest and Akkarfjord. The length of the interviews varies from 30 min to 80 min. The people interviewed all live permanently in Hammerfest or Akkarfjord, and most of them were also born there. The aim was to find a diverse group of people: I interviewed both people working within the petroleum industry and people working in other fields. I had already known some of the people interviewed before, through my time in the area, while others I found through my contacts. Some of them were found by their employer. The interviews were conducted in March and April of 2020. The interviews should be understood as individual stories,

which cannot represent the views of the whole community. However, common, collective narratives can be identified in the interview material. The boundary between individual and collective narratives is, again, not clear-cut; on the contrary, it is blurred and complex, as is the border between collective and individual emotions (Hutchison, 2013). In addition to interviews, during the years 2018–2020, I regularly spent long periods in Finnmark. My observations about life in northern Norway as well as my perceptions of and lived experiences concerning the Norwegian oil and gas industry are utilized in this paper as well.

The interviews were conducted in English. However, the participants had the possibility to explain parts in Norwegian. As English was not the first language of the interviewees, the opportunity to express themselves also in Norwegian was considered important. The use of English most likely placed some limitations on how people expressed the narratives. Most of the interviews were conducted face to face, at home or workplace of the interviewee, outside on a walk, or in one case on a fishing vessel. Due to the timing of the fieldwork and the global pandemic, four interviews were conducted online. In addition to language, also the pandemic might have influenced the interview situations and reflections, of both the interviewees and the interviewer.

The interviews involved open-ended questions in order to let the interviewees tell their own stories. I had questions as anchoring points, but the conversation proceeded naturally. Nevertheless, all the interviews touched upon all the questions I had as a framework. The questions started with the relationship of the interviewee to the place, their personal history and life, and continued with the role of the oil and gas industry in the area and the interviewee’s perceptions of the industry. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. After the transcription phase, I read through the interviews several times and guided by Tina Miller and her narrative approach (2017), I first examined if/which ‘strands of particular dominant and culturally recognizable discourses’ or apparent gaps and silences could be identified from the interviews. Second, I read through the individual interviews in detail while ‘exploring where and how emphasis was given to different aspects of dominant discourses’, and third, I compared the interviews with one another to find any common/varying ground. The interviews were rich in detail. It soon became evident that the interviewees had disclosed numerous narratives and that even one interview could include several conflicting narratives. Narratives should be read in relation to other narratives. They ‘are always partial and incomplete, embedded in values and in personal judgements; they always present us with a perspective, usually connected to other sets of narratives and stories, that cannot and should not be seen as singular or unproblematic’ (Moulin, 2016: 141). The interviewees’ narratives were intertwined and at points illogical, hence showing the complexity of the issue of Arctic oil and gas production.

Talking with people about local oil and gas production also made me question my own ideas and prejudices about the industry and its impacts. The researcher can never be completely objective, and to claim that my own beliefs did not affect the reading of the narratives would be unethical. As Sandra Harding (1995) notes, acknowledging the standpoint of the researcher ultimately strengthens the standards of objectivity. The role of emotions is not just relevant within the narratives, but also within my own positionality: ‘the emotions we experience are also configured by the research we produce’ (Penttinen, 2019: 8). In addition, as a non-Norwegian person, my approach to the topic is inevitable from the ‘outside’. Even though my home country and Norway are similar in many aspects, there are still various socio-cultural differences. However, as a person who has lived in and since spent a great deal of time in Norway, and specifically in Finnmark, I believe I have had the privilege to understand and comprehend the nature of the area somehow. Having already spent some time both in Hammerfest and Akkarfjord was also important in terms of knowing the local debates and issues.

#### 4. Analysis: three narratives of emotion and extractivism

The narratives recounted in the interviews are knotty. A single person often expressed many, even contracting narratives, during the interview. Examining a context-specific case differs from examining general narratives: since the interviews focused on the topic of Snøhvit, Melkøya, and Goliat and their role in the respondent's life, a clear course of action was identified. In the analysis, I follow a path laid out by Ahmed (2014), organizing the analysis around emotions, which are taken as points of entry into narratives of security and insecurity.

##### 4.1. A sense of pride and relief bring security: the industry has saved hammerfest

*'Because, then I realized that if it wasn't for Melkøya, then ... then I don't know if this would be a place to, to live in actually. So ... I think that's when I started to appreciate it. Because I could see all the good things that have happened to the city, because of it.'* (interview 11).

A strong narrative constructed by many of the interviewees is that the oil and gas industry has been the saviour of Hammerfest. Emotions of relief, pride, and happiness were frequently expressed. Before the opening of Melkøya, the city was economically in a bad situation, and people were moving out. A similar narrative constructed by many interviewees describes the industry as giving life to Hammerfest and the surroundings: young people are moving back to the city, the city has culture, restaurants, schools, it has created jobs and wealth.

A clear starting point for the narrative is when the decision to build Snøhvit and Melkøya was made, *'and it was a complete change, before and after'* (interview 3). Several interviewees mentioned that after the decision was made to have the industry in Hammerfest, people felt a sense of hope and optimism about the future. Especially those people who were from Hammerfest and had spent their whole lives there expressed emotions of relief and pride for their city succeeding. It was seen as an honour to be known as the place where the oil and gas development takes place. The industry has positively impacted the economic security of the people – it has created jobs and restored vitality to the area. In many of the discussions, people mentioned the ripple effects of the industry on northern Norway – the jobs it has created, the local contractors they use, and the overall economic wellbeing of the city. Many interviewees noted the ripple effects as one of the most important aspects of the industry. The industry had saved the town, which otherwise would likely no longer exist as such.

The spatial dimension of experiencing and feeling the impacts of the oil and gas industry is important. Pride in the economic success of one's hometown requires a bond to a specific place: *'Since emotions are ways of knowing, being and doing mediated by socio-spatial relationships, their geographical dimension needs to be considered'* (Gonzalez-Hidalgo & Zografos, 2019: 6). The connection, the emotional attachment to a certain place, affects how you feel about extractive industries. The Norwegian oil and gas activity occurs *only* at sea, where it is not visible to most people. The industry has, in a sense, been outsourced or externalized to the ocean area and only the processing station Melkøya reminds people of it. The emotional reaction to, for example, fracking, in other parts of the world, which is a highly visible form of extracting natural gas, is different because people can readily see it taking place (see, e.g. Davidson, 2019).

Within this narrative of the industry being the economic saviour of the town, interviewees only occasionally focused on certain negative effects. For example, at several points, they discussed expensive housing in relation to the economic wellbeing of the town, but even still they were quick to note that the positive economic effects are more important. The negative effects mentioned within this narrative dealt also with the construction phase and the level of *'testosterone in town'* (interview 5), in which the interviewees discussed the construction phase involving thousands of (male) workers as a source of insecurity in town, negatively

affecting personal security as well as economic security. However, the issue was resolved once the construction phase had ended.

In many of the interviews, the idea of Hammerfest being located far away from the capital was mentioned, both in relation to environmental organizations opposing Arctic oil and gas drilling as well as the idea of the south being ignorant of life in the north.

*'You have more fear about the Arctic because you don't know the Arctic. You don't really know what the Arctic is. You think it's maybe ice and polar bears. ... and they warn [that] the Arctic, oh the Arctic will disappear; but no, the Arctic will not disappear. The ice is melting faster than we hope, but the Arctic region will be here.'* (interview 3)

The idea that opposition towards the industry comes from the outside (e.g. environmental organizations based in Oslo) was strong in the interviews. The loudest voices of opposition towards oil and gas operations in the Arctic are from the southern capitals, while the locals are more concerned about the liveability of the city through, for example, economic security. Similar to findings presented by Loe and Kelman (2016), for the local interviewees the environmental aspects of production are not very prominent, and they expressed a high degree of trust in the Norwegian government knowing what it is doing. The industry brings a sense of security, of continuity to the place. The industry has guaranteed the economic security of the place, as well as community security – the community would not exist as such without the industry. Community security is often discussed only in the context of Indigenous Peoples, which is important in this case as well (see the next narrative); however, community security can refer also to the sense of belonging to a group and *'in this sense refers to people who share a common set of interests related to the impact of industry in their area, and they interpret impacts along common lines'* (Stammler et al., 2020: 380). In this narrative, community security thus refers to the historical continuation of a place and community. Therefore, the industry is cast as bringing positive security and as a source of pride in the narratives.

##### 4.2. Anger, fear and worry about the environment and health: the industry is destroying our land and water

*'Like coronavirus now, we don't know, therefore now the parliament says we have to take care, we have to be safe ourself [sic]. But they don't do that with Mother Earth. But with the human being, they take this care. But they should take the same care to Mother Earth ... because they don't have the knowledge how to handle it, and they don't, when they put this Goliat ... now I cannot think, I be [sic] angry at myself, I have to relax.'* (interview 8)

Another common narrative found in the interviews is that Melkøya and the industry are harming nature as well as local culture. While worry over the environment was secondary to the sense of relief brought by the economic benefits in most interviews, some of the interviewees expressed feelings of anger and worry quite strongly concerning the industry. The beginning of the narrative can be traced to the decision to opening Melkøya processing plant and Snøhvit gas field; however, in one discussion a Sámi woman pointed out that the colonization and violence towards nature have started centuries ago. Finnmark is part of the Sápmi homeland, where the indigenous Sámi people have lived for thousands of years. Traditional livelihoods of the Sámi people in that area include reindeer herding and fishing, which have also been affected by modern industries.

In seeking to understand the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples (and surely there is not only one perspective), the concept of environmental security must be taken seriously. This means more than just purely existing on earth, but also the idea of being part of the earth: *'Thus, it could be argued that security from the perspective of Indigenous women goes deeper and is more personal than someone who does not share this worldview might understand'* (Kuokkanen and Sweet, 2020: 82). It is crucial to understand such ontological pluralism and different ways of

existing in a world also when accounting for people's experiences with fossil fuel production. For many Indigenous Peoples, the extractivist projects are not only a source of environmental insecurity but also of personal and community insecurity, threatening their traditional way of life.

In this narrative people do not feel that the oil and gas industry belongs there, and it causes them a great deal of anger, fear, and worry. Special attention was raised about health security in relation to the industry. In several of the discussions, people mentioned the Melkøya processing plant as a test case for health: *'we are sort of like test bunnies, and we will know in a couple of years maybe'* (interview 11). The fact that Melkøya has been built so far north and so close to the settlement area, with it being located right next to the city of Hammerfest, came up in many interviews. In several discussions, the issue of *flakking*, flaring, came up. Many of the interviewees mentioned especially the early times, the years after the opening of Melkøya, when their car windows had been covered in ash due to the flaring at Melkøya. Several of the interviewees called Melkøya Mordor, referring to the well-known Lord of The Rings saga because of the flame. Flaring was the one thing that people expressed the most concern about, especially how the refinery station might impact their health. Perhaps surprisingly, the people working at Melkøya also expressed concern over this issue. Melkøya is the first LNG plant built so close to a city in Arctic Norway. Risk is always present when working with and loading hydrocarbons. After conducting the fieldwork presented in this paper, in September 2020 a large accident occurred in the processing plant, causing a large fire in the facilities (Nilsen, 2020).

Emotional attachment to the land was also strongly present in this narrative, especially for people who had lived in the area their whole lives. Emotional attachment to the land works in myriad ways: it causes a sense of pride in the place succeeding economically as well as sorrow at extracting resources from the land or the sea. The narrative shows that people are not ignorant of the effects on the environment, nor of the health impacts associated with oil and gas production. Almost all the interviewees mentioned the important role nature, the sea, and the mountains have in their life. However, several of the negative emotions – worry about fishing and a loss of economic security, worry over health impacts – primarily involve humans. The causal relationship between the oil and gas industry and global climate change was acknowledged but not discussed in most of the interviews. Similar to the information provided in Equinor's media material (Kangasluoma, 2020), several interviewees working in the industry mentioned the low-emission *production* of oil and gas, while they did not discuss the emissions of the end product. Whereas within climate denial the entire phenomenon is refused, here the connection between fossil fuels and climate change is simply not discussed. The reactions to climate change and responses such as powerlessness, ignorance or rejection, can help to approach the troubling recognition (Stoknes, 2014).

The narrative of the industry not belonging to the area is a strong point of focus in some of the interviews, while others acknowledge the personal economic benefits: *'I don't like it, but I benefit from it'* (interview 7). This illustrates the long tentacles of global capitalism and the fossil fuel industry and raises a question about the extent to which people have a free choice related to Arctic oil and gas operations since the communities are so tied to the global fossil fuel industry. Arctic oil and gas operations 'place communities in a situation where they have to balance economic security concerns with environmental security concerns', write Sam-Aggrey and Lanteigne (2020: 105). 'In certain cases', they continue, 'people have to prioritize one type of security over another based on their socioeconomic circumstances' (2020:105).

#### 4.3. Worry and concern about the future and post-industry wellbeing

*'So, it's a concern for me as a citizen in Hammerfest that Hammerfest kommune [municipality] and the politicians locally are expecting that this*

*income they get from the oil and gas industry will increase or be at the same level. And meaning that, in the future, I have a concern that Hammerfest are [sic] not prepared for the bad days that will come in the future, because there's no industry, there's no activity that can replace the oil and gas industry in this region.'* (interview 12)

A concern many people shared had to do with the one-sidedness of the area's livelihood options. Almost everyone, including people working in the petroleum sector, raised the topic of the town being too dependant on the oil and gas industry. In this narrative, both the spatial and temporal nature of the perceived securities and insecurities was present. While interviewees focused some attention on concerns about the future after the fields near Hammerfest no longer produce oil or gas, they remained silent regarding the inevitable shift to a low-carbon future. The only future that is possible to imagine is one dominated by the social and material landscapes of oil, carbonscapes (Haarstad and Wanvik, 2017). The mentality of being an oil-producing nation is deeply embedded in the minds of many Norwegians, even though the industry is relatively young. The Norwegian 'oil ontology' is strongly present, ensuring a sense of ontological security for the nation (Dale and Kristoffersen, 2018: 248–249). The interviewees raised concerns about the future (of Hammerfest): When the industry finally shuts down, when the resources are depleted, what will happen to Hammerfest? This concern was evident also in the way they discussed the industry, or else chose not to discuss it. Only a few times did an interviewee call attention to the looming shift to a carbon-neutral, post-oil world, even though a number acknowledged the damaging global environmental effects of oil. Instead, the interviewees discussed the lifespan of the fields close to Hammerfest, which would mean a diminishing role for Hammerfest in the future.

The worry about the future is connected to other livelihoods in the area, such as the tourism and fishing industry, which many felt were being neglected due to the oil and gas boom, risking the area's economic security. In the words of one person: *'It's like the fisherman was here first, but still they had to put their work aside because we have the oil, we have the gas and now we also have the windmills, and we have the salmon farmers'* (interview 2). Fishing is an integral part of life in the Barents Sea region. In any harbour, no matter how small, a fishing vessel is ready to welcome you aboard. The fishing industry, the traditional economic backbone of the Norwegian coast, is one of the most environmentally dependant industries in the area. The sea has a special role in the lives of the people of Finnmark. It is integral to transportation, food, identity, and the economy. The sea has provided food and economic security for the area for centuries. Only with the arrival of the petroleum industry in the northern areas has the economic focus shifted away from fisheries. However, fishing is still an extremely important livelihood for many in the area, even though the nature of the fishing industry has changed a great deal recently, with boats being ever larger and more commercial and often operated by non-locals. However, some of the fishermen are also working for the oil companies by taking part in oil response exercises: *'we are part of the industry'*, in the words of one interviewee (interview 1). The same person also mentioned feeling a sense of worry and fear over a possible accident: *'Of course, we are scared if it (oil leak) will come out and affect the fish. That's what we live'* (interview 1).

The local fishermen's connection to the sea is important. Being a fisherman, or part of the fishing industry, is strongly a matter of identity. As Nightingale (2013: 2368) succinctly summarizes, 'emotive reactions to the sea are thus important drivers of fishing practices'. A sense of uncertainty was present in the narratives in relation to the oil and gas industry and the future, especially with respect to the fisheries sector. The oil and gas industry has affected the fishing industry in several (unknown) ways. Interviewees especially viewed the early phases of the construction of the oil and gas facilities as problematic:

*'...there is also the negative side of it [oil and gas production], and we also see it in the fishery because, for instance, when there are, seismic...*

*I: Explorations?*



R: Yeah, we see that the fish disappear. And it can be a coincidence, but the fishing seasons are not as they used to be. Especially haddock has totally disappeared. (interview 2).

Interviewees on several occasions mentioned the disappearance of certain fish stock from the sea after the oil industry had come to the area, but the reason is still unknown. In addition, they viewed the environmental effects of Melkøya as a source of concern for the fisheries. The fishing industry has a strong cultural meaning in Hammerfest: fishing came up in all the interviews as being a fundamental part of Hammerfest and the surroundings. If the fishing industry disappears, it would affect not only food and economic security but also community security, Hammerfest's cultural identity.

## 5. Concluding thoughts

When you travel from one harbour to the next in the Barents Sea region, you mainly see birds, fjords, mountains, occasional whales, fish farms, and fishing vessels. A huge tanker carrying LNG or even an oil platform is a curious sight on the open sea. Even though the production of oil and gas only occurs offshore, it still has implications both on the sea and on land, for both humans and non-humans. As this paper has demonstrated, having oil and gas operations close to the area in which people live is not a straightforward issue, one that can be simplified by attaching the label of either opposing it or supporting it. When people craft narratives for their lives, the sense of security or insecurity created by the industry depends on personal experiences, values, and emotions. However, the narratives are also limited by the fossil fuel world we live in.

The article has shown, that emotions matter within Arctic extractivism and its human security implications. The way people define or constrain matters of security varies according to the cultural, political, and societal situation. Human security is *personal security*; it means different things to different people. Making human security meaningful requires that attention should 'be paid to what communities themselves value' (Hoogensen et al., 2009: 2). The narratives presented show that emotions have a role in what people perceive as constituting a threat. As Hutchison (2013: 127) says, 'security is, after all, about what makes one feel secure'. The emotions embedded in the narratives varied in their nature and strength, yet each of the narratives was emotionally driven. The article has presented three main narratives. The narrative of the industry bringing economic and community security along with relief and pride was the strongest. Its counter-narrative, in a sense, was the idea that the industry does not belong there, that it brings anger and worry while threatening environmental, personal, community, and health security. The third narrative was concerned with the neglect of other industries, and the worry of town about what will happen after the oil dries up, again affecting their sense of community and economic security.

In many narratives, the industry brings continuity to the community. This highlights the paradoxicality of the issues, as the same natural resource offering continuity and security is finite by nature. Another issue raised has to do with the global climate implications of the production sites, which have been proven to affect the Arctic more severely than other regions, and how they affect one's sense of security. Even as the people acknowledged and expressed concern about global environmental change, the opportunity of having a local production site as well as the jobs and the wealth that it creates overcame immediate concern for the environment. The possible emotive reactions, or the lack of them, are of importance here as well, and the need for a wider academic discussion on it is needed. The dominant place of the fossil fuel industry in the global capitalist system leaves little to no room for people to question the industry that pays the bills.

Despite the vagueness and the ambiguity of the term, or perhaps precisely because of it, the concept of human security does prove to be useful in the context of Arctic extractivism. By focusing on the personal

experiences of the hydrocarbon industry and acknowledging the role emotions have within resource extraction, human security has proved to be useful. Furthermore, this paper has argued that adding an emotional component to the concept could be a way forward. Acknowledging, and making emotions visible in security narratives enhances understanding of the subjective experiences of security and the role values play in defining security threats. As emotions are undeniable already present in the everyday lives of all of us, their place should be proclaimed more loudly and not merely silently embedded in academic work on securities, insecurities, and extractivism.

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- 2 Fishing industry, Akkarfjord, 15th of March 2020
- 3 Oil & gas industry (PR) Hammerfest (online), 17th of March 2020
- 4 Oil & gas company (engineer), Hammerfest (online), 18th of March 2020
- 5 Health sector (medical doctor), Hammerfest, 18th of March 2020
- 6 Tourism industry, Hammerfest, 18th of March 2020
- 7 Culture, Hammerfest, 18th of March 2020
- 8 Health sector (midwife), Hammerfest, 19th of March 2020
- 9 Entrepreneur, Hammerfest, 23rd of March 2020
- 10 Oil & gas company (engineer), Hammerfest (online), 24th of March 2020
- 11 Health sector (medical doctor), Hammerfest, 28th of March 2020
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