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Drilling for the future: Gendered justifications of the Arctic fossil fuel industry

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Research Article

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Abstract

Despite the global alarm caused by accelerating climate change, hydrocarbon companies are exploring and opening up new oil and gas fields all over the world, including the Arctic. With increasing attention on the Arctic, companies address the growing global environmental pressure in their public marketing in various ways. This article examines the webpages of Norwegian Equinor and Russian Gazprom & Gazprom Neft. Building on feminist discussions, I analyse the different justification strategies these fossil fuel companies working in the Arctic utilise in order to support their ongoing operations. This article concludes that in order to justify their operations in the Arctic, the Norwegian and Russian companies emphasise values based on discourses that have historically and culturally been associated with masculine practices, such as the control of nature enabled by technology. These justifications are thus reinforcing the narrative of the Arctic as a territory to be conquered and mastered. Even though the companies operate in different sociopolitical contexts, the grounds of justification are rather similar. Their biggest differences occur in their visual presentations of gender, which I argue is part of the justification. Approaching the fossil fuel industry from a feminist perspective allows questioning the dominant conceptualisations, which the justifications of Arctic hydrocarbon companies are based on.

Introduction

Despite the global alarm caused by accelerating climate change, hydrocarbon companies are exploring and opening new oil and gas fields all over the world, including in the Arctic. The Arctic and its natural resources have gained significant attention in recent years, and an "Arctic rush" has occurred both in research and within companies interested in the black gold of the Arctic (see, e.g. Krivorotov & Finger, 2019). The growing interest in the Arctic by both national and international actors, acceleration of climate change and development of drilling technologies has pushed oil and gas explorations to shift further and further north. This article approaches the topic of fossil fuel exploration in the Arctic by building on feminist discussions. The Arctic and its history are strongly connected to exploration, mastering nature and the heroism of male explorers and workers (Aarekol, 2016; Ryall, Schimanski, & Wærp, 2010; Vladimirova & Habeck, 2018). Approaching the fossil fuel industry in the Arctic from a feminist perspective allows not only to focus on the presentation of gender but also on the gendered values reflected by the fossil fuel companies.

The fossil fuel industry has faced new challenges as public awareness of looming (and ongoing) climate change has accelerated in the past few decades (see, e.g. Livesey, 2002). Fossil fuel companies have had to formulate new arguments to justify their ongoing fossil fuel production. In this paper, I focus on three fossil fuel companies working in the geographical area of the Arctic and assess how the companies portray and *justify* the production of oil and gas in an era marked by climate change. I examine the webpages of Norwegian Equinor (formerly Statoil) and Russian Gazprom & Gazprom Neft – not their marketing strategies per se, but the claims they make – to see how they comprehend and reason their continuing and increasing efforts at fossil fuel production in the Arctic. In short, this article poses two important questions: First, *what kinds of justification strategies do fossil fuel companies utilize in the opening of new fields and working with oil and gas in the Arctic?* Secondly, *are these justifications gendered?*

To answer these questions, I utilise justification analysis, a method created for examining values underpinning public arguments (Ylä-Anttila et al., 2018; Ylä-Anttila & Kukkonen, 2014). Justification analysis is based on the idea that in order to convince other people in public discussion, in this case through webpages, one must justify their position by referring to a generally accepted common good. In addition to justification analysis, I draw inspiration from visual analysis. The company webpages play an important role in producing a certain kind of image of the operations in the north, having the power to create the dominant discourses on Arctic oil and gas. The webpages of the fossil fuel companies contain sections dealing with Arctic oil and gas exploration and production, allowing me to pay special attention to the differences and similarities between the Norwegian and Russian cases. Norway and Russia, as neighbouring Arctic

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countries, present an interesting point of comparison. The countries differ fundamentally in terms of their geographic, political and societal realities. However, they are two of the three countries actively engaged in Arctic oil and gas exploration and exploitation.

A feminist perspective allows me to focus on the gendered constructs produced by the company media material, while scrutinising the presentation of gender on the company websites. Feminist theories and a gendered focus have emerged in Arctic research, although their presence is still rather limited (see, e.g. Hoogensen Gjørv, 2017; Sinevaara-Niskanen, 2019, 2015; Vladimirova & Habeck, 2018). Furthermore, research on extractive industries has acknowledged the role of gender as well as other intersecting identities within extractivism. While some research has focused on the gendered nature of extractivism (Daggett, 2018; Kojola, 2019; Miller, 2004), others have explored on the local impacts of extractive projects specifically in the Arctic (Dale, Veland, & Hansen, 2019; Loe & Kelman, 2016; Stuvøy, 2011). Still, a broader assessment of the connections between gendered biases and the hydrocarbon industries in the Arctic is needed. Therefore, bringing a feminist constructivist viewpoint to the research of hydrocarbon industry in the Arctic is important, allowing a critical examination of the justifications and their foundations.

As this article demonstrates, hydrocarbon companies operating in the Arctic emphasise technological solutions both regarding successfully working in the harsh conditions of the Arctic as well as operating in the pristine nature of the north in an environmentally friendly manner. Feminist critique helps to challenge the dominant technological solutionist paradigm. Concepts such as ethics and care offer a counterpoint to technology driven apprehensions of the earth (Jackman, Squire, Bruun & Thornton, 2020). In order to justify their operations in the Arctic, the Norwegian and Russian companies emphasise claims based on narratives that have historically been associated with masculine practices, such as the control of nature enabled by technology (Haraway, 1988; Jackman et al., 2020; MacGregor, 2010, 2009), rather than feminine ones, such as the wellbeing of nature or care (Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2019; Robinson, 2011). The historical narratives of Arctic exploration and conquest have continued to some extent in the modern hydrocarbon industry. This article illustrates the fact that even though the companies operate in a different political and cultural context, their claims are based on a surprisingly similar rationale. The biggest differences between the two countries occurs in their marketing imagery and in their representations of gender, which I argue is also part of the justification process. The paper begins with a contextualisation of the two Arctic oil- and gas-producing countries, Norway and Russia. Drawing from feminist discussions on the Arctic, extractivism and its entanglements with gender, I then present an overview of the key feminist theoretical discussions related to fossil fuel production in the Arctic, after which I introduce the method and materials. By exploring the material produced by the hydrocarbon industry with the help of justification analysis, this paper then proceeds to explore the dominant foundations utilised to justify oil and gas production in the Arctic.

Expressing support for the continued drilling for oil and gas in the Arctic while at the same time promoting climate mitigation is becoming an increasingly difficult juggling act for decision-makers (Palosaari, 2019a). In addition, the climate ethics issue becomes more complex as climate change intensifies (Mittler, 2014). To guarantee the long-term survival of the planet, a major turn in the way of thinking by the fossil fuel companies and decision-makers alike is required. Gibson-Graham and Roelvink (2010) discuss responses to the challenges of the anthropocene and conclude that finding a technological or normative fix for restoring the earth, does not suffice, but instead human beings should be transformed by the world: "it is about the earth's future being transformed through a living process of inter-being" (Gibson-Graham & Roelvink, 2010, p.322). Climate change (caused largely by the utilisation of fossil fuels) forces us to not only change our behaviour but also our perception of the world. A feminist approach allows us to focus on the discourses shaping society and to consider its dominant values that have led us to the present global climate crisis. Moreover, this article aims to shift the somewhat abstract (and overused) concept of the Arctic paradox "where global greenhouse gas emissions drive Arctic amplification with adverse impacts on arctic livelihoods, but simultaneously drive up the need for, and the access to Arctic petroleum resource" (Dale et al., 2019, p.369) to the practical level – to the arena where states operate via their state-owned hydrocarbon companies.

Background: green oil from Norway and the hydrocarbon culture of Russia?

The Arctic is a unique place for many reasons. From the tensions of the Cold War to becoming a model case for environmental co-operation and to the present focus of global attention and a possible site of a future shipping lane, the world has many reasons be interested in the area (see, e.g. Finger & Heininen, 2019). The Arctic is often called a laboratory for climate change, as the phenomenon is affecting the Arctic region more visibly than the rest of the world – the Arctic is warming up at least twice as fast (Arctic Council, 2017). This article focuses on the Arctic hydrocarbon industry and its justifications via three state-owned enterprises (SOE). Currently, three countries are involved in oil and gas exploration and production in the Arctic: the US, Norway and Russia. Since Norway and Russia operate in close geographical proximity to one another and both countries have dominant SOEs, this research focuses on these two Arctic countries.

In Norway, the state-owned energy enterprise Equinor has rebranded itself – oil was removed from the company name and equity brought in (formerly Statoil), and its public emphasis increasingly underlines work for a sustainable future. Statoil was founded in 1972 following oil exploration efforts that began in the 1960s. Petroleum activities have had an enormous impact on the creation of the Norwegian welfare state and are extremely important for Norway today (Norsk Petroleum, 2020). Oil and gas production comprise 57% of Norway's current exports. Even though Norway and Equinor are investing considerably in renewables and the company is rebranding itself, the "elephant in the room" is that the country is run by oil exports (Norby, Jensen, & Sartori, 2019, p.6.). The geographical focus of the oil and gas industry has shifted from the North Sea to the Norwegian Sea and the Barents Sea. Activities in the Barents Sea have expanded in past years – the regulation agency Norwegian Petroleum states the Barents Sea has the largest potential for oil and gas development. Currently, two fields operate in the Norwegian Barents area: Snøhvit (gas) and Goliat (oil and gas). A third field, Johan Castberg (oil and gas), is scheduled for operation in 2023. The development of new fields in the Barents Sea has been fast, and the government has issued a record number of new drilling licenses in the region (Norsk Petroleum, 2020). The role of the Arctic, the High North (as the Norwegians call it), has been emphasised by the state both for its natural resources as well as the well-being of the people living there (Government of Norway, 2017). The Norwegian Arctic has

been presented as an accessible Arctic, meaning the conditions are more manageable than in other areas. Dale and Kristoffersen (2018, p.246) describe how Norway's push to the Arctic and Equinor's narrative of a workable Arctic feeds "the political viability of a scenario depicting an Arctic oil boom." By emphasising that the technology used for extraction operations produces low carbon emissions, Equinor secures the export of "green oil" to the European markets (Dale & Kristoffersen, 2018, pp.246–247).

In the Russian context, Gazprom and its subsidiary company, Gazprom Neft, which focuses on oil, have a dominant position in the national (as well as international) fossil fuel industry. The oil industry has deep roots in Russia, as the first wells were established in the 19th century. Gazprom was formed in 1989 when the Soviet Ministry of Gas Industry was converted into a corporation (Soviet Union collapsed 1991) collapse of the Soviet Union. The oil and gas industry is at the heart of Russian economy and self-identity, or to put it another way, the heart of Russia which keeps the blood circulating. Tynkkynen argues that "energy wealth and power has been turned into a tool for identity construction in Russia" – one can even talk about a hydrocarbon culture (Tynkkynen, 2019, p.22). In addition, oil money in Russia influences society in numerous ways (see, e.g. Rogers, 2015). Gazprom has a strong role both nationally and locally, to the point being described as behaving like a state within a state (see, e.g. Krivorotov & Finger, 2019; Tynkkynen, 2016, 2019). Oil and gas constitute just over 50 % of Russia's exports (Simola & Solanko, 2017). Whereas Norway may be going through an identity crisis in relation to sustainability issues, Russia is only beginning to include sustainability as a part of its identity. However, renewable energy has great potential in the Russian Arctic as well (see, e.g. Salonen, 2018).

Russia sees the Arctic as an extremely important. Sergunin and Konyshev (2018) present an overview of strategies for the Russian Arctic and note that while climate change and its implications for the Arctic are acknowledged, the economic side of sustainable development is still emphasised. The Russian state mainly views the Arctic as a resource base (Sergunin & Konyshev, 2018). However, the most recent strategy includes more emphasis on social development than previous ones (Pelyasov, 2013). Saxinger (2015, p.84) describes that "industry, the Russian state, and the people working in the petroleum industry are embedded in the symbolic, social and socio-economic conditions of the North as a physical and social space". Also in Russia the energy frontier has moved increasingly towards the Arctic and sub-Arctic areas of the country. The Yamal megaproject has been one of Gazprom's most recent grand projects, including several production sites for both oil and gas. Other large oil and gas projects have likewise shifted towards the Russian Arctic. The region holds the most known reservoirs of oil and gas in Russia (Dobretsov & Pokhilenko, 2010). While Norway operates only offshore, Russian projects are based largely onshore. Currently, only one offshore oil platform is in operation in the Russian Arctic, Prirazlomnoye in the Pechora Sea.

The two Arctic countries vary in many aspects, including the role and meaning of gender. Norway as a Nordic welfare state ranks high in gender equality statistics (e.g. Norway ranked first in the United Nations Development Programme's (2020) Gender Inequality Index 2013, whereas Russia ranked 49th). The petroleum sector in Norway has declared its aim to become more balanced gender wise. In 2019, Equinor reported that females accounted for approximately 30% of company employees (Equinor, 2019). As for Russia, Soviet women had a tremendous role in the industrialisation of the nation (see, e.g. Goldman, 2002). As women entered industries previously dominated by men in the 1930s, they "forced male workers to reexamine their ideas about skill, 'masculine' and 'feminine' work, and the role of women in the workplace" (Goldman, 2002, p.1). The history of women's participation in industries has extended to the modern days, though recent decades have witnessed a re-masculinisation of Russia (Sperling, 2015). Currently, about 30% of Gazprom's workforce is female, similar to Equinor (Gazprom, 2018). The legacy of the Soviet gender equality politics lives on as women's wish to work in the petroleum sector, even though gender discrimination does still occur (Saxinger et al., 2016). However, the modern oil and gas industry in Russia is not promoting (at least visibly) gender equality to the same extent as in Norway, as this paper proceeds to show.

The oil and gas industry is one of the most powerful industries in the world. A rationalist approach would identify economic reasons, such as the question of supply and demand, as the drivers of expanding work in the Arctic. However, the companies have had to take other aspects into account as well, given the seriousness of climate change and its implications on all levels of society. Environmental attitudes and the discursive context of climate change are different in Norway and Russia. The Arctic oil and gas industry is currently facing strong opposition in Norway. A case known as *The People vs. Arctic Oil*, in which Greenpeace together with several other environmental organisations sued the state of Norway for granting permissions for new oil and gas developments in the Barents Sea, is still ongoing. The environmental groups base their case on the paragraph §112 of the Norwegian Constitution (2019), which grants the right to a healthy environment to all, including future generations (Greenpeace Norge, 2019). The case illustrates the pressure that Equinor and the Norwegian government are facing in relation to the oil and gas industry, as well as the role of the legal system in affecting future decisions regarding climate change. In the Russian context, one might wonder if Russia needs to justify its operations at all in a cultural context where climate denialism is rampant (Tynkkynen & Tynkkynen, 2018). However, even though Russia has not been framing itself as a climate savior, it has nevertheless recently ratified the Paris Agreement and has globally presented itself as committed to the agreement. In January 2020, Russia published a national plan for adapting to climate change, which acknowledges the severity of the situation while simultaneously mentioning the opportunities presented by it in the Russian Arctic (Government of Russia, 2020). The research material evaluated for this article makes it rather evident that the environmental impacts of climate change still need to be discussed in the Russian context. The position of Norway and Russia as neighbouring countries sharing the Barents Sea region presents a unique viewpoint as well. Their closeness affects public discourse on oil and gas production, with Norway favorably comparing itself to Russia in terms of environmentally sound production measures already in 2007 (Jensen, 2007). Since Equinor is working both with oil and gas, it is important to compare it to both Gazprom, which is working with gas, and Gazprom Neft, which is working with oil. Since all are state-owned companies, it can be assumed that their actions reflect the agenda of the state, at least to a certain extent. Especially Gazprom and its major operations must first receive the approval of President Putin and his entourage (Tynkkynen, 2019, p.13).

The Arctic paradox is fundamentally an ethical question. Palosaari (2019a, 2019b) calls attention to two distinct discourses surrounding the quest for oil and gas in the Arctic: a regional environmental problem discourse and a global climate discourse. The

regional environmental problem discourse focuses on local environmental impacts, such as possible oil spills and contamination of nature, which can be managed via technical solutions. Within this discourse, petroleum activities can be framed as ethically justifiable so long as they proceed in a safe and "sustainable" manner (Palosaari, 2019a, pp.55–56). This is also related to the socio-economic benefits the oil or gas industry can bring to a community. On the other hand, the promotion of new Arctic oil and gas reservoirs becomes questionable when addressing the issue from a global climate crisis perspective. Opening and using new fossil fuel reservoirs, no matter where they are located, contributes to global greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, no matter how environmentally friendly the process of extracting oil and gas is, it cannot be sustainable (Palosaari, 2019a, p.56).

Theoretical underpinnings: feminist approaches to Arctic oil and gas

Feminist scholarship has brought attention to the role of gender, intersectionality and gendered structures within Arctic research, which have previously been overlooked (see, e.g. Hoogensen Gjørv, 2017; Kuokkanen, 2007; Seag, Badhe, & Choudhry, 2020; Sinevaara-Niskanen, 2015, 2019; Vladimirova & Habeck, 2018). Nevertheless, even though gender has emerged to the agenda of Arctic politics and research already 20 years ago (see, e.g. Taking Wing conference 2002), "gender has remained a 'feature' relevant to certain issues only and an attribute of certain people (women) only" (Sinevaara-Niskanen, 2015). While some research exists on masculinities in the Arctic (see, e.g. Ventsel, 2018), in addition to other intersecting identities, gender has yet to become a primary category for defining social and political relations in the Arctic (Hoogensen Gjørv, 2017).

The historical narrative of the Arctic as a frontier, as a territory to be conquered (Aarekol, 2016; Ryall et al., 2010; Vladimirova & Habeck, 2018), has also impacted the ways in which energy companies frame the Arctic region. Jackman et al. (2020) reflect on the concepts of terrain and territory, encouraging a feminist perspective for approaching and re-crafting them. This allows expanding the historical approach towards understanding a region like the Arctic, which has been "told and retold as a story of control enabled by calculative technologies" (Jackman et al., 2020, p.3). The history of Arctic (male) explorers and, for example, glaciology, in which the performance of masculinity determined the dominant knowledge within the field (Carey et al., 2016; Hevly, 1996), have also impacted current narratives on the region. Jackman et al. (2020) argue that the historical conceptualisations linked with masculinity, such as those positioned within the Arctic as a space, should be questioned to better understand the current ones. One reason for the narrow focus on gender issues within Arctic research has to do with the modernist project of mastering nature and the image of the Arctic, which underlines the heroism of the (male) explorers or male workers overcoming the harsh conditions affecting the oil, reindeer herding or mineral extraction industries (Vladimirova & Habeck, 2018). Introducing feminist approaches to the masculine arena of the Arctic hydrocarbon industry is a way to shed light on the values underpinning it. Tickner, a pioneer in feminist international relations, suggested already in 1992 that in order to achieve an ecologically secure future, the system of values must simultaneously respect nature, women and diversity of cultures – "norms that have been missing from the historical practices of statecraft" (Tickner, 1992, p.126) and undoubtedly from the global oil regime as well.

In this article, I approach the oil and gas production from a feminist social constructivist perspective, building on valuable discussions in feminist international relations and feminist geography. By applying a feminist constructivist approach to identify how energy companies justify their practices, the article adopts three underlining assumptions: first, the understanding that language matters and has the power to construct the world and the dominant narratives and discourses within it. Second, the assumption that the material produced by the companies has a political meaning and the power to shape narratives in relation to Arctic politics (Lempinen, 2019b; Livesey, 2002; Scarce & Ockwell, 2010), and third, the recognition that the role of gender and unequal power dynamics between gendered discourses impact Arctic issues (Hoogensen Gjørv, 2017; Sinevaara-Niskanen, 2019; 2015).

Entanglements of gender and fossil fuels

Comprehending fossil fuel production requires accounting for its multiple societal dimensions, such as gender, race and class. The literature discussing gender within extractive industries usually refers to women's roles; however, gender as an analytical tool could and should be broadened to examine the masculinities and femininities within the oil and gas industry as well as other intersecting identities and structures. In this paper, the concept of gender refers to socially constructed identities and differences between the categories of men and women, which allude to the characteristics assigned to the categories of masculine and feminine. These categories are always culturally specific and change over time (Connell & Pearse, 2014; Hoogensen Gjørv, 2017; Tickner, 2001). Extractive industries have been argued to belong to a culture of masculinity (Daggett, 2018; Kojola, 2019; Miller, 2004), and they have historically been rather male dominated. Daggett (2018) has forcefully argued that there is a relationship between fossil fuels and the white patriarchal order, proposing the concept of *petro-masculinity*. Miller (2004) has examined the oil industry in Alberta, Canada, and concluded three aspects constructing masculinity within the industry: "everyday interactions which exclude women; values and beliefs specific to the dominant occupation of engineering which reinforce gender divisions; and a consciousness derived from the powerful symbols of the frontier myth and the romanticized cowboy hero" (Miller, 2004, p.47). In the Arctic, the history of exploration together with the idea of conquering nature has been updated and transferred to the modern hydrocarbon industry. (Female) gender is missing from the energyscape in the Barents region (Lempinen, 2018). The imagery and role models visible to the public to affect perceptions of the industry (European Institute for Gender Equity, 2016, p.6). Nevertheless, the dichotomy between femininity and masculinity is no longer so simplistic within the modern hydrocarbon industry in Norway and Russia, or within the Arctic, and "the debate is already moving beyond such stereotypes and structural limitations" (Vladimirova & Habeck, 2018, p.148).

In this article I focus on the justifications utilised to support the continuing production as well as on the construction of gender. When analysing the material, it became evident that especially in the Russian context, the presentation of gender meant a presentation of masculinity, as the majority of the people presented in the webpages were male. Connell, a pioneer in masculinity studies, emphasises that we should discuss *masculinities,* not masculinity. Multiple masculinities exist within a certain gender order (Connell, 1995) and the performance on masculinity relies "on maneuvering between several competing gender regimes which function within historical gender orders" such as the Soviet and post-Soviet context

(Yusupova, 2016, p.31). The construction and performance of various masculinities can be only done within a certain framework laid out by the state (Yusupova, 2016). For instance, Vladimir Putin's "hypermasculinity" is playing a crucial role in the contemporary re-masculinisation of Russia (Sperling, 2015; Yusupova, 2016). Ventsel (2018) has examined the dominant masculinities in Siberia, specifically in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), where the discourse of conquering nature has deep roots. In Soviet times, Yakutia was one of the nation's resource-extraction frontiers, characterised by a pronounced proletarian "hard" masculinity that continued well into the 2000s. Recently, according to Ventsel, more urban, "softer" masculinities have emerged (Ventsel 2018, pp.210–211). The masculine identity of an oil worker that provides for his family is an important incentive to work in the "extreme" North (Saxinger 2015, p.95). However, it is noteworthy that the evolution towards stricter definition of gender roles can be interpreted as a result of colonial regimes and modernisation, also in the context of the Russian (and Norwegian) north (Vladimirova & Habeck, 2018; Ziker, 2010), since many indigenous cultures have traditionally not had binary gender division and roles.

What do masculinities look like in the Nordic context, specifically in Norway? An interesting concept introduced by Hultman (2013) is ecomodern masculinity. In the 1990s, the discourse of ecomodernism began to expand globally, wherein economic growth provides the basis for transition to a more sustainable future (Hultman, 2013; Anshelm & Hultman, 2014). Hultman suggests that with ecomodern masculinity, gender identity is connected to care for the environment and economic growth. Anshelm & Hultman (2014) noted that with industrial masculinity shifting towards ecomodern masculinity, an emphasis on toughness and hardness is replaced by care and responsibility. Those ascribing to the new ecomodern masculinity still desire to expand economic growth via technological progress but do so while simultaneously caring for the environment (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014). The notion of ecomodern masculinity therefore encompasses attempts to address environmental problems, especially climate change, while supporting policies and technologies connected to climate-destroying systems (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014; Hultman 2013). Ecomodern masculinity can be linked to the concept of green economy, in which the green economy offers an arena for economic opportunities, achieved by technological solutions (Caprotti & Bailey, 2014). The ecomodern discourse is strongly present within the claims currently made by Arctic hydrocompanies, which argue that they are combining technology and ecology, an argument that ultimately serves the interests of continuing to drill for oil and gas.

The narrative of territory (especially in the Arctic context) has been characterised by the "dominance of a calculative lens" (Jackman et al., 2020, p.2) emphasising the role of technology. In a similar vein, feminist scholars have criticised the framing of climate change as a technological challenge (see, e.g. Haraway, 2016; MacGregor, 2010, 2009) and likewise politics of energy transitions have been criticised for their technocratic description that ignores gender and social dimensions (Lieu et al., 2020). While responding to the challenges of ecological crises with green techno-scientific innovations has value, the technological focus also enables "searching for the new rather than improving the old; more omnipotence rather than humble reflection on the benefits *and the costs* of male-dominated scientific ingenuity to date" (MacGregor, 2009, p.133). In her writing, MacGregor (2010) has examined the politics of climate change and argues that it is framed by gendered discourses. She has demonstrated how the social constructs of masculinity and femininity emerge and are reproduced within the dominant discourses. Her work identifies ecological modernisation and environmental security as top-down approaches connected to masculinity, whereas, for example, the individual duty to protect the environment is linked to femininity (MacGregor, 2010). Feminist scholars have criticised traditional ecomodernist solutions that have simultaneously facilitated a "downgrading of ethical concerns," such as justice, economic equity or health (MacGregor, 2009, p.128). Feminist (and post-colonial) perspectives should be laid out as a counterpoint to technological understandings of the earth (Jackman et al., 2020) and remain at the center when new terrains are explored (Jackman et al., 2020; Squire & Dodds, 2020). Feminist discussions on environment highlight the significance of care and ethics within climate change, especially in relation to future generations and global inequalities (see, e.g. Powys & Cuomo, 2017; Robinson, 2011). Care is not a property of feminist research; however, its idea is often embedded within feminist ideas on, for example, human and non-human (Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2019). The question of future generations is embedded within feminist ethics of care, which becomes an important issue with the opening of new oil and gas fields in the Arctic.

Extractivism, and more specifically oil and gas drilling, arises from the ontological premise where understanding of the land and having "permission" to use it are based on an anthropocentric, Western division between human beings and nature. This is extremely visible in the exploitation of the Arctic fossil fuels, made possible with the help of modern technology. Technology is not created in a vacuum; rather, it is the product of longstanding historical sociopolitical developments (Jasanoff, 2015). In a similar manner to Haraway, who has identified how society worships science and forgets its own role in its creation (1991, p.8), the present study identifies and problematises the dominance of technology, especially within an industry that greatly contributes to global emissions, and hence, has an influence on more than just the Arctic region.

Method and material: justification analysis of Arctic hydrocarbon companies' self-representation

This paper examines Norwegian and Russian companies' perceptions of the Arctic and the image they model for the public with material consisting of sections of three Arctic energy company webpages. I approach the webpages through a feminist version of justification analysis, including some discussion on visual methods.

Justification analysis builds on the work of Boltanski and Thévenot, *De La Justification* (On Justification, 1991[2006]). Their core idea is that in order to convince other people in public discussion, one must justify such a position by referring to a generally accepted common good. Within public debates, a limited set of moral principles is utilised to support such arguments. For example, justifying a claim in economic terms means taking a moral stand wherein money is the measure of worth (Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016, p.2). Moral principles are widely shared by different participants but are often understood differently (Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016). In the context of the Arctic hydrocarbon industry, justification analysis is useful in revealing and challenging the values on which the companies base their continuous operations.

Understandings of the "common good" vary across time and society; however, Boltanski and Thevénot have proposed six

"worlds of justification" based on values commonly recognised by societies in general. The seventh justification was added later. The fixed frames, or worlds, of justification are based on values emerging from the industrial, civic, market-oriented, fame-driven, ecological, domestic and inspirational domains. Boltanski and Thevénot (2006, pp.203–201) describe the *industrial world* as one dominated by technology, efficiency and progress. In the context of this article, the industrial world refers to the importance of new technologies being utilised by the Arctic oil and gas industry as well as the importance of technology in addressing environmental concerns. The *civic world* is one where value is not given to individuals, but to the collectives they form. Legal systems and civic rights are the basis of this value (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006, pp.185–193) as well as democratic means of agreeing on the rules (Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016). In this research, the worlds based on civic values refer to the companies' responsibility to produce energy for the world, to work within the constraints of existing legislation and to bring benefits to local communities. In the *market world*, "actions are motivated by desire" (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006, p.196). Objects considered worthy of desire are those that have value or a strong position in the market. Therefore, the market world refers here to the economic value of the Arctic hydrocarbon industry both for the companies' shareholders and for the respective countries. Within the *world of fame*, the opinion of others plays a crucial role, in addition to visibility and notoriety. Being recognised for what one does is important (Boltanski & Thévevnot, 2006). In the context of this study, fame is understood and presented as the companies being perceived as leaders and pioneers in the Arctic realm, much in the manner of early polar explorers. In the *ecological world* well-being of the environment is the focal point (Thévevnot, Moody, & Lafaye, 2000). In this study, the ecological world refers to the well-being of the pristine Arctic environment and its flora and fauna. In the *domestic world,* according to Boltanski and Thévenot (2006, pp.164–165), the worth given to the objects is based on their contribution to hierarchical relations among people, as connected to generations and tradition. In the research material, the domestic world can be understood as the value that, for example, the gas distribution system in Russia brings to the country. The *inspirational world* was not visible in the research material and so will not be a point of focus in this research.

From this initial premise, scholars have developed a method of justification analysis (Ylä-Anttila & Kukkonen, 2014; Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016) to analyse the claims made and the moral stands taken in public debates. Within public media justification analysis, a unit of analysis consists of one claim. A claim is a "unit of action in the public sphere" (Koopmans, 2006). A claim can be a statement made to a reporter, a speech, or, for example, a demonstration (Koopmans, 2006; Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016). Once such a claim is made, justification analysis assesses the given *worth* or value upon it is based. A combination of values can be found in a single claim. As with many social science methods, the coding of the claims is not inductive, but based on fixed categories – the worths. Therefore, justification analysis is especially suitable for comparative analysis, as the cases are approached from the same justification principles (Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016). Justification analysis has been utilised mainly for analysing mass media (Ylä-Anttila et al., 2018; Ylä-Anttila & Kukkonen, 2014; Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016) but also for Russian energy strategies (Salonen, 2018).

Employing justification analysis to assess company webpages differs somewhat from the analysis of traditional media material. The webpages of hydrocarbon companies exist for a certain reason – the webpages themselves are crafted to convince the audience of the validity of the claims. Therefore, while a newspaper article may contain, for example, three claims for a story, I argue that a webpage *itself* is one large claim, and the analysis aims to identify the nature of the values upon which the individual underlying claims are based. Following the path laid out by Ylä-Anttila and Luhtakallio (2016) and Salonen (2018), I first determined the sections of the material that contained a specific claim. Second, I identified claims that make a reference to a world (or worlds). Finally, I identified and categorised the claims and their references according to the fixed worlds of justification. For example, going through the webpages of Equinor, I first identified the sections that made a specific claim (e.g. section *Sustainability*) and after that went through the content sentence by sentence and identified the claims that refer to the fixed worlds of justification (e.g. *ecological world*). Because this research is qualitative in nature, the frequency of the claims is not discussed extensively, but rather the focus is on their content.

Since the material consists of webpages, it would be limiting to exclude a large portion of their content – images. We live in an era of visuality, and so visual analysis should not be ignored when analysing webpages. Hence, this article also draws from discussions on visual methodology to present the webpages in their entirety. Haraway (1988, p.581) has explored social power relations with respect to the availability of visual "gluttony" and how it is linked to a "history of science tied to militarism, capitalism, colonialism, and male supremacy." Such power relations produce social differences (e.g. hierarchies of class, gender, race), while claiming to not belong to any hierarchy (Haraway, 1988). This is especially interesting when considering oil and gas companies, as the fossil fuel industry is one of the most powerful industries in the world.

Webpages utilised to create a desire for Arctic exploration

The material for this article consists of certain sections from the webpages of three hydrocarbon companies (collected in summer/fall 2019) working in the Arctic. The webpages of energy companies tend to represent a general company policy – or at least what the companies expect the public to perceive positively, and therefore, the webpages help them gain public support. The webpages presumably target the national political sphere, international consumer states, investors and civil society. The audience is not homogeneous – therefore, justification strategies differ. By studying the material produced *by* the energy industry, one can "understand better what kind of power, truths and identities" the industry is constructing (Tynkkynen, 2016, p.375). The energy industry utilises advertising to "establish a desire for opening Arctic regions to commercial exploitation" (Mason, 2016). I do not approach the webpages as sources of a single truth, but rather as a way for the industry to present its claims to the public. The webpages of state-owned companies are clearly an aspect of marketing, but also a tool and even a platform for discussion. The webpages actively stake out a position for companies in societal discussions. For example on Equinor's webpage, a section focusing on the activities in the Barents Sea includes a sub-section *Concerns* and *Frequently asked questions*, with both sections directly addressing the concerns of environmental organisations about Arctic drilling (see, e.g. Greenpeace Norge). Gazprom Neft's webpages only discuss the environmental effects of an individual project regarding Prirazlomnoye, an offshore platform that received much international attention in 2013 when Greenpeace activists were arrested

for trying to seize the operation for environmental reasons (Greenpeace Russia, 2019). Prirazlomnoye, however, is currently the only offshore project in the Russian Arctic, which could further raise environmental concerns linked to it.

Comparisons of the Norwegian, Russian and English webpages revealed that the content on the webpages was approximately the same regardless of the language. Hence, this study is limited to the English versions of the company webpages. The webpages are rich in content and consist of text, photos, videos and reports. To begin, I went through all the sections to get an idea of their content. Next, I focused on the sections connected to Arctic hydrocarbon activities. The homepages of all the companies and company overviews provided were included in the analysis. In addition, other parts focus on ongoing Arctic projects (with subsections) as well as on activities in the Arctic (for example, Equinor's webpages include sections such as *Our activities in the North* and *Safely exploring the Barents Sea*). Sections focusing on the environment, sustainability and engagement with indigenous peoples (for example, Gazprom Neft's webpages include a section on *Engaging with the peoples of the Russian Far North*) were included. The webpages ranged from August to October 2019. Since the webpages are "living," meaning they are being continuously updated, the material was transferred to separate documents and the analysis was conducted from there.

The gendered worlds of justification

After reading through the research material with the help of justification analysis, six worlds of justification and their combinations were identified. Based on the findings, the following four subsections have been organised thematically. The first subsection addresses the importance of technology and its ability to overcome both physical challenges as well as challenges related to climate change and the environment. The second subsection focuses on the role of the economy. In addition, it also compares early polar explorers with the search for new oil and gas fields as well as the discourse of being an Arctic leader. The third subsection assesses the meaning of the ecological world in the webpages. Furthermore, it also focuses on the representations of gender. The fourth subsection discusses the companies' emphasis on the wider benefits of having an industry in one's country and community. The first two subsections and the worlds they present navigate in the discursive and cultural constructions historically associated with masculine practices, working in the public domain instead of the private. The last two subsections move somewhere in between masculine and feminine discursive and cultural constructions (MacGregor, 2010). The analysis shows how the companies are building the justifications while reproducing and reinforcing the gendered foundations and stereotypes. Excerpts from the research material are utilised to demonstrate how the justifications serve the interests of oil and gas companies.

Industrial world – technology will save us?

Since the companies are working in harsh conditions, the role of technology is important. All the companies put an especially visible focus on the *industrial world*. Justifications based on technological measures and the belief in technology are strong:

> *Drawing on technology, competence and experience from harsh weather operations, we are approaching the North with a strong focus on safe operations and respect for the environment. Research and development programmes are tailored to meet the technological challenges ahead, such as drilling and production systems, long distance transportation of unprocessed oil and gas, material science, oil spill response and health and working environment in cold climates.* (Equinor, 2019)

> *Unique technological and logistical solutions mean oil is being produced, stored, shipped and transported all year round under the ultra-challenging environmental and climatic conditions of the waters of the Arctic.* (Gazprom Neft, 2019)

> *Overcoming the Yamal Peninsula's harsh climate and environment, Gazprom has made Yamal its launch pad for efficient, safe and innovative technologies and technical solutions.* (Gazprom, 2019)

An emphasis on technology and infrastructure utilised within the operations conducted in the harsh conditions of the Arctic is visible throughout the webpages. In addition, technology is important for the challenges of addressing environmental questions. The visual side of the material emphasises the technology-oriented nature of the industry – a large number of the photos on all the company websites show production facilities and provide technical details. Often, the images are from a bird's-eye perspective observing the production facilities or the Arctic wilderness. This reminds me of Haraway's concept of the *god trick* "of seeing everything from nowhere," in which modern technology has "put the myth into ordinary practice. And like the god trick, this eye fucks the world to make techno-monsters" (Haraway, 1988, p.581). The opening image on Gazprom's website is an aerial image of Europe at nighttime with electric lights shining in every corner of the region, presumably powered by Russian gas. Equinor has a similar photo of Scandinavia, in a section on *Safely Exploring in the Barents Sea*. In all three cases, several images show oil rigs, production facilities and ships surrounded by ice – from the bird's-eye or "god" perspective. In Haraway's writing, god trick is connected to a larger dilemma of objectivity, which in feminist understanding is never completely possible, as knowledge is always situated. Such objectivity and "knowing all" are also related to what Connell and Pearse (2014) write in relation to climate change, specifically how "gender research into environmental politics shows that a masculine God-like view of the global problem has merged into technocratic, marketized 'solutions' to environmental crisis." The imagery of industrial facilities supports justifications based on the industrialised technological world. The claims based on industrial world represent and reproduce a masculine value system building on the ability to control nature and harness its resources for a commodity of humans.

Laying the groundwork for ecomodern discourse, claims based on the *industrial-ecological world* are substantial. The nature of the references varies somewhat between the companies. While Gazprom's claims with respect to technology and the environment are more pragmatic and linked to direct environmental issues, those of Equinor and Gazprom Neft highlight technology as a tool for solving problems stemming from climate change.

> *Gazprom prioritizes innovative development and advancement from the technological and organizational standpoints as the key prerequisites for the efficient and sustainable development of the oil and gas sector and Russia's fuel and energy complex at large.* (Gazprom, 2019)

> *One of today's most urgent problems—climate change—is connected to environmental emissions of [greenhouse gases]. Gazprom Neft is doing its bit to address this problem with a programme to increase the productive use of associated petroleum gas (APG) produced in oil production as well as concurrently implementing several major projects in this area.* (Gazprom Neft, 2019).

> *It's supplying the world with energy, creating value for society—and not least, reducing CO2 emissions from production by up to 90%. The Paris Agreement is quite clear that the world will still need oil as part of its energy mix. But which oil is produced, should be produced as cleanly as possible.* (Equinor, 2019)

These descriptions draw attention to technology's role in addressing environmental issues and to the companies' pioneering role in dealing with environmental problems. New projects are justified through their capacity to operate as cleanly as possible. According to the Norwegian actor, oil needs to be drilled and Equinor can do it in the best (cleanest and safest) way possible. This framing of climate change via technological solutions is an example of the masculinisation of responses to climate change, where solutions come from the traditional domain of men and hegemonic masculinity (MacGregor, 2010). In Norway, and to a certain extent in Russia too, the discourse regarding the harmony of economic growth via technology and environmental protection can also be connected to the discussion on ecomodern masculinities (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014; Hultman, 2013).

Worlds of market and fame – economic heroism

When discussing the justifications offered by the energy companies working in the Arctic, a rationalist approach would assume that economic reasons are the main objective for expanding production. However, all three companies rarely make claims based purely on market worth. Claims based on the *market world* thus refer to economic value, but not solely. Gazprom and Gazprom Neft refer to pragmatic actions aiming at cost efficiency. Equinor's claims emphasise local economic development and the creation of value for its stakeholders.

> *When bringing promising fields into production, Gazprom aims to ensure economic efficiency by expanding gas production facilities concurrently with gas transmission, comprehensive processing and storage capacities.* (Gazprom, 2019)

> *Supported by this the company is able to ensure year-round shipments of all oil produced, at minimal cost.* (Gazprom Neft, 2019)

> *Through our core business and supply chain, we create economic value and opportunities for society and communities. We create jobs and develop capabilities among our own employees and beyond our company.* (Equinor, 2019)

The lack of claims based purely on market worth indicates that the companies are responding to changing expectations in the international context surrounding emerging climate concerns, by recognising that it is not acceptable to base arguments purely on economic growth. Like technology, economy is not something created in a vacuum, but instead it is always a gendered human construct (Mellor, 2017). The ecofeminist notion on political economy is relevant for discussing the market world and the capitalist system where the companies are working: "Instead of seeing economies as natural forms based on universal economic laws, ecofeminist political economy sees modern economies as ecologically unsustainable and socially unjust" (Mellor, 2017, p.86). Economy, as we currently know it, is based on the exploitation of nature and its resources. The circulation of the concept of green economy has impacted the ways how companies address the public. The renaissance of the concept has affected how businesses work and frame themselves in order to survive (Caprotti & Bailey, 2014). Earlier research on the U.S-based oil company Exxon Mobil's advertorial campaign addressing climate change in 2000 reveals the company's aim to present business and technology as saviors while at the same time showcasing environmental protection as the enemy (Livesey, 2002). In today's world, even Russian companies cannot deny the environmental impact of the industry, and therefore such claims have dropped the business rhetoric but retained the idea of technology as a savior.

The notion of competition found in the research material does not refer only to market competition, but similarly to the competition for Arctic leadership. This can be linked to the *world of fame*. The companies' websites make frequent references to being an Arctic leader and refer to the polar explorers of earlier times. Equinor actively compares the current explorations for new hydrocarbon fields with the polar explorers of the early 20th century. The polar explorers of Norway, already a source of national pride, are portrayed as "paving the way" for modern explorers like Equinor.

> *Thanks to a long lasting maritime tradition and experience dealing with harsh environments, Norway has fostered some of the greatest ocean and polar explorers in history. Building on a heritage of adventures, Equinor has become a world-leading explorer for oil and gas.* (Equinor, 2019)

The characteristics of early polar explorers, such as "aspirations, persistence, boldness, creativity and knowledge" (Equinor, 2019), are crucial for the modern explorer as well. This is notable from a feminist perspective, as the celebrated early polar explorers were virtually always men. Representations of their deeds stood at the intersection of "heroic adventure, patriotism, honor and manliness" (Ryall et al., 2010). Even though the early polar explorers did not exactly aim to secure the large-scale utilisation of natural resources in the same way as modern hydrocarbon companies, a certain discourse of conquering the north and nature already existed. The idea of conquering the Arctic as polar explorers or being a leader in the region speaks again in the language of anthropocene and coloniality, ignoring the possible harm to nature or the (indigenous) people living in the area. The will to be a leader in the Arctic hydrocarbon industry refers not only to the actual oil and gas industry but also to the wider political context within the Arctic. Both Equinor and Gazprom emphasise being Arctic leaders, especially Gazprom.

> *No other country in the world has ever created anything like this in the Arctic. This project has no precedent in the history of the global gas industry. By creating a brand new gas production center beyond the Arctic Circle, Russia has proven its leadership in the Arctic.* (Gazprom, 2019, quoting CEO Alexey Miller)

World of ecology and the presentation of gender

The biggest and most obvious controversy arising regarding oil and gas operations has to do with their consequences for the environment via global emissions. The Russian discourse on climate change has different expectations for the need to address climate issues than the Norwegian one, due to widespread climate denialism in Russia (Tynkkynen & Tynkkynen, 2018). The extent to which the Russian companies choose to address climate change, however, differs – Gazprom Neft's material mentions *climate change* or *manmade* environmental impacts in several instances, while Gazprom's material refers to climate change only rarely, with the words *greenhouse gas* or *climate protection* occurring just a couple of times. Gazprom Neft's website focuses on global climate change in certain sections (such as *Environment* and *Prirazlomnaye*), whereas Gazprom discusses local environmental impacts. In contrast, Equinor addresses climate change throughout its webpages. It responds to the problem of global emissions by

noting its responsibility to provide energy: "The world needs more energy than renewables can provide" (Equinor, 2019).

Environmental and ecological values recently have assumed a prominent place in the public sphere due to growing awareness about climate change. However, the companies rarely address the *ecological world* as such. Equinor offers more frequent reflection, with Gazprom and Gazprom Neft having less to say about their impacts on the ecological world:

> *Delaying climate action increases the challenge. Current climate actions are far from enough to put the world on a path to keep global warming well below 2 degrees. Global emissions increased in 2018 to reach an all-time high—and the longer this continues, the stronger measures will be necessary to reach common goals. The need is ever more urgent for rapid and significant change.* (Equinor, 2019)

> *Gazprom operates both in densely-populated Russian regions and in pristine areas across Eastern Siberia, the Far East, the Extreme North, and the Arctic shelf. No matter the region, the Company seeks to minimize its environmental impacts.* (Gazprom, 2019)

> *Gazprom Neft endeavours to minimise the negative environmental impact of oil production and refining whilst ensuring its products meet high ecological standards.* (Gazprom Neft, 2019)

The global and local aspects of the Arctic hydrocarbon industry are at the core of these justifications. Local problems, such as possible oil spills, can be solved with technology, while global emissions are harder to tackle. The global effects of climate change are argued to affect women more drastically than men, due to the larger proportion of women within the poorest segments of the population globally. Though this claim is not unproblematic and has been questioned (see, e.g. Arora-Jonsson, 2011), it sheds light on the unequal effects of global climate change.

Another issue that must be critically assessed as a part of the hydrocarbon companies' ecological justifications is the ontology of the environment. At the centre of ecological well-being is often the idea that the environment provides sustenance and well-being for all people. Such an anthropocentric worldview tends to ignore, for example, the well-being of animals. The division between humans and non-humans is deeply rooted in most contemporary Western worldviews (see, e.g. Haraway, 1991; Plumwood, 1993). Arctic animals are well represented in the imagery utilised by the companies, especially by the Russian companies. However, hydrocarbon companies may well interpret ecological well-being rather differently than, for instance, what would constitute ecological well-being for an Arctic codfish. Though each company discuss sustainability of the industry, the different dimensions of the concept need to be evaluated in more detail. Lempinen (2019a) has examined Arctic energy and sustainability and notes that sustainability means different things when looked at from different angles. Turning her attention to the fossil fuel industry, Lempinen (2019a, p.31) asks how can the extraction of something that is finite by nature ever be sustainable. Furthermore, when the resource extracted is itself exacerbating the climate crisis, the framing of it as sustainable is difficult to justify.

Ecofeminism, an approach introduced in earlier scholarship regarding the connections between gender and the environment, has embraced the natural connection between women and nature. Though the essentialist nature of this claim has since been problematised, for example, sustainable consumption decisions have been linked more strongly to the female gender (see, e.g. Brough et al., 2016; Oldrup & Breengaard, 2009). I argue that this idea of females being more connected to nature is utilised in Equinors webpage and in their rebranding process. The most significant and visible difference between the material produced by the Norwegian and Russian companies has to do with the representation of gender. Roughly half of the images on Equinor's website depicting people working in various capacities are of (assumed) women. Equinor also includes a more varied group of ethnic backgrounds within its imagery. In contrast, Gazprom's and Gazprom Neft's material typically only show women in the corporate social responsibility sections, or in a few images of office workers. Equinor's material shows women working in office jobs as well as in the field, and especially in contexts related to sustainability. One example of gendered imagery in Equinor's material can be found in the section on *Johan Svedrup*, a new flagship production site presented in the frontpage. An image shows two women (young, white) in working clothes (with helmets, ear protectors and yellow overalls) looking happy, with the caption "*It's 2019 and climate strikes are taking place the world over. So why are we so proud of our new oil field?*". I argue that the combination of the image displaying young females in work overalls and this caption is intentionally meant to assuage and shift perceptions regarding the traditional high-emission oil industry and help form an impression of an industry that is truly changing. The story continues with a description of the project's low level of emissions compared to global averages in oil production.

Gazprom's and Gazprom Neft's representation of gender is a masculine one: strong (assumed) men working in harsh conditions. The visual imagery perpetuates a traditional "oilman" type of masculinity among white men. In addition, especially Gazprom utilises many images of "important" (male) figures, such as politicians, signing deals and so forth. A descriptive example of such imagery can be found in the section of Gazprom Neft's website on the Messoyakha field and its levels of production, where three men wearing warm winter clothes and helmets are shown walking in front of industrial machinery. The text accompanying the picture states that oil production at the field has increased 30% since 2018, which is due to technical and geological initiatives. Several pictures on Gazprom's and Gazprom Neft's websites show men either at a control board or with machinery, working inside or outside in harsh climate. The imagery fits the concept of *petromachismo* (Etkind, 2014) or *petro-masculinity* (Daggett, 2018). While both concepts also refer to the connections between wealth and fossil fuels, the material presents the men as hardworking *workers,* which is also connected to the Soviet heritage.

Domestic and civic worlds – caring for the communities

In the local context, the Arctic hydrocarbon industry can be seen to bring numerous benefits. The fossil fuel industry plays significant role in the local level via revenues as well as by providing energy security (see, e.g. Arctic Council, 2009). Claims based on the *domestic world* highlight the benefits the industry brings to the national and local levels. Equinor emphasises its instrumentality with respect to local communities, especially in economic terms (*domestic-market* worth). In many sections of its website, Equinor focuses on employment, highlighting the tax revenue Norway is gaining from the industry.

> *The oil and gas industry creates positive economic ripple effects, not only for the many tens of thousands of people directly employed by the oil industry, but for all Norwegians, in the form of significant tax revenues for the state.* (Equinor, 2019)

Gazprom attaches great importance to its domestic world as well, but in a different way. The company's website dedicates much space to describing the role of the gas distribution system for

Russia and how it provides energy for all areas. Moreover, almost every section that discusses machinery mentions they are produced in Russia. The gas distribution system has become an important part of peripheral Russia, thereafter creating a hierarchical position for the different areas of Russia (Tynkkynen, 2016). Through its gas distribution system, Gazprom places more importance on the *domestic-civic* worth strategy as well, emphasising the value created for Russia and Russians. This perspective is also visible in the website's discussion of a new Gazprom Neft corporate social responsibility program called "Home Towns" (Rodnye goroda):

> *We operate on the premise that anyone living in a small town deserves the same quality of environment as someone living in a major city. For that reason, the approach we take is innovative and unusual: investing in our "Home Towns," we strive for the highest possible standards in all projects we undertake—many of which are genuinely unique in Russia.* (Gazprom Neft, 2019)

Equinor's justification strategies, in contrast, focus more strongly on the *civic world*, since its justifications are based on the global need for providing energy. Gazprom and Gazprom Neft also utilise this argument, but not as visibly as Equinor. Providing energy for the growing population of the world can be marketed as caring for the people. The companies highlight their domestic and civic worth by expressing care for the people, though from a perspective of a hydrocarbon company. Each companies' justifications rely strongly on Norwegian and Russian laws and regulations. In several sections, Equinor justifies its role of providing more oil and gas (especially from the north) for the growing population, while simultaneously acknowledging the acuteness of climate change. The attention given to future generations is not in the context of climate change, but that of context of energy security.

> *There is considerable interest in this exploration since many geologists believe that most of the remaining undiscovered resources on the Norwegian continental shelf may be right here in the Barents Sea—and could be of major benefit to future generations of Norwegians, as well as a valuable source of energy for the world.* (Equinor, 2019)

In Norway, the discussion on future generations is topical. Opposition to the hydrocarbon industry has grown significantly, for example, in the form of the court case mentioned earlier.

Civic world is also present in the Russian material in relation to indigenous people, with the websites providing text as well as imagery to address indigenous concerns. In the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, both Gazprom and Gazprom Neft operate on land that has traditionally provided home and subsistence to indigenous people. Relationships of power undeniably impact interactions between a parastatal company and local indigenous peoples, such as the Nenets. Gazprom and Gazprom Neft both briefly discuss cooperation efforts with indigenous people in the Yamal district. The story *Bovanenkovo stands still letting deer herds pass* portrays an image of indigenous people, reindeer, and the hydrocarbon company currently coexisting well. While indigenous Sámi people live in northern Norway, the context of Norwegian hydrocarbon projects being offshore makes their situation rather different. All three companies foreground the idea of caring about people and bringing benefits to local communities when justifying their worth and contribution to the domestic and civic world domains. In their view, the fossil fuel industry in the Arctic is caring for the people and their economic security.

Conclusions

Continuing to drill for oil and gas in the Arctic is not a value-neutral decision. The acceleration of climate change and its implications are already visible – it is not a future phenomenon. The image the Arctic hydrocarbon companies produce of their oil and gas operations as an inevitable and viable operation needs to be challenged. The justifications utilised by the companies push for certain narratives and produce a certain reality in relation to Arctic fossil fuels. The premise of continuing oil and gas drilling in the Arctic arises from the capitalist, patriarchal and anthropocentric worldview, in which the earth is understood as resources for human beings. This paper reveals the dominant conceptualisations of which the justifications of the Arctic hydrocarbon companies are based on. In addition, the paper contributes to emerging discussions on feminist approaches to the Arctic and demonstrates how the hydrocarbon industry shapes the discussion through gendered justifications for continued drilling operations. Furthermore, this article contributes to the growing body of literature on justification analysis and moreover acknowledges that visual communication is an important side of justification, making analysis of visual data an essential part of justification analysis.

The "gendered environmental discourses frame and shape dominant understandings of the issue", notes MacGregor (2009, p.127), a point clearly supported by the research findings presented here. In this paper, I drew attention to the gendered foundations underpinning the justifications and the social constructs of masculinity and femininity embedded in the narratives promoted by the three companies. Furthermore, the article demonstrates how the justifications of Norwegian and Russian actors rely mainly on values belonging to masculinist conceptualisations of space (Jackman et al., 2020) and masculine discursive constructs (MacGregor, 2010, 2009), such as the belief in techno-scientific solutionism or the need for leadership in the Arctic. The justifications relying mainly on feminine sets of values are more subtle, but nonetheless present. The justifications connected to social constructs of femininity include, for example, caring about the well-being of local communities and providing energy for future generations.

In addition, I have shown that the justifications utilised by Norwegian and Russian companies are rather similar, even though the respective countries are quite different. This reveals a global paradigm shift in the hydrocarbon industry. At least in terms of public marketing, firms have gone from simply selling oil to being sustainable energy companies, even, to a certain extent in Russia. The choice of research material, the webpages focusing on Arctic oil and gas exploration, set certain premises and limitations for the worlds discussed throughout the article. The justifications employed on the company websites do not necessarily reflect the real-life actions being taken by them to tackle climate change and conduct operations in a sustainable manner. In real-life terms, the differences between Norwegian and Russian companies and their carbon footprints are likely to be greater. In the Russian Arctic, frequent oil spills from the pipelines, methane emissions and flaring (burning of any "unnecessary" petroleum gas) occur, yet reliable numbers are impossible to obtain (Tynkkynen, 2019). In addition, the justifications found on the webpages of the two Russian companies must be understood as the result of mounting global public pressure to express accountability for environmental impacts. If we assume that economic reasons are the actual drivers of continuing Arctic oil and gas production, then the companies would not need to utilise other justifications. Furthermore, the webpages and the public image of the companies are aimed at the general public, which is not homogeneous. Therefore, several justification strategies are offered for different audiences.

The Arctic is becoming an increasingly important, yet vulnerable region because of the warming climate. As feminism and gender have started to work their way into Arctic discourses, it is increasingly evident that "gender is everywhere and nowhere at the same time ... but the relevance of socially embedded gender hierarchies and practices (for example in the economy) is ignored" (Sinevaara-Niskanen, 2012, cited in Sinevaara-Niskanen, 2015). As the environmental crisis of our planet accelerates, it is important to scrutinise the underlying values and ideas behind the practices actively contributing to the destruction of the planet. However, instead of focusing merely on gender, the future (feminist) research on Arctic, extractivism and environment should focus on the intersections and explorations of identity and nature.

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