

Place Reinvention in the North. Dynamics and Governance Perspectives

Place Reinvention in the North

Dynamics and Governance Perspectives

Edited by Torill Nyseth and Brynhild Granås

NORDREGIO 2007

Nordregio
P.O. Box 1658
SE-111 86 Stockholm, Sweden
nordregio@nordregio.se
www.nordregio.se
www.norden.se

Nordic co-operation

takes place among the countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, as well as the autonomous territories of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

The Nordic Council

is a forum for co-operation between the Nordic parliaments and governments. The Council consists of 87 parliamentarians from the Nordic countries. The Nordic Council takes policy initiatives and monitors Nordic co-operation. Founded in 1952.

The Nordic Council of Ministers

is a forum of co-operation between the Nordic governments. The Nordic Council of Ministers implements Nordic co-operation. The prime ministers have the overall responsibility. Its activities are co-ordinated by the Nordic ministers for co-operation, the Nordic Committee for co-operation and portfolio ministers. Founded in 1971.

Stockholm, Sweden
2007

Contents

Chapter 1	
Dimensions of place reinvention	
<i>Brynild Granås and Torill Nyseth</i>	9
Chapter 2	
Industrious cultures? The uneasy relationship between an industrial order and a ‘second modernity’	
<i>Karl Benediktsson and Leena Suopajarvi</i>	27
Chapter 3	
Culture, cultural economy and gender in processes of place reinvention	
<i>Magnfríður Júlíusdóttir and Yvonne Gunnarsdotter</i>	39
Chapter 4	
Kirkenes: the ‘bordered’ reinvention of an industrial town	
<i>Arvid Viken, Torill Nyseth and Brynild Granås</i>	55
Chapter 5	
The unique and the ordinary – reinventing place through symbolic communication	
<i>Brynild Granås and Yvonne Gunnarsdotter</i>	69
Chapter 6	
Politicized Places	
<i>Leena Suopajarvi and Arvid Viken</i>	87
Chapter 7	
Control over resources in place reinvention: Kemijärvi in far-away Lapland	
<i>Seppo Aho</i>	101
Chapter 8	
Concrete messages – material expressions of place reinvention	
<i>Karl Benediktsson and Seppo Aho</i>	117
Chapter 9	
Governing place reinvention: obstacles and challenges	
<i>Torill Nyseth and Cecilia Waldenström</i>	131
Chapter 10	
Towards an understanding of place reinvention	
<i>Torill Nyseth</i>	147
List of contributors	157

Preface

The research programme, *'Internationalisation of regional development policies – Needs and demands in the Nordic countries'* was commissioned by the Nordic Council of Ministers in the spring of 2005.

The aim of this programme is to undertake research on key issues, where it has been identified that new knowledge is needed, and where such knowledge could be seen to benefit the development and implementation of regional development policy in the Nordic countries.

The basis for the research programme is its Nordic character. Research should lead to new knowledge both for the academic world and for the world of policy and practice. Projects should add 'Nordic value', i.e. they should produce knowledge of relevance for several regions and countries across *Norden*. The research should moreover be comparative and collaborative across at least three Nordic countries or self-governed areas.

Three themes of high priority for the research programme have been identified; *'regional governance'*, *'innovation and regional growth'*, and *'demography and labour migration'*.

In addition to these priorities two additional crosscutting themes were also defined; *'the enlargement of the EU and the challenges for Nordic regional development policies'* and the broad topic of *'the three dimensions of sustainable regional development'*; i.e. social, economic and environmental sustainability.

The research programme has been launched in two rounds. In the first round during the spring of 2005 it was decided to fund five projects. These will be reported during the spring and summer of 2007. In the second round during the spring of 2007 it has been decided that a further five projects will be funded. These will be reported in 2009. All project reports are published in this publication series dedicated to this programme. At the end of the programme, a synthesising report will also be produced where the most important findings are discussed.

Nordregio wishes to thank the Nordic Senior Official Committee for Regional Policy and the Nordic Council of Ministers for providing this unique opportunity to develop new research-based knowledge and for encouraging cooperation and the exchange of ideas between Nordic researchers.

Nordregio would furthermore like to thank all of the involved research teams and the programme's Steering Committee for their continuing contributions to the Nordic discourse on regional development.

Ole Damsgaard
Director

Margareta Dahlström
Coordinator of the research programme

Authors' preface

This report looks at eight regional and municipal centres in Iceland, Sweden, Finland and Norway, and explores how they have been reinvented in the context of globalization. Nine researchers from the four Nordic countries involved have carried out fieldwork in Kemi and Kemijärvi, Pajala and Övertorneå, Kirkenes and Narvik, and Egilsstaðir and Fjarðabyggð. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people from these places who, in generous and inspiring ways, have shared their valuable knowledge and perspectives with the researchers through group interview sessions and individual interviews.

A network of nine Nordic researchers has developed and run this project by means of three workshops (in Narvik, Tornio, and Tromsø) held in 2005 and 2006. Through the great efforts of each researcher, supported by electronic communications, extensive and successful international teamwork has been achieved, co-ordinated by the secretariat at the Department of Planning and Community Studies, University of Tromsø. Though working within a Nordic researchers' network, we must also pay tribute to the research environment in the departments of our 'home' institutions at the University of Lapland (Rovaniemi), the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Uppsala), the University of Iceland (Reykjavík), Finnmark University College (Alta), and the University of Tromsø. The research presented in this book is imprinted with the perspectives of the researchers, based within different social science disciplines, i.e. human geography, social anthropology, sociology, political science, and learning science.

The research and production of this report has been made possible mainly with funding from Nordregio through the research programme 'Internationalisation of regional development policies – needs and demands in the Nordic countries' (2005–2006). We would like to thank Nordregio for their support and for valuable feedback from the steering committee and others at the Research Programme Seminar in Stockholm on 9 November 2006. We especially thank Margaretha Dalström at Nordregio for her kind and professional support throughout the project. This research has been additionally funded by The Research Council of Norway through the project 'Globalisation From Below? Localized Transformations in a Northern Perspective' (University of Tromsø, 2003–2007).

Finally, we are grateful for the critical and constructive support and guidance received from our research colleagues Jørgen Ole Bærenholdt (Roskilde University) and Gry Paulgaard (University of Tromsø). Thanks also to Mary Katherine Jones (University of Tromsø) for proofreading all the texts; to Tor Arne Lillevoll for his assistance in preparing the map; to Annemari Kivivuori (University of Lapland) and Bryndis Zoëga (Reykjavík University) for their fieldwork assistance; and to Eva Sigrid Braaten, who replaced Brynhild Granås in a highly competent fashion at the secretariat during the finalization process of this report.

On behalf of the authors,

Torill Nyseth
Editor & Scientific Project Leader

Brynhild Granås
Editor & Administrative Project Leader

Chapter 1

Dimensions of place reinvention

Brynhild Granås, University of Tromsø, and Torill Nyseth, University of Tromsø

Introduction

Narvik is a town that has been in transition from LKAB (a Swedish mining company) and NSB (The Norwegian Railroad Company). I guess that Narvik earlier thought that this was sufficient... But LKAB downscaled and NSB vanished. It has been a problem for Narvik to be attentive to this. It's like the town hasn't been able to find its legs in this new situation... It has been a struggle to get out of the past...

From an individual interview, Narvik

From Egilsstaðir in Eastern Iceland to Kirkenes on the Russian border of Eastern Finnmark, this study explores recent developments within eight Nordic towns and villages that have undergone major changes. Like Narvik, addressed in this quotation, all eight places¹ have formed the scene of severe economic restructuring over the past 20 years. Situated at 'the top of Europe', this region has been defined as 'the northern periphery'. The peripheral, however, is always relative. For example, parts of this region are now located at the centre of a global race to secure energy resources, particularly petroleum resources in the Barents Sea and hydro-electric power in Iceland.

The places studied are located in the sheltered hinterland and on the exposed coast of Eastern Iceland, and below steep mountains and in the gentle taiga landscapes of the Northern Norwegian fjords. The slightly rolling Torne Valley landscape of rich soil, vast forests and powerful watercourses frames the two Swedish places and stretches into Finnish Lapland, where the two Finnish places are to be found. This area of Northern Europe is historically marked by ethnic diversity and the Sámi people of the North Calotte and Russia practised a nomadic lifestyle within an area that was divided relatively late by national boundaries. Rich natural resources, such as fish and timber, provided a means of livelihood and from the late 17th century onwards, water power and minerals contributed to prepare the ground for the industrialization of the area. The labour movement gained ground within these regions and the social democratic welfare state system of the Nordic countries, implemented during the 20th century, also found its way to the peripheries.

Today, the ethnic diversity of these territories has been strengthened by migration from mainly East European and South-East Asian countries, though there are considerable national variations. The ethnic mobilization of particularly the Sámi, but also the Kven, imprints regional development on the North Calotte. Unlike other parts of Northern and Central Europe, the Nordic periphery described here is still heavily involved in the extraction of its natural resources, including the petroleum industry. Nevertheless, the fall-off and relocation of sections of the manufacturing industry has had a severe impact in specific places. This development has been paired with a downscaling of welfare state services. Today, out-migration and an increased percentage of elderly population challenge most places in the area, while at the same time there are evident signs of centralization *within* this periphery. A change from one-company locations to increasingly heterogeneous local economies also characterizes the context; manifold businesses are found to be connected not only to manufacturing industries, but also to primary industries, knowledge-intensive industries, cultural economic activities and services, tourism being one of the fastest-growing economies.

¹ Throughout this report we refer to the *eight* places that we have studied. One of these places is Fjarðabyggð in Eastern Iceland which actually consists of three smaller places. See table 1 for more details on the places studied in this report.

These places are located within the formerly ‘barbarous’ but now ‘welfare’ societies of Northern Europe (Eder 2006). More exactly, they are what Eder speaks of as ‘the Northern border’ of these areas: ‘Beyond the Northern border there is no threatening Other... There seems to be just wilderness... The North represents the natural past, a kind of primordial reference of a people struggling with nature’ (Ibid: 265). Investigations made in this research go beyond such hegemonic narratives of life in places in these territories. The report describes narratives and identities of place within specific contexts of changing economic materiality, with social structure and cultural orientation equally on the move. A fishing village may turn into a manufacturing industrial site, while iron ore towns turn into service centres. Old manufacturing plants may close down as new apartment buildings and shopping malls pop up.

Place reinvention

The concept of *place reinvention* directs the approach of this report. This place development notion addresses *changes* that have an influence on the meaning of a place for an inhabitant, for example, a visiting tourist or external financial actors. By place meanings we refer to how people understand or take in a place – they are ‘representations’, ‘images’, ‘narratives’, or ‘identities’ of place. This research is designed to intercept the place meaning aspect of *different* development processes. Even though the word ‘invention’ may bring about associations of entrepreneurialism and evident intentionality, such an interpretation is more narrow than the actual approach in this report: place reinvention does not exclude entrepreneurialism, but instead is open to the idea of grasping the complexity of elements that bring about a changing understanding of place.

The study of development and change implies a similar focus on *continuity*, as will be emphasized through the analyses. The researchers behind this study have not set out to expose a historical shift in place development. The reinvention approach is, rather, open to the idea of describing the non-linear process of place transformation linked to both continuity and discontinuity. A place is under reinvention, but never reinvented in the sense of a final historical outcome. The ‘extract’ of this study is like a ‘historical snapshot’, where we do not expose any ‘final outcome’ of transformation processes. Instead, the research is undertaken to explore how place perceptions become part of place development, and whether this involves dramatic change or not.

A comprehensive approach to ‘place’

In everyday language, the word ‘place’ is quite unproblematic. In social analyses, however, the term calls for specifications. Place is not a straightforward, but rather a diffuse concept that may refer to several quite different aspects. This study relates to Agnew’s (1987) identification of three complementary and interrelated dimensions of place that together constitute a comprehensive place approach:

- Place as location, i.e. a more ‘objective’ and from-the-outside description of development, where place becomes a physical and material background that lays down premises for social and economic life.
- Place as a sense of place, i.e. the place from-the-inside is additionally viewed as something ‘subjective’ that people experience and understand. Descriptions of how people think and feel about a place contribute to analyses of how people act with regard to place.
- Place as a social context (locale), i.e. describing a place as the ideas, actions and institutions of the people, as something intersubjective and social-spatial, formed by social practices (everyday routines and social institutions)².

² This classification of place is based on Agnew’s identification of three dimensions of place used within geography (Agnew 1987, referred in Agnew et. al. 1996, Agnew & Duncan 1989, and Gunnerud Berg & Dale 2004). Our presentation relies heavily on the thorough accounts of Gunnerud Berg & Dale (2004).

Location is the first important aspect of place in this study; the agenda is set in the first place by the geographical location of all eight places within a Nordic periphery. In addition, the criterion of severe economic restructuring has played a decisive role in the selection of places. Together, these two location aspects have directed our attention towards Kemi and Kemijärvi in Finnish Lapland, to Pajala and Övertorneå in Swedish Norrbotten, to Kirkenes and Narvik in Northern Norway, and to Egilsstaðir and Fjarðabyggð in Eastern Iceland. Common to all these places is the fact that they are challenged by the practicalities implied by their location.

Sense of place: Additionally, the places are challenged by the *ideas* implied by this location. Even though outsiders may have specific ideas about peripheral places, the understanding that local inhabitants have of their place may be quite different to that of being off-centred, as this report will elaborate. In this research, place is perceived as more than simply a nature-given material and ‘objective’ location. It also has a subjective dimension, and is infused with meaning.

Social context: Additionally, we perceive place to be what people make and do – it is the arena for activities in everyday life and it is formed by people’s social practices. As Shields (1991) puts it, places are in this sense sites for someone and of something.

This comprehensive approach to place opens up the research to include a multitude of place development aspects. Firstly, economic or physical development – related to a restructured labour market, for instance – which changes the premises for life within a place (place as location). Secondly, inhabitants changing the way they act with regard to a place as the way they feel and think about that place changes (place as a sense of place). Finally, when social institutions – the school, the workplace, the cinema, the shopping mall, etc. – change, as well as people’s ideas and actions, then so does the local social context (place as social context/locale). This report presents research that is open to interconnection between these three aspects, with the aim of better accounting for place transformation. At the same time, each chapter of the report will emphasize these aspects differently.

Place reinvention: Dynamics and governance aspects

Persistent and ambivalent strategic endeavours to model and formulate place identities and images are found in all the places involved in this study. When the material development, as well as the cultural and social development of each place rolls forward, the basis for identity and image articulation also changes. We observe that place interpretations are pulled into place development, but not in isolation from entrepreneurs, politicians or bureaucrats. Rather, place narratives also evolve and manifest themselves within discrete development processes that may be quite unintentional or informal – a new image of a place may be just as much an unintended coincidence, out of the hands of local leaders.

The complex interplay between strategic development and discrete and continuous processes of change is investigated in this research. Here, the dynamics of place reinvention are identified and explored, based on the comprehensive approach to place described above. Characteristics of the local economy, implementations of cultural economy, the impact of high-level politics, local political practices and cultures, place development discourses, power structures, the physical materiality of place and governance regimes – these are the dynamics of place reinvention that have been identified through this research and they are discussed in the following eight thematic chapters. They are all interwoven processes that affect each other and they are linked to place meanings. The strategic-informal interplay involved accentuates governance aspects involved in place reinvention and this will be a particular focus of discussion. Additionally, the analyses in each chapter bring about a knowledge of the role that place meanings have in place development, how they evolve and how place meanings relate to growth or decline.

The aim of the research has been to contribute to a knowledge base for policy development within the field of place development. Today, this policy division directs more attention and public funding towards the specifically ‘territorial’ development approaches concerning *The Place*. Examples include place image projects, locally embedded ‘cultural economies’ and

questions concerning a place's attractiveness. In addition, these new growth policies are paired with a strong emphasis on new governance regimes. Today's Northern European Periphery contextualizes these discussions in ways that may inform not only the Nordic policy field of regional and place development, but also its corresponding international academic discourses.

Theoretical framing

Globalization

The concept of place reinvention stands within a terrain of different theoretical discourses by which this research project has been inspired and framed. Within the boundary of this frame is the metadiscourse on globalization. The concept of globalization became central in social sciences during the 1980s and discussions on the dynamics and implications of globalization have unfolded in an extensive range of discussions over the years that have followed. Part of what is found within this range is the pursuance of 'classical' social science issues concerning the actor-structure relationship and questions of historical continuity and discontinuity.

With regard to the actor-structure dimension, this research project gives priority to an actor-close approach, including social interaction and interpretations, and sees this as a way of understanding the phenomena of globalization. We also perceive empirical phenomena of globalization as stretching back in time in a long-term historical span of migration, international politics and trade, and cultural fluctuations. We nevertheless recognize the impact of elements of discontinuity and change that have marked at least the Western world since the 1970s, as described by Hutton and Giddens (2000), for example, who identify four overlapping trends involved in globalization: the worldwide communication revolution, the arrival of the 'weightless' or knowledge-based economy, the fall of Soviet Union communism and transformations at the level of everyday life. The mobility and ideologies included are certainly also present in a Northern European context.

The rediscovery of place

Globalization addresses many aspects of social change, and central to this report is how the 'fortune' of a place is reflected. What is place if the world is global? In fact, place is a spatial term and spatiality constitutes a central element in the discourse on globalization (Harvey 1989, Giddens 1991). In the wake of this discourse follows a 'rediscovery' of the importance of place. Ulrich Beck (2002:23) insists that 'you cannot even think about globalisation without referring to specific locations and places'. Places may be understood as sites from which forms of mobility as well as fixity may be empirically observed (Savage et al 2005:1). Furthermore, place is not a victim of globalization that leaves the actors within specific places with no option but to 'adjust' to circumstances. Rather, places are moments through which the global is constituted, invented, co-ordinated and produced. They are agents in globalization (Massey 2004:11). This is constitutive to the approach of this research project, seeking to uncover Northern European place-specific 'mementos' of globalization.

The 'singularity' of place in global competition

From the field of urban studies a considerable discourse on entrepreneurial managerialism has emerged over the past 20 years, with David Harvey's work as a core reference. Economic and political structural change is addressed in relation to increased inter-place competition. The research presented in this report is also related to this discourse, but with some important differences in basic assumptions and approaches, to which we shall return.

The urban context described by Harvey (2000) lists a number of '...difficulties that have beset capitalist economies since the recession of 1973.' (Ibid, 51). These difficulties are 'Deindustrialization, widespread and seemingly 'structural' unemployment, fiscal austerity at both the national and local levels, all coupled with a rising tide of neo-conservatism and much stronger appeal (...) to market rationality and privatisation.' (Ibid, 51). Though described at a highly abstract structural level, such development patterns of economic avalanches and market

rationality thinking are also reflected in the places covered by this report. According to Harvey, part of this picture is a weakening of the nation state, particularly in the sense that it can no longer control international money flow. Therefore, 'Investment increasingly takes the form of a negotiation between international finance capital and local powers.' (Ibid, 51).

According to Harvey, strengthening the attractiveness of the locality is thus perceived as a response within such a situation (1989). The local 'power' in relation to negotiations is also dependent on the attractiveness of the place per se. Places are involved in competitive networks of a global range (Hall 2001), i.e. there has been a spatial and numerical increase in such networks. In addition to this, places are 'individualized', in the sense that they are '...subject to fewer protective measures and structures than has previously been the case.' (Ibid., 124). With regard to the latter element of deregulation, it should be stressed that the Nordic welfare state system still provides regulatory systems that mitigate this effect. Nevertheless, even the Nordic countries have abandoned sections of the former bodies of their welfare state regimes, a trend that has impacted strongly on the relatively small and fragile networks and economies of the places covered by this study.

A hyper-mobile character of economic activity, with seemingly uncommitted and 'footloose' capital, may also explain the instability that has been forged and the rising competition between places. Non-industrial economic activities are not as bound to space as was former industrial production (Hall 1997). Such mobile economic activities are found within new patterns of heterogeneous local economies in the places covered by this study, e.g. knowledge-intensive and/or businesses with a micro technology basis. The growing tourist sector in the area also bears the same characteristic of being unrestricted to place, in the sense that tourist streams may easily change direction to approach new destinations. But it is important to add here that the Western industrialization of our times found within this area is also imprinted by instability and a reduced long-term commitment to place. This element of competition also clearly affects the tug-of-war where local actors are fighting to impress industrial investors and offer them the best possible terms to convince them to invest in a specific place. This element seems to be undermined by the field of not only entrepreneurial managerialism, but also urban studies in general, generating theories within specific global urban centres where the manufacturing industry has left the arena. Industrialization certainly has not left the surface of the earth, not even in the Western world, as we shall discuss in Chapter 2. The further development of this scientific field would benefit from taking this into account. The 'singularity' of place, left alone in the global market to present its unique qualities, is indeed tackled from many angles, and is also connected to re-industrialization.

According to Jenkins, rural parts of Europe have remained largely sheltered from the impacts of global competition that has taken place in urban and industrial centres (Jenkins 2003:23). Jenkins further argues that the competition and associated deconstruction and reconstruction of place identities have been at their greatest in urban areas. As is probably evident to the reader, that statement is questioned in this report, since traces of similar development patterns are also found in our case. The diverse European periphery bears the hallmarks of de-industrialization and evolving new economies in a different mix to that found in the Western 'central' cities, be they London, Manchester or Baltimore. The impact of the structural, economic and political changes of globalization, fundamental to the above discussions, also impacts significantly in places in the Northern European periphery. Even socio-cultural changes, such as the growth of migrant communities, are present in many of the places in this study, and these supersede place homogeneity, if such homogeneity ever existed in the first place, since this region has been multi-ethnic for a long period of time.

Changing politics and new governance regimes

Changing politics also influence the processes of place reinvention. Several northern towns and localities have been one-company towns, dependent on a single manufacturing company, marked by a Fordist mode of production and a defined class structure. The political regimes in these places have been stable and the social democratic parties of the Nordic countries have

ruled the local arenas in a version resembling a one-party system. As is evident in all cases in this study, this era is now fading out.

Lash and Urry (1994) account for a range of changes that follow the passage from such biased industrial eras to new and more heterogeneous economic structures. Their descriptions very much emphasize the step from industry to service, further elaborated as a step from production to consumption. It is a simplified description of the new economies, since they are all labelled 'service' and continued industrialization is not accounted for. Still, their exposition gives a good account of the transition from a homogeneous to a heterogeneous local economic structure, and the implications of such a transition. New political cultures have emerged, defining new rules of the game for local governments (Clark 2003). Class politics is not dead, but less pronounced. Social stratification is expressed in new ways. New social issues are raised on the public agenda concerning social patterns, lifestyles and cultural norms about 'the good life'. More issue-oriented politics have led to a decline in hierarchical political organization. Fiscal crises have lessened the space for political action. This new political culture is expressed by a transformation in the classic left-right dimension. Such changes also affect what Lash and Urry refer to as 'place-images' (Lash and Urry 1994: 216). This includes the social composition of the local population with regard to class, gender, race and generation. With economic restructuring follows a recomposition of class distinctions and social cleavages; political behaviour changes and new groups may enter positions of power where they are able to impose their preferences, values and perspectives upon a town. This point is discussed in several chapters in the report and is especially elaborated in Chapter 6.

New governance regimes are likely to appear as consequences of a break with established ways of understanding politics. Within a local community, a shared experience of crisis that releases a feeling of shared destiny may constitute an example of such a break. The loss of a main local company would be a typical example. Something has to be done, and action is required on all sides. At the same time, people realize that it is not possible to solve the task 'in the usual way'. Such a feeling of shared destiny may constitute a new discursive framework involving different actors within a local community working together, bringing actors from different positions together and establishing a governance network. From the start, place transformation is a field that is not 'governance-able' through formal decision-making, i.e. through 'government' alone. This is because it concerns a number of different processes within, but maybe just as many beyond formal systems of 'conductors'. To the degree that government is still there, it may be especially as a co-ordinator or as metagovernance, in the sense of developing municipal strategies for place development. However, strategies will never work without involvement from outside: from civil society, from the business sector, from the region, etc.

Within entrepreneurial managerialism, the discourse further relates to how local regimes evolve into entrepreneurial ones as a response to this competitive situation. The place becomes a scene where structural development patterns intersect and trigger off such new regimes to enhance the attractiveness of a place. Entrepreneurialism may be defined as a political prioritization of pro-growth economic development. Harvey argues that part of this involves the public sector, aiming to attract investors, absorbing risks that formerly lay on the shoulders of private companies, through taking over the role of facilitator, e.g. with regard to infrastructural provision (Harvey 2000). This tendency is reflected in the cases in this study, where associated, organizational and institutional shifts from government to governance are apparent. Established governance institutions, for example, include public-private partnerships and other alliances between public and private agencies. In a peripheral Nordic context, with limited access to private capital, we sometimes encounter considerable efforts to develop governance networks locally, as in the case of Övertorneå, and sometimes more thorough examples, such as in the case of Narvik, both discussed in Chapter 5. In general what we find is a different pattern, where regional municipal actors are more central within the networks.

The practices of selling and the promotion of place are described as being tightly involved in such entrepreneurial regimes. As Brenner and Theodore (2002) point out, it is a part of the

true neo-liberal vision that a place should be branded and marketed. The distinctive feature of entrepreneurial places is that a place-image is proactive in promoting the competitiveness of economic spaces (Jessop 1997). Within such practices, of which we can also perceive traces in our cases, sometimes powerful discursive simplifications of the world are linked to the process of image-building. Such images may mobilize and legitimate particular sets of actions or policies, as we shall discuss in this report.

Beyond place promotion

The discourse on entrepreneurial managerialism highlights recognizable and central development aspects that influence the places investigated in this report. Nevertheless, framed by place reinvention, this research takes quite another approach. Hubbard (1996) claims that entrepreneurial managerialism has had too narrow a focus on place promotion as a response to the competitive situation, and has overlooked the physical regeneration that is also involved. His argument is partly that ‘...the attempt to construct a new city image is seldom limited to the launching of a new advertising campaign’ (Ibid, 1442).

Although we agree and will discuss this aspect more particularly in Chapter 9, we shall nevertheless introduce a more fundamental critique that also affects Hubbard’s own argument: place promotion and the physical regeneration of place are not ‘answers’ to or operationalizations of entrepreneurial managerialism. Rather, we question why the phenomenon of entrepreneurialism and its striving towards image construction has become the social point of reference in the discourse. Is this the correct ‘labelling’ of the underlying process of social change involved? Returning to the main concept of place reinvention, this report takes another point of departure and acknowledges that the intentional work on place meaning that is touched by the image discourse above does not operate alone on the social scene. As the chapters in this report will show, matters of place meaning are also involved in interplays with informal levels of social processes that together place the meaning of place on the agenda, not only in terms of strategic development work, but also in terms of people’s everyday life experiences.

Hubbard also stresses that new urban landscapes are not simply expressions of broader structural changes, but ‘they are centrally implicated in such processes’ (Ibid, 1442). This is a relevant argument and should also include place promotion activities. Place marketing is a symbolic communication of place, not only towards the prime target groups of external actors; it also demonstrates locally how ‘our place’ should be understood, an argument that will be elaborated in Chapter 5. This exemplification underpins the argument above about the involvement of informal processes in place development enhancing the meaning of place.

Underlying this, entrepreneurial managerialism makes use of structural explanations as to why it is important for local economic life, within a global competitive setting, that the name of a place should be well known and arouse specific and positive associations. As such, these structural theorists speak to a central aspect in this research project. Nevertheless, the fortitude of this research is its comprehensive place approach that attends to both subjective and intersubjective perspectives. The bottom-up approach is designed to address more than the hypothesis in, for example, the neo-Marxist and highly material-structural theories of David Harvey. The discourse referred to above thus very much constitutes a framing of the research done, and situates the main research questions within a broader scientific discourse.

The local *interpretations* we observe of structural levels involved are also an interesting aspect of our material. Informants seem to accept the view that they can no longer wait for help from their nation state, but are placed under the unavoidable pressure of an innovation imperative. Their interpretation of the relation between the place and the world at certain points confirms a breakdown of the global hierarchy and puts the place in a position where ‘everything is possible’. Their economized language, as seen in the case of the branding of the town of Narvik, may be interpreted as a local pinning-down and practising of a global trend that perceives the world through the eyes of economic neo-liberalism. And this sight does indeed at

certain points give actors the idea that managing our influence on the symbolic attributes of place should be part of the process of local economic regeneration.

Beyond place identity

The informal ways in which practices that enhance place meaning are played out may be captured analytically through 'place identity'. To start with, it is important to distinguish between the social practice of identity and identity as an analytical concept (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Place identity as a social practice is not entirely innocent and involves power that, for example, affects local political priorities. When used analytically, as acknowledged in many of today's critical cultural analyses, there is a danger that descriptions of place identity may compel stories from informants into reproductions and reinforcements of certain over-harmonizing 'versions' of what a place is or should be. Concerning the notion of a 'global sense of place', Doreen Massey questioned the thinking of place in the context of globalization not as something stable and fixed, but rather as fluid, open and porous. Increased mobility has made places more diverse. As class has become deconstructed by economic and political change, as we see in the cases of this study, local identity has fragmented and an increasing diversity of culture has produced new social practices, as well as new social cleavages and tensions. This is a description of place identity as being contested and linked to power.

Within a constructivist perspective that, in different versions, has dominated critical cultural analyses over the past decade, place identity is, like Massey's version, generally packaged with specifications indicating that place identity is unstable, in flux, fragmented, contested, negotiated, etc. The authors of this report relate strongly to such 'in flux' and 'contested' understandings of matters of place perception and place-specific collective dimensions. Place identity forms part of the text throughout the report, partly with reference to social practices, e.g. identity politics, and partly from an analytical perspective.

Nevertheless, the notion of place identity takes second place throughout the report, to the advantage of other analytic concepts that address meaning structures with regard to place. Such concepts include 'narratives', 'discourses', 'sense of place', 'place image', 'place perceptions', etc., depending on the more specific analytical discussion laid out. As such, the analyses of this report correspond to some degree with Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) critique of identity as an analytical concept. They suggest that identity should be replaced by a variety of alternative concepts when used analytically, in order to account for the more specific processes and mechanisms involved (Ibid, 5). Uttering reservations with regard to identity through the notions of 'in flux' and 'contestedness' is 'clichéd constructivism' (Ibid, 11) and a compulsory exercise that tends to signalize '...stance rather than words conveying meaning'. This is a description that we recognize to some degree, even though we are not ready to abandon the concept of place identity.

As part of our approach, none of the analyses are intended to convey the 'true' or 'authentic' place spirit in any of the places involved, as the ontological status of such an essentialist understanding of place is questionable and people within places '...always have multiple identities' (Holloway and Hubbard, 2001). At the same time, we seek to describe not only the fragmented, fluid and contested meaning structures surrounding place, but also to identify stable and dominant place meanings as they appear at a certain time within a specific and relationally defined context, as discussed for example in Chapter 4.

Place, culture and economy – the cultural economy

Also found within the terrain surrounding the main concept of place reinvention is the notion of cultural economy. Cultural economy is not only related to this study in being often spoken of as central to the new local economies that have evolved as part of the post-industrial epochs of restructuring. A broader interpretation suggests that cultural economy is a concept that may help us to capture cultural and social relations concerning economic life (Amin and Thrift, 2005). This is in line with our interest in a close relationship between cultural economy and place. Economy, culture and place could be seen as part of a symbiotic relationship (Scott

2000). We shall argue somewhat differently to Amin and Thrift and suggest perceiving cultural economic activities as examples of this relationship, though not the only examples.

First, however, we observe that there is a certain confusion regarding the meaning of cultural economy. This disorder is found not only in lay discourse but also within the social sciences. Gibson and Kong (2005) give an informative overview of ways of defining cultural economy: 1) as a way of describing a sector, 2) as a way of describing the labour market and production organization, 3) as a way of describing all economic activities, measuring their impact on local economies in relation to a 'creativity index' (with Florida 2002 as a key reference), and 4) as a way of describing a convergence of format within economies (media, technology). Their point is not to define cultural economy but to '...acknowledge the polyvalence and address specific research agendas from there.' (Ibid, 546).

In this research project, cultural economy is mainly approached as a sector including, in our cases, tourism and the arts and entertainment industries. But a weak point in Gibson and Kong's argument is that it does not account for the place relatedness of cultural economic activities. What is common to these economic activities is that they are heavily tied to place-related culture. As such, matters concerning the fortune of these industries relate very much to the meaning of the place.

But this is also the case for other economic activities in different places. It is hard to find any economic activity that is not tied to place culture, to the meaning of the place, be it with regard to recruiting people or to attracting investors or customers. Nevertheless, we do not speak of the service economy of, for example, trade as cultural economy; nor do we refer to manufacturing industry or high-tech firms in such terms. This point is taken up by Florida (2002) but, as Gibson and Kong object, 'This approach misses the complexity of cultural activity, and reduces contradictions and interpretations to a numerical scale' (Gibson and Kong 2005, 545). This report may in fact be read as a document that aims to investigate precisely such complexities involved.

Methods

The report is based on fieldwork completed by four national research teams of two or three researchers, performed in eight places. A total of nine authors have conducted this research in the places of their respective countries. The places were visited for approximately two weeks over two or three visits. There was a careful selection of places, according to the criteria that they are places that have undergone severe economic transformation over the past 20 years, and these transformations have challenged the symbiotic life of the material, social and subjective place, as described above (cf. Agnew).

The study gives priority to certain comparative elements, whilst others are less emphasized. The exploratory character of the research is decisive to considerations concerning comparison. The aim of the research has been to perform in-depth place studies that provide knowledge of complexities involved when place meanings take on more central roles in local development (cf. the first part of this chapter). Therefore, the identification of dynamics of place reinvention has been a first step in the research process. The comparison starts when, through the second step, some of these aspects have been selected for further analysis: at this point, two or three places are compared according to one selected aspect. This emphasis has been made to provide knowledge concerning the dynamics of place reinvention. Comparison between all the places included in the study on all these aspects would not be possible within the framework of this project, but some such lines of comparison are drawn at a more general level at the end of the report.

The main section of data consists of semi-structured individual and focus group interviews. Common to all the teams is the fact that local leaders within political life, municipal administration, the business sector and cultural life have been interviewed individually or in pairs. Between ten and 25 such interviews, one to two hours in length, were carried out in each place. Additionally, between three and six group interviews took place of approximately the same duration. Between three and seven people took part in these sessions. The aim was

mainly to enlarge and supplement information provided through interviews at a leadership level. The groups were set up somewhat differently in each place, depending on considerations concerning who could supplement and contribute most to the comprehensive data material on existent place perspectives. Examples of such groups include young people, retired people, women and intermediate level employees. In addition, a diverse set of documents is included in the data, from statistics on economic development, the employment situation and demographic data to historical literature, municipal plans and strategies.

The individual interviews were carried out to provide information about specific development processes in existence, and also to provide data on place interpretations. The focus group interviews mainly emphasized the latter data aspect, but additionally provided relevant information on more practical matters. All the interviews fronted questions of change and continuity within a specific place with regard to its economic and cultural life, governmental and municipal activities, and local identity. Specific events, processes and projects of place transformative importance were particularly described in the individual interviews. Also included were specific projects or informal processes that related to the image or identity of the place. The question of identifying the rhetoric and terminology used was decisive to our way of phrasing questions. Most interviews also aimed to identify local and external actors and networks with the power to influence these processes and also, indirectly, learn who was excluded from such processes.

The main difference between the data output of the two different interview methods was that the group session opened up the opportunity for more informal reflections and provided us as researchers with informal descriptions of the place; otherwise, many individual interviews with people 'in positions' tended to pursue more official lines. In addition, the focus group method brought a positive and strong dynamic to the interview situation, where people encouraged and guided each other from topic to topic in conversation, less controlled by the researcher's questions. At certain points this provided rich and unexpected information about life in a particular place. Nevertheless, the quality of the individual interviews is indisputable, since this provides a more closed setting of discretion that gave access to more sensitive process-specific data.

With two exceptions, each of the chapters explores and compares two or three places with regard to one aspect of place reinvention. Altogether, eight aspects of place reinvention are discussed in the chapters (see chapter overview below). These aspects have been identified through the fieldwork. The researchers have co-written thematic chapters across the national teams. At the end of the report, lines are drawn between all the chapters: the dynamics of place reinvention described throughout the report inform specific policy fields that approach place development. In the last chapter, dynamics of place reinvention processes in all eight places are therefore compared at a more general level, and special attention is paid to governance aspects.

The places studied

Egilsstaðir and Fjarðabyggð in Eastern Iceland

The two Icelandic places studied are to be found in Eastern Iceland. In an Icelandic context Egilsstaðir, with its 2,300 inhabitants, is a relatively sunny and exceptionally well-wooded place. In summer it is rather lively, and the town centre farmhouse, with grazing cows, is turned into a guesthouse. Egilsstaðir and Fellabær developed on each side of the large river Lagarfljót after a bridge was constructed in 1905. The municipality of Egilsstaðir was established in 1947 as a service centre at the crossroads of this agricultural region. Since 2004, Egilsstaðir has been the centre of the merged Fljótshádalshérað municipality. Today, this small town is still a service centre, including an airport, a regional upper secondary school and a farmers' co-op. Over the past few years the nearby construction of a hydropower dam and an aluminum plant has contributed to economic growth. As construction activities were slowing down in 2006, people

expressed hope for the future vitality of Egilsstaðir as a ‘knowledge centre’, commercial centre for the region and a centre for tourism and culture/art.

Just south-east of Egilsstaðir is Fjarðabyggð, a municipality that was established in 1998, when three previously ‘independent’ townships – Reyðarfjörður, Eskifjörður and Neskaupstaður (or Norðfjörður) – merged. Further enlargement took place in 2006, but these three places form the core of Fjarðabyggð. Each small town is located in a separate fjord. They cling to the shore, backed by high mountains, which have sometimes sent devastating snow avalanches down onto the settlements. Each town has a distinctive history. Eskifjörður is an old trading place that developed into a fishing town in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Neskaupstaður also came into being as a fishing town at this time, as did Reyðarfjörður, although the formation of the latter also had a lot to do with its location, with regard to transportation and commerce in the inland rural communities being linked to the building of



Picture 1: The eight places studied

Source: The Norwegian Mapping Authority. Processed by Tor Arne Lillevoll

the road network. Road connections are indeed a continual source of concern for these communities, especially for Neskaupstaður, which is geographically and emotionally somewhat removed from the other two towns by the mountain pass of Oddsskarð (632m above sea level), which is a considerable barrier to interaction. Different political cultures have also characterized these three towns, but what they have all had to grapple with is a host of radical socio-economic changes that have affected all the fisheries communities in Iceland, contributing to considerable out-migration. The 'solution' in this case has been the establishment of a very large industrial plant, namely an aluminium smelter.

The Torne Valley: Övertorneå and Pajala

The Torne Valley area on both sides of the Torne River constitutes the Finnish-Swedish border. After the peace between Sweden and Russia of 1809, this border was drawn right through a Finnish-speaking area, and on the Swedish side the language of Meänkieli (Torne Valley Finnish) developed. Since then, the inhabitants of the Torne Valley have been perceived as and have understood themselves to be residing between Finland and Sweden, rather than being Swedish. During the first decades of the 20th century 'Swedification', initiated by the government, led to the oppression of Meänkieli. But during the past few decades a cultural revitalization has created positive connotations for the language and Torne Valley history. This has come into being through a period of restructuring in the forest and mining industries that has involved a heavy economic decline and depopulation of the area.

Pajala, in the middle of this area, is marked by vivid debates and a high evaluation of the border culture and Meänkieli. The population of Pajala municipality is scattered over more than 80 villages. Five unregulated rivers flow through its great forests. The Lainio River runs through the town of Pajala, a physically rather undefined and 'invisible' centre. Small farming and forestry enterprises used to dominate in Pajala, although the iron works in Kengis, established in 1646, was intermittently active until 1879. Pajala lost most of its public sector employment during the 1990s, compared to other municipalities in Norrbotten county. These losses led to efforts to stimulate economic diversification and, in Pajala, to local policies to enhance the computer and electronic industry that has grown in significance.

While Pajala is sometimes referred to as the 'wild cousin', the neighbouring municipality of Övertorneå, to the south-east, is talked of as the 'wealthy' one. Historically, the municipal centre of Övertorneå, earlier called Matarengi, was a centre for trade in the Torne Valley. Following a decline during the 19th century the railway, inaugurated in 1914, re-established the importance of this small town. Övertorneå is situated on the shore of the Torne River, surrounded by a landscape of gentle hills, an agricultural landscape and fir tree forests. The small town centre is dominated by cosy wooden houses and small modern business premises along the one main street. The preconditions for agriculture are good, and the town is economically relatively well off compared to other municipalities in the area. But, like Pajala, Övertorneå has struggled with a loss of public sector employment during the 1990s.

Kemi and Kemijärvi in Finnish Lapland

Two places in Finnish Lapland form part of this study: east of the Torne Valley, the Bothnian Bay unfolds and a few kilometres further east along the coastline is the pulp industry town of Kemi, facing the Bothnian Bay to the south, located by the mouth of the river Kemijoki. From a town centre characterized mainly by modernist architecture and networks of streets the chimneys of the pulp factory and their rising industrial smoke can be seen on the western horizon. The old tradition of floating timber down the many rivers in the area made it possible to use Lapland's forests as a resource base for the timber industry, which started in Kemi during the 1860s. Over the years the town of Kemi, with its pulp industry, has been affected by historical turns and cycles in Finland, as well as the technological developments of the paper industry. The town has been a stage for strong leftist political movements. Today, the pulp industry and working-class culture still have their imprint on town life but unemployment, as well as an evolving service sector, has upset traditional class distinctions and understandings of place.

To the north, further up the river Kemijoki, is Rovaniemi, and 90 km to the north-east of this regional centre is the second Finnish section of this research: Kemijärvi is the northernmost Finnish municipality to hold town status. The large land area of the municipality (3,900 km²) includes a variety of hills, ridges, lakes and rivers. The famous winter tourist destination of Suomu is located in Kemijärvi, as is another, Pyhänturi. The end station of train traffic to North-East Finland is to be found in this town. The population decline has been severe here: it decreased from more than 16,500 in 1966 to 9,300 in 2005, with a 24% decline between 1990 and 2005, and the number of jobs decreased by 37% between 1990 and 2003. Dramatic changes have hit the industrial structure of Kemijärvi over the past two decades: several new industrial production themes – mostly modern – have started up, but new projects have been followed by closures; there seems to be a surprising pursuit of renewal in the town. Whilst unemployment figures have remained high, the industrial structural changes have left their visual and cultural ‘stamp’ on the place, preparing the ground for new directions to be taken.

Narvik and Kirkenes in Northern Norway

In Northern Norway two small towns, established as harbours for the shipping of iron ore, are included in the research. At the turn of the 19th century the Northern Norwegian town of Narvik developed from almost nothing in the area on and between the small Narvik peninsula and the mountains to the east and south-east. Four small farms developed into a town with a population of several thousand over a period of less than ten years (Aas 2001). Topographically, the settlement was strictly framed by the Ofoten Fjord and the steep mountain terrain. Through this challenging terrain a 42 km railroad track was constructed to the Swedish border, to transport iron ore from the Kiruna mines onto ships at the head of the Ofoten Fjord. In 1902 the railway opened and the town of Narvik was formally established. During the first post-war decades Narvik became known as the richest town in Northern Norway. The modern and well-planned appearance of blocks of houses, small high-rise districts, the central street plan, monumental buildings, sculptures and large square formations gives an impression of a strongly urbanized northern town. But the hey-day of this iron ore town faded during the 1980s and 1990s (Svendsen 2002) and Narvik inhabitants are now in search of new means of livelihood and identity.

The second Norwegian place in this study is Kirkenes, the last Norwegian outpost towards the Russian border. It grew from a small settlement into a town within a few years, between 1906 and 1908. Kirkenes was a small town dominated by wooden buildings with towers inspired by those of their neighbours to the east. Like all the areas of Northern Norway that were destroyed during the Second World War, almost the entire town was rebuilt after the war. The characteristic towers are gone and so are the small poorhouses that used to shelter those who could not afford to build their own houses. As in the case of many other northern towns these anomalous buildings, which referred to a particular period of Kirkenes history, have been replaced by the uniform style of post-war architecture – the former uniqueness of the town has been replaced by what is perceived by most inhabitants as a rather faceless appearance. In the words of one of the old local writers: ‘The iron and the concrete, the engineers and the architects have made everything so uniform that only the map tells you where you are’ (Borgen 1983). Today, the iron ore days of Kirkenes seem to be gone for good, but new palmy days are about to arrive, nurtured by high-level politics and the opening up of the Russian border.

Country	Level	01.01.1986	01.01.2006
Iceland	a. Eastern Iceland	13143	13822
	b. Fljótsdalshérað	¹⁾	3990
	c. Egilsstaðir		2307
	b. Fjarðabyggð	¹⁾	3907
	c. Reyðarfjörður		1424 ²⁾
	c. Eskifjörður		1008
	c. Neskaupstaður		1410
Sweden	a. Norrbotten	262 300	251 740
	b. Pajala	8 685	6 798
	c. Pajala town		2 000
	b. Övertorneå	6 101	5 229
	c. Övertorneå town		1 320
Finland	a. Finnish Lapland	200 943	185 800
	b. Kemi	26 426	22 831
	c. Kemi town		22 081
	b. Kemijärvi	12762	9293
	c. Kemijärvi town		9293 ³⁾
Norway	a. Nordland	242 240	236 257
	b. Narvik	18 750	18 365
	c. Narvik town		13 950
	a. Finnmark	75 668	72 937
	b. Sør-Varanger	9 853	9 464
	c. Kirkenes town		3 236

Table 1: Inhabitants in 1986 and 2006 on different levels: a. County/province. b. Municipality. c. Place. The figures for level c, place, for 1986 is not included in the table because of lack of adequate data sources.

¹⁾ The municipalities did not exist as such in 1986.

²⁾ A large part of the population currently registered in Reyðarfjörður consists of construction workers working at the aluminium smelter. Most live in a camp just outside the town. On December 31, 2004, just before the project was started, the town's population was 696.

³⁾ The town and the municipality of Kemijärvi cover the same area and have the same number of inhabitants.

Sources:

Norwegian figures: Statistics Norway: www.ssb.no

Finnish figures: City of Kemi, Regional Council of Lapland, Statistics

Finland: www.stat.fi

Icelandic figures: Hagstofa Íslands (2007). *Hagtölur*: www.hagstofa.is

Swedish figures: www.regionfakta.com, personal communication with municipality administrations, www.pajala.se and www.overtornea.se

Presentation of the chapters

In Chapter 2, *Industrious northern cultures? The uneasy relationship between an industrial order and a 'second modernity'*, Karl Benediktsson and Leena Suopajarvi describe Kemi in Finland and Fjarðabyggð in Iceland; places that relate to industrial modernity in different ways: Fjarðabyggð has been characterized by the fishing industry, which is subject to cyclical fluctuations, but linked to global markets. Today, a large aluminium smelter is under construction, providing hundreds of new jobs. In Kemi, the forest industries have provided the economic base, but recent restructuring has contributed to unemployment. New economic activities are now

evolving alongside the forest industry. The focus in this chapter is on how different types of work are perceived and appraised within the mixed context of an industrial economy and emergent new economies. This chapter further links such perceptions to a changing understanding of the meaning of place.

In Chapter 3, *Culture, cultural economy and gender in processes of place reinvention*, Magnfríður Júlíusdóttir and Yvonne Gunnarsdóttir analyse the meaning and strategic use of culture by different actors in Pajala, Sweden and Egilsstaðir, Iceland. In both places a discourse on cultural economy is becoming part of the regional development policy and economic aims are increasingly used in arguments in support of cultural activities. The analysis focuses on the gendered outcomes of that process. Other contestations discussed include tensions between visions of culture primarily to strengthen the local or territorial identity (inward-looking) and as a means to attract investment and people from other places (outward-looking).

The Norwegian town of Kirkenes, on the border with Russia, is analysed in Chapter 4, *Kirkenes: the 'bordered' reinvention of an industrial town*. The town was established one hundred years ago as part of the iron ore mining venture in the Sør Varanger municipality, an industry that closed down during the 1990s. The authors, Arvid Viken, Torill Nyseth and Brynhild Granås, describe how Kirkenes has recently been transformed within the 'bordered' relationships of civil society, business and politics in a combination of high-level and local political activity and by multinational and local business actors. The manifold transformations have led to the situation of Kirkenes becoming a 'Russianized' town in many ways, though local actors struggle to handle the implications of this development concerning the meaning of the place.

In Chapter 5, *The unique and the ordinary – reinventing place through symbolic communication*, Brynhild Granås and Yvonne Gunnarsdóttir address the negotiation of place understandings in Övertorneå in Sweden and Narvik in Norway. Brochure material intended to communicate these places to new inhabitants, investors, students and tourists is analysed in the way that the ordinary and unique features of each place are communicated. Furthermore, this analysis has been carried out in relation to interview data from these places, including considerations of how the material in question has come about and been produced. Place communication is approached as part of a local formation of place understanding; the analysis of the chapter explains how such formations play with, negotiate and exceed the dichotomy of unique-ordinary. This is done whilst also relating to the disbanding of the centre-periphery dichotomy.

With a basis in Kemi in Finnish Lapland and Narvik in Northern Norway, Chapter 6, *Politicized places*, elaborates contexts of politics and political change. Leena Suopajarvi and Arvid Viken highlight these places as 'politicized', firstly because the political history of the towns is central to an understanding of their inherent social dynamics, since the towns both have a long tradition of being ruled by a leftist hegemony. Secondly, this leftist hegemony has recently been challenged by new coalitions, a challenge that keeps political issues strictly on the agenda. The contradiction between these traditional leftist regimes and new ways of understanding and performing politics inform public discussion as well as the perception of politics among local inhabitants. Using Beck's theoretical framework, this chapter explores a possible 'reinvention of politics' at a local level.

The different processes involved in place reinvention also include the aspect of resources. On the basis of development processes in Finnish Kemijärvi, Seppo Aho, in Chapter 7, *Control over resources in place reinvention. Kemijärvi in far-away Lapland*, maps various resources that may be identified within processes of place transformation and reinvention: who controls such resources, and how? Central distinctions involved are those between the local and the external, and between public and private actors. Additionally, the third sector is introduced as a relevant sphere. Kemijärvi offers a rich series of remarkable 'openings' for development. Ten cases of various development themes are considered, representing significant sources of place reinvention; these cases have also been, and some still are, very important from the standpoint of the local economy and employment. But all of them make clear contributions to the image,

sense and social constructions in Kemijärvi; in this instance they are thus relevant (re)sources of place reinvention.

Chapter 8, *Concrete messages – material expressions of place reinvention*, places its focus on Egilsstaðir in Iceland and Kemijärvi in Finland. Karl Benediktsson and Seppo Aho take as their point of departure the fact that the arrival of industrial modernity during the late 20th century carried with it some highly visible material transformations. A new, 'modern' aesthetic was put to work in the town landscape. The current reinvention of Kemijärvi and Egilsstaðir has also been accompanied by material changes that express some of the values and forces lying behind the drive towards intentional development and a more complex place reinvention. The aesthetic of postmodernity has made some inroads. New landscapes of cultural and material consumption are evident. Nature has been reinvented as a landscape of pleasure for the townspeople and tourists, and various urban planning ideologies have been put to work. This chapter looks at these and other outward expressions of place reinvention and probes their meaning for both local inhabitants and outsiders.

With Pajala and Övertorneå in Sweden, as well as Narvik and Kirkenes in Norway as points of departure, Chapter 9, *Governing place reinvention: obstacles and challenges*, explores governance aspects of place reinvention. The authors, Torill Nyseth and Cecilia Waldenström, identify one development project within each place, projects that aim to enhance certain understandings of the place. The discussion shows how these projects are playing out within new governance structures, as well as their influence over such new regimes and their 'success'.

The final and concluding Chapter 10, *Towards an understanding of place reinvention*, written by Torill Nyseth, highlights comparative aspects along the lines of a number of selected questions. This chapter will further mainly address policy implications.

References

- Agnew, J. A., Livingstone, D. N. and Rogers, A. (1996) *Human geography: an essential anthology*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Agnew, J. A. and Duncan, J. S. (1989) *The Power of place: bringing together geographical and sociological imaginations*, Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Amin, A. and Thrift, N. (2005) What's left? Just the future, in: *Antipode*, 37, pp. 220–238.
- Aas, S. (2001) *Narviks historie, bind 1. Byen, banen og bolaget*, Narvik: Stiftelsen Narviks historieverk.
- Beck, U. (2002) *Globalisering og individualisering*, Oslo: Abstrakt forlag.
- Borgen, A. (1983) Handelsforhold 1926-1940. I: Aarnes, T, J. Rognmo and Å. Wærelius; *Sør-Varanger handel-, håndverk- og industriforening 75 år*, Kirkenes.
- Brenner, N. and Theodore, N. (2002) Cities and the Geographies of actually existing neoliberalism, in: *Antipode*, 34, 3, pp. 349–379.
- Brubaker, R. and F. Cooper (2000) Beyond 'Identity', in: *Theory and Society*, 29, 1, pp. 1–47.
- Clark, T. N. (2003) Globalisation and Transformation in Political Cultures. In: R. Hambleton, Savitch, H. V. and Stewart, M. (eds) *Globalism and local democracy. Challenges and Change in Europe and North America*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Eder, K. (2006) Europe's Borders. The Narrative Construction of the Boundaries of Europe, in: *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9 (2), pp. 255–271.
- Florida, R. (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class*, New York: Basic Books.
- Gibson, C. and Kong, L. (2005) Cultural economy: a critical review, in: *Progress in Human Geography* 29, 5, pp: 541–561.
- Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gunnerud Berg, N. and Dale, B. (2004) Sted – begreper og teorier, in: Gunnerud Berg, N., Dale, B., Lysgård, H. K. and Løfgren, A. (eds.) *Mennesker, steder og regionale endringer*, Trondheim: Tapir.
- Hall, T. (2001) *Urban Geography*, Florence, KY, USA: Routledge.

- Hall, T. (1997) Introduction. In: Hall, T. and Hubbard, P.: *The Entrepreneurial City. Geographies of politica, regime and representation*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Harvey, D. (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Harvey, D. (2000) From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism. The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism, in: Miles, M., Hall, T. and Borden, I. (eds.) *The City Cultures Reader*, London: Routledge.
- Holloway, L. and Hubbard, P. (2001) *People and place: the extraordinary geographies of everyday life*, Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- Hubbard, P. (1996) Urban design and city regeneration: social representations of entrepreneurial landscapes, in: *Urban Studies*, 33, 8, pp: 1441–1446.
- Hutton, W. and Giddens, A. (2000) *On the edge. Living with global capitalism*, London: Jonathan Cape.
- Jenkins, P. (2003): Space, place and territory; an analytical framework, in: C. Hague and P. Jenkins (eds): *Place identity, participation and planning*. London: Routledge.
- Jessop, B. (1997) The entrepreneurial city: Re-imaging localities, redesigning economic governance, or restructuring capital?, in: Jewson, N. and Macgregor, S. (eds.) *Transforming cities. Contested governance and new spatial divisions*, London: Routledge.
- Massey, D. (2004) Geographies of responsibility, in: *Geografiska Annaler*, 86B (1), pp: 5–18.
- Lash, S. and Urry, J. (1994) *Economies of Signs and Space*, London: Sage.
- Philo, C. and Kearns, G. (1993) *Selling Places. The City as Cultural Capital, Past and Present*, Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Savage, M., Bagnall, G. and Longhurst, B. (2005): *Globalization and Belonging*. London: Sage.
- Scott, A. J. (2000) *The cultural economy of cities: essays on the geography of image-producing industries*, London: Sage.
- Shields, R. (1991) *Places on the margin: alternative geographies of modernity*, London: Routledge.
- Svendsen, O. (2002) *Narviks historie, bind 2. Storbetstid, brytningstid, framtidshåp*, Narvik: Stiftelsen Narviks historieverk.

Chapter 2

Industrious cultures? The uneasy relationship between an industrial order and a 'second modernity'

Karl Benediktsson, University of Iceland, and Leena Suopajarvi, University of Lapland

Introduction

Are towns in the Nordic periphery heading out of an industrial era and into a future of a different kind? How do their own inhabitants answer that question? It is now more than thirty years since American sociologist Daniel Bell (1973) confidently asserted that the structures of industrial society were giving way to a different kind of societal organisation: the 'post-industrial society'. Numerous others have since presented broadly similar arguments, and ever more intricate labels continue to roll off academic production lines.

Many people living in the towns of the Nordic periphery are not entirely convinced by the (admittedly somewhat grand) narratives of postindustrial society, with the corresponding emphasis on 'immaterial' economic activities. Theirs are localities whose existence has always been predicated upon the utilization of the material bounties of nature – fish, timber, minerals, etc. For the best part of the 20th century, the industrial processing of these resources seemed to be the 'natural order' of economic life. No wonder perhaps that many people in these towns harbour deep suspicions towards suggestions about the disappearance of the industrial era. And yet, times are obviously changing. New technologies have reduced the need for industrial labour. A global marketplace has brought in new actors in faraway countries. At a micro level, social and cultural changes have deeply affected gender roles and prevailing ideas about 'the good life'.

This chapter looks at two very different instances of adjustment to a new environment. One is Kemi, a town in Finnish Lapland, the fortunes of which have been tied to the forest industries for more than a century, but which has seen industrial jobs gradually disappear. The other is Fjarðabyggð, a coastal municipality in Eastern Iceland that is enthusiastically reinventing itself through heavy industry of precisely the kind that is presumed to be on the wane. The chapter compares and contrasts the development discourses in these localities, building mainly on focus group sessions and individual interviews. The importance of everyday discursive production of local space as an arena of meaningful economic engagement – of place as social context – will be highlighted, through direct quotations from our fieldwork material. Pre-empting the conclusion, we find a common concern with uncertainty and how to avoid it – themes that are central to recent ideas about 'second modernity'. People in both localities find it somewhat difficult to come to terms with the recent emphasis in academic and policy circles allocated to services and 'knowledge'.

Seconding the idea of modernity?

Among the aforementioned theories about current socio-economic changes, the concept of 'second modernity' is somewhat distinctive. Based on Ulrich Beck's (1986) ideas about the pervasive impact of increasingly mobile risks and the central role of reflexivity in modern society, this is less a theory about epochal change towards *post*-modernity than of a changed

complexion of modernity. 'First modernity', according to this line of thinking, is a social order 'based on nation-state societies, where social relations, networks and communities are essentially understood in a territorial sense' (Beck & Lau, 2005, p. 526). The transition to 'second modernity' has meant that

[t]he collective patterns of life, progress and controllability, full employment and exploitation of nature ... have now been undermined by certain interlinked processes: globalization, individualization, the gender revolution, underemployment and global risks (Beck & Lau, 2005, p. 526)

Society is thus characterized rather by fluid networking, mobility and cosmopolitanism than by territorially bounded and cohesive entities (cf. also Urry, 2000). This is not an argument about 'place' having lost its significance for inhabitants, but that its meaning has to be renegotiated within a framework of fluidity and ongoing changes. Marx's famous aphorism, about all which is solid melting into air with the advent of capitalism, is thus even more true in the second modernity than in the first, which did after all provide a modicum of stability for a good part of the 20th century (Beck, Bonß, & Lau, 2003). In this account, the transition to second modernity is seen as the direct result of the success of, and contradictions inherent in, the first.

A defining characteristic of the move towards second modernity is *reflexivity*: this is *reflexive* modernization (or perhaps simply remodernization – see Latour, 2003). The concept of reflexivity has often been used in a broadly positive sense, to signify increased contemplation by individuals and collectivities of their life's conditions and how to cope with them (see e.g. Aarsæther & Bærenholdt, 2001; Lash & Urry, 1994; Ray, 1999). In the formulation of Beck and his colleagues, the term 'does *not* mean that people today lead a more conscious life' (Beck, Bonß, & Lau, 2003, p. 3) and are thus better able to master their fortunes. Quite the opposite – it signifies disenchantment and loss of certainties: 'Simple modernization becomes reflexive modernization to the extent that it disenchant and then dissolves its own taken-for-granted premises' (Beck, Bonß, & Lau, 2003, p. 3). Old, purified and powerful modern binaries such as nature::society, state::market, and work::leisure, are called into question. Previously taken-for-granted categories of nation-state, family, company and so on, have been destabilized.

What, then, of the meaning of 'locality' or 'local community'? In fact, local practices and discourses are something of a blind spot in the otherwise comprehensive theorization of Beck *et al.* In the manner of much classical social science, it is directed towards an explanation of the 'whole', but 'without showing the least interest in the practical and local conditions making this 'whole' visible' (Latour, 2003, p. 40). For the authors of this chapter, that lacuna is indeed problematic: this is precisely what we want to do in the empirical discussion which follows. We are concerned with how local actors define their situations in local development discourse and how they act on them; how place is animated as a social context through everyday discursive practices. Can we really say that places in the north fit the story of 'second modernity'?

Like most other theories about a new kind of modernity (or post-modernity), the 'second modernity' thesis has been developed with reference to the world's old industrial heartlands – in this case Germany and Western Europe – regions of intensive restructuring of industries, labour markets and welfare state functions during the late 20th century. De-industrialization is central to this tale. That process has certainly also impacted upon localities in the northern periphery, many of which were in fact latecomers to industry. The fish processing industries of Iceland have been 'rationalized' through technology and changes in management; the Finnish pulp and paper industry has been shedding labour since the 1970s. But how well placed are the localities in the north to enjoy the benefits of a 'new' economy – of moving into service occupations and cultural activities? And, even if these activities are found to hold some promise, to what extent do the people of the north accept the premises of the new socioeconomic order – with a stress on flexibility and change rather than standardization and stability? As we shall see, the development discourse in the north reveals a somewhat uneasy relationship between these two models.

Kemi

Floating into industrial modernity

The town of Kemi is well located by the sea in the Gulf of Bothnia and at the mouth of the Kemijoki river. Timber floating made it possible to use Lapland's forests as a resource base for the timber industry, which started in Kemi in the 1860s. Two trading houses founded the first industrial company, *Trävaruaktiebolaget Kemi*, in 1893. This was the beginning of the Lapland's biggest sawmill industry, the 'Father of the Bread' as it was also called (Kerkelä, 2003; Hänninen, 2006).

The development of the sawmill industry involved migration to the Kemi region, because there was not enough labour in the region and the descendants of farmers did not want to work in the industry. From 1890, hundreds of people moved to work in the timber industry every year, so that in 1920 about a quarter of the population in the region was employed in this sector (Hänninen, 2006).

After independence in 1917, the Finnish state took an active role in utilizing the large forests in Lapland. The state founded a new sawmill in Kemi, *Veitsiluoto Ltd*, which started operation in 1922. In the decades between the First and Second World Wars, a 'paper revolution' changed the production composition in the forest industry: besides sawmilling, a pulp and paper industry started to develop. The Kemi company opened a sulphite pulp mill in 1919 and a sulphate pulp mill in 1927. The Veitsiluoto company also opened a sulphite pulp mill in 1930. The idea was to raise the degree of upgrading so that the northern factories would not just produce raw wood for the needs of Southern Finland and foreign trade. Hence Kemi was developed as an industrial centre, where almost half of the population in Kemi was working by the end of the 1930s (Kerkelä, 2003).

After the Second World War, the Finnish state turned its attention even more strongly to the North. The forest industry played an important role because of its large share of Finland's export earnings at the time. Despite this, the Kemi company was struggling after the war because of huge debts. The company ended up in the hands of the Finnish forest companies, which hindered its development: the owners did not want to increase the degree of processing in Kemi, so continued to keep it in pulp production only. On the other hand, the state-owned Veitsiluoto Ltd started its first paper machine in 1955 and continued to increase its production by taking on new paper machines for the production of newspaper material. In addition, Kemi Ltd opened a new kraftliner mill in 1971. Surviving in the paper markets has demanded investment and changes in the production for more refined production (Hänninen, 2006; Kerkelä, 2003).

Globalization and the paper tigers

The biggest changes to the pulp and paper industry in Kemi took place during the 1990s. The pulp-producing Kemi Ltd was merged with Metsä-Botnia in 1991 and is now owned by big forest companies in Finland. The head office is situated in Espoo, in Southern Finland, and Kemi is just one production unit among others around Finland (Metsä-Botnia, 6.11.2006). The Kemiart Liners company was founded in 2002 for the production of kraftliner mills and in 2004 it became a part of M-Real, a company that owns 26 production units around Europe. (M-Real, 6.11.2006). Veitsiluoto Ltd was merged first with Enso Gutzeit, in 1996, and then in 1998 with Stora Enso Ltd. The company produces paper, packaging material and wood products in over forty countries and has over 46,000 employees. In 2006 this globally-operating company was mainly owned by the Finnish state and the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation. Its head offices are in Helsinki and Stockholm, and its international office is in London (Stora Enso, 6.11.2006).

During the development of the pulp and paper industry it has provided employment for thousands of people in the region: about 3,000 people worked in the factories in 1945. In addition, the population of the town of Kemi and the adjacent Kemi rural municipality increased. During the peak years, in the mid-1970s, there were about 6,150 employees in the

industry (Kemppinen, 1987). Since this time, the need for labour in the factories has constantly decreased. In 2006, almost 1,800 employees were working in the pulp and paper industry in Kemi. Industrial jobs are no longer providing the 'bread' for half the population, as was the case in the 1970s. Industry as a whole accounted for 27.5% of the workforce in Kemi in 2004. Nevertheless, industry's share in occupational structure is still large when compared to other regions and municipalities in Lapland. The reason for this is that there has not been much industrial development in Finnish Lapland in a modern sense: besides Kemi, there has been steel production in Tornio, which is a neighbouring town to Kemi, and a pulp factory in Kemijärvi that was founded in 1965. Finnish Lapland developed into a service-based society at the end of the 20th century, basing its living on tourism and public services. In this sense, Kemi is a very special place in Lapland, with an industrial history that spans over one hundred years. In the next section, the local inhabitants discuss the industry and its meaning in the town and in their own lives.

The glory days of industry – and after

Until the 1970s, the pulp and paper industry in Kemi developed favourably. Until the end of 1970s, the unemployment rate was one of the lowest in Lapland, on average 4-6%. Sons followed their fathers to work in the factory and the future of the town seemed to be good. It was the time for dreaming of eternal prosperity: the standard of living rose and people built bigger houses, bought cars and began to travel. The political situation was quite stable and the life seemed to continue in a safe and comfortable way in this northern industrial town (Kemppinen, 1987; cf. Beck, 1998).

About 30,000 people lived in Kemi during the best years in the 1970s and the town planning officials were counting on an increasing population. Industrial firms had taken on a crucial role in developing the services and infrastructure in the town of Kemi. They offered accommodation for employees, took part in the organization of social and health services and funded sport clubs and other kinds of activities in the town, as the locals explain:

If you think what it has been like. There has been everything, nursery schools and other things. They took care of everything. Schools and other things as well.

Later these industrial communities were there just outside the factory gates; in those days the spirit of collaboration was totally different from now. In Kemi, team sports and strength sports, boxing and wrestling have been popular. At least [industry] has had an effect on the youth and sports activities.

On the other hand, the smelly industry and Kemi's image as a communist and left-wing town branded the image of Kemi in a negative fashion. Kemi was labelled as a town like those in the Soviet Union: an ugly and unpleasant town in the cold and remote North that became the butt of jokes such as 'Why does it smell bad in Kemi? Because the inhabitants sleep with their windows open'. People who moved to Kemi shared these negative ideas – at least in 1970s, as a woman who moved there from Southern Finland recounts:

When I came to Kemi, this was still quite a dreary place. It was so left-wing. And I, coming from the south, felt that it was so... colourless here, the surroundings were not taken care of. The seaside looked just terrible and was not taken care of.

The dream of eternal prosperity and the favourable development of the industry and the town was not fulfilled. Already, in the 1970s, the industry began reducing its workforce and ceased to hire new workers. Security gave way to uncertainty. Locals put it this way:

For thirty years, when one factory's gate was closed for the last time, it was never opened for the first time for another. To put it very strongly.

I remember my own schooldays, when I was working at the factory. There were big halls and an enormous number of women and men working in the Kemi company. Today when you walk through the factory there are monitoring systems and just a few people sitting there.

Those who have kept their jobs and are working in the factory are older. This has had an effect on the workplace, as one worker in the factory remarks pointedly:

Some years ago, after the weekend people used to talk about what it was like on the dance-floor on a Saturday evening. Now the talk is just about the colour of the heart medicine you are taking. It is old people who work there.

The decline of the industry's employment is also perceived in the everyday life of the town. One interviewee recollects the days of his youth:

In the 1970s we used to hang around on street corners, but since the 1990s and after you don't see anyone there on Saturdays anymore. Before, when I was young, it was so crowded that it was difficult to walk along the street. Many friends, relatives and tourists ask if there has been a neutron bomb explosion here, because now there is no one around.

A reporter who has followed the development throughout the entire period sums up this change:

Kemi is still declining in some senses, but in my opinion – how can I put this nicely? – it is gradually reaching the bottom in development terms. Kemi has been developed since 1870s, and reached its peak in the 1970s because of the industry. Since that time there has been – sometimes more quickly, sometimes more slowly – a development backwards here, if you evaluate development by the population figures, as you have to do.

Indeed, the population in the town has declined year by year, and there were fewer than 23,000 inhabitants in Kemi in 2005. If this 'backwards development' continues, there will be only about 20,000 inhabitants by 2030. During the years of economic depression at the beginning of the 1990s, the unemployment rate reached almost 30% and it was still 17% in 2005 (Lapin liitto, 6.11.2006). Net migration has been negative for years and those who are leaving are young people. This gives cause for concern among politicians in the town:

In the 1970s, everyone who graduated from vocational school had access to work. Thousands of people were working. Now the young ones don't get in. It is true that if youngsters don't get work they leave the town, you can see it here as well. The centre is populated by retired people, you cannot hear young people's laughter in the evenings, nor the sound of people pushing prams.

What, then, are the reasons for the negative development of Kemi and its industry? The oil crisis during the early 1970s started, or at least was one of the factors contributing to, a striving for more efficient production. Technical developments gradually caused redundancies. Efficiency is the catchword of these neo-liberal times: productivity is rising, but not employment. Technology in the factories in Kemi is very advanced nowadays and the workers are proud of it:

Technology is top-notch. In my opinion, it is an enormous thing if you understand the process in the factory. That you feed raw wood to the line and from the end of the line comes the finest paper. The technology and the knowledge in between are unbelievable – and it occurs as continuous process, without a break. To get young people to work in that process – that has been difficult.

This is usually explained by the need for competitiveness: production must be as cheap as possible in a global world – and Finnish labour is costly. A significant example of this was experienced in Finland in March 2006, just before the fieldwork for this research project took place, when UPM, a big forestry company, launched news of 'a programme to re-establish its profitability'. This entailed thousands of redundancies and even the closure of production units in Southern Finland.

Investments may be moved, but for individuals, moving away from your home area is not so easy. Globalization is experienced locally as uncertainty:

In the old days, decisions about investments were made here. But not any more. These production units can have an effect only in the sense that if they obtain a good result they may also attract investment. When looking at things from London, the directors don't care about the locality at all.

Yes, in the glory days of industry there was a sense that industry was committed to the place, to the local society. As the pollution and the smell of the factories has faded away, the social responsibility of the companies has faded too. Now there are fine programmes and plans to protect the environment, but not to protect the local society. The head offices of the

companies are hundreds of kilometres away. In addition, the leaders of the local production units are changing and there is no time to develop long-lasting relationships between managers and the local community. Nowadays, factories are led by faceless people situated somewhere else. People miss – again – the good old days:

In those days there were quite noteworthy manufacturers here, living here for years. And they were very visible, together with the town and its people. But then came a new time and there were only hired men, and the true managers moved to the South. It happened all over the industry. There was no local leadership here anymore.

These memories of the mutual commitment between industry and the locality sound old-fashioned: somewhat romantic stories when seen through the eyes of the globally-operating forestry industry. Taking care of society is a task for the public sector, the state and the municipality, not for private enterprise. Now, industry is concerned only with issues of direct importance for its own development: it has, for example, contributed financially to developing the harbour, and is also co-operating with local schools to ensure the supply of skilled labour needed for a business operating in global competition.

Memories of Kemi in the 1970s, when young people had jobs in the factories and the main street was full of people on a Saturday night, are of course the memories of middle-aged or older locals, who were young at that time. Young people living in Kemi in 2006 have only heard these stories, but they are usually proud of their home town and its industry. Here speaks a young man whose parents have not worked in the factory. Nor has he. Yet, for him, the industry is a fine and beautiful thing in the town:

In winter, we have been out many times with friends onto the ice outside the town and we have taken a photo of Kemi. You can see two factories and the town scene, and the town looks very prosperous in the photo. Where else in Europe or in Northern Europe can you see two new factories and a building site for living accommodation? It looks fine, and according to statistics and logic Kemi should be a very rich town. We have two big factories and they produce well-being and work.

Technology and tourism?

The forestry industry is still very important in Kemi, but there is also a need to develop other occupational sectors. There is a centre for high-technology, *Digipolis*, where over thirty enterprises in the fields of electronics, information technology and environmental technology, for example, are to be found. And not surprisingly – at least not in Finnish Lapland – tourism is considered a trump card for the future.

The most important effort to develop tourism in Kemi has been the ‘World’s Biggest SnowCastle’, built for the first time in 1996. The first SnowCastle was a success story; there were celebrated music and theatre performances, over 273,000 visitors and international media attention. Despite the success there was also criticism. The SnowCastle was funded by the town and attempts to make it profitable did not work out. The town is still supporting its annual construction and opponents do not perceive it as the task of the municipality to finance ‘such a melting business’, but rather to use taxpayers’ money for providing services. Supporters of the SnowCastle say that it is the most important thing for the development of tourism and also for the image of Kemi. What is being attempted is a changing of the old industrial and communist image of the town and its reinvention as a versatile northern town with wintry experiences in a place associated with snow and sea (Varila, 2004). Although discussion about the municipality’s role in the SnowCastle is still on the agenda, interviewees acknowledge its importance:

It brings tax revenues and fame. When I was travelling in Arabia, people knew of Kemi even there because of the SnowCastle. It was quite a sensation in the beginning and now they have to develop it. They should make the whole town look like a snow castle!

There is also a deep-water harbour and inland harbour at Kemi, and besides another wintry tourist attraction – the icebreaker Sampo – there are also plans to develop summer activities based on the town’s location right by the sea in the Gulf of Bothnia. The town is also being developed as a shopping centre, especially as a large new IKEA store opened in

Haparanda in Sweden in 2006, only about 20 kilometres from Kemi. There are thus many routes for future development. This, too, may become a problem for a place that has for decades based its existence on the big forestry industry.

Fjarðabyggð

Industrial dreaming in a composite municipality

Fjarðabyggð is a new municipal entity, created in 1998 through the amalgamation of three previously 'independent' townships – Reyðarfjörður, Eskifjörður and Neskaupstaður (or Norðfjörður). Each is located in its very own fjord (as the names imply) and each has its own distinct character. In 2006, the municipality was further enlarged to include two fjords to the south and one to the north, adding two smaller towns and some farms.

Up until recently, the towns of Fjarðabyggð have been fishing communities par excellence. The main exception has been Reyðarfjörður, where services were a somewhat larger part of the economic structure than in the other towns. Eskifjörður and Neskaupstaður are very much 'company towns', although they have also stood for very different political leanings. Eskifjörður was a conservative town with a strong private company, whereas Neskaupstaður used to be known in Iceland as 'Little Moscow', due to the strong power base of socialists.

Locational and socio-political differences notwithstanding, these three towns have now united in a single municipal entity, and have plunged headlong into a 'reinvention' phase based on heavy industry. Like the road hugging the coast of the East Fjords, the metaphorical road to industrial development has been a long and winding one. As early as the 1970s a government working group had reasoned that Reyðarfjörður would be a suitable place for locating heavy industry, although at that time the small size of the town's workforce was seen as a hindrance to the development of a major industrial project, such as an aluminium smelter. A smaller industrial plant was planned, but this did not materialize. When aluminium smelting again apparently became a strategy of choice by the powers-that-be, which happened around 1990 (Skúlason & Hayter, 1998), Reyðarfjörður was seriously considered. Again, nothing happened. Local frustration grew. Finally in 1997 the then Foreign Minister and local MP announced that the multinational giant Norsk Hydro was ready to build a very large smelter in Reyðarfjörður, powered by a new hydropower plant that had been on the drawing board for some years. A very divisive battle ensued between environmentalists and the developers. The proposed hydropower scheme was shelved – but an even bigger one drawn up: the Kárahnjúkar dam. Then, in 2002, Norsk Hydro backed out. Morale in Reyðarfjörður sank to new lows. But in 2003 another multinational corporation appeared on this contested ground: Alcoa. An agreement was signed. Local despondency turned to euphoria and jubilation that to many other Icelanders reached almost bizarre proportions.

A story jokingly told in the focus group session we held in Neskaupstaður may be taken as a gentle critique of the mentality engendered by the history of 'industrial dreaming', which is presumed to have prevailed in Reyðarfjörður especially:

An old man in Reyðarfjörður asks his grandson: 'Little fellow, what to you want to do when you grow up?' The boy answers: 'I am going to do like you have done, grandpa. I am going to sit and wait. For an aluminium smelter.'

The people of Reyðarfjörður, mind you, are at pains to tell you that this gives a very wrong impression and is based on ingrained prejudices towards their beloved town – in fact, there were, and to some extent are, considerable rivalries between the three towns of Fjarðabyggð. But, as a focus group participant in Reyðarfjörður – a man in his late thirties – reminisced:

...even when I was just a small boy, there was always something just about to come, some heavy industry. ... Then that faded away, and perhaps two or three years passed, and then the discussions began again about something big. I experienced this right from my childhood.

From fish to aluminium

And now industry has finally arrived – big time. When this was written in 2006, a brand-new behemoth of an aluminium smelter has been erected on the shores of Reyðarfjörður, some five kilometres east of the town. The town itself looks more or less like one extensive construction site. The people interviewed in Fjarðabyggð are, understandably enough, very preoccupied with the immense economic and social changes that are taking place in the municipality. The demand for labour is great and just about every firm and individual entrepreneur has been drawn into the project's orbit. Most people see this as a very welcome break from the stagnation that allegedly prevailed in the past. They also perceive a changed attitude on the part of other Icelanders towards their community, which is no longer seen as just a moribund fishing town:

I feel that [Reyðarfjörður] is no longer an irrelevant extremity [in the eyes of other Icelanders]. It has become a place.

When asked whether they had been in favour of the project, and if so why, most replied that they had indeed been positive from the outset, for very simple reasons:

I looked at it this way: If this had not come, the town would have continued to shrink. The community and the services... it would all gradually have collapsed. But with this you get expansion. There are more jobs. You have more jobs to choose from. You do not have to accept whatever job you may be lucky enough to get.

It is all happening very quickly. A woman in Reyðarfjörður contemplated the changes to the identity of her home town:

The fish is gone, the smell of fish is gone... We have suddenly moved from being a fishing place to industrial labour.

One of the major concerns of those who have questioned the emphasis on heavy industry is that it will make the localities into single-industry towns that are vulnerable to market forces over which they have no control. Few interviewees were overly worried about this issue. Some brushed the question of potential risk aside rather lightly:

You simply think that it will never close down!

Others referred to an economic past which was certainly always rather risky and changeable anyway, like this middle-aged man:

Of course we are born and raised in an economy dependent upon a single sector – fisheries. We know that situation well. We know that when the catches fail, there is less money and less activity – we know all of that. The cod has sometimes failed, or the capelin or the whole lot, and this has alternated with booms, and we have lived with that. Therefore... will this kind of dependence be different? Of course, if this factory closes down, then that is not like the cod, which comes back the next season. The factory would be gone for good. So that would perhaps be a risk, but maybe this factory will have built up such an environment around itself that we would be better able to cope with losing it.

Similar reasoning often came up in the group sessions, where the participants exchanged their views:

We have only ever had one single thing to build on. We have never had other things.

Well, many small things...

But all these small things have always depended on the fisheries. We have never known anything else. And always, when the fish has gone, in all villages, when the fish has gone, nothing is left. It does not matter if the place was doing well before. Look at Stöðvarfjörður. For a while it was one of the richest places in Iceland. If you wanted to look at the most recent car models, you would go to Stöðvarfjörður. You did not go to Reykjavík for that. This is a fact. And then the fish was gone, and nothing was left.

The aluminium industry is of course highly globalized. The global economy certainly has its ups and downs. That notwithstanding, the new industry was compared favourably with the fisheries and related industries.

But even if the sentiments were thus for the most part positive, it was of course not the case that all the inhabitants of these three towns turned out to be in favour of the industrialization project. In Norðfjörður a man in his forties with very strong ideological convictions alleged that a pernicious

...brainwashing ... has been taking place here: we are being told 'it is aluminium or nothing'!

He also hinted that his own life had not been entirely pleasant since the debates started:

I am of course nearly expelled from this community here for holding these opinions, which... I have been trying as best I can to make heard.

Another man had very serious reservations about the nature of jobs associated with the project:

I cannot say that it was my most cherished dream that the sons and daughters of Norðfjörður should be working in a giant factory... This was never my dream, far from it. And this means that if I were a young man here then I would be looking for another place to live, certainly. I am here because I am a village person by nature, not a factory slave.

Some of the most serious doubts aired about this industrial 'reinvention' project have been related to its gender implications. Critics of the project have often pointed out that, as such industrial jobs have traditionally been culturally coded as 'male', it is likely that the project will exacerbate already-existing gender imbalances, but the male-to-female ratio is already more skewed here than elsewhere in regional Iceland. A woman observed that this gender imbalance in local economic life was not exactly new:

I would argue that these coastal villages, they are really very male-centred communities: everything is somehow based on the male view-point.

Alcoa has put great emphasis on the company's commitment to gender equality by explicitly seeking to recruit women (Alcoa, 2006). One of their advertisements shows a young, smiling woman with a toddler on her arm. She is the manager of Alcoa's Reyðarfjörður office. A special 'Women's Day' was also held at the plant in October 2006, where local women were encouraged to visit the site and receive information about the job opportunities that are opening up. According to the company's public relations office, a surprising number of women turned up. In October 2006, the company hired a third of its prospective workers, and a third of these were women. In other Icelandic aluminium smelters the overwhelming majority of the staff are male.

Another question relates to where the workforce for the plant is going to come from. The local labour market is quite small and the interest of Icelanders in 'Fordist' industrial work has been dwindling, it seems, witnessed by the numerous international labourers found not only in the fishing industry but also in most larger workplaces. A local politician scoffs at the suggestion that these jobs will be filled by international labourers:

...there are those who talk much but think little, and who do not know the local context, they of course say that there will be some 400 new jobs in the aluminium plant and that nobody wants to work in an aluminium plant, so there will be only Turks, and such things. But you see, it is simply not like that.

Others recognized staffing of the new plant by foreign labour as a distinct possibility and even a likelihood. However, they did not perceive this as a problem but simply a healthy development towards a more diverse community. The great majority of those who had already been hired in October 2006 were Icelanders.

A place for 'knowledge'?

Apart from the industrial project, there is a growing realization in all three towns that general socio-economic change will require considerable 'retooling': new attitudes, skills and practices geared to the processing of somewhat ethereal symbols and meaning, as well as to the processing of some very material resources. Increased education and the raising of the region's

relatively low level of (formal) knowledge are seen as vital for the well-being of the community.

During the past few years, despite an overwhelming penchant for energy-hungry industrial developments, the Icelandic central government has in fact at least paid lip-service in its regional policy to the idea of a knowledge economy. Some regional and local authorities have taken up the challenge of designing an institutional architecture appropriate to their knowledge needs. One such initiative has been the establishment, in June 2006, of the Eastern Iceland Knowledge Network. With its headquarters in Egilsstaðir, the network builds on an earlier and quite successful learning network that revealed a latent need for education in the towns and rural areas of the region. It organised classes in topics as diverse as digital photography and Danish *smørrebrød*, in addition to providing assistance for distance learners. The new Knowledge Network is supposed to build on this and broaden the possibilities for local people to undertake tertiary study at the universities. It is also meant to serve as a vehicle for promoting local research and development, in collaboration with two existing small research centres elsewhere in the region, one of which is located in Fjarðabyggð (in Neskaupsstaður).

This initiative has generally been well received. Yet there is some scepticism. While nobody among the interviewees made any suggestion that increased tertiary education was a negative thing, there was a pervasive sentiment that the move towards knowledge-based occupations had led to serious intellectual devaluation of the kind of jobs more commonly found in the coastal towns. The local politician referred to above forcefully expressed the notion, very common in regional towns and rural areas, that urban Iceland has lost its bearings:

It is simply a fact that ... those doing non-vocational studies ... those types generally do not know what they want at all. They have no idea! ... The molly-coddling attitude towards university studies is becoming a social disease, in my opinion. ... We live today in a society where we educate five plumbers against five hundred lawyers! This is pure nonsense! Meanwhile, our country needs thousands of skilled industrial workers.

To wrap this up: a rather simple vision of the ‘industrial community’ and the need for a single, strong economic base seems to prevail in Fjarðabyggð. Again, the local politician stated this clearly:

It is very simple, really. I have always thought that it is the economic life that is the basis for everything, and if you really want to analyse and understand a development process, you start by looking at what is happening there.

And the economy was indeed limping. Thus:

People realised that they needed something else – more vigorous, safer, bigger – in order to reverse the trend.

Development, in other words, is first and foremost about jobs; preferably industrial jobs. Knowledge, in this view of the world, is a kind of *Überbau* on top of a solid, metallic *Grundlage*. Apart from the sheer size of the aluminium project, which will provide hundreds of jobs in an instant, there will be a multitude of spin-offs that are easily envisaged. Industrial jobs of the old type are generally seen as more convincing – offering more security and stability – than an admittedly somewhat vaguely defined ‘knowledge society’ or ‘cultural economy’ could provide.

Conclusion: second-hand modernities?

I must say – and I have thought quite a lot about this – that I can not predict at all what this community will look like in three to five years’ time. (Focus group session in Fjarðabyggð)

We have presented empirical material from two very different localities, in terms of their natural and cultural contexts, as well as their historical trajectories. What the Finnish forest industry town of Kemi and the Icelandic municipality of Fjarðabyggð do have in common is a certain construction of a ‘proper’ place, which prevails in local discourses, and of possible ways in which their own marginal position can be dealt with. We find somewhat more continuity in their thinking than Beck and other theorists of a radically different ‘second modernity’ would presume. Thinking back to Latour’s (2003) critique of the interest by Beck *et al.* in the universalities of ‘society’, we have sought to highlight how ‘practical and local

conditions' (Latour, 2003, p. 40) inevitably enter into the everyday discursive construction of contextual modernities in the places of the North, which are striving to reinvent themselves.

There is considerable flux in Fjarðabyggð at the present time, as the quote at the beginning of this section attests. It is difficult to be certain about what exactly will come to pass. Yet the local people do not see themselves as entering 'second modernity'. It is more accurate to say that their reinvention strategy is aimed at finally entering the first one. Although the large-scale mechanization of fishing and standardization of fish processing in the 1970s has sometimes been characterized as the Icelandic regions' belated entrance into the Fordist economy, the holy grail of 'proper' industrialization has beckoned for a long time. But while they have been busily – and for the most part enthusiastically – changing their place both in material terms and as a locale for socioeconomic activity, the inevitably concomitant radical changes to the 'sense of place' are only now becoming apparent. Among some people at least, these changes are viewed with a slight trepidation. But then again, there is not exactly anything new in such radical changes in this place.

Kemi is at a different end of the industrialization process. The pulp and paper industry really was 'The Father of the Bread' in Kemi until the 1970s, offering work for the people, as well as securing the services and the financial base for the development of the town. Nowadays the situation is different. The industry has decreased its labour force because of the need for productivity in global markets. In 2006, industry in Kemi is part of the international forestry business, which has created uncertainty at a local level: the business does not have responsibility for local development to the same extent as it did in the early days of industrialization.

The days of secure industrial development have passed in Kemi. The town is on the road to a new economic structure. This is based on an 'experience economy' in tourism with attractions like the SnowCastle and the icebreaker Sampo; also on consumption and commercial services, as the result of a new shopping centre and department stores; and on a knowledge-based industry in high technology. The developers want to dust down the image of an industrial, working-class town with a leftist political tradition and would like the place to become a northern town of white snow, sea and services. Nevertheless, the industrial history of Kemi is still strongly present in the discourses of the local people and it also forms an important part of the town's image.

What is obvious, though, is that both places may be said to be undergoing a kind of 'reflexive modernization'. The people who live there do not indeed take things for granted, but reflect constantly upon the conditions of their lives and communities. They are far from secure about themselves or their communities: on the contrary, they are very much preoccupied with uncertainty. They are aware of their somewhat marginal position in a risky global environment, although the people of Fjarðabyggð quite correctly point out that risk has always been present. They do realize that gaps in education levels and knowledge-based activities increasingly set them apart from the metropolises of their respective countries and the globalized world. There are those who perceive certain opportunities in tourism and in linking up with other parts of the cultural economy. But 'proper industry' is still an irresistible prospect for most local people. Perhaps a characterization of the results of such reinvention processes as 'second-hand modernities' is not entirely facetious.

References

- Aarsæther, N., and Bærenholdt, J. O. (eds.). (2001) *The Reflexive North*. Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers.
- Alcoa (2006) Viewed 6 November 2006 at <http://www.alcoa.com/iceland/ic/home.asp>
- Beck, U. (1986) *Risikogesellschaft: Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Beck, U. (1998) *Democracy without enemies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Beck, U., Bonß, W., and Lau, C. (2003) The theory of reflexive modernization – Problematic, hypotheses and research programme, in: *Theory, Culture & Society*, 20(2), 1–33.

- Beck, U., & Lau, C. (2005) Second modernity as a research agenda: theoretical and empirical explorations in the 'meta-change' of modern society, in: *British Journal of Sociology*, 56(4), 525–557.
- Bell, D. (1973) *The Coming of Post-industrial Society: a venture in social forecasting*. New York: Basic Books.
- Geirsson, S. (1983) *Norðfjörður: Saga útgerðar og fiskvinnslu*. Neskaupstaður: Samvinnufélag útgerðarmanna & Sildarvinnslan.
- Hänninen, N. (2006) Sahayhteisöstä EuroCityyn, in: Lähteenmäki, M. (ed.), *Alueiden Lappi* (pp. 39–58). Rovaniemi: Lapin yliopisto-kustannus.
- Kemppinen, K. (1987) *Niin perkeleen punainen*. Kemi: Pohjolan Sanomat Oy.
- Kerkelä, H. (2003) Teollistuva Lappi osana maailmantaloutta. In I. Massa & H. Snellman (eds.), *Lappi. Maa, kansat, kulttuurit* (pp. 129–159). Helsinki: Suomen kirjallisuuden seura.
- Lapin liitto. (2006). *Lapin seutukuntien keskeiset muuttujat 1990-luvulta lähtien*. Viewed 6 November 2006 at <http://www.lapinliitto.fi/tilastotkuvat/kehsk.pdf>
- Lash, S., and Urry, J. (1994) *Economies of Signs and Space*. London: Sage Publications.
- Latour, B. (2003) Is re-modernization occurring – and if so, how to prove it? A commentary on Ulrich Beck, in: *Theory, Culture & Society*, 20(2), 35–48.
- Metsä-Botnia Oy (2006) *Yrityksemme Botnia*. Viewed 6 November 2006 at <http://www.botnia.com/default.asp?path=1,66>
- M-Real. (2006) Viewed 6 November 2006 at <http://www.m-real.com/wps/portal>
- Ray, C. (1999) Endogenous development in the era of reflexive modernity, in: *Journal of Rural Studies*, 15(3), 257–267.
- Skúlason, J. B., and Hayter, R. (1998) Industrial location as a bargain: Iceland and the aluminium multinationals 1962–1994, in: *Geografiska Annaler*, 80 B(1), 29–48.
- Stora Enso (2006) Viewed 6 November 2006 at <http://www.storaenso.com>
- Urry, J. (2000) *Sociology beyond Societies: Mobilities for the twenty-first century*. London: Routledge.
- Varila, A. (2004) Kemin Lumilinnan sosiaalisten vaikutusten arviointi. Rovaniemi: Pohjois-Suomen ennakointi- ja arviointikeskus.

Chapter 3

Culture, cultural economy and gender in processes of place reinvention

Magnfríður Júlíusdóttir, University of Iceland, and Yvonne Gunnarsdotter, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Introduction

In academic and political discourse, culture and creativity are increasingly viewed as the promoters of economic reinvention of place. According to Gibson and Kong (2005), generalizations about the capacity of a cultural economy to transform urban locations have developed into a 'normative cultural economy' approach in policy circles, encouraging cultural economy clusters, innovations and knowledge economies, and attracting the 'creative class' as residents. In an analysis of Nordic and European cultural policies Ritva Mitchell (2003) claims that from the second half of the 1990s, a new economic approach to cultural policy, which regarded arts and culture as increasingly important to employment, adding value to production and exports, has gained ground in regional and local development programmes. New EU and national sources for funding cultural projects, along with the decentralization of cultural policies, have promoted the role of the regions.

In this chapter our aim is to contextualize the cultural economy debate by analysing developments in two small Nordic towns in peripheral regions. Is culture increasingly seen as an instrument for economic growth, or are other meanings and a strategic use of culture to be found in our case studies? Are there variations in different actors' use of cultural connotations and practices to initiate new projects and enterprises? What contestations and power relations are prominent in the cultural economy developments in these places? We shall pay special attention to the gendering of these processes and the possible tension between cultural sources that are conceptualized as local versus extra-local sources on various geographical scales, e.g. national and global.

This chapter is born of fieldwork in the towns of Egilsstaðir in Eastern Iceland and Pajala in the Swedish Torne Valley where, to a varying degree, local views emerged from discussions in focus groups and interviews with individuals. Despite a loosely-defined peripheral situation, the cultural context of these places varies, especially considering their geographical location on cultural borders. Pajala was declared a cultural municipality at the beginning of the 1990s. The local politicians then picked up on the cultural revival that had been going on spontaneously for some years. Over the years, this strategy of place reinvention has shifted its emphasis from theatre, literature and the language of Meänkieli (Torne Valley Finnish), addressed mainly to the inhabitants, to culture as a way of attracting tourists and developing local business life. The cases presented from Egilsstaðir/Fljótssdalshérað focus on recent cultural contracts with the government; the creation and use of a local resource, wild reindeer, for place marketing; and income generation and contestation over the control and meaning of place when 'global' culture in the form of contemporary art is promoted as a strategy for revitalization.

The rise of cultural economy

According to Amin and Thrift (2004), the dominant position today in the use of the concept of cultural economy is how the commodification of culture offers new life to the economy through tourism, the media, art, etc. This 'cultural turn' in economic analysis has its source in

discourses on postmodernity, manifested in post-industrial production and consumption, where the analysis of change by Lash and Urry (1994) has been influential. They argue that both production and consumption are characterized by increased reflexivity, with 'aesthetic reflexivity' giving more weight to culture as a symbolic process in life-style consumption. Hence design, images/signs, experience and knowledge are important components of goods and services.

In the context of regional development, a second source of cultural economy ideas is named 'new regionalism' by both Simonsen (2001) and Ray (1998), although there is some divergence in their approach. Ray's emphasis is on influences from the European Union development policy, where different funds have been redirected from a sectoral to a territorial approach. This policy encourages people to identify and value local resources, including cultural identity. Related to these changes is regionalism, expressed in place-promotion to preserve cultural identity or to develop socio-economic vibrancy (Ray 1998). Simonsen (2001) focuses on expressions of 'new regionalism' in the linking of culture and economy with economic geography, where culture is incorporated into the analysis of economic life in certain places or regions, mainly 'through four key/overlapping notions; as local milieu, embeddedness, networks and knowledge/learning' (Simonsen 2001:42). Culture is conceptualized as an attribute possessed by firms and places and is seen as a resource or constraint in economic development. Simonsen claims this approach is imbued with a problematic understanding of culture-place relations, as culture appears relatively stable, bounded and internally undifferentiated. This is in opposition to formulations of a progressive sense of place (Massey 1994) and the conceptualization of culture as the production of meaning, where places become specific articulations of multiple layers of meaning in a variety of practices, networks and spatial scales.

Simonsen (2001) suggests that studies of practice and meaning open up new understandings of cultural economy, where economy is conceptualized as 'a meaningful activity inseparable from culture' (ibid. 2001: 47)³. In line with this we are interested in different actors' practices and meanings regarding activities that can be located in the cultural economy framework, e.g. in creating a new place identity and making a living from creativity and culture-associated work. We also take our point of departure in Ray's suggestion that the cultural⁴ economy should be understood as an '... attempt by rural areas to localize economic control – to (re)valorise place through its cultural identity' (Ray 1998:3). At the same time, the contested nature of place identity cannot be overlooked as a meeting place of historic and newer social relations, in the form of new inhabitants (Kneafsey 2001) or large-scale investments in experimental art in small towns formerly dominated by industry (Zukin 1995) or commerce (Lysegård and Tveiten 2005). Not only values and identities but also the trend of public-private governance leading cultural economy developments are contested (Harvey 1989).

In this chapter we deal with relations between culture and economy, mainly through the concept of culture. There are at least three different understandings of culture (Duelund 2003: 19-20). The first, culture as art, reflects the ideal of the cultivated individual. The second is culture as an anthropological concept condensed as the 'whole way of life'. The third interpretation is culture as *Volksgeist*, the soul of the people. In Ray's (1998) definition, culture is perceived as a preferably territorially-based way of life. The contemporary anthropological concept of culture is less place-bounded and basically viewed as something that gives meaning to practice, either perceived as the meaning making itself or the manifestation/expression of meaning.

Gender and reinvention policy

In 'new regionalism' the field of cultural economy is depoliticized, drawing attention away from how cultures are 'internally complex and continually reshaped through practice,

³ In German 'Wirtschaftssoziologie' at the end of the 19th century, the study of economy belonged to the cultural sciences (Simonsen 2001:47).

⁴ Ray uses 'culture economy', which we have changed to the nowadays dominant term 'cultural economy'.

negotiation and struggle' (Simonsen 2001:48). Cultural economy is not merely generating new kinds of economic activities, but is taking place in localities where social relations like class and gender are imbued with power (Kneafsey 2001), which can be reproduced or changed with a policy emphasizing the transformative power of cultural economy.

In a European context, the main focus of studies on the gendered outcome of regional policy has been on rural areas, farming and entrepreneurial activities as income generation in market-led economies (Little and Jones 2000, Little 2002, Shorthall 2002, Bock 2004). Emphasis on direct competition in fund bidding, partnerships with the local private business sector and a preference for large-scale 'flagship' projects are processes that have reinforced male power within policy-making, the outcome being that the praxis of rural economic policy is increasingly masculine in style and direction (Little and Jones 2000). Pini (2006) claims the dominance of a discourse on business and entrepreneurship in regional development marginalizes women, who are seen primarily as carers and community builders. Despite the women in her Australian case study being very active in small enterprises, such as shops and personal service, the cultural construction of 'businessman' and 'leader' is tied to men and masculine identities.

In a Nordic context, special action programmes have aimed to increase female entrepreneurship and, despite gender mainstreaming being the official policy in the EU and in individual Nordic countries, gender equality has recently been treated more as an objective deriving from economic growth, rather than a question of social justice (Mósesdóttir 2005 and 2006). In Swedish regional development policy, the hegemonic discourse has revolved around concepts such as growth, competition and business, where knowledge-intensive and high-tech business has replaced traditional industry (Scholten 2003). Regional business advisors use gender stereotypes when discussing the motives and skills of men and women seeking assistance to start a new business, where women show most interest in starting firms in service and handicrafts (Scholten 2003). Gender differentiation in activities among entrepreneurs has been found to mirror the general pattern of gender segregation in the labour market (Regeringskansliet 2001), which is high in the Nordic countries.

The 'cultural municipality' of Pajala

Background⁵

Pajala is the name of a small town as well as a municipality. The municipality has approximately 7,000 inhabitants spread over more than 80 villages in the Swedish Torne Valley. Before industrialization gathered pace, the Torne Valley was characterized by Sámi reindeer herding, a farm-based plurality of activity and, especially in the lower parts of the region, commerce. A letter from a chief in the 9th century mentions different nations living in the area. When Sweden and Russia made peace in 1809, the border between Sweden and Finland was drawn along the Torne and Muonio rivers and the main population became a Finnish-speaking minority within Sweden. A variation of Finnish developed, called Meänkieli, meaning 'our language'. During the first half of the 20th century there were strong movements to make 'real Swedes' of the Torne Valley people and it was forbidden to speak Meänkieli in schools.

For over a century, forest and mining industrial development led to a substantial increase in population in these places. The rationalization of this industry, together with a marked decrease in public employment in the 1990s, led to increased unemployment. Paradoxically, the closing of mines in Kiruna at the beginning of the 1980s counteracted the depopulation because people who had left Pajala moved back. This caused a number of years of relative optimism, but now Pajala faces severe problems.

⁵ Background sources include www.pajala.se (2006-10-15) and Berglund, A-K, Johansson, S. & Molina, I. (eds). 2005. Med periferien i centrum. Rapport 2005:14. Norut NIBR Finnmark.

A hundred years ago we were colonized when the state paid to get the wood out of here. Villages were built. But with the industrial rationalization in the 1950s and 1960s the state disappeared. Those who had got their profit didn't care anymore. We were left to die. We were only a work-force reserve. People were left without any capital and the younger generation moved away.

Male politician in Pajala

In 1996, a municipal business company (PUAB) was established to stimulate diversification. The electronic industry and proximity to Finland and Russia are examples of new opportunities. Five unregulated rivers flow through its great forests, but a lack of control over salmon fishing in the Baltic Sea hinders salmon fishing tourism. For the entrepreneurs, the lack of risk capital is a problem. The education level is lower than the national average, though the schools have shown very good results in national ranking in recent years. Male unemployment is more than double compared to female, and more families are supported by women than by men. There is a clear gender division in both working life and leisure time, expressed by one woman saying: 'We sometimes call this the Taliban Valley'.

The cultural sector has grown and several authors of national renown come from Pajala, the most well known being Mikael Niemi. One important step in the cultural revival was the establishment of a national organization for people from the Torne Valley in 1980. New opportunities opened up when Sweden joined the EU and when Meänkieli, together with Sámi, achieved the status of a minority language. The Torne Valley theatre, Tote, established in 1986, has played an important role in the revival of Meänkieli. This has brought a new self-confidence, which is important in the face of today's adverse developments.

The meaning and use of culture

The municipal Internet page announces 'Pajala – the cultural municipality in the middle of Nordkalotten'⁶. In around 1990 a woman who was at that time a member of the municipal council wrote a proposal suggesting that Pajala should be labelled a cultural municipality. She recalls her argumentation:

Partly because we should challenge our thoughts. We need new ways of thinking [...] and culture is a forerunner to open doors and open up thoughts. So that was one reason. But also because our culture has been oppressed for such a long time. There is so much to get from there. We have a base that we never use. [Giving an example of traditional food] That is something in our culture that we can make use of and develop and make new products from, that we can live from. So that was also a thought and there are certainly more to be found. And then culture as such, that's good for our individual well-being. It was for those three reasons that I wrote the proposition. I wrote it during a meeting and it was approved at once.

Female former politician

In this quotation, all three understandings of culture presented in Duelund (2003) are to be found. Culture as something that 'opens up thoughts' is culture in the anthropological sense, emphasizing the creation of meaning. 'Our culture that has been oppressed' shows culture as a way of life as well as the soul of the people, the latter being a rather homogenous and enclosed phenomenon that can be utilized in market terms. The third argument is culture for individual well-being, reflecting the Enlightenment ideal of a cultivated individual.

'Cultural' in the designation 'cultural municipality' is interpreted by most people as a local identity manifested first and foremost in the language, Meänkieli. The mayor points to a multicultural area where some people may speak four languages without being formally educated. The dominant narrative is that the Torne Valley people used to be oppressed and that cultural commitment is a way of strengthening local identity. The municipal managers bear witness to the low self esteem that people from the Torne Valley experienced during the 1960s and 1970s.

In Stockholm you didn't speak Meänkieli because you were ashamed. There were people who never had said a word in Swedish to each other here, but when they met in Stockholm then it was Swedish that counted. You pretended not to know Meänkieli because you were ashamed. You had a complex. You didn't tell people you came from Pajala, but from Norrbotten [the county]. That was very common then, but it is as though now in Pajala

⁶ 'Nordkalotten' is the Arctic area of Scandinavia.

people have accepted themselves. Something has happened in Pajala and now Pajala is something good.

Male municipal administration manager

Another example of oppression is that travelling salesmen offered Swedish surnames for sale, often translations of the existing Finnish name. One woman with a Swedish name that her father bought interprets cultural commitment as a way of 'telling our story'. For a long time, theatre and music have been important means of expression and she calls attention to 'Tote, the villages' theatre groups and the cultural and musical profiles in the schools.

We enjoy it when we watch a production simply giving form to an ordinary Torne Valley kitchen. That is a very good theatre play and we all turn out in force. If we buy in a product from Luleå it is not necessarily the case that the audience will be as big.

Female municipal administration manager

Tote now receive subsidies from the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs and the county administration, with the requirement to perform partly in Meänkieli and to co-operate with schools. They argue that the people in Torne Valley are different from the rest of Sweden and the county: 'We have a tradition of conflicts and we need this to exist. [...] It is Læstadius⁷ on one wall and Stalin on the other.' One dilemma is whether they should stage plays in Meänkieli or in Swedish. Either tourists and new inhabitants will feel excluded or most of the native inhabitants will not be interested. The solution has been to mix them. For the first time they are to play a classic piece in Meänkieli, instead of something written by local authors. Not everyone agrees on the importance of Meänkieli. Some people think that it is a poor language that should not be taught in school, and that creating a grammar is 'too fundamentalist'. Many young people find it more important to learn a language that will be useful outside Pajala. The language question is certainly something that evokes strong feelings.

Apart from different opinions concerning the role of Meänkieli, there is a consensus about the importance of strengthening the local identity. The proclamation of a cultural municipality is a contested issue, since culture is also interpreted as fine arts. The politicians interviewed are men in their late middle age, and those in opposition to the leading social democrat party are sceptical of culture as a way out of the problematic situation in Pajala. They view culture as 'snobbish' and 'opium for the people' and ask, 'Who has time for theatre when there is wood to be cut?'

I was born with dirt under my nails and I care about the Tornedalen culture. The kind of culture promoted by Mikael Niemi... I am not convinced that cultural commitment is the right thing. I was raised believing that it is production you should live from. Sure, it is an experience to see someone dancing with a sheet by the river, but how is it going to be in the long run?

Male politician

A new emphasis was brought to the cultural label, reinforced by a change of mayor in 2002, when tourism and the image of Pajala based on natural and cultural resources came into focus. A local journalist says, jokingly: 'As soon as he [the mayor] sees a tourist he calls for a press conference'. Apart from the uniqueness of being a border region, the mayor mentions the unregulated river system and the salmon fishing when explaining cultural aspects of the municipality, a view with which other politicians agree. When they criticize the fact that permission was given for a festival in the village of Korpilombolo, the mayor defends this by reminding them that an event of this kind leads to a positive self-image.

Some male and female entrepreneurs are of the same opinion as the politicians and their perception of culture may be summed up as follows: 'Culture is positive, but there have to be jobs'. One man says that 'it is really *knappsu*⁸', while two women oppose it by arguing that it is mostly men who are engaged in this. They all suggest that culture should be tied to traditional

⁷ Læstadius lived during the first half of the 19th century and in Pajala during the last decades of his life. He was a multi-faceted man: priest, botanist, scientist and inaugurator of a religious revival. Many of his followers live in Pajala and around the county of Norrbotten. Their large families and entrepreneurial spirit are appreciated by the authorities.

⁸ *Knappsu* is a Meänkieli term meaning female in a derogatory sense with reference to a man. The expression has recently been incorporated into the Swedish language, thanks to Mikael Niemi.

handicrafts such as tanning, knitting gloves in the village of Lovikka or making coffee cheese. A man who, amongst other things, offers hunting as a form of tourism, views moose hunting as culture. From their perspective, the political emphasis has shifted from theatre and Mikael Niemi towards nature tourism, and they also mention the Læstadius project (funded by the EU), which attracts another type of tourist.

The change in emphasis from culture as local identity (a way of life and the soul of the people), expressed in the language, but also in theatrical plays and literature (arts), to culture as a resource for the tourism business is mirrored in a reorganization of the local administration. The municipal committee for culture and education had a female manager with close connections to Tote. She encouraged a cultural profile in schools, including classes in Meänkieli, music, theatre and projects about the local heritage. When the municipal business company (PUAB) reorganized in 2004, most cultural issues were assigned there instead of with the municipal committee. This responsibility also includes the tourist agency and the local village groups. The three middle-aged men at the PUAB office are guided by a board composed of men only; aside from the mayor, these represent different companies.

In 2005, Pajala received EU funding for a development project hosted by PUAB⁹. The project was inspired by the 'Vittula Project' in 2004, involving the local authorities and actors from the cultural and business sectors. This project emanated from Mikael Niemi's book *Populär musik från Vittula* (Popular Music from Vittula), a novel about life in Pajala during the 1960s and 1970s. In 2004, a film based on the book had its first performance in Pajala, and a range of events took place connected with literature, theatre, film and Niemi's book. The vision of ten thousand visitors was an overestimation, but it attracted international attention.

There are different opinions concerning the reorganization and one of the women employed in the municipal administration explains that it is a matter of who is involved and who is not:

Should we engage in culture for ourselves or should we engage in culture that draws an external audience? [...] Should we spend money on voluntary associations offering theatre plays to those who return home, or should we spend our money on entrepreneurs?

Female municipal administration manager

The Vittula Project has been criticized by a female municipal employee for being invented by a group of men in the sauna, being driven by two men, and most of all because of the provocative name that gained exposure in different situations¹⁰. One of the men reminds us that many women have gained from initiatives in the cultural sphere: 'So I don't think there have been any problems with this'. The Vittula Project also created a media association with bussing women in for Römppäviikko¹¹ during the 1980s. This event was both exaggerated and misunderstood and it gave Pajala a bad reputation, according to some of the municipal administration managers. They all agree that Pajala is well known, though sometimes in a negative way, as a male-dominated community. The young people enjoyed the activities in the Vittula Project, but they think the local politicians made a big fuss about it and they do not approve of the idea of renaming parts of Pajala as Vittula. In addition, followers of Læstadius

⁹ Examples of projects supported by PUAB in the EU project called 'Krafttag för Omtag' ('Power to Start Again') include:

- a Night Festival in the village of Korpilombolo
- Meja, a development project with several villages, based mostly on cultural heritage.
- a network of six tourist enterprises on both sides of the border
- a salmon fishing contest
- festivals and markets in the town of Pajala (e.g. the Northern Light festival, Pajala Market, Römppäviikko)

¹⁰ *Vittula* is a Meänkieli term meaning 'the place of the female sex organ', by the same token that Pajala means 'the place of the smithy' (in the English translation of the book this was translated as 'Cuntsville').

¹¹ Since 1987, when Pajala celebrated its 400th anniversary, the tradition of Römppäviikko (which translates as 'romp week') has been renewed. The name refers to the last week in September, when people celebrate the end of the harvest. The anniversary was overshadowed by the idea of chartering a bus to invite women to Pajala. This became an international media event and divided the inhabitants for and against the event. Römppäviikko is celebrated with dance, theatrical plays and competitions, e. g. sauna bathing.

are critical of the name Vittula. According to PUAB many people, especially middle-aged men, hold the same sceptical views about culture as some of the politicians. When culture is perceived as a potential for growth, as with the Vittula Project, these people can see a future in Pajala.

The people at Tote felt confident about the role of the theatre in strengthening the local identity and creating jobs, and they have noticed that working with culture is also gradually being accepted by men. After the Vittula performance they lost their energy and are now rather pessimistic about the future of Pajala, one serious sign being that young people are moving away in spite of the big investment in activities for them. The Tote representatives' experience is that the municipal council and administration have unrealistic expectations as to what they can accomplish. They criticize what appears to them to be short-sighted planning, such as when culture cannot create enough jobs so the local politicians try fishing tourism instead.

The difficulty in reconciling these different perspectives is illustrated by a man in the tourist business who wants to create a tourist package including theatre and outdoor activities such as hunting and snowmobile driving:

Well, what we try to communicate with Tote or whoever is that they produce a nice, quick play or something, and are prepared to perform it many times. To have this as a product that you can simply show at short notice. It may be something else then to set up a theatre play, because when you set up a theatre play it has to be sold, and you arrange a whole package with food and accommodation and everything, and there are no problems. But if it is very local and in Meänkieli you don't have this: I mean, in how many countries do people speak Finnish? How many inhabitants of Sweden speak Meänkieli?

Male tourist entrepreneur

At the PUAB office, culture is said to include 'almost everything', which is similar to what Lysegård & Tveiten (2005:496) found in a Norwegian small town: 'Culture ranging from fine arts to leisure activities'. The staff at PUAB mention Mikael Niemi, Læstadius, music, theatre and the mixture of Swedish, Finnish and Sámi. In a PowerPoint presentation about Pajala, language and culture are placed under the headline 'Infrastructure'. They stress the possibility of benefitting from the unique combination of nature and culture in the tourist business. They also point out that the inhabitants need culture, as 'wood for the fire', that culture can both be used to 'tie us together' and to gain money from all the events that take place. Besides culture and nature, they stress high-technology as being a characteristic of Pajala.

At PUAB a problem is perceived with the image of Pajala being pervaded by a macho culture, but still they have not engaged in assisting women's enterprises or networks. One of the men says, without further explanation: 'You have to creep when it comes to projects addressing women'. They lack the resources to be proactive and their strategy is to listen to those who contact them; these are seldom women, since 'women are bad at networking'.

This stretched interpretation of culture, together with the male perspective, makes support from PUAB a bit random from the point of view of enterprises and village groups. A group of women engaged in food production based on local traditions arrange tourist visits and sell their products. Within the framework of an EU project they have educated themselves by means of several courses associated with food production, with the aim of expanding their activities, and at least one enterprise has been established. They have received neither economic nor marketing support from PUAB for the next step, which is to open a food house. The woman representing the group is disappointed that a well-established entrepreneurial project based on local heritage and involving women has not received any support.

Egilsstaðir – themes on cultural cross-roads

A cross-roads image has been central to the work of creating a vision for Egilsstaðir at the dawn of the 21st century, based on the metaphor of roads leading both to and from the place in many directions (Austur-Hérað 2001). Implicit in this cross-roads image is an awareness of both external and internal developments being the source of change, and the vision creation process was seen as a democratic way of influencing the local outcome of future changes. In this section, selected changes are discussed as examples of the cultural cross-roads at

Egilsstaðir: in policy, place marketing, gendered practices and the mixing of local and global cultures.

In 1947, the municipality of Egilsstaðir was created in legal terms to become a service centre at a cross-roads in an agricultural region. Since a recent merging of municipalities the town has become an administrative centre in the large Fljótsháðsfjallshérað municipality, with 2,300 inhabitants in 2005. Public and private services have been the main sources of employment for both women and men. Manufacturing industry is, and always has been, less important than service, and has focused mainly on agricultural processing, kitchen interiors and textiles. The textile industry was part of a large woollen industry in Iceland whose factories mostly closed down during the second half of the 1980s. Forty people lost their jobs in Egilsstaðir, most of them women. In some interviews a transient population was seen as characteristic of the town, mainly due to people moving in and out of public service jobs. Since 1979, an upper secondary school for the region has been sited in Egilsstaðir, and an increasing level of higher education and research is emphasized in development visions.

Coinciding with this trend in the local political sphere is the increased participation of women in policy making¹²: new actors and forms of governance are increasingly shaping the (economic) development policy for the whole region. One is the Business and Regional Development Centre (BRDC) in Eastern Iceland, located at Egilsstaðir. This is a product of decentralization in regional development efforts and a public-private exercise, with much of the financing coming from government funds, while the board is made up of representatives from private firms and the municipalities. There was only one woman out of a total of nine board members in 2006. There was a similar gender imbalance in the taskforce committee preparing a recent proposal to the government for a regional growth contract (Íðnaðar- og viðskiptaráðuneytið 2006).

In 2001, Eastern Iceland was the first region in Iceland to sign a cultural contract with the government (the Ministry of Education and Culture), with the greater share of finance coming from the government but the municipalities gradually increasing their input. The main content of the contract was a new cultural fund allocating annual grants based on applications and the position of cultural administrator. The municipalities intended to develop four cultural centres in the region, specializing in different cultural fields: creative arts and exhibitions, music, literature and the performing arts. When the contract was renewed in 2005, the Ministry of Transport joined to support heritage tourism, and crafts were added to one of the cultural centres¹³. The BRDC urged the municipalities to unite in a proposal for a cultural contract and the main argument used was to increase the satisfaction of inhabitants with the supply and quality of cultural activities, with special attention paid to young people. Reference was made to a study showing that in Eastern Iceland only half of the respondents – the lowest level in the country – were satisfied with the cultural and leisure activities in the region (Ólafsson 1997). It was also stressed that cultural activities create employment and have a direct impact on sectors such as tourism and commerce (Þróunarstofa Austurlands 2000). In these formulations cultural activities are an important ingredient in perceptions of the quality of life in various places, and hence a factor in migration decisions.

Performing arts were allocated to the cultural centre in Egilsstaðir, which, in a government statement from 1999, was declared the lucky recipient of an arts centre in the region. The plan is to start building this venue for theatre and opera performances in 2009. Since the cultural contract, three posts in cultural administration have been established in Egilsstaðir, all filled by

¹² Since the elections in May 2006, the gender balance on municipality committees and in the council, which is headed by a woman, has been quite good, with women totalling 40% of general members of the whole local political structure. A commonly-found gender division emerges in the main areas of responsibility, with women being the majority in committees under the heading of 'Family and Leisure', which includes a cultural committee. Men are in the majority on the 'Planning and Environment' committees (www.fljotsdalsherad.is).

¹³ In April 2006, the sum of around 20 million Icelandic kronas was granted to 58 diverse cultural projects in the region.

women. One manages the regional cultural fund and two work for the municipality combining the administration of cultural events, youth activities and sport/leisure.

In the summer of 2006, a place promotion campaign was launched to attract new inhabitants to Egilsstaðir/Fljótshádalshérað, with advertisements in the national newspapers and on television. Among the slogans used in the newspapers were 'flourishing culture' and 'energetic cultural life'. The main referents are an active amateur theatre and a vibrant music life. Since the 1990s a town festival in summer and other events aimed at both inhabitants and tourists have added to the image of a lively cultural life. In our interviews new cultural activities were often perceived as being initiated by enthusiastic new inhabitants managing to mobilize the community, e.g. a jazz festival and an opera studio, with the risk of it coming to a halt if the initiator moved away, as happened in the latter case. What was seen as mainly lacking in cultural life was a place for dancing and a cinema, after the municipalities sold the venue used for such activities to a private firm, which subsequently suspended many of the earlier activities.

Reindeer, place identity and female entrepreneurs

In Eastern Iceland reindeers have recently been discovered as markers of uniqueness and are now used systematically to market the area, especially to tourists. In the widely-distributed regional brochures from the Icelandic Tourism Association, the heading for Eastern Iceland is now Nature, Culture and Reindeer. In the report 'Reindeer as a Resource', it is claimed that there are many missed opportunities regarding the wild reindeer¹⁴ that could be used to strengthen the image, settlement, culture and employment in Eastern Iceland (Þróunarfélag Austurlands 2005). Although both handicrafts and food culture are discussed, the main emphasis is on activities related to hunting. In 1992, the government established a reindeer committee, with its administration at Egilsstaðir, and in 2000 there was an open market for hunting licences, with around 900 licences now sold annually to sports hunters. Most of the revenue goes to the local municipalities and jobs relating to reindeer are mainly for compulsory local hunting guides, all male.¹⁵ The majority of the hunters are men from the capital who belong to a growing group of relatively well-off sports hunters. In the above-mentioned television advertisements¹⁶ to attract new inhabitants, a masculine hunting culture, the wilderness, the forest and warm weather dominated the images.

According to reports, there was no tradition of using the hides earlier, but in recent years designers and handicrafts people have been making use of this 'byproduct', making fashionable clothes, hats and handbags. It is claimed that Icelandic reindeer hides are 'unique in the world' because flies don't make holes in the skin. Producing souvenirs is seen to have future potential and to be important in providing a market-place for handicrafts. In the 1980s a local farmer took the initiative of processing the reindeer hides and the aim was to establish a small industry for local farm women. The project resulted in a network of women sewing clothes and bags at home. Today only one of them is still producing goods from reindeer skin, 'as much as she can with kitchen work' as one woman commented¹⁷. This pioneering work in enterprises using the skin is invisible in the report.

Another women's enterprise, partly based on the reindeer resource, closed down in 2003 after operating for four years in the centre of Egilsstaðir. The House of the Hands was a

¹⁴ These reindeer (around 4,000 of them), now cherished in the marketing of uniqueness, are descendants of 35 reindeers imported from Avjovarre in Norway to Eastern Iceland in 1787. They have been living wild in the area since, which adds to their uniqueness by comparison with herded reindeer.

¹⁵ The Association of Reindeer Guides has 85 members, all male (www.hreindyr.is).

¹⁶ It is possible to see the television advertisements on the municipality webpage http://www.fljotsdalsherad.is/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=81&Itemid=101. Women are invisible in these advertisements and it is hard to see what should attract them to migrate to this place, represented as male adventure landscapes (Pritchard and Morgan 2000).

¹⁷ The women mainly sold at an outdoor market, initiated by a woman in 1986 to make Egilsstaðir a livelier place in summer for tourists and the locals. The market closed down soon after it was forbidden to sell food, with reference to health security regulations.

combination of workshop and shop, run by three professional artist and designers, one of them specializing in designing dresses made of reindeer skin and another in items for the home made from natural materials. The women hired the old dairy in 1999, thereby realizing a dream of a central and visible location for women in arts/design/handicrafts production. Their ambition was to make a living from this work and being more visible was one strategy towards this goal. During the four years that this firm was in operation it attracted locals, tourists and the national media, and enhanced the image of cultural creativity and an innovative use of local resources. This was judged to be of little value when a flagship project involving construction, energy production and the aluminium industry was agreed on in 2003 between the multinational Alcoa and local and national authorities (see Chapter 2). Suddenly, the centrally-located house became valuable for firms wanting to reap some of the profits from this megaproject and the house was sold to a local engineering firm wanting to move to the centre. Other small firms, mainly in services and run by women, were also hit by a sudden increase in property costs.

The sale of the old house and failed attempts to buy another centrally-located property¹⁸ proved to be the end of the House of the Hands. According to one of the women, they just lost ground and then it was over. In her view, the issue was not only the women losing the place, but also the historic and cultural value of the house for the area, as the oldest industrial house in Egilsstaðir. She claimed the house had a soul, a good atmosphere that fascinated visitors coming to the old dairy turned into a living workshop. Instead of the house, the kind of activity they were pursuing and the profile they were raising for the town being accorded some sense of value, the only thing considered was how much rent they could pay. They never applied formally to the municipality for support when the house was set up for sale, but the situation was discussed informally. The main argument for not intervening was that it is difficult to assist one kind of private company but not another, according to both the women and a municipal employee. 'But we were not pleased, as we had been like a 'show-case' for the municipality. I don't know how many visitors we received on behalf of the municipality: bank directors, foreign visitors, parliamentary committees, and so on we were like pretty dolls who could be wheeled out at festive moments.'

The woman making designer clothes from reindeer skin was pessimistic about the future supply of skins, since the only factory processing them in Iceland closed down in March 2006. For years she had needed to buy the skins herself from hunters and she was wondering if she should bother to continue with so little support in accessing the material needed to produce goods from this unique local resource. In a recent proposal for a regional growth contract between the region and the government (Iðnaðar- og viðskiptaráðuneytið 2006), support has been sought to establish a firm processing reindeer meat as a service to hunters. The processing of hides is not mentioned and interestingly, the majority of the proposals for government support for new firms are from men, and relate to male-dominated occupations.

A new and innovative use of the reindeer image was developed in 2005, resulting in the first international experimental film and video festival to be held in Iceland, at Egilsstaðir, in April 2006. The name of the festival was 700IS Reindeerland¹⁹. Kristín, the young woman and artist who initiated the festival, had moved from England to Egilsstaðir the previous year when she obtained a position at the newly-established cultural centre in the municipality. She suggested this name without knowing about the ongoing marketing of the reindeer image, and is

¹⁸ A group of women, including those in House of the Hands, tried to buy another centrally-located property with a lot of empty shopping and office space. The idea was to create a lively mixture of shops, workshops, services and tourist information run by women in the centre. Despite help from a business and gender equality advisor temporarily positioned at the BRDC, and the possibility of financial backing from the Institute for Regional Development, the 'big, strong' companies who owned the property demanded far too high a price.

¹⁹ The number is the postcode for the area, referring to a peripheral location in an Icelandic context.

convinced that the name alone helped her to gain local support and grants²⁰. She just knew this was the right marketing abroad: 'It sounds just like a fairy tale. Like the home of Santa Claus and for foreigners and some artists that are so romantic ... it is just right. Snow and reindeer.'

The 50 films/videos shown were chosen from over three hundred works from 34 countries, which indicates a large interest in participating in this kind of festival in a small town in Iceland. Kristín related a lot of interest in the festival to the novelty of participating in a festival in Iceland, as artists were always going to the same places in the USA, Germany or Japan. Many just wanted to put on their CV that they had participated in a festival in Iceland. After Egilsstaðir the films were shown in Reykjavík, and then in New York and a few other cities.

Despite the word 'experimental', this new festival was well received by people in the area, especially young people, and the plan is to make this an annual event. After the festival, local teachers asked for a course in experimental film making and courses have been held at the youth café, so the seeds sown for the future by this kind of cultural event may be many.

Eiðar – a meeting of world art and local memories

In 2001, the municipality of Fljótshálsa, with Egilsstaðir as urban centre, agreed to sell Eiðar, which for a century had been a centre of education and culture in the region²¹, to two men from Reykjavík. The sale was debated locally and critics claimed that large tracts of valuable land for recreation were practically given away, in exchange for promises of future investment in the revitalization of the place. The first plan centred on the creation of an international cultural and educational centre, including housing for performing arts, an environmental art garden with sculpture symposiums and a Japanese garden, courses centered on the arts and an international research centre on water. The concepts of world art, national art and home art were used to express the idea of mixing art on different geographical scales and from different geographical origins in this place.

One of the new owners, Sigurjón, a film producer and businessman interested in contemporary art, has established a network of 20 well-known international artists who first met in Eiðar in 2004. Ólafur Elíasson²², an artist well known in contemporary art circles, is leading the group, which has been selected according to professional criteria. At annual meetings of this group in Eiðar the aim is to develop the future of the place as an art centre and also to be a venue for creative ideas in a dialogue between artists working in different media. To mediate these ideas to a wider group there is an ambitious plan of publishing interviews conducted in Eiðar with a hundred artists²³. The planned sculpture garden in the former forestry preserve at Eiðar is also ambitious, with four 'very strong' works already planned, or at least the artist (interview with Klara, the new manager at Eiðar). The only sculpture so far has not been well received by the locals. It is a massive replica of a Macy's shopping mall in the United States by two American artists, Paul McCarthy and Jason Rhoades. It is defined as critical art, criticizing consumerism and environmental destruction. In the eyes of some local users of this space, the work is simply ugly and out of place in a space which, in their memory and in everyday practice, is linked to outdoor recreation in a growing environment to which they have contributed by planting trees. This planting has been part of school activity for decades.

Artistic courses for children from the region organised by Sigríður, the film producers wife, have been received positively and got one of the highest grants in 2006 from the East Iceland

²⁰ In terms of finance, the biggest grant came from the publicly-funded Eastern Iceland cultural board. The new regional actor, the multinational Alcoa, awarded a first prize and travel costs to the winner.

²¹ With the increased provision of schools in the region the school at Eiðar was finally closed in 1998, with the buildings and much of the land handed over from the Ministry of Education and Culture to the municipality.

²² Ólafur was born and raised in Denmark, but is of Icelandic origin. Sigurjón lived in the United States for 28 years. Both men have access to global-reaching networks in their fields.

²³ The first book was published in 2005 (Obrist et al. 2005). Hans Ulrich Obrist is the curator of the museum of modern art in Paris and has a long list of publications in this field.

Cultural Board. In response to heavy critic from some locals at a meeting in 2005 Lára, a woman from Egilsstaðir, was hired to take care of the 'home art' (meaning local) part of the vision presented when buying Eiðar. She has organized cultural events to attract locals to the place and as part of her vision wants to emphasize the memories attached to Eiðar in the minds of the thousands of people from the region who went to school there. In the developments at Eiðar we can see contestations of meaning and control of place, memories and future visions. These are linked to private capital taking over a former public space and the local outcome of global trends in contemporary art being placed in the landscape.

Weaving together culture and economy in Pajala and Egilsstaðir

From our case studies of the use of culture in reinvention processes in Pajala and Egilsstaðir, we find similarities in an increased emphasis on cultural heritage and artistic activities that promote these places to the outside world, especially to tourists. Local cultural resources are incorporated in a territorial identity and marketed as products or as experiences (Ray 1998). This is achieved, for example, by the revaluing of old cultural events, as in the case of the Römppäviikko festival in Pajala, or by creating or inventing a new territorial identity, like the reindeer image in Eastern Iceland. Frequent references made to symmetry between the development of cultural activities and attracting potential visitors to these places leaves an impression that the economic potential of the cultural economy in these small towns in the Northern periphery is primarily linked to income from tourists with varying interests, e.g. as sports hunters and fishermen, festival-goers or those interested in specific art forms and historic events. In Egilsstaðir national and international artists are also entering more strongly into discussions on cultural economy developments, mainly through the film festival and plans for the provision of facilities for artists at Eiðar, and group pressure for similar developments in the former slaughterhouse at Egilsstaðir.

In Egilsstaðir, interestingly, the tourist attraction argument was used both in seeking support for contemporary art of global origin and for a centre for craft products based on local resources. The increased weight given to tourism may also been seen in the special support granted to heritage tourism when the cultural contract with the government was renewed in 2005. In Pajala a cultural revival, with an emphasis on strengthening territorial identity, turned into support for local tourist enterprises based on natural resources. In the contemporary regional policy environment, referred to in the introduction as 'the new economic approach to cultural policy' (Michelli 2003) and 'the normative cultural economy approach' (Gibson and Kong 2005), claiming the intrinsic value of culture in terms of identity and individual fulfilment does not seem to be enough to gain financial and political support. Although people working in cultural fields may be driven by motives other than economic ones, they strategically adapt their arguments for the support of culture to the dominant neoliberal discourse in both Sweden and Iceland. The main content of the discourse is that each region should find and develop its economic growth potential in a competitive global market-place by attracting investment, money-spending tourists and migrating human capital (Gibson and Kong 2005). In Pajala this search for new economic possibilities is explained by a desperate need to find ways out of an economic and demographic decline. Although Egilsstaðir has not experienced a downturn on a similar scale, culture as a leisure activity is understood in the regional cultural contract with the government as an important component in migration decisions, especially among young people. Attracting young and better-educated people is perceived as vital for the future development of the region (Iðnaðar- og viðskiptaráðuneytið 2006). Although the concept of a 'creative class' is not used, the argument may be interpreted as a vague expression of that theme.

In Pajala and in Egilsstaðir/Eastern Iceland, PUAB and BRDC, respectively, are new forms of governance where the local business community and municipalities work out strategies for future economic developments according to the new regional policy framework. Similar

developments in England (Little and Jones 2000) and Australia (Pini 2006) have been found to have gendered implications, strengthening male leadership in defining development paths, with masculine values dominating the course adopted. In our case studies we can see such trends in cultural economy developments, with more interest and institutional support being given to the development of local hunting resources than to projects and enterprises using those same local resources to produce food, clothes or other artefacts. In both places the hunting/fishing is culturally coded as a male leisure activity, while food production and clothing/handicrafts are common female activities. Following Johnson's (2006) use of Bourdieu's disaggregated typology of cultural capital as embodied, objectified and institutionalized, the making of clothes and food is embodied female cultural capital, objectified in reindeer-skin dresses or coffee cheese – to take examples from our cases – but not institutionalized in the same way as hunting and fishing activities.

In Egilsstaðir there has been little formal support for utilizing the skin of the reindeer resource proclaimed as unique, irrespective of the enterprises being established to create extra income by farm women or by women with professional training, or the creation of fashionable products aimed at better-off life-style consumers. In Pajala the female entrepreneurs with plans to create a food house have faced the same problems, with a lack of municipal support in spite of their project qualifying for EU funding. Gendered practices with a segregation of activities (relating to both production and consumption) and gendered ideology about businessmen and entrepreneurs (Pini 2006, Scholten 2003) may help to explain the indifference shown to women's projects and enterprises. What women are doing is not valued as having the same growth potential as men's activities and interest in economic reinvention, hence it does not gain the same level of financial and institutional support as men's ideas and activities. In Egilsstaðir the men in construction-related occupations got a megaproject going via the government, through the construction of a hydropower station and an aluminium factory. In Pajala a number of male informants seem to be hoping for similar forms of revitalization through traditional, male-coded occupations in the forestry industry. Though both theatrical plays and literature in Meänkieli are appreciated and fulfil the aim of raising people's self-esteem, many men perceive this kind of cultural manifestation as female/*knappsu* and without economic potential. This view is now dominant within the municipal domain in Pajala.

The different historic trajectories of Pajala and Egilsstaðir influence a number of other understandings and practices concerning cultural revitalization, especially regarding the emphasis placed on raising the self-confidence of local people by creating a new territorial identity (Ray 1998) based on a formerly oppressed culture. In Pajala the dramatic Torne Valley history is a source of tension when it comes to interpretations of the aims of the 'cultural municipality'. According to Ray (ibid.), cultural economy may have a normative capacity, such as when inhabitants choose alternative development paths stressing local self-reliance in the use of physical resources. The original thought concerning cultural commitment in Pajala is an illustration of this normative capacity. The idea was to integrate the cultural revival into the municipal domain, with Meänkieli as the most important manifestation (but also to utilize the local heritage to create products to be marketed). This perception of culture is in line with Wittgenstein's understanding of language as a medium for social practice (in Simonsen 2001). Meänkieli is, for many inhabitants, a manifestation of 'the soul of the people', as expressed by Duelund (2003). In the light of the great importance accorded to language, e.g. at the Torne Valley theatre, it is interesting that young people seem to interpret the struggle to establish Meänkieli as a form of rehabilitation for those who experienced oppression at school. The young people themselves are more interested in learning English, Russian or 'real Finnish'.

Apart from gendered power relations we find contestations and negotiations concerning cultural developments in both Pajala and Egilsstaðir between groups with different forms of attachment to the places through their memories, as expressed by young people in Pajala and users of the land at Eiðar. Places are imbued with multiple layers of meaning and the way in which individuals and groups sense a particular place varies, depending on past and present practices (Simonsen 2001) and the stretching out of social and cultural relations (Massey 1994).

This stretching out may refer to networks and experiences built on physical mobility, e.g. migration and travel, as well as formal and informal cultivation through schools, the media, the Internet, etc. Paradoxically, the cultural heritage emphasis on reinvention as cultural identity or a tourist-oriented cultural economy is prominent in our case studies, at the same time as the younger generation seems to place more emphasis on outward connections in their visions. How to accommodate cultural developments on the periphery, respecting both the wishes of nostalgic centre-dwellers and different segments of the local population, is a question policy makers might like to consider in between the production of new place-marketing strategies.

References

- Amin, A. and Thrift, N. (2004) *Cultural Economy Reader*, MA, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Austur-Hérað (2001) *Á nýrri öld. Stefna Austur-Héraðs. Staðardagskrá 21, 2001–2006*, Report available at: www.egilsstadir.is/egilsstadir/files/anyrriold.pdf.
- Berglund, A-K. Johansson, S. and Molina, I. (eds) (2005) *Med periferien i centrum*, Rapport 2005:14, Norut NIBR Finnmark.
- Bock, B. (2004) Fitting In and Multi-Tasking: Dutch Farm Women's Strategies in Rural Entrepreneurship, in: *Sociologia Ruralis*, 44, 3, pp. 245–260.
- Duelund, P. (ed.) (2003) *The Nordic Cultural Model*, Copenhagen: Nordic Cultural Institute.
- Gibson, C. and Kong, L. (2005) Cultural economy: a critical review, in: *Progress in Human Geography*, 29, 5, pp. 541–561.
- Harvey, D. (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Iðnaðar- og viðskiptaráðuneytið (2006) *Vaxtarsamningur Austurlands. Tillögur verkefnisstjórnar að vaxtarsamningi Austurlands, til aukinnar samkeppni og sóknar*. Reykjavík: Iðnaðar- og viðskiptaráðuneytið. Report available at: www.idnadarraduneyti.is/media/rafraen_afgreidsla/austurlandLowRes.pdf.
- Johnson, L. (2006) Valuing the Arts: Theorising and Realising Cultural Capital in an Australian City, in: *Geographical Research*, 44, 3, pp. 296–309.
- Kneafsey, M. (2001) Rural Cultural Economy. Tourism and Social Relations, in: *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28, 3, pp. 762–783.
- Lash, S. and Urry, J. (1994) *Economies of Signs & Space*, London: Sage.
- Little, J. (2002) *Gender and Rural Geography*, Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- Little, J. and Jones, O. (2000) Masculinity, Gender and Rural Policy, in: *Rural Sociology*, 65, 4, pp. 621–639.
- Lysgård, H.K. and Tveiten, O. (2005) Cultural economy at work in the city of Kristiansand: cultural policy as incentive for urban innovation, in: *AI & Society*, vol. 19, 4/2005, pp. 485–499.
- Massey, D. (1994) *Space, Place and Gender*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Mitchell, R. (2003) Nordic and European Cultural Policies, in: Duelund, P. (ed.) *The Nordic Cultural Model*, Copenhagen: Nordic Cultural Institute.
- Mósesdóttir, L. (ed.) (2005) *Policies and performances. The case of Austria, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Spain, Hungary and Iceland*, Wellknow project, Report nr. 4. www.bifrost.is/wellknow/Files/Skra_00077700.pdf.
- Mósesdóttir, L. (2006) *Final Report*. Wellknow project, www.bifrost.is/wellknow/Files/Skra_0014164.pdf
- Obrist, H.U., Sighvatsson, S., Agustsson, H.O. and Oskarsdóttir, M. (ed.) (2005). *Hans Ulrich Obrist Interviews. Eiðar Sessions 2004*. Reykjavík: Eidastoll.
- Ólafsson, S. (1997) *Búseta á Íslandi. Rannsókn á orsökum búferlaflutninga. Sauðárkrókur: Bygðastofnun*. Report available at: www.byggdastofnun.is/media/skyrslur/byggd.doc
- Pajala Municipality web page: <http://www.pajala.se/mun/pajala/www.nsf/About/about.html>
- Pini, B. (2006) A critique of 'new' rural local governance: The case of gender in a rural Australian setting, in: *Journal of Rural Studies*, 22, 4, pp. 396–408.
- Pritchard, A. and Morgan, N. (2000) Privileging the male gaze. Gendered tourism landscapes, in: *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27, 4, pp. 884–905.

- Ray, C. (1998) Culture, Intellectual Property and Territorial Rural Development, in: *Sociologia Ruralis*, 38, 1, pp. 3–20.
- Regeringskansliet (2001) *Women as entrepreneurs in Sweden and the UK*. Kvinnor som företagare i Storbritannien och Sverige, London: The Women's Unit Cabinet Office. Report available at: www.regeringen.se/content/1/c4/18/90/6a1f84e5.pdf
- Scholten, C. (2003) *Kvinnors Försörjningsrum. Hegemonins förvaltare och murbräckor*, Lund: Institutionen för kulturgeografi och ekonomisk geografi, Lunds universitet.
- Shorthall, S. (2002) Gendered Agricultural and Rural Restructuring: A Case Study of Northern Ireland, in: *Sociologia Ruralis*, 42, 2, pp. 160–175.
- Simonsen, K. (2001) Space, culture and economy – a question of practice, in: *Geografiska Annaler*, Series B, 83, pp. 41–52.
- Zukin, S. (1995) *The Cultures of Cities*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Þróunarstofa Austurlands (2000) *Stefna í menningarmálum á Austurlandi*, Egilsstaðir: Þróunarstofa Austurlands.
- Þróunarfélag Austurlands (2005) *Auðlindin breindýr. Skýrsla starfshóps*, Egilsstaðir: Þróunarfélag Austurlands. Report available at: www.austur.is/images/stories/skjol/audlindin_hreindyr.pdf.

Chapter 4

Kirkenes: the 'bordered' reinvention of an industrial town

Arvid Viken, Finnmark University College, Torill Nyseth, University of Tromsø, and Brynhild Granås, University of Tromsø

Introduction

Kirkenes is the centre of Sør-Varanger, the only municipality in Norway to share a border with Russia. The town was founded in 1905 as a harbour for the shipment of iron ore from mines a few miles inland. The town is situated on the northern rim of Europe, 2,500 kilometres north of the Norwegian capital Oslo. Until the 1980s, Kirkenes was primarily a company town, a place where the mining enterprise took care of most societal needs and functions. At the moment, Kirkenes is moving from being a one-sided industrial town to a manifold service centre. Most of the services under development relate to the border.

As with many other border towns, Kirkenes is an arena for economic, cultural and political innovation and change. Borders are also places for researching the structures and agencies of the state, and the ways in which national and other identities provide meaning and order to the forces of the state, according to Donnan (1999). This chapter will look at historical change and continuity in the town of Kirkenes, with a special focus on its recent history, the period in which the mining activity closed down and the border to Russia was opened. Attention will be focused on socio-cultural, socio-economic and political practices, to investigate change and continuity with regard to place narratives and identities. The power of the symbolic place and its far-from-innocent character is part of this analysis of how Kirkenes is now changing from an industrial town into a border town.

As Lash and Urry (1994) observed on a general level in the 1990s, many Western industrial towns are being restructured into sites for consumption. The town of Kirkenes has followed this beaten track, from a flourishing mining industry to an industrial manifold and a service economy. The changes involved are closely related to the opening of the border with Russia and the new Russian national state. The research question traced here is how and to what extent the closed mines and opened border have affected socio-economic, socio-cultural and political practices, and how these changes are influencing place identity issues. This analysis is based on 21 in-depth interviews with central development actors, and four focus group interviews with people who do not hold such leading positions. Altogether 44 persons were interviewed.

The significance of borders

The functions and significances of national borders are manifold. Most importantly, borders delimit the territory of the state, and at the same time represent its forefront (Donnan and Wilson 1998:45). The significance of national borders has changed throughout history. In pre-modern times border activities were rare, simply because many borders are products of the nation-state itself. Within the last two centuries, the nation-states of the Western world and their borders have become a way of institutionalizing territories (Paasi 2005). With today's rhetoric of globalization, and with the development of transnational regions and regimes, a 'borderless world' has been assumed (Ohmae 1995). However, fights over national borders are

as encompassing as ever, and it is likely that the state, with its borders, will be ‘...the key medium in the governance of the international system... in the near future’ (Paasi 2005:118).

Several terms relate to ‘border’, each throwing light on the complexity of this phenomenon. According to Prescott (1987), borders are areas that lie near *boundaries* and boundaries are the actual lines of demarcation seen on the map. *Frontier* is another border term and relates to zones that mark political divisions between countries or divisions within a country between settled and uninhabited areas. A third term, described by Prescott, is *borderland*, signifying the transition zones that boundaries cross. Kristof (1969, in Donnan 1999) is even more explicit about the difference between *boundaries* and *frontiers*: a frontier denotes ‘...the process of expansion of a political entity’ (ibid.: 48). Furthermore, Kristof states that the frontier is ‘...an agent of the state’s continual expansion; it is at the forefront of a state’s role with its neighbours.’ Whereas boundaries, according to Kristof, are inner-oriented, frontiers are outer-oriented (Kristof 1969: 127). Frontiers, then, are areas where nation-states are open to the world, and where they let the outer world have significance for their own practices. Until recently, the border discussion had a mainly national political focus. However, borders manifest themselves in economic, social and cultural practices and discourses that are of particular importance for specific border places and regions. Such aspects of borders are important and are about to become central to border discussions today (Paasi 2005). Paasi claims that boundaries are not only political phenomena, but also historical, cultural and symbolic ones (1996). History is important to most people, and much of history is about how borders are decided upon and nation-states created. History actually precedes the political significance of borders. Socially and culturally, borders are important because they are part of the everyday practices and discourses for people living at the border; for the time being they are also of growing importance, because border-crossing activity is increasing. In addition, the symbolic significance of a border varies according to location, time and the international political situation; the meaning of the boundary between Russia and the West in 2006 was notably different compared to twenty years earlier.

Each of these dimensions has been important to Kirkenes in various ways. While drawing on distinctions from the border discussions, the following analysis will illuminate the reinvention of the town of Kirkenes by exploring the changing significance of the Norwegian-Russian boundary. In this investigation, historical, political, socio-cultural, socio-economic and identity-wise impacts are all part of the picture.

The changing significance of the Norwegian-Russian boundary

The Norwegian-Russian boundary represents the northernmost state border in Europe. Despite its stability for nearly two hundred years the border has not always been where it is today, and the meaning of the border has changed dramatically over time. This previous history is important in understanding the most recent twenty years’ development of Kirkenes in the perspective of this chapter. The changing significance of the Russian-Norwegian border can be divided into five historical periods: the ‘common land’ époque (before 1826), the period of the Swedish-Norwegian Union (1826-1905) and a third period, from when Kirkenes was established until the Russian Revolution (1905-1917). The fourth period coincides with the Cold War (1947-1989) and the fifth and last is the post-Soviet period (1992 to date).

For several reasons, the European trend towards the delimitation and demarcation of permanent boundary lines was held back in the northern areas. Most important was the old hunting culture based on the extensive use of land areas and Sámi reindeer pastoralism. For centuries, Norway and Russia accepted the existence of a huge common district where the two states’ right of taxation was not connected primarily with territory but with Sámi ethnicity (Hansen 1996). The border areas between Norway and Russia during the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century had the features of frontiers (Niemi 2005).

However, it has been said that ‘only good fences make good neighbours’. It became important for the small Norwegian state with its powerful Russian neighbour to negotiate a boundary line that would clarify once and for all where Russia ended and Norway began. Russia, on the other hand, could afford to wait²⁴. Part of a diplomatic compromise between Sweden-Norway and Russia in 1826 made two thirds of the area Russian, and the remaining one third Norwegian (Niemi 1992). The Russian-Norwegian border has been stable since this treaty was signed, except for a short period (see below), and is considered to be Russia’s oldest existing state border. This stability is an exception to the rule of instability in most of the other European border regions (Niemi 2005).

For nearly 200 years, from 1700 to 1919, a significant Pomor trade had been going on along the coasts of Norway and Russia. This contributed to the development of strong Norwegian-Russian relations (Niemi 1992). Even though Kirkenes was never a Pomor harbour, traders from Kirkenes established their businesses on the Russian Fisherman’s Peninsula during this period. This contributed to the establishment of good relations between Kirkenes and North-West Russia.

By the end of the 19th century, industrialization, initially related to mining, became important in Northern Norway as well. The iron ore in Sør-Varanger was discovered and when the mine was established, Kirkenes was chosen as the export harbour. The administrative headquarters of the mining company, Sydvaranger, were located in Oslo, and from day one Kirkenes had close relations with the capital and was an integrated part of the Norwegian national economy.

With the Russian revolution in 1917, the Norwegian-Russian border was emphatically closed. The revolution also changed the relationship between Norway and Finland: in 1917 Finland gained independence from Russia. As a part of the treaty, Finland gained a small corridor of land all the way to the Russian coast (the Petsamo corridor). Thus, from 1920-1944, the Norwegian-Russian border became a Norwegian-Finnish border. Finnish politics in this period were expansionistic. This was perceived as a threat to Norway and the relationship between Norway and Finland became tense. A policy of the ‘Norwegianization’ of Finnish immigrants and the Sámi population had been implemented in order to reduce their presumed loyalty to Finland (Eriksen and Niemi 1981). Until the early years of the 20th century, the Sámi and the *Kvens* (people of Finnish origin) constituted the majority of the population in Sør-Varanger. The mining company Sydvaranger Ltd. was given a role in the Norwegian sovereignty policy and the company tried to limit the numbers of Finnish employees. With Sydvaranger Ltd., the area we now call Kirkenes changed from a small multicultural community into a Norwegian town.

The Kirkenes area was a site of important events during the Second World War. This war and partisan activities linked Russians and Norwegians in the area in the battle against the Germans. The Russian army liberated north-eastern areas of Norway from German occupation during the last part of the war. The visual landscape of today’s Kirkenes is clearly marked by this historical event: the town was completely dismantled during the war, and there are scarcely any pre-war buildings left. The houses in the town centre all bear the dominant characteristic of post-war reconstruction, a project where the functionality of post-war architecture dominated. Additionally, bunkers, gun sites and other war installations are found in great numbers in the town and its surroundings, some of them used as tourist attractions these days.

During the Cold War, the Norwegian-Russian border had a strong international significance, as it was the only northern Russian border to the countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). This very strictly controlled border was both a manifestation and a symbol of the split between East and West, and between communism and capitalism. Throughout this period, defending forces, the police and the Norwegian Intelligence Service

²⁴ This conflict was not very different from today’s Norwegian-Russian boundary disputes in the Barents Sea (Nielsen 2005).

had a strong presence in Sør-Varanger and in the town of Kirkenes. National authorities on both sides perceived their neighbours as a potential enemy.

In the minds of Kirkenes inhabitants, at least among the elderly who experienced the war, the Russians are still seen as the real liberators. Even during the period after the revolution and in the midst of the Cold War, people across the border have had some contact, mostly on a cultural level and always persistently controlled by the authorities. With glasnost, the patterns and frequency of contacts has changed dramatically and today Kirkenes stands up as a vital border town.

A reinvented Kirkenes town – changing social practices

A place is what people do (Massey 1994, Agnew & Duncan 1989), and a closer look at social practices will show how and to what extent Kirkenes has developed from an industrial town to a border town since 1985. The next section of this chapter will describe how, compared to 20 years earlier, employment structures and economic activities have developed, as well as political and cultural institutions. Central to this story is how things relate to the border.

A vanishing industrial community: changing economic practices

Sydvaranger mining company employed up to 1,500 people. In this working-class and labour union community the social democrats held political power from one decade to the next. Several incidents during the 1980s were crucial for the final closure of Sydvaranger Ltd. The company was involved in the construction of a steel factory in Germany, an unsuccessful megaproject from which the Norwegian state and Sydvaranger Ltd. suffered heavy losses, partly due a severe crisis that hit the global iron ore market. Afterwards, the Norwegian authorities decided to gather the entire Norwegian iron ore industry within one company, Sydvaranger Ltd. Altogether, Sydvaranger Ltd. became heavily subsidized by the national authorities. The national political climate shifted, with growing scepticism towards subsidizing industry. Decisions about downscaling and closing down Sydvaranger Ltd. were taken in the mid-1980s. Locally, this conclusion was never accepted and throughout the 1980s and 1990s people went into battle for the company. Processions of demonstrators walked the streets of Kirkenes year after year as one group after another lost their jobs. In 1996, mining production in Kirkenes was abolished.

From the late 1980s to the beginning of the 21st century, Sør-Varanger municipality and Sydvaranger Ltd received considerable funding to restructure the local economy. The main transfers (1991-1996) were carried out through Sydvaranger Ltd. in an effort to adjust and increase the efficiency of the mining production. Throughout the period as a whole, the municipal institution and its development companies allocated money to infrastructure, including a harbour, pilot business projects, welfare initiatives, and so on. Two initiatives of the restructuring period stand out. Firstly, the mechanical support of the mining company was allocated to a separate firm, Kimek, offering services on the open market. With many contracts related to Russian trawlers, the factory partly developed into a shipyard employing between 100 and 200 people. This cleared the way to establish Kirkenes as a harbour for the Russian marine sector. Kimek constructed a 3,000m², 80m tall factory building that dominates the visual landscape of Kirkenes town centre, symbolizing a manifest and continuing industrialization. Secondly, the administrative department of the National Insurance Organization (a welfare organization, today part of the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organization) was relocated close to town (in Bjørnevatn), providing approximately 130 jobs with a particular white-collar and female profile. There is also a regional hospital and regional police office, and the Norwegian Armed Forces are strongly at present in the area. The municipality therefore has more than 50% employment within the public sector.

Despite an extensive public sector, a manifold of private businesses have evolved as well. For example, the tourist industry employs approximately 250 people. The main attractions and

the marketing focus are not the town of Kirkenes as such, but the war history of the area, the Russian border, a diverse ethnicity and excellent opportunities for outdoor recreation. A high occupancy rate in the accommodation sector of the town is also due to the many delegations of politicians and business people who visit Kirkenes. All the way along, this growth has been underpinned by an increased mobility in and through the town relating to the opening of the Russian border.

There has also been a considerable growth in local trade and commerce, partly based on a Russian presence. Two shopping centres have been constructed since the year 2000. Russians cross the border every day to go shopping in Kirkenes; Russian trawlers come to buy fuel and use the excellent harbour facilities, and to deliver their catch to fish factories in Kirkenes or the surrounding district. Kirkenes is also about to become a regional trade centre. The former self-fluxing local economy implied a rather regionally isolated Kirkenes, while local companies now think and act more regionally.

Despite the closing-down of Sydvaranger, manufacturing industries have maintained a prioritized position. This was also the case during the restructuring period. One outcome has been persistent harbour development. Another has been a long-lasting and still prevailing expectation of a petroleum era. The ship repair and reloading of petrol from smaller Russian oil tankers to long-distance ships that started up in 2006 are the only significant results so far. However, a boom in the property market in 2006 was linked to the oil and gas expectations. Petroleum-related consultancy companies have established offices in Kirkenes. Kimek has signed contracts connected to Russian petroleum activity in the Barents Sea. Petroleum is also the task of the many delegations in the town. These manifestations are just as much related to the development of Russian oil and gas fields as to any feasible petroleum production in the Norwegian part of the Barents Sea. Kirkenes and Sør-Varanger stand in a harsh competitive situation as a site for petroleum industrial localization. Kirkenes is not an obvious choice, even though the place has proved its competitiveness on a number of occasions, particularly as a bridgehead towards the East.

New political practices: the institutionalization of cross-border contacts

The local politicians in Sør-Varanger municipality and the town of Kirkenes have been involved for many years in different co-operation projects relating to the border. One example is friendship agreements: in 1972, Sør-Varanger signed its first friendship agreement on cultural and sport exchange with Pechenga. In 1994, a similar agreement was signed with the Russian naval base town of Severomorsk. A women's cultural exchange network between Sør-Varanger and Nickel is a third example. Starting in the 1980s, and encouraged by the national authorities, this co-operation has developed into an institutionalized border network over the years, incorporating sixteen municipalities, including Russian, Finnish and Swedish ones. The glasnost era not only stimulated these co-operation activities, but led to a booming border crossing through the 1990s. Local authorities, observing that many Norwegians were adopting a negative attitude towards the Russians, started several projects to inform and educate inhabitants and integrate with the Russians.

The Norwegian central authorities were also involved in cross-border co-operation in 1993, when the Norwegian foreign minister initiated the Barents Region. Kirkenes was chosen as the central arena and the secretariat of this new transnational regional co-operation was located in the town: The Norwegian Barents Secretariat was constituted as an agency under the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to assist with Norwegian-Russian collaboration in the north. Recently, a research organization, The Barents Institute, has been established under the umbrella of the secretariat. The Norwegian Barents Secretariat has grown into a strong and important institution, very much due to local efforts to utilize and nurture the opportunities provided for by its establishment. In 2006, approximately ten regionally-recruited individuals were employed at the secretariat, most of them in positions requiring high competence. The institution has developed into an information centre and a node in many Barents networks. Quite often, the secretariat acted as host for national and international political or business

actors. Many of these visits relate to the Barents Sea as an international petroleum production area, and to a politically more liberal and increasingly wealthier Russia providing business opportunities. 'Kirkenes is a political destination', one informant claimed, and further referred to a statement from the American ambassador: 'I have been in Kirkenes more than the Norwegian prime minister. Seen from Washington, this is the center of Norway'. Having positions in such networks, The Norwegian Barents Secretariat is not greatly involved with the local community and the municipality. On the other hand, the institution has played a strong part in the social construction of Kirkenes as the centre of the Barents Region.

Socio-cultural practices of a border town

Part of this construction work incorporates a local artistic-cultural women's association, The Girls on the Bridge (*Pikene på broen*²⁵), established in 1996 as a project-based organization operating mainly on public funding. The aim of their activities is to stimulate multicultural dialogues, but also to develop Kirkenes as a town. The organization has run dozens of international arts projects over the years, using Kirkenes as an arena. Several projects are tied to the terms 'border' and 'Barents'. The most popular and well-known local project is the annual Kirkenes festival 'Barents Spectacle'. Several private and public actors use Barents Spectacle as an arena and a context for their own events. The activities of The Girls on the Bridge seem to influence local political and commercial actors, particularly with regard to perceptions of place development and how the border element might be managed and manifested as part of the Kirkenes identity. Part of this is their promotion of Kirkenes as a Barents centre.

The ethnic composition of Kirkenes has also changed since the 1980s. Approximately 8% of the inhabitants were Russian in 2006; many of these are Russian women married to Norwegian men. In addition, refugees and asylum seekers started to arrive in Kirkenes in around 1993, first Bosnian refugees and later people from many countries. Thus, there are foreign employees in many firms and public services in Kirkenes – the hospital, for example, employs people of a variety of ethnic origins. Altogether, Kirkenes was host to between 40 and 50 different nationalities in 2006, while in the 1980s there were mostly Norwegians, Sámi and Finns. However, the iconography of Kirkenes does not reveal a multicultural town, but a border town – primarily a town with ties to Russia; there are signposts and commercials in Russian, and Russian speaking people 'everywhere'. There is a weekly Russian market in the town centre and one of the shopping centres has been specifically set up to serve Russian customers.

Towards an integrated borderland?

The above description of new practices and manifestations is one way of telling the story of transformation and continuance in Kirkenes after its palmy days as an industrial town. While recognizing that other emphasis could be made, the major substantiation is still about how *border related practices are a central part of the newly-evolving practices and institutions in Kirkenes*. This description also shows how new practices develop within networks that involve actors from an international to a local level. When asking people about the driving forces in the transition of Kirkenes, the opening of the Russian border is the major factor pointed out; it was Kirkenes' luck that the closing-down of the mining company overlapped in time with the opening of the Russian border:

The big changes didn't come in 1996 (the closing-down of the mining company), but earlier. Because we already knew what would happen to Sydvaranger. It was the opening of the (Russian) border that really brought the big change.

From a group interview with women

This quotation expresses the hegemonic narrative about the recent change of Kirkenes, a narrative that is also embedded in the social practices that constitute the town today.

²⁵ 'Pikene på broen' is the name of a Edvard Munch painting from 1901. The English name of this painting is 'Girls on a Jetty'. With regard to the project group in Kirkenes we have translated the name as 'The Girls on the Bridge'.

Despite these changes, some lines of historical continuance are to be found. One example is the outdoor leisure lifestyle, to which we shall return, a story quite uncoupled from the border aspect. Another continuance is the orientation towards manufacturing industry. To talk about 'what characterizes the town today' (this question was directed at all informants) inevitably brings up the story of what Kirkenes used to be – an industrial town. The Sydvaranger Ltd. era is still part of the local consciousness. The 1980s and 1990s were dominated by the struggle for Sydvaranger, about conflicts and tension, anger and grief. This implied that there was limited room for alternative courses of action during this period. The dream of re-opening the mines remained strong all the way into the 21st century and blocked the way for new economic activities, according to several informants. While some still dream about the mines, expectations for a petroleum future seem to have taken over and carry on the industrial orientation, a dream of the future very much related to developments in Russia. The main impression is nevertheless that most people in Kirkenes acknowledge that the future economy must be manifold.

There is a tendency in Kirkenes towards a development in the direction of an interdependent borderland (Martinez 1994). Within the areas close to the Russian-Norwegian border, actors depend ever more on contact with their neighbours. Nevertheless, several examples from Kirkenes show how new economic practices depend heavily on Russian actors and development within Russia. Most important are the reloading of petrol from smaller Russian oil tankers, the oil bunkering of Russian trawlers, the fish catch delivery by the Russians in Kirkenes, and the shipyard activities of Kimek, with the Russians as their most important customers. Altogether, these activities provide several hundred work places. At the same time, the new arrangements seem to solve harbour and support problems for the fishing fleet and shipping sector on the Russian side, and problems with fish supply in the Norwegian fishing industry have also been resolved. Also included in this picture are the many Russians who go shopping in Kirkenes; this solves a supply problem on the Russian side and contributes to economic growth on the Norwegian side. In each case, the two countries are complementary to each other, the one side providing services or goods that meet demands from the other side. Many people also make a living from the many cross-national projects and many Russians work in Norwegian firms on both sides of the border. Due to the salary differences there are only a few examples of Norwegians working in Russian enterprises, but some entrepreneurs in Kirkenes are involved in business projects in Russia. In every case there is a dependency on industries on the other side. The many cross-border marriages also imply cross-border friendships and family connections.

Despite the growing interdependence of the two border regions, there is still a way to go before this border area can be described as an ideally integrated borderland, in the sense of a free flow of capital, goods and employees (Martinez 1994). From the Finnish-Russian border, Paasi (1999: 127) has observed that there are no signs of the happy border-crossing consumers known from borders that are more open and have more equal societies on both sides. With regard to this characteristic, Kirkenes has perhaps taken a step further. There are certainly a whole group of people who often cross the border and who have an everyday life that involves contact with Russians in one way or another.

Identifying a 'Barents elite'

The descriptions above of new and border-related practices can be read as a story of how Kirkenes has developed from an industrial town on the border to a border town. That stated, it is also necessary to ask *for whom this development is important*. The answer, in a way, is everybody, indirectly, because border-related activities are so vital for the town. 'The border and the proximity to Russia mark us all', it was said. Secondly, relatively many have work where they meet Russians or are involved in affairs that relate to the border or the neighbouring country. But most people are not involved in the creation of new border-crossing politics or businesses. However, some are. There seems to be a rather limited network of people involved in cross-border co-operations. Participants are found within institutions and organizations involved to

promote Kirkenes as a 'political destination', a 'border town', a 'bridgehead towards Russia', a 'capital of the Barents region' and a 'cultural Barents centre'. These people may be viewed as a 'Barents elite'. The activities of the Barents elite are not strongly embedded in the local community or politics – their activities are beyond the local level and their networks are outwardly directed. On the agenda are the politics of identity: they focus on the development of a local identity in Kirkenes, and they use the term 'Barents' to influence attitudes in the local community actively and to force the outer world to adopt the idea of 'the Barents town of Kirkenes'.

The politics, narratives and rhetoric of bordered identities

The border-related social practices of Kirkenes tell the story of a place that in some ways now performs (Bærenholdt et al. 2004) as a border town, within externally-reaching networks (Massey 1994). The analysis will now move on and supplement this perspective with an analysis of how people think and feel about the place. The reinvented Kirkenes town also has a 'subjective' aspect (Agnew 1998): local interpretations of Kirkenes, for instance, entail how people act with regard to the place. This approach brings about supplementing perspectives of how the meaning of the border influences the development of the town. This will be presented and discussed through the concepts of place or local identity, narratives, rhetoric and discourses.

When discussing matters of identity, it is important to distinguish between identity as a social practice and identity as an analytical concept (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Identity politics is an important example of 'identity as practice'. In the case of Kirkenes, both local and national actors practice identity politics when they work to enhance certain place identities in the town. As researchers, however, we make use of the concept of identity to analyse collective identifications and feelings of belonging among people.

On a general level it is stated that identity platforms such as class, gender and occupation become weaker, and as they do, other identity bases and markers seem to take over (Kellner 1992). It is also widely accepted that it is part of the modern subject project to choose identities (cf. Bauman 2001). Following this approach, identities may be seen as something that is continuously constructed, through presentations, actions and communication. In such processes the place where people live has a crucial position; Florida (2002), for example, perceives places where people live as the major base for identity construction in current society.

The boundary and local identities in Kirkenes

The primary focus of this analysis will be on place-related identity (cf. Stedman 2002; Twigger-Ross and Uzzel 1996). Nevertheless, the border inscribes matters of *national* identity in Kirkenes in particular ways. Newman and Paasi (1994) have discussed this: the boundary between countries often corresponds to boundaries between national cultures and identities. A dynamic of state territoriality and ideology is that differences and distinctions between neighbouring countries are sometimes effectively exploited in constructions of national identities (ibid.: 194). Boundaries, in the sense of the lines on the map or the physical border markers in the landscape, are at the same time both manifestations *and* symbols of power relations between states (ibid.: 194). Boundaries are institutions that '...embody implicit or explicit norms and values and, therefore, legal and moral codes...', and further:

Identities and boundaries thus seem to be different sides of the same coin.... Boundaries both create identities and are created through identity'. (Newman and Paasi 1998: 194)

An implication of this argument is that in Kirkenes, local and national actors are involved in constructions of the meaning or significance of the Russian-Norwegian boundary. This constitutes a backcloth for place-related identity constructions in Kirkenes, as the boundary is a manifest part of the Kirkenes landscape. In this section we shall argue that the signs of

growing border-related orientation and identification in Kirkenes are particularly inscribed in local identities.

Different narratives about the border

To analyse place-related identities we make use of Somers (1994), who embeds identities in four different types of *narratives* constituting bases for identity (cf. Holstein and Gubrium 2000 for a similar categorization). The first, ontological narratives refer to people's personal experiences. The second type is public narratives, shared for example within a local community or particular place. Thirdly, people have professional, knowledge- or work-related identities based on conceptual narratives. Finally, some identities are based on metanarratives, in the sense of, for example, grand theories and ideologies. All these narratives are constructed and therefore also contestable, and by definition unstable. This notion of narratives as bases for identities will be pursued in the analysis that follows.

Signs of the border in Kirkenes are numerous, and they reflect practices that relate to Russia. There is also a strong local rhetoric relating to different aspects of the Barents Region, and Kirkenes as a Barents town. This also includes a politics of identity that can be linked particularly to The Norwegian Barents Secretariat (including local and national actors), The Girls on the Bridge, representatives from Sør-Varanger municipality, and a number of local politicians and business people. In the previous section these people were characterized as the Barents elite. To these people, the Barents narrative constitutes an ontological identity – it is part of their daily working life to travel and to host and guide visitors from or on their way to Russia.

However, the interview material from this study does not confirm that this political identity project has succeeded in gaining a broad ground locally. The narrative of a Barents town is not rooted in a public narrative or a collective past, but based on the political involvement and professional experiences of a minority that hold positions. The Barents rhetoric is therefore primarily based on conceptual narratives, and partly on meta/narratives. Regarding the metanarrative, elite members emphasize different aspects: The identity project of The Girls on the Bridge emphasizes more an ideology of universal values of inclusion, integration and mutual understanding. Other participants within the elite place more emphasis on a promotion of Kirkenes as a place, or on the strategic location of the town within the High North²⁶. This may even be interpreted as an ideological project to communicate the perception that '...the geographical peripheries are not necessarily economic or cultural peripheries' (Snickars 1989, in Paasi 1996).

The Barents town of Kirkenes: a hegemonic discourse

The narratives in question should preferably be explored through some concept from the tradition of discourse analysis: in their efforts to create a Barents identity, the Barents elite make use of a particular rhetoric containing what Laclau (2000: 70-71) refers to as master-signifiers and floating (supporting) signifiers. *Master-signifiers* are in charge of '...the process of articulation that characterises a particular discursive formation that struggles for hegemony', according to Vila (2003: 618). In the rhetoric of the Barents elite, the master-signifier is the idea of Kirkenes, as a Barents centre, as something favourable for everybody and essential for the development of Kirkenes. Floating signifiers like 'border', 'cross-border communication', 'international', 'multicultural', 'integration', and 'Barents' support this message. Another discursive element is how these actors transform happenings (of personal and limited importance) into events (of general importance) (Vila 2003). Examples of *happenings that become events* are decisions concerning the Barents Region, the institutionalization of the cross-border women's network, and Barents Spectacle. Most of these are minor happenings for most people in Kirkenes, but articulated as events by the Barents elite.

²⁶ Since 2004, this has been a term used for the northern parts of Scandinavia and Russia and the ocean areas above, in Norwegian called *Nordområdene*.

The discourse on Kirkenes as a Barents town is a hegemonic project, and it has an increasing influence on public narratives about Kirkenes. Nevertheless, the narrative of the Barents town does not provide an unambiguous identity base for inhabitants in Kirkenes. One primary observation is that in most interviews with individuals, other than the Barents elite, the Barents town issue is not mentioned. But at some points the narrative is referred to:

...it is exciting because Kirkenes is constantly on the map, on television, in the media. At the same time we see, with all the meetings that are here, that they (national politicians) actually come here, in one election campaign after another. So it is obvious that this is something for the big boys too.

From a group interview with retired people

This quotation expresses a pride and sense of belonging to the 'political destination' of Kirkenes ('getting us on television'), while at the same time the practices involved are considered something for the political elite ('the big boys'). Another informant expressed this as follows:

(this is a) borderland (...) That is what makes it exciting to live here. And then there is the concept of Barents... Barents Secretariat, but also the Barents Sea, the Barents Region and the Barents Institute... (...) Before, we used to go to Tromsø for shopping, now we go to Murmansk. Many of us have a multi-visa. (...) Also, Arkhangelsk is so close that it is part of our everyday life...

From a group interview with women

This female informant, holding a leading position in the town, is not part of the identified Barents elite, but probably unveils a personal identification that is strongly influenced by Barents parlance.

Statements from other informants indicated an underlying ambivalence towards a Barents or Russia-related identification: 'It is funny with all these Russians, however...' one elderly person commented. Another claimed that '...the Russian seamen – it marks the whole (town)... They are on the public foot-path, they are everywhere...very positive, actually.' Some young people expressed alienation towards these tendencies: 'It is the commercial actors who put up signs in the Russian language', one said. The youngsters appreciated 'multicultural' Kirkenes, but at the same time they stated that it sometimes goes too far: 'I feel that there is lots of talk about Barents, Barents, Barents... but do we really have that much to do with Barents?' The adolescents had a variety of floating signifiers supporting their opposition: 'Russian sailors take over the town', 'the Russian seamen offend young girls', and so on. However, without a clear master-signifier, this protest is not likely to be heard. Some youngsters admit to having friends of Russian origin, with at least one Russian parent, but they are perceived as Norwegian:

There are two types (of Russians) – those who are pals, who are integrated and practically Norwegian. They don't talk much about Russia anyway. It doesn't seem as if they like it very much.

From a group interview with young people

In the eyes of the young people interviewed, there are obviously two major categories, those who have become Norwegian and those who are still Russian.

There are clearly variations in how informants relate to the idea of Kirkenes as a Barents town. Grown-ups in leading positions in the town seem to be 'happy border-crossing consumers' who advance an integrated borderland (cf. Paasi 2005: 127), holding a multi-visa that allows them to move relatively unconstrained across the border. But young people claimed that a multi-visa is too expensive. Their only personal experiences of crossing the border was through a school class exchange. They even claimed that this activity was not well thought-out or organized, partly because it was arranged on Norwegian premises, and 'It is a bad way to promote Russia, sending school classes to Nickel', a relatively undeveloped, poor and polluted mining town close to the border.

One could obviously question the embeddedness of the Barents identity. With reference to Somers narrative categories, one interpretation of this is that the public narratives and metanarratives about the Barents town first gained ground as identity bases when supported by

personal experiences or experiences from professional work contexts. This makes the story of the Barents town still quite unstable as an identity base for most people in Kirkenes, whilst a more open border would probably stimulate a new era, where the features of an integrated borderland would become stronger.

Alternative and supplementary Kirkenes narratives

Among people in Kirkenes there are other identities that are stronger than those relating to the border and to Barents rhetoric. The narratives about mining and manufacturing industries are still important to many and contain shared history and myths relating to the industrial epoch. As mentioned earlier, the industrial orientation that this heritage carries now seems to be being continued through the narrative of the petroleum industry. The latter narrative is border-related, but the border aspects are more noticeable and recognized within professional circles, and thus a type of conceptual narrative and not so much a public narrative about a possible petroleum future.

Another narrative with strong roots, which was in fact touched upon in all the group interviews, is about the significance of nature and outdoor recreation. This is a combination of ontological and public narratives and metanarratives, since most people are raised according to the Norwegian outdoor recreation tradition and ideology. Thus, this identity is more or less embodied and reinforced by social practice and public parlance. 'This is the reason why I live here', and 'every Friday we set off for the cabin', many stated. The master-signifier here is a good and healthy life with family and friends. Floating signifiers are 'nature', 'cabin', 'angling', 'hunt', 'snowmobile', and so on. The importance of this narrative is underlined by the fact that there are almost as many cabins as families in the Sør-Varanger district. Some, however, indicated that the outdoor recreation discourse is challenged. Several regretted the cabin lifestyle:

It has struck me many times that the cabins are of a higher quality than the houses in the town. I wonder what has happened. Do we not care at all about what we have down here (in the town)? Or is it so that at the cabin we are free to do whatever we want? The cabin is our own little haven.

From a group interview with intermediate level employees

This informant reflects and dwell on the losses and gains of the strong outdoor tradition. With a growing awareness of the urban space of the town centre and requests for aesthetic and social upgrading, the outdoor lifestyle seems to be a block for the development of a more attractive and appreciated town centre. However, there were also informants who expressed a hope for a more urban culture in Kirkenes; in fact, many of the activities of The Girls on the Bridge may be interpreted as part of an urbanizing project.

There are reasons to believe that the Russian inhabitants of Kirkenes would present place narratives along other story-lines. This research involves interviews with only two Russian immigrants and we have no definite data concerning how Russian immigrants' identities have developed. However, some individuals related how, for example, Russians relate differently to the outdoor recreation narrative described above: as was the case for one of our informants, many Russian immigrants come from large Russian towns and bring with them new life practices and relations towards nature and outdoor life. One informant stated, for example: 'To me, this is not so much a town... None of us are from here, and we are not part of the outdoor recreation wave...' (from a group interview with women). Furthermore, she stated that this makes life in the town centre more important and she longs for a more vital town life in Kirkenes.

'Barents' versus 'border' as identity elements

Interpretations of the complexity of the discourses described have several aspects. Firstly, people embody several identities – different narratives form bases for multiple identities, but the importance of each narrative depends on situation and time. Another is that people inscribe the border and the Barents region into their lives as personal narratives and identities in very different ways. Vila observed this on the U.S.-Mexican border:

...the different constructions people make of the international divide (as a barrier, a set of opportunities, a metaphor for other – more important – personal border, etc.), enter the common sense of the region in the variety of narrative plots people develop to understand who they are and who are the ‘other’ (Vila 2003: 616).

In fact, people’s perceptions and feelings about the border are strongly influenced by other identities relating to categories such as gender, class and occupation. Vila (2003: 617) maintains that ‘the socially constructed border has different weights for different types of identity’. This inquiry into the Kirkenes identity shows that *the Barents identity* element is strong only for the relatively few, whereas *the border* is much more important and inscribed in other identities that people embody. Another striking point is that when the mine lost its position as a master-signifier, this made way for the Barents town narrative and a new master-signifier in the discourse about the town of Kirkenes. The central authorities rhetorically support the new ‘borderland’ and Barents politics also sustains the Barents identity project.

However, the politics of the central authorities probably illustrates how strongly – or weakly – the rhetoric is founded in reality. At the same time as celebrating Barents policies, the central authorities sustain a strict immigration regime where, for example, quite an expensive visa is required to cross the border (in both directions). Thus, frequent border crossing is primarily open to the cultural, political and economic elites. As also observed by Vila (2003: 610) on the U.S.-Mexican border, the paradox of the prevailing national politics of Norway is a likely reinforcement of the border. For the Norwegian authorities, the Norwegian-Russian boundary is still a demarcation zone: along the boundary there is a tall iron fence, and lots of surveillance stations (cf. Enloe 1989). As a frontier, this boundary symbolizes an offensive Norwegian political strategy in the north. One sign of this is the regime that the country has established for sea operations, with fishery and trade zones along the coast. Towards the end of 2005, the Norwegian coastguard trapped a Russian trawler that had caught fish within a Norwegian fishery zone that Russia has not agreed upon; in such a conflict, Kirkenes tends to be allocated the role of operational base, transfer site and information centre.

Reinvented Kirkenes

This book is about the reinvention of an industrial town. As a point of departure in this chapter, accounts related by Lash and Urry (1994) were used – in the mid-1990s they stated that these places were about to be restructured and were turning into sites of consumption. Since Kirkenes is a town on the border between two countries this analysis coins their theory, along with a border theory that discusses the political, economic, socio-cultural and symbolic significance of the border (Paasi 2005). During the Soviet period, Kirkenes was not a border town in this sense, but an industrial community that ran into severe trouble during the 1980s. The breakdown of the Soviet Union and opening of the border a few kilometres away from the town could therefore not have been more convenient. The Gorbachev politics were also a glasnost for Kirkenes.

Most of the new practices and changing perceptions of the town described here can be related to this event. Severe changes in all the areas that Paasi outlines are signs of a Kirkenes that is about to turn into a border town. Within this process, the Barents elite has been involved in a political identity project and has promoted what Lash and Urry (1994: 218) call a hegemonic project. The border opening has provoked significantly different political realities and agendas. Similarly, the local economy base has changed, there are different social and cultural practices from before and there are new identities, particularly one relating to the border, and the contours of an emerging Barents identity. This study shows that the cultural impact of these transformations has been underpinned by active strategies in the local community that have redefined the place and its identity. So Kirkenes has been reinvented by chance, but also by the intention of many people who perceived opportunities in the new border situation.

The social practices and local interpretations that constitute today's Kirkenes show that the economic, social and cultural potential of the border town of Kirkenes have only just started to be aroused. Social practices that make Kirkenes a border town are manifest and numerous. Their local political gains are acknowledged, as are the economic profits of border practices. The many relations, transactions and signs of interdependent or complementary borderlands cannot be denied. However, the social and cultural inscriptions of a border identity are not equally manifest. It would be of little importance if this identity was an 'innocent' and powerless field. But as people's interpretations of their place are decisive to the action they take, issues concerning border cultures and border identities play a rather crucial role for any 'innovative' or flourishing borderland. This aspect cannot necessarily be satisfactorily handled by local politics of identity alone, as identity matters relate to people's experiences, springing from the personal to the professional level. The future realization of Kirkenes' potential depends not only on further local reflexive awareness of the contextual dynamics of being on the border, but also on national border politics that encourage and arrange for increased cross-border mobility and make room for the development of bordered cultures.

-The authors would like to thank Professor Einar Niemi from the Department of History at the University of Tromsø for reading and commenting an earlier draft of this chapter.

References

- Agnew, J.A. and Duncan, J.S. (1989) *The Power of place: bringing together geographical and sociological imaginations*, Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Agnew, J. (1998) *Geopolitics: re-visioning world politics*, London: Routledge.
- Barth, F. (1969) Introduction, in: Barth, F. (Ed.) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (pp. 9-38), Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Bauman, Z. (2001). *The Individualized Society*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Donnan, H. (1999). *Borders. Frontiers of Identity*, Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- Enloe, C. (1989). *Bananas, beaches & bases: making feminist sense of international politics*, London: Pandora.
- Eriksen, K.E. and Niemi, E. (1981) *Den finske fare: sikkerhetsproblemer og minoritetspolitikk i nord 1860–1940*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Florida, R. (2002) *The rise of the creative class: and how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*, New York: Basic Books.
- Holstein, J. and Gubrium, J. F. (2000) *The Self We Live By. Narrative Identity in a Postmodern World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kellner, D. (1992) Popular culture and the construction of postmodern identities, in: S. Lash and Friedman, J. (eds.) *Modernity and Identity*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Laclau, E. (2000) Identity as hegemony: The role of universality in the constitution of political logics, in: Butler, J., Laclau, E. and Zizek, S. (eds.) *Contingency, hegemony, universality. Contemporary dialogues on the left*, London and New York: Verso.
- Lash, S. and Urry, J. (1994) *The economies of signs and space*. London: Sage.
- Martinez, O. (1978) *Border people. Life and society in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands*, Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.
- Massey, D. (1994) *Space, Place and Gender*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Nergård, R. (2004) *Sør-Varanger i utvikling. En systemteoretisk og kompetansestrategisk analyse av søringsamarbeidet med Nordvest Russland*, hovedoppgave, Institutt for planlegging og lokalsamfunnsforskning, Tromsø: Universitetet i Tromsø.
- Newman, D. (2000) Boundaries, Territory and Postmodernity, in: Pratt, M.A. and Brown, J.A. (eds.) *Borderland Under Stress*, London: Kluwer Law International.
- Newman, D. and Paasi, A. (1998) Fences and Neighbours in the Postmodern World: Boundary Narratives in Political Geography, in: *Progress in Human Geography*, 22, pp. 186–207.
- Niemi, E. (1992) *Pomor. Nord-Norge og Nord-Russland gjennom 1000 år*, Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk forlag.

- Niemi, E. (2005) Border Minorities between State and Culture, in: Jackson, T.N. and Nielsen, J.P. (eds.): *Russia-Norway. Physical and Symbolic Borders*. History Department, Tromsø/Moscow: University of Tromsø. Institute of World History/Russian Academy of Sciences.
- Nielsen, J.P. (2005) Some Reflections on the Norwegian-Russian Border and the Evolution of State Borders in General, in: Jackson, T.N. and Nielsen, J.P. (eds.) *Russia-Norway. Physical and Symbolic Borders*, Tromsø/Moscow: History Department, University of Tromsø/Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Sciences.
- Ohmae, K. (2005) *The next global stage: challenges and opportunities in our borderless world*, Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Wharton School Publ.
- Paasi, A. (1996) *Territories, boundaries and consciousness: the changing geographies of the Finnish-Russian border*. London: Belhaven.
- Paasi, A. (2002) Place, Boundaries, and the Construction of Finnish Territory, in Kaplan, D.H. and Häkli, J. (eds.) *Boundaries and place: European borderlands in Geographical Context*, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Paasi, A. (2005) Boundaries as Social Practice and Discourse. The Finnish-Russian Border, in: Ganstner, P. and Lorey, D.E. (eds.) *Borders and Border Politics in a Globalizing World*. Oxford: SR Books.
- Prescott, J.R.V. (1987) *Political frontiers and boundaries*, London: Unwin Hyman.
- Somers, M. (1994) The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach, in: *Theory and Society*, 23, pp. 605–649.
- Stedman, Richard C. (2002) Toward a Social Psychology of Place – Predicting Behavior from Place-Based Cognitions, Attitude, and Identity, in: *Environment & Behavior*, 34 (5), pp. 561–581.
- Twigger-Ross, Clare and David L. Uzzell (1996) Place and identity processes, in: *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, pp. 205–220.
- Urry, J. (1995) *Consuming places*, London: Routledge.
- Vila, P. (2003) Processes of identification on the U.S.-Mexico border, in: *The Social Science Journal*, 40, pp. 607–625.
- Wilson, T.M. and Donnan, H. (1998) *Border identities: Nation and state at international frontiers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapter 5

The unique and the ordinary – reinventing place through symbolic communication

Brynhild Granås, University of Tromsø, and Yvonne Gunnarsdotter, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Introduction

The global place

The Swedish small town Övertorneå with its 1,300 inhabitants²⁷ is situated on the shore of the River Tornio, which forms the Swedish-Finnish boundary and runs through the gentle landscape of the Torne Valley. The Norwegian town of Narvik with its 14,000 inhabitants²⁸ is located at the head of the deep Ofoten Fjord, protectively encircled by steep mountains towards the Swedish border to the east. Övertorneå and Narvik are places of the periphery, whilst at the same time they are the centres of their respective municipalities – a place is always a centre for somebody or something. While Övertorneå represents the rural, the town of Narvik is a relatively urban part of the Nordic periphery.

From the 1980s onwards, both the Torne Valley area and Narvik have experienced an economic decline. Övertorneå has been marked by a restructuring of the forest and mining industries and Narvik by the restructuring of the iron ore transport industry. Both places have been hit by a downscaling of public welfare services and employment. The severe depopulation in the Torne Valley has affected Övertorneå, though to a relatively small extent. In Narvik the population numbers are surprisingly stable. Both Övertorneå and Narvik have managed relatively well throughout this period.

The social science discourse on globalization highlights mobility as a (sometimes normative) dynamic; places in the centre are seen as continuous crossing-points of intensive flows of people, goods, services, money and ideas. The places of the so-called periphery are at the same time described as points where such flows are weaker and more vulnerable. The people of the periphery tend to have to struggle with distances to markets and power centres. This discourse may express a process of centre-periphery polarization (Bauman 1999), where those who stay behind in the periphery are considered 'the waste products of modernity' (ibid.).

The periphery position also represents a symbolic challenge: a place labelled as a periphery is linked to specific values and attributes. This constitutes symbolic restraints as well as potentials that contextualize any efforts made to direct the flow of people or capital to these places. Within the analysis to follow, the periphery position of Övertorneå and Narvik is understood as a backcloth to symbolic place communication.

Many places tend to be formed and communicated by the use of resembling symbolic expressions (Philo and Kearns 1993, Harvey 1989). Wording, events and physical constructions look alike, while at the same time they claim to highlight the uniqueness of the place. This may seem like a paradox as long as it is stated from every political rostrum how important it is for a place to appear attractive and unique. We have identified traces of such 'resembling uniqueness' in communications made about Övertorneå and Narvik. A theoretical point of

²⁷ The entire municipality of Övertorneå has approx. 5,000 inhabitants.

²⁸ The entire municipality of Narvik has approx. 18,500 inhabitants.

departure for this research was found in discussions about global cultural heterogenization or homogenization: is there a cultural uniformity spreading globally? Is local cultural uniqueness strengthened, or is a dichotomization between the two perhaps misleading (cf. e.g. Wallerstein 1990, Friedman 1990)? In this context, any local nurturing of unique or ordinary place characteristics may contribute to such supra-local patterns.

As will be discussed here, localized global cultural production sometimes evolves in strange ways. This chapter explores processes where the meaning of place is negotiated, formulated and communicated. One empirical basis consists of brochures that communicate Övertorneå and Narvik to potential inhabitants, students, investors and tourists. In both cases they are articulated by poetic texts, loud slogans, spectacular pictures and logos. The analysis approaches the brochures as an integral part of the place discourse connected to recent developments in Övertorneå and Narvik, and is also based on interview data. These discourses are part of the reinvention of these places.

The aim of this chapter is to explore how and why people in places that are often called peripheral make use of certain symbols to communicate their place. The chapter relates stories about how local actors play with, negotiate and exceed any dichotomy of the unique or ordinary place. This is done whilst also disbanding the centre-periphery dichotomy.

Symbolic communication, meaning constructions and politics of identity

The texts and illustrations in and layout of the brochures create signs that communicate the meaning of each place in symbolic ways. These *representations* of place (Halloway and Hubbard 2001) not only reflect the meaning of place, they also contribute to meaning production; the communication between ‘us’ and ‘them’, between the place and the outside world, is part of what shapes the meaning that individuals attach to a place. This in turn affects people’s experiences of and behaviour towards a place.

Furthermore, this place communication is part of a local politics of identity. Specific places are often represented in different ways, and representations may thus be seen as part of a struggle to control places and people living there (Holloway & Hubbard 2001:144). Some place narratives may be supported and others neglected in place brochures. One implication of this is that ‘...it is necessary to study the images in a process and in their development at a local level, and not as disembodied representations...’ (Olsen 2003). The brochure communication must be understood as part of the processes of change and continuity in Narvik and Övertorneå, processes that we aim to understand better.

This perspective on place communication material opens up discussions other than just those concerning place marketing and place promotion, where more intentional perspectives are adopted concerning the way in which place representation communicates meaning (Kearns & Philo 1993). The basis for our approach is found in a more constructivist and post-structuralist perspective (Jørgensen and Philips 1999) of language and meaning; meaning is constructed culturally and is just as much produced *by* communication as it is transmitted *through* communication²⁹.

The ‘true’ meaning of place?

A place may be perceived in various, sometimes even opposing and competing ways. The meaning of the place-names ‘Övertorneå’ and ‘Narvik’ will vary between actors in different parts of the outside world, and even between different inhabitants. Nevertheless, shared place understandings can be traced; some place narratives are more dominant, appreciated, accepted or taken for granted than others. They stand out in a local place discourse or in a broader

²⁹ This statement differs slightly from Hall (Hall in Holloway & Hubbard 2001:147), who emphasizes that meaning is constructed and produced *by* communication. According to Hall, there are three main ways of thinking about the way representations communicate meaning. In addition to the constructivist perspective, there is also the reflective/mimetic (meaning lies within what one is representing and thus simply communicates the true nature of whatever is being portrayed) and the intentional (relying on the authors being able to use language to communicate what they want to say) (ibid.: 147).

discourse, e.g. on places in the periphery. Dominant understandings of a place may also be embedded in material structures (nature, economy, physical constructions) and in social practices. But any understanding of place that is taken for granted is always contestable and ambivalent. By exploring the brochure material and local interview data in this chapter we are drawn into such construction processes and contestable realities concerning the meaning of Övertorneå and Narvik.

A place is a socially relational phenomenon that is ‘...open and porous...’ (Massey 1994:5). Massey defines place as ‘a particular moment in (...) networks of social relations and understandings’ (ibid.). According to Massey place is, by definition, about inhabitants’ and outsiders’ relations and understandings. The relations and perceptions of all these actors are what form the place³⁰. Narvik and Övertorneå cannot be understood by approaching local actors as isolated, but by including their outward social relations, and those towards institutions. This is in part an argument for our research approach: firstly, a focus on the outward communication of place prepares for a study of externally relational social practices and secondly, analysing how local actors handle the periphery position of a place implies a study of how to manage an image that stems from relations towards other places. Finally, we address the place in relation to broader societal development patterns of e.g. cultural heterogenization or homogenization.

Approach

The analytical approach is partly inspired by discourse analysis and makes use of a number of elements from this analytical field: signs used in symbolic communication need to be interpreted in order to be meaningful. Representations, then, basically imply the existence of shared systems of meaning, upon which people draw in a variety of ways in order to communicate (Holloway & Hubbard 2001: 145). Such shared meaning systems correspond to a discourse analytical understanding of ‘discourse as a social field’. Another metaphor for this meaning structure might be a ‘shared meaning horizon’.

The analysis mainly relates to the local place discourse, but at certain points addresses inter-discursivity (Neumann 2003: 158) between the local place discourse and a broader hegemonic discourse on the centre-periphery. Sections of the local discourses about Narvik and Övertorneå are imprinted by an urge to influence the subject position, i.e. the role and meaning given to the place in the hegemonic discourse, as remote, uncivilized, backward and outdated (Paulgaard 2006). Paulgaard refers to centre-periphery as a ‘...distinction (that) forms a kind of basic foundation for other constructions...’ (ibid.: 13). The use of symbols in this material underpins the relevance of the centre-periphery distinction in an analysis of place-related meaning structures.

The empirical basis of the analysis of each place mainly consists of three place-communicative brochures, individual interviews with approx. 20-30 local actors in leading positions within different sectors³¹ and between three and five group interviews constituting a broader spectrum of inhabitants³². We identify our approach with Norman Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis (Jørgensen and Philips 1999) to the extent that we view discursive practices as one type of social practice that stands in a dialectical relationship with other social practices³³ (ibid.). The rest of the empirical data in the research project also provides a

³⁰ All at a certain point in history, but always in progress, according to Massey.

³¹ The different sectors are: the municipal administration/politicians, civil society associations, the media and the business sector.

³² In Narvik the five group interviews were composed of people not in leading positions: 1) women, 2) public and private employees, 3) retired people, 4) leaders of private companies within different business sectors, and 5) central actors within the transport industry. In Övertorneå the three group interviews consisted of 1) local politicians, 2) municipal employees, and 3) young people.

³³ This way of perceiving discursive practices differs from that of discourse analysis as presented in the milestone work of Laclau and Mouffe (1985, referred to in Jørgensen and Phillips 1999). Laclau and Mouffe perceive all social practices as discursive practices.

knowledge of other social practices relevant to the reinvention of place, e.g. the context of the production of the brochures.

From ‘the good life’ to ‘world class excitement’

Övertorneå

The Torne Valley comprises the area on both sides of the River Torne, which constitutes the Finnish-Swedish border. After the peace between Sweden and Russia of 1809, the border was drawn right through this Finnish-speaking area, and on the Swedish side the language of Meänkieli (Torne Valley Finnish) developed. The inhabitants of the Torne Valley have since been perceived as, and have perceived themselves, as being in-between Finland and Sweden, rather than being Swedish. During the first decades of the 19th century a ‘Swedification’, initiated by the government, led to the suppression of Meänkieli, but in recent decades there has been a cultural revitalization creating positive connotations towards the language and the history.

Historically Övertorneå, then called Matarengi, was a centre for trade in the Torne Valley. After a decline during the 19th century the railway, inaugurated in 1914, re-established the importance of this small town. The preconditions for agriculture are relatively good in Övertorneå, and the economy concerning both inhabitants and the municipality is also good compared to other municipalities in the area. This is mirrored by a slower rate of depopulation compared to most parts of Norrbotten county. Today, public services dominate especially, but there are private services as well. Small industrial manufacturing enterprises make up about 13% of employment. A centre for vocational education, Utbildning Nord, in the town of Övertorneå is a national-level collaboration between Finland, Norway and Sweden that attracts 300 students per year and is also an asset to the vocational programmes in the upper secondary school in Övertorneå.

Narvik

At the turn of the 19th century, the town of Narvik popped up from almost nothing in the area on and between the small Narvik peninsula and the mountains to the east and south-east. Four small farms became a town with a population of several thousand over a period of less than ten years (Aas 2001). Topographically, the settlement was strictly framed by the Ofoten Fjord and the steep mountain terrain. Through this challenging terrain a 42 km railway track was constructed to the Swedish border to transport iron ore from the Kiruna mines to Narvik harbour and out via the Ofoten Fjord. In 1902, the railway opened and Narvik town was formally established.

Throughout the 20th century, the iron ore town of Narvik became known as the richest town in Northern Norway. One key to this era of wealth was a lucrative municipal tax agreement with LKAB³⁴ (Aas 2001), which sustained the municipal economy for more than twenty years after the Second World War (Svendsen 2002). The Norwegian State Railways (NSB)³⁵ and LKAB were the main employers, around which the rest of town life circled. A crisis occurred when the scope and importance of both declined from the late 1960s onwards, though mainly during the 1980s and 1990s (Svendsen 2002). In 2006, LKAB still employed 226 people in Narvik³⁶, while NSB had withdrawn. Narvik is no longer solely an iron ore town.

³⁴ LKAB (Luossavaara-Kiirunavaara Aktiebolag) is a Swedish high-tech mineral products company wholly owned by the Swedish government. Its primary business is the mining of iron ore and its main mines are in Kiruna and Malmberget.

³⁵ Norges Statsbaner (Norwegian State Railways, commonly known as NSB, officially called NSB AS) is a Norwegian transport company.

³⁶ These 226 people are employed by two companies: 151 people in the main company and 75 people in the subsidiary company NTAS (which handles the railway transportation of the iron ore).

Rather, a multitude of economic activities makes up the town life. The social democratic traditions and rich popular cultural life that amalgamated to form a strong town pride have been challenged.

Brochures

This research commenced with interviews. There then followed an extensive study of brochures and Internet pages representing these places; texts, illustrations and layout were systematically analysed with regard to how they presented the unique and the ordinary place attributes using different themes. Three printed brochures from each place were then selected for further analysis, using the main criterion that they were in close dialogue with local discourses on place. The production of all six brochures was locally embedded and this printed material seems to have a more stable character than the Internet pages. As interesting variations appeared between brochures aimed at different audiences, material directed towards these different target groups is represented in the brochures selected. Tourists, as well as potential new inhabitants, investors and students, constitute these groups. Identifications of the target groups are partly interpreted directly from the texts, but are also confirmed through interviews with the producers. Each brochure will be presented in an exposition framed by further descriptions of the context of their production. This framing accentuates local development initiatives within each place, which have influenced place discourses.

Torne Valley – The Tale of the River Valley People

As the traditional economy of the area has been challenged, tourism has become a growing industry in the Torne Valley. *The Torne Valley – The Tale of the River Valley People* is a popular tourist brochure, according to the tourist agency in Övertorneå. This extensive publication is created by a Finnish marketing agency, with little other involvement. The front page (see Picture 1) and a map are printed in old-fashioned sepia. Smiling young people, a Sámi shaman, salmon fishers and folk dancers are tied together by the midnight sun. The language is poetic and sensuous: *The weather powers have let the warm winds loose to evoke summer; The land of the light; Water ways to mother nature; The rich gifts of nature.* By means of pictures the brochure presents an intertwined relationship between nature (mainly using photos of water) and culture (Sámi people and artefacts). The border culture is emphasized, including the Swedish, the Finnish and the Sámi: *The strength to live side by side.* A harmonic history is related³⁷.

The brochure closely associates the Sámi culture with nature when their origin and reindeer herding are described. A Sámi tale introduces the northern lights: ... *in the enchanted atmosphere the shamans are chanting their spells.* The geographical position of Tornedalen is also associated with the Sámi culture: *From the edge of the sea to the land of the shamans.* Cultural aspects are illustrated by a common heritage, historical events, food, sauna, music, handicraft, reindeer herding and sport fishing. The text describes how life is and what it used to be like in the Torne Valley. Very few lines address the tourists directly. Only when outdoor activities such as fishing and canoeing are suggested do visitors get to know that: *In Tornedalen there are plenty of enterprises which arrange fishing expeditions and give tip-offs about the best places for catch.*

³⁷ An affinity threatened only by the war between Sweden and Russia, which resulted in the separation of the people.



Picture 2: The Sámi people are presented as exotic and primordial

Vitality Övertorneå: living incentives for people and enterprise

The history of the second Övertorneå brochure, *Vitality Övertorneå*, directed towards inhabitants, potential inhabitants and investors, dates back to the 1980s. With the mining crisis in Kiruna, many people moved back and a rather expansive period followed in the Torne Valley until the mid-1990s. With the support of a political consensus, the mayor of Övertorneå initiated an application to a municipal development project launched by the Institute for Future Studies and Umeå University. The application to make Övertorneå into an ecological community was approved. This was a development project more than an ecological project, and the name was later shortened to 'eco-municipality' to enhance both the ecology and the economy. The intention was both to mobilize inhabitants and change the place image, as viewed from the outside. Another aim was to attract external money to Övertorneå. There was also a genuine wish to contribute to a sustainable society and the former mayor was an enthusiast in this respect. Övertorneå received 7.5 million SEK in public funding and invested this sum in the Ecotopen Foundation, and in education and seminars³⁸. Since 1989, the municipality has financed eco-projects on its own. Övertorneå became one of the 'challenge municipalities' (Utmanarkommunerna) in 1998, a national project aiming to reduce the use of fossil fuels. They reached their target long before the deadline.

For more than twenty years, considerable effort has been put into ecological projects and Övertorneå has been internationally recognized for all its work. The original focus on cultivation was soon complemented by building construction. During the 1990s the day nurseries were also included, and since the late 1990s energy issues have been part of the agenda³⁹. People are generally proud of the ecological profile, but some people question

³⁸ This was carried out in partial co-operation with the Luleå University of Technology.

³⁹ A few examples of what has been achieved include: 1988 – building an eco-village; 1992 – UN prize for ecological municipalities; 1995 – environmental plan for the day nurseries; 1997 – building a new upper

elements of the project and the main objection is that the municipal centre benefits more than the smaller villages do. This man, who recently moved back to the Torne Valley, may be right: *I think this has meant more to Övertorneå than the inhabitants realize.*

In 1992, the Social Democratic party lost their leading post in Övertorneå and a coalition with a mayor from the Centre party ruled for three years. Even though there was a consensus concerning the eco-profile, the coalition wanted to mark this political change with the slogan 'Vitality' (Växtkraft), implying a growth in both ecological and economic terms.

LIVING INCENTIVES FOR PEOPLE AND ENTERPRISE



Picture 3: Vitality was a slogan in the 1990s when Övertorneå emphasized its ecological profile. A small plastic bag with carrot seeds was attached to the picture of the carrots in the leaflet.

As such, the brochure *Vitality Övertorneå* is part of the eco-municipality project. It is produced by an advertising company in Luleå, in co-operation with municipal directors and politicians in Övertorneå, and is intended to attract a broad target group of visitors, enterprises and present and potential inhabitants. There is both a Swedish and an English version. It has the slogan but no pictures on the cover and through the brochure several adjectives indicating growth are used, e.g. *living, fertile, flourishing* and *rich*. On the second page a small photo (see Picture 2) is found, together with a text:

The quality of life is rich in Övertorneå. The ground is fertile for human and business development. A clean environment and ecological harmony create the right living conditions everywhere in the region. That gives Övertorneå vitality!

A picture of the River Torne and an old barn house is followed by a text that briefly presents the geographical location, the history (including the border culture) and the green municipality. The last part informs us about *Övertorneå as a modern municipality with extensive social and public services...* and the educational opportunities are pointed out.

The centrefold has the title *A greenhouse for good business* and presents the business life in text and pictures (steel and wood-based manufacture, a computerized office and agriculture). In text and in pictures, the final two pages highlight different attractions such as the midsummer sun,

secondary school according to ecological principles; 1999 – all buses become free of charge; 2004 – pellet furnaces installed in the heating plant; 2005 – construction of an ecological park commenced.

the northern lights, the library, the church, fishing and various sporting facilities. The back cover is a collection of demographical and geographical facts, with a few words about the balance between the public sector and business life.

The Good Life in Övertorneå

The third brochure, *The Good Life in Övertorneå* dating from 2005, is intended for the same target groups as the second brochure, and stems from the project Expedition Övertorneå (2002-2006). Although printed in Malmö, it is produced by municipal employees, with layout assistance from a journalist in Umeå. It is only printed in Swedish, but there are plans for an English translation. The brochure presented also includes advertisements (private and public).

One important part of the Expedition Övertorneå project was to strengthen Övertorneå as a brand. Amongst other activities, the schools were engaged to reinforce entrepreneurship and creativity⁴⁰ and the main street was improved to create a more visible town centre.

A municipal director explained the argument behind the new slogan:

The Good Life: The eco-municipality is the base that makes it possible to develop our new trademark [...] There are 66 ecological municipalities, so we are not alone any longer.

Furthermore, the wording of the new slogan was chosen because

The alternative to growth is to point out what we have: schools, elderly care, leisure activities, housing, culture, border co-operation, etc. We do it on our own terms.

Others also claim that after a number of years, people's enthusiasm has dropped off and a new direction is needed to evoke an engagement with and confidence in their place.



Picture 4: The front page of the brochure *The Good Life in Övertorneå*

The cover picture of the brochure (see Picture 3) shows three children in red T-shirts with the slogan *The Good Life in Övertorneå* picking dandelions. On the second page the place is introduced with the headline *It could be that simple*, followed by this text:

In Övertorneå we have found The Good Life. Actually it is rather simple. We have a closeness to nature and a unique, untouched border crossing the River Torne. We offer four distinct seasons with both light and darkness. We have noticed that the qualities distinguishing the inhabitants of Övertorneå are values appreciated by many people. These values are guiding us in everything we do.

The qualities or values mentioned derive from deliberation meetings within the framework of Expedition Övertorneå, involving business people, inhabitants, municipal officers, politicians and teachers. The brochure presents the four place qualities 'sisu [get-up-and-go], culture, hospitality and simplicity' established through the project. Otherwise, the brochure informs about the border culture, low taxes, good service, Internet access, leisure opportunities, celebrations and events, educational opportunities and the spirit of togetherness. The last sentence promises: *There is room for more people. Everyone who wants to live The Good Life is welcome!* The River Torne runs through all the nature pictures, and a wind power plant and an

⁴⁰ The secondary school was rated second in the whole country by the National Teachers Association in 2004 and 2005.

ice castle are also shown. However, most of all the pictures are filled with people playing football, riding horses, canoeing, swimming, hugging and a crowd of people walking down the street during the annual market.

Narvik – a town with potential

The Narvik brochure *Narvik – a town with potential*, reaching out to potential inhabitants and investors, was initiated and produced by the local development company Futurum in 2002. Futurum was established during the restructuring period in Narvik in the 1990s⁴¹. Over the years, Futurum has been involved with various marketing and profile projects. This brochure became one step on the way. In supporting entrepreneurs that approach Narvik, Futurum saw the need for systematic information about the town. This requirement was also recognized by other local actors: thirteen business companies, organizations and public institutions⁴² joined the project and met regularly to discuss the product as it developed in the hands of a local advertising agency. We are told that the participants mainly agreed on the basic need for an informative, honest and straightforward brochure, without sales-promoting, glossy presentations.

The brochure is of an informative character and has a quiet and sober-minded linguistic format, all in the Norwegian language. The front page presents seven town slogans: the technology town, the iron ore town, the alpine town, the navy town, the school town, the peace town, and the town for song and music⁴³. According to the project leader, no effort was made to push through one comprehensive slogan. Rather, the brochure mediated town labels that were all embedded among the inhabitants.

The formulations in the introductory text have a personal and humble tone. Shaded expressions and an explicitly alleged honesty is used, as in this example: *We will not present to you a picture postcard of our municipality but will try the best we can to present a down-to-earth and truthful image of ourselves to you.*

Seven thematic sections follow⁴⁴ with a diversity of illustrations from the town centre (six), extreme sports activities (two) and a mixture of children, amateur popular culture, production life (container transport, high-technology) and nature⁴⁵. A map, placing Narvik at the centre of Scandinavia, accompanies the heading *Where the roads meet*. Narvik is communicated through diversity, centrality, education, high-technology, amateur culture and outdoor activities, not only extreme sports, but equally recreation and cabin life.

As soon as it was printed, Futurum regretted that the brochure had not been based on solid background work that identified a new image of Narvik. This consideration was followed up in the next step in the work of Futurum as the 'Masterplan' process for tourism, which started up in 2001, developed.

Narvik – Sterke opplevelser/World Class Excitement

*Narvik – Sterke opplevelser/World Class Excitement*⁴⁶, is a Destination Narvik winter tourist brochure that was printed in 2005. Different versions have existed since the mid-1990s. Destination Narvik is a shareholder company fully owned and initiated by Futurum to co-ordinate the tourism sector. The company was central in the Masterplan process for tourism, a

⁴¹ Throughout this period, the municipality received extra national funding to develop new economic activity.

⁴² Futurum, Ankenes sparebank, Narvik University College, K-Bank, LKAB (the mining company), Narvik sparebank, Narvik Regional Hospital, Narvik Vekst (a local development company), Nordlandsbanken, Postbanken, Sparebank 1, the Student Welfare Organization, and VINN (a local development company).

⁴³ Teknologibyen, malmbyen, alpinbyen, rallarbyen, skolebyen, fredsbyen og sang- og musikkbyen.

⁴⁴ 'A place to live', education, working life and businesses, the restructuring period, leisure time, 'There are many possibilities', 'Where the roads meet'.

⁴⁵ The brochure contains a total of 37 pictures.

⁴⁶ Downloadable as a pdf file from www.narvikinfo.no/dokumenter/BrosjyreVinterNarvik2004.pdf

‘...primary development plan for Narvik as a tourist destination and adventure municipality’ (Narvik Masterplan 2006⁴⁷).

In the process the new town slogan of *Narvik – sterke opplevelser*, seen on the front page of this brochure, came up. The slogan gained ground locally in the years that followed. The English translation of the slogan is a problem that is recognized by several. Literally, it means *Narvik – strong experiences*, but this translation is not commonly used. Instead, the brochure makes use of the English slogan, *Narvik – your compact Arctic area for world class excitement*⁴⁸.

The source of both the Norwegian and the English town slogans is the possibility of (more or less extreme) outdoor sports activities offered by the natural surroundings in Narvik, e.g. mountain biking, climbing, wreck diving or whale watching. But these are primarily Telemark skiing, other forms of downhill skiing and snow boarding. The Fagernes mountain that rises from the town centre is the main location and symbol for these activities.

Downhill skiing on *The Mountain*⁴⁹ is also the main topic for this brochure. This typical tourist brochure is a clear sales promotion in character; the layout is dominated by a combination of big pictures and highlighted short texts. Each page has a whole-page background picture of a spectacular mountain terrain, often accompanied by the breathtaking manoeuvring of downhill skiers⁵⁰.

The target groups are the ‘tougher’ or more extreme sectors of downhill skiers and snowboarders. Quotations are taken from foreign magazines and used as headings, e.g. *Narvik is unique. When Narvik has fresh snow, its riding is world class*⁵¹. The reference for the outline of the brochure has been international productions within this same market sector. The main marketing of Narvik as a downhill skiing destination is obtained through a more and more extensive national and international media exposure.

Produced on a limited budget by Destination Narvik, priority was given to what has been considered the main target group within tourism, at the expense of, for example, any general Narvik tourism brochure. This consideration taps into a broad discussion about tourism development that is now concerned with whether, for example, one should de-emphasize the extreme sports element and go for a broader and more ‘common’ tourist market. Others claim that such adjustments will erode the uniqueness that Narvik can offer.

Make the right decision. Choose Narvik

The third brochure, *Make the right decision. Choose Narvik*, was produced by Narvik University College in 2005. This institution is now in a strongly competitive student market⁵² and part of this involves marketing Narvik as a place to study. For several years, the college has directed its attention towards the sports marketing sector described above, also including other outdoor pursuits such as climbing, golf, horse-riding, and mountain biking.

The front page has a photomontage of ten pictures, six of them demonstrating such outdoor activities. On the back is a presentation of the town of Narvik with the heading *Narvik – the town, at the head of Ofoten*. The text is produced by a ‘cut and paste’ method, we are told, and is of an ‘grown-up’, inviting and tempting character: *The nature, with fjords and mountains, invites those interested in outdoor activities to a myriad of opportunities*. At certain points, the texts also becomes less fact-based: *There are also many opportunities for the more urban ones*. When describing ...a rich and manifold economic life... it is also claimed that: *Additionally, the town is the most important communication centre in Northern Norway*... One picture frames the text: three

⁴⁷ www.masterplan.futurum.no, accessed 19 October 2006.

⁴⁸ The Internet site of the destination company also uses this translation.

⁴⁹ Locally, the Fagernes mountain is often referred to as The Mountain (Fjellet).

⁵⁰ A total of 21 smaller pictures have similar subjects, but they also include three pictures of children and several ‘quieter’ downhill skiing situations.

⁵¹ This is cited from a publication in English, ‘The Snowboard Guide: Europe’.

⁵² This competitive situation has hit all the other Norwegian institutes of higher education as well, and is not specific to Narvik University College.

Telemark skiers stand on top of The Mountain, peeking over the edge of Mørkhola, a famous off-piste track just above the town of Narvik.

The producer of the brochure informed us that the slogan *Narvik – sterke opplevelser* was not used because ‘...it was not ready yet’⁵³. By this he was referring to a town branding initiative from Futurum that had started in 2003. Due to the economic strength of Narvikgården Ltd.⁵⁴, this company has run the project with support from external consultants in Oslo. The result is a branding package that contains ‘mandatory’ branding elements (visions, values, promises and visual design). The ‘vision’ is the slogan *sterke opplevelser*, now encompassed within a new logo for Narvik (see Picture 4) – it is this logo to which the producer at the university college brochure was referring.



Picture 5: The Narvik town slogan ‘Sterke opplevelser’ encompassed within the new logo, introduced as part of the town branding project in 2006.

In 2006 the slogan was formally approved and carried by Narvik Town Council. Narvik University College and Destination Narvik, as well as Futurum, state that they will make use of this branding package in future communications about Narvik.

Communicating symbols and negotiating place

Traces of the unique and the ordinary

The symbolic expressions found in this material offer rich examples of resembling uniqueness (Philo & Kearns 1993, Harvey 1989), as well as images of an ordinary place. In both Övertorneå and Narvik what is communicated as unique is related to natural conditions (climate, topography, etc.) and geographical position; nature offers opportunities for traditionally masculine outdoor activities like travelling by snowmobile, fishing, hunting and skiing in Övertorneå, supplemented by extreme sports in Narvik. The places are expressed as ordinary through welfare society phenomena such as education, child care, health and cultural events, all traditionally more female activities.

The ‘unique Övertorneå’ presented comprises the place in the sense of it being part of the Torne Valley, as shown in *Tornedalen – The Tale of the River Valley People*. The area is described as exotic, with a history of enchanted nature and culture. The harsh climate and the peripheral position are illustrated by pictures and maps, and by words like *Arctic* and *polar*. The history told goes back before the time when the national border cut through the area and the Torne Valley is presented as unique, beyond national identity, being neither Swedish nor Finnish. This brochure obviously addresses tourists, but still tells a story about ‘us’, the inhabitants, and the visitor is addressed in only a few sentences when practical information is provided. The people in the Torne Valley are said to share a ‘border culture’, a harmonious mix of Swedish, Finnish and Sámi. Nevertheless, it is the Sámi culture to which attention is drawn and the Sámi are mirrored as magical, close to nature and tradition. Though only approx. 5% of the Sámi population gain a living from reindeer herding, using modern technology, they are generally portrayed as the Other, apart from the rest of the population, in tourist brochures (Olsen 2003).

⁵³ This slogan is now used on the university college Internet pages.

⁵⁴ Narvikgården Ltd. is a semi-municipal real estate development company.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Övertorneå was emphasized as unique by being the first ecological municipality in Sweden, expressed in *Vitality – Living incentives for people and enterprise*. Here, the favourable conditions for agriculture and business characterize the place. Övertorneå is presented as modern – growth and creativity are flourishing, and all facilities that could be expected are there. This profile has since weakened, partly because ecological issues have become mainstream. Over time this ‘unique eco-municipality’ has transformed into something ordinary.

The brochure and slogan *The Good Life* articulates the ‘ordinary Övertorneå’, a place as good as any other in a welfare society. The ordinary dandelion flower is an apt symbol. Övertorneå is said to offer good possibilities for a family-oriented and environmentally friendly life, characterized by togetherness, a simple life, hospitality and a good economy and services, as well as sporting opportunities. The ‘uniqueness’ of its nature and culture is introduced as something extra, not dominating the scene. Though the slogan is a trademark in a pro-growth project, working life is invisible in the brochure. The slogan is explained as mirroring a modest vision of the future, not trying to be what it cannot be. This slightly contradicts the fact that nine out of the twelve outdoor photos show the summer season and most of the pictures include people, one of them a crowd that appears only once a year.

The ‘unique Narvik’ is articulated through the natural landscape that frames the town, i.e. the mountains and the fjord. A typical Narvik town motif (Picture 5) of steep mountains in winter snow or summer light, combined with mountain and fjord scenery, is found in all the brochures, though the town centre is not always included. This particular image has deep historical roots and reflects the meaning of the fjord and the mountains for the establishment of the town as an iron ore hub. As in this picture, the iron ore boat is included as part of this image.



Picture 6: A summer picture of the town of Narvik and the Ofoten Fjord, with the iron ore boat in the middle and Fagernes mountain to the right. From the brochure *Narvik – a town of possibilities*. Photo: Jeff Webb.

Furthermore the meaning of this landscape is expressed as something that, to an exceptional degree, prepares for outdoor activities, not least extreme sports experiences. This

way of representing uniqueness has grown strong by means of local political and economic processes in Narvik over the past few years but, as mentioned earlier, it is contested. Picture 6, from *Narvik – Strong experiences/World Class Excitement*, well exemplifies the most frequent motif in the Narvik brochures, i.e. extreme sports situations with mountains, fjords and practitioners. Narvik is further described as offering *...incredible possibilities for skiing, with the ocean and sharp cirque mountains as far as one can see*. Traditionally masculine symbols of strength and power are included.

Symbolically, this representation of Narvik may be read as a modern version of the navy tradition, the most celebrated town narrative in Narvik throughout the 20th century. Navy tradition tells of the railway construction period when the town was born. The navy's courage, strength and love of adventure correspond well to that of the modern extreme sports performer. As such, the slogan *sterke opplevelser* symbolically connects a pride in the past with future potential. This potential is not only about tourism, but just as much about new technology and transport, as when the town was established. Most informants perceive these three businesses as the future for Narvik. None of the interviews confirm that inhabitants have reflected on this connection. Nevertheless, the symbolic relation is striking and may be understood to be lying just under the surface. This may explain why the slogan *sterke opplevelser* is gaining ground, despite its weaknesses and apparent narrowness.

"Narvik har hva altfor mange skandinaviske skisteder savner: de rette alpine forutsetningene" - Åka Skidor

Narvik har hva de fleste andre skisteder i Skandinavia bare kan drømme om; eventyrlige skiligheter med hav og spisse tinder så langt øyet rekker. I april og mai er omgivelsene spesielt spektakulære, ofte med fantastisk tørrsne og et utrolig lys til de sene nattetimer. To heiser løfter deg over 1000 kofrie høydemeter på 15 min.

● SVALBARD
1,5 t Bys + 4,5 t buss

● NORDKAPP
739 km

GJENNOMSNITTS-TEMPERATUR °C:
(Narvik, havnivå)

November	+ 0,2
Desember	+ 2,7
Januar	+ 4,1
Februar	+ 3,9
Mars	+ 2,0
April	+ 1,8
Mai	+ 6,9

Mørketid:
5. desember - 8. januar

Midnattsol
21. mai - 21. juli

Picture 7: This facsimile from the brochure *Narvik – Sterke opplevelser/World Class Excitement* shows the typical Narvik motif of the extreme sports performer, the mountain and the fjord – all in one picture. Photo: Jeff Webb.

The 'ordinary Narvik' is mainly presented in *Narvik – a town with potential* and tells of a 'normal' but 'above average' family-friendly, small town that offers good welfare services and interesting workplaces. This 'normality' is spiced with little more than the simple combination

of (very good) opportunities for outdoor recreation and popular cultural enjoyment. The two reflect a continuing social democratic cultural imprint on the town: high culture and traditional urban values are almost absent in these presentations. Rather, the lifestyle opportunities are connected to folksy and democratic events – these activities are centred on the main cultural venue, *Folkets hus*⁵⁵. In this part of the material, nature is emphasized as a scene for typically social democratic cabin life and outdoor recreation connected to a more family-appropriate lifestyle.

Target groups and relational commitments

Brochures that address different target groups emphasize unique and ordinary place aspects differently. The ‘unique Övertorneå’ that comprises the place as part of the Torne Valley is directed at tourists, while the ‘ordinary place’ is directed at present and potential inhabitants. The ‘unique Narvik’, with its extreme sport possibilities, is part of all the brochures but primarily dominates communication directed towards tourists and students. The ‘ordinary Narvik’ is emphasized with regard to potential inhabitants and investors.

The unique place is fronted in the more commercialized place communication intended for tourists. These place articulations approach social groups, i.e. tourists, who are expected to consume services and experiences connected to place. According to Urry (1995), tourists are invited to consume the place. A tourist brochure displays the place for ‘the tourist gaze’ and the place and its inhabitants are objectified as ‘the Other’ (Urry 2002). This place representation contrasts with brochures that invite the reader to share the place in non-consumer fashion, i.e. potential inhabitants.

The tourism industry also works to establish long-term consumer relations, but relations between the locals and visiting tourists are to a certain degree uncommitted. Tourists are not invited to engage in a long-term committed place community. On the other hand, potential inhabitants and investors are invited to involve themselves in such a reciprocally committed relationship. As such, communication of the ‘ordinary place’ is part of a relation development project of a more binding character. Perceptions of how a place *can* be described (what our characteristics *really* are) are therefore more decisive in this form of place communication. The fact that tourism communication carries this uncommitted characteristic may provide a space of opportunity where ‘...the exotic difference common in tourism adverts’ (Dann 2000, in Olsen 2003: 3) is displayed.

Local discourses – kindred representations

The six brochures all mirror place understandings that certain key actors in local development have perceived as relevant to a specific communicative occasion. Interviews in Övertorneå and Narvik express the places in ways that somehow differ from the brochures.

The local discourse on Övertorneå, traced from interviews, relates to the exoticized accounts in tourism as well as the ‘good life’ descriptions from the municipality. Nevertheless, the interviews reveal other place perspectives. People proudly repeat the narrative of the enchanted nature and the border culture from the tourist material, but the negative side of this narrative also appears: this is a history of subordination, resulting in a collective identity as outsiders, in a geographical, social and cultural periphery. Additionally, the status of Övertorneå as the ‘wealthy cousin’ of the area makes the ‘Wild North’ narrative less accentuated. On the other hand, the uniqueness of being the first ecological municipality results in a relatively high self-esteem that characterizes the inhabitants of Övertorneå. The Sámi element highlighted in the tourist brochure is almost absent in the place discourse. There are indeed rather few Sámi in Övertorneå, but neighbouring Pajala has a larger Sámi population and even there people do not accentuate the Sámi element. We cannot conclude whether the Sámi are integrated, and thus not mentioned explicitly, or whether there are tensions between

⁵⁵ The cultural venue *Folkets hus* is 50% owned by the local labour party and 50% by the regional labour union LO.

the Sámi and other people. Nevertheless, there are certainly more representations of the Sámi than of 'the exotic Other'.

Representations of the 'ordinary Övertorneå' are contested, as the place is described as 'masculine' – the traditionally masculine outdoor activities of fishing and hunting dominate and few alternative leisure activities are available. Kindred representations describe Övertorneå as a place for agriculture and forestry, and both of these are male gendered. The public sector, on the other hand, is dominated by women; they hold jobs that are often branded as less respected.

Inhabitants also describe Övertorneå as being less frictionless and fulfilling in its 'ordinariness' than the municipal brochures suggest. The context of a continuous depopulation is trying for the inhabitants. A man who returned to Övertorneå in the 1980s summarizes the situation:

Either you move money or people. It's a big problem when young people move and the average age becomes high. The houses are not for sale, they are inherited by family members and the forest is owned by people who have moved. It is difficult to find small flats.

Compared to Övertorneå, we do not find similarly clear place narratives to contrast with the brochure representations in Narvik. Rather, the Narvik inhabitants are in a state of identity transition: *Narvik is standing at a cross-roads*, several people claimed. The old place narrative has become less adequate or at least insufficient as the basis for future action and a renewed town pride. The brochure *Narvik – a town of possibilities* expresses this transition stage well: the seven different town labels on the front page all appear in the interviews and are referred to negatively: *...this is an all-at-once-town. (...) Should we become the technology town, the alpine town, the tourist town... (...) We want to be the best, but we are unable to contain (our ambitions)* (from a group interview). Nevertheless, the interviews are characterized by rich descriptions of the town history. The formerly stable place narrative of the iron ore town is embellished. But this is presented as the past. Some regrettably confirm historic characteristics that still manifest themselves from time to time, e.g. the old town pride. A more appreciated tradition still manifest is the railway and the rich popular cultural life, both part of the annual navy culture celebration in the Winter Festival.

Throughout the interviews people sought a foundation on which to form a new place identity. Some reflected on *sterke opplevelser* as an alternative. The slogan has met with resistance among both inhabitants and development actors, mainly because many have questioned whether it is too narrow. The tourism emphasis on the extreme sports sector has been troublesome⁵⁶ and some have questioned the potential of the slogan to embrace other tourist sectors. The average inhabitant makes jokes about the slogan: *Now we are all supposed to have strong experiences, but it is not defined what that means – is it the hazardous traffic that runs through town?* But this does not necessarily imply rejection. Rather, its frequent appearance and the jokes may indicate that people are tasting and exploring the slogan to define what it means. What we have observed is a continuous expansion of the meaning invested in the slogan, among development actors as well. *Sterke opplevelser* is about to become (well)-known and is (just about) embedded among the inhabitants.

Communicating the periphery

The ordinary and unique Övertorneå and Narvik, articulated by means of brochures and interviews, are related to both change and continuity. Geographical position, climate, nature, and physical constructions, for example, constitute material continuity. Even though material structures lay down a premise for what a place is, the meaning of the place may be interpreted

⁵⁶ The extreme sports tourism efforts concentrate firstly on downhill skiing (Telemark, alpine, snowboard), but also mountain biking, (wreck) diving and climbing. Marketing The Mountain has been difficult, since snow conditions are unstable this close to the fjord, and differing local interests have collided in the development of The Mountain over the years. It is also questionable whether the market for extreme sports tourism is big enough to sustain a continuous and profitable tourist industry.

in different ways. One resemblance between Narvik and Övertorneå is the formulation of two 'wildly unique' northern periphery places. The peripheral 'Wild North' has also existed in England, though as a much weaker representation than in Sweden and Norway (Shields 1991, Holloway & Hubbard 2001). This representation includes the subject position of 'inhabitants of the North', which is associated with rather appreciated values such as honesty, straightforwardness and endurance, but also with unsophisticated behaviour and a low level of education. The subject position is masculine gendered, i.e. women are expected to behave in the same (male) way.

In Övertorneå, nature is interpreted as the context for an ordinary lifestyle, including rich leisure opportunities, as well as enchanted surroundings for unique experiences. Both versions of the Övertorneå narrative lean towards traditional preperceptions, but in different ways. The tourism material utilizes widespread representations of the (natural and cultural) 'differentiators' in the northern periphery to enhance place promotion. Stereotypes of people in the north as uncivilized are materially linked to the masculine production life of lumber, mining and agriculture. The interviews from Övertorneå confirm that such less appreciated associations imprint self-perceptions upon the inhabitants and limit the scope for action. This subject position is difficult to change, since it is rooted in this masculine materiality.

Representations of the 'ordinary Övertorneå' try to create alternative subject positions in the local discourse on place. Here, inhabitants of the north are educated, business oriented, they live a family life with room for men, women, children and elderly people, they play football and they listen to music. This counter-representation is striving to place Övertorneå culturally and socially at the centre by being good at offering an ordinary life. The engagement with tourism also contributes to the image of being at the centre, where things are on the move. It is an open question whether the place interpretations promoted by the growing tourist sector and the municipality will influence the local discourse of place in a combined anthem celebrating an enchanted and unique nature as well as an 'upgraded' and 'civilized' ordinariness.

The Narvik material tells the story of how this 'wild' periphery may be interpreted into something very modern, and in that sense anti-peripheral. This is quite a different way of playing with the preperceptions with which places in the periphery are labelled. The extreme sports trend is a global one and is manifest in the youth culture of MTV, clothes fashion and 'alternative' sports icon like the snowboarding stars⁵⁷. The modern is only one symbolic aspect of the anti-periphery statements made here. Another is that of a playful, speedy, powerful and dangerous nature-based excitement. This is an interpretation that confronts the periphery as relaxing, dull and quiet. Playing with the myths of the periphery like this is not necessarily denying its position as peripheral, but it disbands the centre-periphery dichotomization.

The examples from Övertorneå and Narvik explain how actors in periphery places play with symbols of the unique and the ordinary. This may be read as a search for ways to overcome a threatening marginalization. Klaus Eder (2006) identifies a Europe where the former barbaric North versus a cultivated South turned into the natural North and the artificial South. Throughout the past century the North has strengthened its position even further by developing its welfare society as a model for the rest of Europe. The European borders play different roles, especially since the East-West dimension has developed. 'The Northern border represents the natural past, a kind of primordial reference of a people struggling with nature' (ibid.: 265). In the light of this it might be wise not to communicate places in the northern periphery as so unique that they end up being symbolically on the wrong side of the European border, placed in 'the natural past'. This is what has happened to the Sámi in a tourist context (Olsen 2003). The step from the positive connotations of 'the Natural North' to the ambivalent epithet 'the Wild North' is rather small for places in the geographical periphery. The emphasis on the ordinary may be viewed as a way of being included in a European

⁵⁷ One of these stars, Terje Håkonsen, recently claimed on the radio that Narvik offers the best opportunities as long as there is snow...

community defined by welfare, but here the demographic and economic decline may be a bigger threat than the stereotypes of the northern periphery.

This analysis shows that the 'resembling uniqueness' observed in place development may not constitute a problem, seen from a local perspective. In our case, the 'unique place' is articulated mainly within more commercialized place communication, but it is balanced and developed locally towards other understandings of place. In both Övertorneå and Narvik we have observed some potential for place narratives to provide for positive development. Nevertheless, if the commercially directed promotion of the 'unique place', with its stereotyping effects, turns into a hegemonic place narrative, some problems may arise. It would be but a very short step towards an alienated place in local political terms that meets the needs and demands of external actors to the detriment of the local inhabitants.

Finally, then, do these local signifying processes enforce patterns of global cultural heterogenization, or maybe homogenization, seen from a bird's eye view? Our answer, in both cases, is no. This analysis has explained how enhancement of the 'unique place' involves playing with both universal values, with patterns of homogeneity, and place-specific features that contextualize a normatively appreciated ordinariness. This local cultural production always taps into more fundamental cultural meaning categories, consisting of more or less appreciated values such as, for example, 'the modern', 'the civilized', or 'the thrilling'. Evolving place meanings nurture a balance of such values, based on place-specific materiality and social features. Together, this may contribute to the confusion concerning questions of heterogeneous or homogeneous global cultural development. The questions may even be irrelevant, seen from a local perspective.

References

- Aas, S. (2001) *Narviks historie, bind 1. Byen, banen og bolaget*, Narvik: Stiftelsen Narviks historieverk.
- Bauman, Z. (1999) *In Search of Politics*, Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Eder, K. (2006) Europe's Borders. The Narrative Construction of the Boundaries of Europe, in: *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9 (2), pp. 255–271.
- Friedman, J. (1990) Being in the World: Globalization and Localization, in: Featherstone, M. (Ed.), *Global Culture. Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, London: Sage.
- Holloway, L. and Hubbard, P. (2001) *People and place: The extraordinary geographies of everyday life*, Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- Harvey, D. (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Jørgensen, M. W. and Philips, L. (1999) *Diskursanalys som teori och metod*, Studentlitteratur: Roskilde Universitetsforlag.
- Massey, D. (1994) *Space, Place and Gender*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Neuman, I. B. (2001) *Mening, materialitet, makt: En innføring i diskursanalyse*, Oslo: Bokforlaget.
- Olsen, K. (2003) Making differences in a changing world: The Norwegian Sámi in the tourist industry, conference paper: *Taking Tourism to the Limits*, Hamilton, New Zealand 8-11 December 2003.
- Paulgaard, G. (2006) Identitetskonstruksjoner – hvor langt rekker de?, in: *Tidsskrift for ungdomsforskning*, 1-2006.
- Philo, C. and Kearns, G. (1993) Culture, history, capital: A critical introduction to the selling of places, in Kearns, G. and Philo, C. (eds.) *Selling places. The City as Cultural Capital, Past and Present*, Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Shields, R. (1991) *Places on the margin: alternative geographies of modernity*, London: Routledge
- Svendsen, O. (2002) *Narviks historie, bind 2. Storbetstid, brytningstid, framtidshåp*, Narvik: Stiftelsen Narviks historieverk.
- Urry, J. (1995) *Consuming Places*, London: Routledge.
- Urry, J. (2002) *The Tourist Gaze* (second edition), London, Thousand Oakes, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Wallerstein, I. (1990) Culture as the Ideological Battleground of the Modern World-System, in:
Featherstone, M. *Global Culture. Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, London: Sage.

Chapter 6

Politicized Places

Leena Suopajärvi, University of Lapland, and Arvid Viken, Finnmark University College

Introduction

Social scientists have suggested that politics has reached its end. The change from an industrial, production-based and locally organized modern society to a service, consumption-based and market-driven global economy has also challenged the meaning of politics. For example, Ulrich Beck (1997: 142) argues that politics in the Western world, meaning democratic politics based on the party system, has lost, or will lose, its organizing power. As major explanations for this he cites the end of the East-West conflict, individualization and new uncertainties that the modern industrial system itself produces. Every day, news about politics in Western democracies provides evidence for Beck's claim: voting numbers in elections are declining, party politics does not interest the crowds, and young people, especially, are focusing on other things than taking part in elections.

So, what happens when the old political order breaks down? Beck (1997) himself suggests a *Reinvention of Politics*, which is also the title of his book, where he is *Rethinking Modernity in the Global Social Order*. The 'art of doubt' is at the heart of reinventing politics, which may be described as a reflexive, creative and self-creative form of politics that alters the rules of the old political system and designs and forges new contents, forms and coalitions. The idea is that nothing can be taken for granted, and even the basic ideological goals of Western politics, such as economic growth, full employment and social security, have been opened up and discussed (Beck 1997:135-136). Nevertheless, Beck's challenge for the 'art of doubt' is presented in an era when old political structures and practices, such as the nation-state and the party system, are still working, as he also notes (1997:145).

In this chapter, two Northern European towns are studied: Kemi in Finnish Lapland and Narvik in Northern Norway, both interesting places, especially in the context of politics and political change. We call them politicized places, because political history is a necessity in understanding the nature of these places. Both towns have a long tradition of sustaining a left-wing hegemony – in Narvik on the part of the Labour Party, and in Kemi by the Democratic League for the Finnish People/the Left Alliance and other communists. Kemi has been called The Deepest Red Town in Finland, and Narvik has been characterized as a one-party regime, due to the long-lasting hegemony of the Labour Party.

Both Kemi and Narvik have been modern industrial towns. The percentage of employees in manufacturing industries has been declining, whereas the percentage of those in service industries has been rising. In Kemi about half of the labour force worked in industry during the 1970s; in 2004, the percentage was about a quarter. Service industries were the main source of livelihood in Kemi in 2004: almost two-thirds of the jobs were in public or private services. However, it is still a manufacturing town. In Narvik the situation is similar. In 2004, 14% of the work-force (and currently growing) was in manufacturing industry, whereas almost 80% were employed in the service sector. The public sector is quite important, accounting for 43% of the work-force. Thus, for decades there has been a declining importance in manufacturing industry, but none of the towns have really turned into 'post-industrial spaces' (Lash & Urry 1994: 218). However, manufacturing industries are only one of a whole variety of industries these days.

What happens, then, when the industrial working-class town turns into a town comprising services and white-collar individuals? How do the changes in the occupational structure influence the *local political environment*? As Lash and Urry (1994) state, there is certainly no

simple relationship between industrial restructuring towards services and political processes within localities. The relationship between economic restructuring and politics is defined by locally specific structural preconditions. These include, for example, economic factors such as occupational structure, political factors such as embodied material consequences of earlier political action, the vitality of local political associations, local political ritual and political socialization, and social/cultural features (Lash & Urry 1994: 218).

This chapter presents firstly a theoretical framework for the analysis, followed by historical outlines and analyses of the contemporary political situation in both of the towns in focus. Towards the end, a comparison is made. The outline is based on data from focus group and in-depth interviews with representatives from the municipality, industrial sectors and occupational and other social groups in the two towns during the first half of 2006.

A theoretical framework

In order to study local political environments in Kemi and Narvik, the concept of *political opportunity structure* (POS) is applied as a model for analysing political change. This has been mainly used to theorize how and in what kind of situations new social movements have emerged (cf. Kriesi et al. 1995; Tarrow 1991, 1994), but in this article the four-dimensional definition of the political opportunity structure presented by Kriesi et al. is a point of departure for analysing changes in *local* politics.

The idea is to show how new political ideas and coalitions challenge and change traditional political cleavages. Firstly, Kriesi et al. (1995) maintain that political oppositions are often based on cultural and social cleavages in society. These may be cleavages relating to religion, class, the division between periphery and centre or the division between urban and rural districts (Kriesi et al. 1995: 10-15.) In this chapter the way in which class-based political activity and governance in Kemi and Narvik in the 20th century have been tied to industrial development will be discussed, and how the left-wing hegemony in both towns has been challenged in recent decades.

Secondly, formal structures of political institutions are important when studying the political field. As Kriesi et al. argue (1995: 27), formal structures such as the openness or reticence of the state define the possibilities for collective action. This is only partly relevant to this study, as the focus is on the municipal level and formal political structures have been quite stable and open in countries such as Finland and Norway. However, the state policy has changed with regard to the local level and regions. The new regional policy, applied in Finland in 1994, awarded responsibility for regional development to the regions themselves and state subsidy of the municipalities diminished. In Norway there is a similar tendency, or at least there is political parlance celebrating local democracy. In reality, however, the local scope for action has been narrowed, due to many new state-imposed policies and citizens' expectations and rights (Christensen et al. 2002: 154).

Thirdly, the model of the political opportunity structure focuses on the logic of action in the political field: what kind of prevailing strategies and procedures do members of the political system employ when dealing with challengers, either exclusive or integrative (cf. Kriesi et al. 1995: 33-34)? In fact, this has to do with the perception of democracy: how should new policies be developed – above the head of those concerned, or in collaboration with them? This relates directly to the question of modern governance (Kooiman 2003) and touches upon the way in which democracy should be practised. The prevailing theoretical perception of modern democracy is about collaboration, partnership, co-management and co-governance. As will be shown, different perceptions of democratic practice may be part of the explanation for local political cleavages.

This theme may be related to the fourth dimension in the Kriesi model, the changes in political conditions that may open access to new groups and alternative forms of participation. Elements of a changing configuration of power include, for example, shifts in ruling alignments, and the availability of influential allies and cleavages within and among elites (Kriesi et al. 1995: 53). Labour movements used to originate from the working class. Today, this

is a vanishing social base; middle-class individuals dominate both towns in question. New groups and coalitions have recently challenged the left-wing hegemony in Kemi and Narvik as well.

To conclude, the main research question in this chapter is how the local political environment performs when a modern industrial town is changing into a post-industrial place. Using the question posed by Beck, is there really a 'reinvention of politics' going on at a local level? Does the new challenge also involve a change in the form and content of politics in these Northern European towns? The discussion about political opportunity structure links the politics to the place: the towns are reinvented in political struggles and negotiations – they are arenas where different interests and interest groups are acting and seeking power.

Kemi

Working-class-based left-wing politics

The role of left-wing political action in Kemi is deeply rooted in the social and cultural cleavage that began with the industrial development of Kemi towards the end of the 19th century. It was articulated as a political struggle between an industrial working class and companies, the state and bourgeois parties. Industrialization was a massive societal and cultural transformation in the Kemi region. In this sparsely-populated, traditionally peasant area an industrial town emerged. So too did the workers' movement and left-wing organizations (Jussila 2005: 30-32).

During the first years and decades of industrialization, the workforce was in a depressed situation: their living and working conditions were poor and the workers did not have any legal rights. They might work fourteen hours per day, and had to be satisfied with the salary that the company was prepared to pay. Social problems in the early industrial community were the main reason for founding the Workers' Association in Kemi in 1887. The founders were working-class people themselves, not intellectuals as in many other places in Finland. This means that already, in Kemi's first period, social conditions were a matter for the working class that at that time was generally open to the idea of socialism (Kemppinen 1987: 14-21).

Kriesi et al. (1995: 3) argue that 'political cleavages develop initially on the basis of social stratification that sets the cultural conditions for group identity, and only later do they become fully political, particularly with the development of mass democracies'. Kemi provides evidence for this claim. The Workers' Association in Kemi joined with the Social Democratic Party, which was founded in Finland in 1903 to fight, amongst other things, for better working conditions. The Workers' Association and workers in Kemi also took an active part in a general strike in Finland in 1905, and began to organize trade unions to champion improved working and housing conditions. The collective action of the workers was not accepted by Kemi Ltd.: they fired the employees, evicted families from their houses and used police force to stop the strikes (Kemppinen 1987: 67-84).

International and national politics deepened the class-based conflict between left and right in Kemi. After the First World War and Finland's independence in 1917, the Civil War started between the bourgeois 'Whites' and the socialist 'Reds' (1918). The Whites won the Civil War and the results were devastating for the Reds in Kemi: activists were sentenced to prison and some worker activists had to escape to Sweden; there were even executions. The Civil War was the start of a 'white' power in Finland, a regime that was interpreted by the left wing as fascist. The extreme left, communism, was prohibited. However, the workers' associations in Kemi continued their activities during 1920s and 1930s, and among other things they were active in cultural life and sports. In the elections, the Social Democratic Party gained the votes of the workers in the 1930s, but there were secretly-operating Communist Party factions in the town, and trade unions also kept being organized (Kemppinen 1987: 244-336; Silvennoinen 1969: 133-170).

After the Second World War, the extreme left-wing parties became legalized again. The Democratic League for the Finnish People, founded in 1944, immediately became the largest

party in Kemi. At the same time, Kemi Ltd. worsened the workers' situation by cutting their pay. When the trade unions started a strike, the company and bourgeois and social democratic newspapers interpreted the strike as communist agitation. The situation became critical, the Finnish government ordered that work should start again and a police force was assembled in Kemi that opposed a workers' demonstration on 18 August 1949. A violent situation developed that resulted in the deaths of two workers. The left-wing faction stressed that the demonstration, where women and children also took part, was non-violent, whereas the state authorities and the non-socialist faction interpreted the demonstration as a revolt. This time, too, people involved were sent to prison (Kempainen 1987: 348-367; Silvennoinen 1969: 174-177).

Confrontation between the Democratic League for the Finnish People and the workers' movement, involving the company, police, state, bourgeois and social democratic factions, was one reason for the local success of the Democratic League for the Finnish People in Kemi: the party obtained about half the votes in municipal and general elections at the end of the 1940s and during the 1950s. This party, called the Left Alliance since 1990, has been the largest party in Kemi ever since, obtaining about half the votes in every municipal election until 1964. Over the past few decades its percentage has slowly diminished; the party won 32% of the votes in the municipal elections in 2004. The Social Democrats gained almost as much support with 29% of the vote. The bourgeois parties' share was about 31% (Kempainen 1987: 407; Statistics Finland 2006).

The legacy of left-wing politics

Kemi is still the deepest red town in Finnish Lapland: the Left Alliance obtained fifteen places out of a total of 43 on the municipal council in the municipal elections in 2004. The Social Democrats were next, with thirteen places. The long history of left-wing domain is also present in the discourses of the local people, who claim: 'This has always been a political town'. The support for the Democratic League for the Finnish People/Left Alliance has been primarily based on the working-class employees in the pulp and paper factories, but the class bias is not so evident any more. Firstly, the wage levels among factory-workers are quite high and their trade union in Finland is strong. They are actually the well-off elite among workers in Finland (cf. Kriesi 1995: 14) and hence there are workers who hold more bourgeois views. On the other hand, the share of the votes for the Left Alliance is bigger than the share of the whole industrial sector in Kemi. This implies that white-collar employees in the service sector also vote for the left. This refers to a political socialization phenomenon (cf. Lash & Urry 1994:218): many left-wingers have adopted their political convictions from their working-class parents – a leftist ideology that values solidarity and caring, especially for poor people.

Even the extreme left has been in power in Kemi for decades. The party has not had a majority on the municipal council in its own right, and hence its political culture has had to be negotiatory. Issues are discussed between political groups and consensual decisions are made. On the other hand, opponents say that the prevailing strategy of Left Alliance has been exclusive. As the biggest party it has decided upon the most crucial policy strategies and left-wingers have occupied many vital jobs in the town administration, and even at shop-floor level. The party card in left-wing parties has been a good reference when applying for a position in the town administration, as members of the bourgeois parties discuss:

Since the left or actually communists have ruled this town for ages, some kind of owner's spirit has been growing.

And there are also these officers. They have been able to occupy positions. They obstruct a lot. The 'machinery' is theirs.

The long leftist tradition and the hegemony of the Democratic League for the Finnish People/Left Alliance is experienced and also practised in everyday life. Kemi has been a polarized town: sport clubs, cultural clubs and other associations, for example, are divided into two, the left-wing associations and the non-socialist associations. The left-wing hegemony has also been noticed on a social level, as one factory worker explains: 'You had to be silent in the

factory if you were non-socialist. If you said anything out loud, little by little you would notice that you were being sidelined socially’.

In Kemi a left-wing welfare policy has resulted in a good service sector – all the groups interviewed were proud of this. Left-wing ideology is also embodied in other ways. For example, the shores around the Bothnian Gulf have been left without being exploited for residential purposes. The shore has been saved for public use. On the other hand, this has caused migration to neighbouring municipalities, which have better sites for building private houses.

The left-wing hegemony has also affected the image of Kemi. People explain how, especially in the 1970s, the image was negative: it was compared to ramshackle towns in the Soviet Union. A marketing professional in the tourist sector concludes about the legacy of left-wing policy and its possible reinvention in the future:

The image of Kemi is a very heavy load. If you consider that there has been revolt, strikes and a strong communist background, and you could not do anything about that. There has been talk of Kemi being some kind of communist memorial, but I am against that.

Breaking the left-wing power in Kemi

Following the municipal elections in 2004, the Social Democrats, the Centre Party and the right-wing National Coalition Party formed a coalition called *Group 26*, constituting a majority on the town council. The leading positions in town government and on the town council are in the hands of the Social Democrats and the Centre Party. Group 26 has tried to introduce new ways of working and thinking to town politics. On the other hand it is also called ‘an unholy alliance’ because the coalition between the left-wing Social Democrats and the non-socialist parties is seen to be ideologically unaccustomed. In this sense, Ulrich Beck’s argument about breaking the dualism between left and right has happened in Kemi (Beck 1997: 148-151). Whether this means new ways of conducting politics, and long-lasting change to the political agenda in Kemi, is a question that had not yet been answered in 2006.

The reason why the ruling alignment changed is that the political parties, in continuous opposition with one another, were frustrated by the exclusive strategy of the Left Alliance, as one of the politicians explains:

Although they always said that we would discuss things, the fact was that the biggest party decided. They could discuss an issue within the party and also with others, but then they would often decide that this issue was not an issue to be voted upon.

Another reason why the extreme left has been slowly losing power in Kemi is that the class conflict, in its traditional meaning, is not an organizing factor any more. The traditional working class is smaller, whereas the group of white-collar employees and the service sector has been growing constantly (cf. Kriesi et al. 1995: 14, Lash and Urry 1994). However, it is too simple to assume that change in the occupational structure necessarily entails a different political environment. Lash and Urry argue that the modern service sector is not homogenous: the virtues of the public sector workers are different to those of the private sector workers, and differences also exist between workers in the small entrepreneurial and the multinational sectors (Lash and Urry 1994: 218). In Kemi most people work in the public sector and the municipality employs almost 30% of the labour force. Many white-collar workers in the public sector still vote for Left Alliance due to their socio-political background. The situation in Kemi is as Lash and Urry (1994) have observed: ‘The politics of different kinds of service workers are spatially variable precisely because changes in the occupational structure of local labour markets occur within, and are constrained by, the previous political environment. This previous environment provides the bases, the language and the relations of the local political life.’ (ibid.: 218-219). However, as Kriesi et al. (1995: 14) argue, public welfare services and a better standard of living has weakened the working-class opposition. Two informants from the bourgeois parties discuss this somewhat ironically:

Here there are lots of these 'communists' with a very high standard of living. They have a Lada by the gate, but the house is big and they have summer cottages and boats. The car, the Lada, is part of the illusion about some kind of group...

And behind that Lada is a Mercedes Benz...

And no-one uses the Lada, it is just there to be seen.

The new challenger, Group 26, was also established – at least partly – because the Left Alliance was not able to reduce public services costs in Kemi. Good public services are a burden to the town economy. Although the tax revenue per inhabitant was the highest in the region (Lapland) in 2004, so too was the mortgage level per inhabitant (Regional Council of Lapland 2006). Group 26 demands efficiency from the town administration and says that sections of the (left-wing) staff have an attitude problem: they do not understand the strict laws of economics and are not ready for change. In addition, according to some entrepreneurs:

Certain offices are politically labelled, I mean left-wing. They envy entrepreneurs and have a certain kind of ideology. It has that kind of slowing-down effect... I have heard with my own ears, when officials say that let's just wait now and see what the coalition is bringing about, let's wait and see. Let's see what happens when we put a spoke in the wheel. They will fail.

The new regime also wants to change the town planning and wants to build new houses on the shores of the Bothnian Gulf. This new policy in town planning will, it is assumed, attract new inhabitants to the town. They do not want the town to look like 'a communist memorial', but like a 'normal' small town, located by the sea and uniquely beautiful.

Group 26 has urged the left-wingers to rethink their political message and ways of acting, and possibly gain new supporters. Younger left-wing politicians argue that new members are to be found in all social groups because uncertainty and short-term jobs are more usual in all sectors and levels of society. However, an older left-wing politician thinks that a new left-wing movement may rise, because of a weakening in social security:

The welfare state, created by the efforts of the working-class movement and left-wing parties, has been like an umbrella sheltering the new generations. This umbrella does not provide such certain protection any more.

Whether there will be a new left or not (see Hall & Jacques 1990: 14-20), the leaders of the Left Alliance in Kemi recall that they are still the biggest party in the town – and are waiting for the next elections to obtain votes from Social Democratic Party members who may be disappointed because of 'the unholy alliance' with bourgeois parties.

Narvik

An empowered working class

The political history of Narvik is mainly about a fairly harmonious relationship between a working-class-governed municipality and a number of big companies, of which LKAB (Luossavaara-Kiirunavaara Aktiebolag), a Swedish mining company, is the most important. This firm was once the largest employer in town, at its height employing more than a thousand people. Another big company was Norwegian State Railways, which took care of the transportation of iron ore until 2001. The relationship between the companies and their workers has also been fairly harmonious, despite the fact that the workers have had left-wing and radical political attitudes. There have been minor controversies, of course, but overall Narvik has never become a site of real class conflict.

There are several reasons for the fairly low level of conflict in Narvik. The Labour Party, the Norwegian social democrats, has been in charge of municipal affairs right from the start. Thus, the history of Narvik is a history of working-class people in power in a rather rich community. In 1913, a tax agreement was made stating that LKAB should pay a tax of never less than 10% of its income to the Norwegian authorities (Aas 2001). This made Narvik wealthy compared to other towns. It was therefore possible to develop an all-embracing welfare system, including good facilities for sports and cultural activities. In addition, the working

classes put their energy into leisure activities, seemingly more than into political struggle. The mining company supported welfare and leisure facility development. It was said that people got materials to construct cabins – an urge for most Norwegians – from the many wooden barracks left over from the period of the railway construction. The town also has strong traditions within the sphere of music; it was the first town to in Norway have its own jazz ensemble, and for many years an opera was staged in collaboration with Norwegian Opera in Oslo. These cultural activities are partly claimed as a result of stimuli from the outbound contacts and orientation common for a town integrated within an international network based on iron ore production and shipment (Aas 2001). To illustrate how well off the labouring class people could be, one informant said that ‘Narvik was a town where even the wives of the miners could be seen strolling around in their mink stoles’ and ‘this is a bourgeois labour town where even the Labour Party has become bourgeois’. There were certainly also controversies and conflicts within this society. History relates that there was sympathetic action relating to strikes in the mines in Kiruna, a conflict in a shipyard in the neighbouring town of Harstad and a miners’ strike in Spitsbergen. There was also confrontation concerning the introduction of a tariff wage system demanded by the labour organization, but the company gave up its stand on this before the situation became critical. One of the most politicized situations occurred as late as in the 1990s, when Norwegian State Railways decided to quit and transfer the transportation of iron ore to LKAB – this was perceived as a threat and people protested in the streets.

Perhaps the most interesting political controversies in Narvik relate to internal power situations between different factions of the political left. What happened in Narvik was similar to what had happened in Kemi and many other towns, with a coinciding development of manufacturing industry, urbanization, labour movements and trade unions. The first Labour Association in Narvik was founded in 1899 as both a trade union and a local branch of the Labour Party. However, the first real trade union was founded only three years later, and in the years that followed local branches of many trade unions were set up. The labourers working for LKAB were the most radical, those working for Norwegian State Railways representing more moderate labour policies (Aas 2001: 133-138). Given the very many types of workers and trade unions, an umbrella organization was formed in 1915 (*Samorganisasjonen*), which in fact meant that workers within one sector would benefit from solidary actions on the part of other working groups in the case of conflict. As in Kemi, the most left-wing party, the Norwegian Communist Party, obtained a strong position. For a short period after the Second World War, the Communist Party had almost as many supporters as Labour and the party had a newspaper in the town (*Nordland Arbeideravis*). However, with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1948 many Norwegians communists left the party, and strong anti-communist propaganda started, mostly precipitated by Labour. This also happened in Narvik. There were severe actions against the party. The most violent was when the newspaper headquarters were blown up (17 September 1948) (Svendsen 2002). Labour worked against the communists within the trade unions, and from the early 1950s the communists occupied a rather marginal political position in Narvik. Later, from the late 1960s onwards, other parties such as the Socialist Left and the Red Election Alliance (*Rød Valgallianse*) took part in local elections, but they never secured a strong position. Thus, Narvik has been a bastion of the Labour Party since the town was founded. On several occasions, the party has been weakened by internal struggles – there have always been many party cells, some based in the workplace, others spread out geographically (district-based cells), but the position of the party was never threatened.

Working class: from political base to heritage

There is a widely accepted perception in Narvik that the town has a history to be proud of, and this is important in the contemporary search for a future. Particularly celebrated is the period around the turn of the previous century, the so-called ‘*rallar*’ period. The *rallars* (navvies) were the construction worker who built the railway in the mountainous areas between Narvik and Kiruna in a harsh Arctic climate. It was terrible, hard work, but the salaries were not bad and

there were lots of opportunities to find a job somewhere else at that time (Aas 2001), but many preferred to stay, and even settled in Narvik when the railway work was finished. Due to the rather tough circumstances, lots of legends and myths exist from this period, and the *rallar*, and also the female cooks – one called '*Svarta Bjørn*' [The Black Bear] – have been local heroes ever since. For decades there has been a winter festival where the *rallar* and *Svarta Bjørn* are celebrated, and for a long time a *Svarta Bjørn* (a young woman) of the year was chosen in something like a Miss Narvik contest. This gave rise to feminist protest in the early 1970s (Svendsen 2002). The *rallar* and *Svarta Bjørn* represent important heritage, but are only political figures in the sense that they represent some vital values, a strong work ethic and loyalty towards employers and place.

The *rallar* also symbolizes a strong culture relating to manufacture, mining and transport. Although the town has been primarily a harbour, over the years lots of mechanical industries have developed to support the basic activities. For most people in Narvik manufacturing is the only real industry, besides transport: there is a strong perception locally of Narvik as a transport hub. There are lots of signs of an industrial culture: since the Second World War a whole series of factories has been established (for example Kongsberg Våpen during the 1980s, and Scancell in recent years) – often with political support from the municipality and central Labour politicians; efforts were made to establish factories and a mine by the local LKAB manager during the company's crisis in the 1980s; when a college was to be established in town, engineering became its major orientation. The transportation sector includes the headquarters of the *Hurtigruten* company (the coastal tourist route from Bergen to Kirkenes on the Russian border), a local railway company (Ofofbanen) and a transport terminal. Goods are taken from Southern Norway to Narvik by train (through Sweden), and then distributed by trucks to destinations all over Northern Norway. This is the successful result of a strategy developed during the early 1990s that also has given rise to the idea of Narvik as the hub in a transport system between China and the United States: train transport through China, Russia, Finland and Sweden to Narvik, where the cargo containers would be loaded onto ships for the last leg to the U.S. There is a lot of optimism relating to this, and lots of efforts are being made to realize this idea but, as one powerful informant stated: 'No container has crossed the quayside so far'. These examples all relate to manufacturing and transport, industries that in former days gave rise to a strong labour class. Although still a significant factor in the manufacturing industry and industrial culture, the working class is not particularly visible in local politics, and many workers seem to have abandoned the left-wing political parties.

Thus, it is not the working-class traditions that dominate the local political picture. Rather, it is another mythical character, '*Narvikguten*', the Narvik lad, who seems to be a model for many local actors. This is said to be a self-confident, loud, boastful, outward-looking and internationally experienced man (or woman) who helped to recreate the town and the town's culture after the Second World War when the town had been partially burnt down. He listens to jazz, is interested in football (the town had a team in the top division in Norway during the 1960s (*Mjølner*)), but is also fond of outdoor recreation. This is probably the type of person who has given rise to the modern Narvik which, besides the traditional industries, is strongly dependent on service and trade. Two modern shopping malls have been built and there are a whole variety of services offered in the town, both to locals and those in the surrounding regions. The town is also a significant centre for study and has a regional hospital. Tourism has gone up and down and this has been given priority from time to time. Altogether, the many small businesses and industries are those that are keeping up the population numbers. The new service class is not especially political, but it is central to the new political map. This class and its symbol, *Narvikguten*, are vital elements in a new political climate where formal competence and commercial attitudes are challenging the old political regime.

A challenged Labour hegemony

In Narvik the Labour Party, with a few exceptions, has been in charge and sustained a hegemonic position since the beginning of the 20th century. But there have always been other

parties as well, and since the 1980s the Labour Party has been forced to rely on others to keep their position, a position that has weakened in every election. In the 2003 election, Labour won 14 out of the 42 mandates to the town council and had to make a coalition with Social Left to secure the mayor's position. This is therefore part of the political picture in 2006, a Labour Party about to lose seats, but with no clear contestant. Many middle-class people vote as their working-class parents did. According to one informant, 'instead of changing party, people have changed the Labour Party'. This is a national phenomenon. It means that the identity and profile of the Labour Party have become blurred. However, its hegemony is threatened to the extent that this produces a rather edgy political climate and the focus is more on politicians as people than on political issues. One of them appeared in court in 2006, due to a bar dispute with one of Labour's long-term supporters. A Labour informant blames the right-wing populist party (*Fremskrittspartiet*) for this situation:

There has been a change in the political culture since the 1990s. Narvik is a less homogenous community today, and may also be less open. Despite all the shouting and the noise, there is less substance behind them than earlier. When politics is based on populism, and the focus on individuals and political issues is less important, then you have a different grip on reality.

One of the retired interviewees claimed that there is 'much too strong a focus on the individual, and the political ambience is bad.' 'The politicians are personal enemies', said another informant. A man who was worried about the political climate was also anxious about political recruitment: 'young people are not stupid, they read the newspapers... They'd have to be extremely interested to go into politics, bearing in mind all the political shit' ('all faenskapen som skjer').

However, there are also disputes over political issues. One crucial issue for years has been the restructuring of the town from a manufacturing and transport town into something else – the search for new industries – but what has been achieved has not been particularly politically controversial. Perhaps the most important and long-lasting dispute concerns the use of a huge downtown area facing the sea – *Trekanten* (The Triangle) – taken over from LKAB and Norwegian State Railways, in the latter case as late as 2001. That this area has ended up in the hands of the municipality is very much thanks to the Labour Party mayor who served from 1988/1999, Odd G. Andreassen, according to historians (Svendsen 2002: 542). There was a lot of negotiation and turbulence during the process, and there are still disputes concerning its use. The area has been regulated as a new part of town, with both dwelling and commercial quarters, leisure facilities and a seafront pedestrian area. Others seem to regard the area as having the potential for new industries. The area formally belongs to *Narvikgården*, the municipally-owned real estate company. In 2006, there was an ongoing discussion concerning the status of this and other municipal companies established for planning and urban development purposes. The political leadership, and Labour and Socialist Left, seemed to feel that they did not have sufficient political control over these companies. Others seem to feel that Labour is too heavily involved in these affairs.

Far from being supported by the majority of people (and with only 34% of the representatives), the Labour Party keeps hold of the most important power positions in town: the mayor, leading positions in Narvik Harbour (*Narvik Havn*) and the municipal real estate company (*Narvikgården*), central members on the boards of the industrial development company (*Futurum*), Narvik Energy (a company owning several hydropower plants), and so on. In fact, those knocking on the door claim that a rather close network exists of old Labour Party members and their allies. There are lots of clever people seeking positions who are excluded. The reason why the old Labour Party people hold positions, according to the informants, is for the sake of the status it carries, for the sake of power and because they believe that they are more competent than others. It is also partly to do with political tradition: this is the way that it used to be, and until recently nobody bothered.

The current antagonisms are at present particularly apparent in questions of planning and development. From its early days, Narvik has been a planned and a well-organized town. There was a plan for the town one hundred years ago, there was a plan for the reconstruction of the

town after World War II, there was a plan for transformation after the depression in the 1980s, and an industrial development plan was produced in the 1990s. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, the municipality, inspired by new public management thoughts spreading throughout Europe, decided that some of the municipal functions would be better handled by share-holding companies – the major arguments were that this allowed managerial freedom and a greater degree of professionalism (Hood 1995). But if industrial development and real estate were to be managed by public-owned companies, there was not such a great need for a strong municipal planning department, and this was abandoned. However, the municipality and the Labour Party soon learned that this new governance structure gave them less power than the old regime. They are challenged by a new elite of well-educated and professional managers and employees in both public and privately-owned companies. Thus, a new public and private sector with lots of clever, innovative and reflexive people is challenging the old Labour Party and the municipal officers. The outsiders perceive the old power system as out-dated and conservative. They themselves represent new types of attitudes, knowledge and skills – and in fact, represent the contemporary driving forces in Narvik that sustain the population size.

A third explanation for the edgy political situation in 2006 probably also relates to perceptions of democracy and political regimes. The Labour Party seems to adhere to the idea of a numerical and representative democracy; those who are elected are those who are in charge. This is probably not the type of democracy that is practised today, according to modern governance theory. According to this view, policies are developed and implemented in a dialogue between the governors and the governed – policies are formed and performed within complex and diversified networks (cf. Jessop 1999; Kooiman 2003), policies and decisions are negotiated, and the governors are normally responsive towards those who are governed (Vincent-Jones 2002). The old Labour Party people in Narvik are not familiar with this type of governance. There was a unanimous perception among the informants that some of the old Labour Party had been not integrative, but exclusive (cf. Kiresi et al. 1995). The Labour Party networks were closed and reminiscent of a time when policy development was an internal party concern. However, change is taking place and Narvik is on the verge of a new regime, allowing space for new types of political participants (cf. Kriesi et al. 1995): business people who negotiate directly with the authorities and through the Narvik Business Association (*Narvik Næringsforening*), for example, or publicly-owned company managers who act according to business principles and not according to political will. The popular version of the political situation is not about out-dated people who love power and do not collaborate. Part of this story is also about reforms in the political system narrowing the structure of political opportunity. Before, there used to be a few sector councils preparing the decisions for the town council. This meant that a lot of local politicians were involved in the decision-making process, and cases were better prepared politically when they reached the town council. This system was abolished a few years ago, making the political system intrinsically more exclusive and, according to one informant, ‘... this has perverted much of the political life in Narvik ... allowing room for politicians who do not know what they are deciding about’.

A comparison of the reinvention of politics in Kemi and Narvik

This chapter has analysed the political situation in two Northern European towns that have followed the development patterns described more than ten years ago by Lash and Urry (1994); towns that have been transformed from spaces strongly relating to production to spaces of consumption. Although the old industries are still vital to the towns, they have been transformed from working-class-based places to post-industrial centres with people working in different service sectors. These two social processes – the restructuring of old industries and the emergence of a new competence-based service sector – have recently changed the local political environments in Kemi and Narvik.

In both Kemi and Narvik the left-wingers have been in charge; in Kemi broadly based on class antagonisms that have been experienced, in Narvik based to a greater extent on the simple fact that Norwegian workers have been used to voting for the Labour Party. Today, both these circumstances have changed. In addition, middle-class people vote for socialist parties, and many workers vote for right-wing parties, against taxes and immigration (particularly in Norway). Thus, social or cultural cleavages do not seem necessary to produce political disagreement, as Kriesi et al. (1995) maintain, but rather new issue-based controversies that divide people into different political camps. At least, the question of how to govern the waterfront in Kemi, and probably also the use of The Triangle in Narvik, which is also partly a waterfront area, may be viewed in this way. The political situation is at any rate fuzzy and supports the idea put forward by Beck (1997) that individualization restores a stable commitment to certain parties. There also seems to be more emphasis on the personal dimension in today's politics than before: politics offer an arena for the subjective projects of creating personal careers. Politics has been reinvented.

Another point made by Kriesi et al. (1995) is that formal structures of political institutions are important in providing opportunities for collective action. This seems to be an important point in both the towns studied: there have, in fact, been formal structures that have made it possible to exclude large sections of the population from taking part in many decision-making processes. This may of course be said to be the burden of the numerical democracy, those representing the minority being kept out. As a matter of fact, party-based democracy may be seen as an example of the modern 'dysfunction' (Beck 1997) of the modern socio-political system. The position taken by Beck (1997) is that in an age of reflexive modernization and a second modernity, politics has been redefined or reinvented, because '...more and more often we find ourselves in situations which prevailing institutions and concepts of politics can neither grasp nor adequately respond to'. (Beck 1997: 7) Politics is no longer limited to formal systems and actions, but 'breaks open and erupts beyond formal responsibilities and hierarchies', claims Beck (1997: 99). He even states that '... the political constellation of industrial society is becoming unpolitical, while what was unpolitical in industrialism is becoming political' (ibid.: 99). Furthermore, he claims that new types of social groups define the political agendas (ibid.: 101). All this has in fact been observed in this analysis: that the representatives of the old political left have become pragmatic entities, that new types of issues are in focus and that new groups are vital in defining political strategies, giving rise to what Beck calls 'subpolitics', including new ways of organizing political affairs, new policies and new political coalitions and patterns of power. As the outline above has shown, new public policies and the outsourcing of public services has created a new political system, particularly in Narvik. The municipal policies are not concerned with workers' social conditions and welfare but, for example, municipal budgets, industry development, urban space policies and aesthetics. As far as the power side of politics is concerned, new alliances and power centres have been identified: cross-party alliances and networks that also include the business and knowledge sectors. This may be interpreted as a kind of political pluralism, not far off the perception of modern democracy presented by Robert A. Dahl in the 1960s (Dahl 1963).

Beck (1997) emphasizes that the changes in politics that he observes are mostly going on beneath the surface. This means that even if the politics is about to be reinvented, the same political institutions still exist, the same parties still perform, and they still refer to the same old ideologies (ibid.: 137). Beck calls this *façadism*. This is also what has been observed in Kemi and Narvik: it seems as though the same political systems and quarrels are going on, because the major institutions and political parties are the same. There are grounds for asking why the political system is almost unchanged, even with a totally altered political focus. One answer is that the political system as such is not a matter of voting, and that this is somehow the product of the parties still in charge (Beck 1997: 145). Another explanation relates to the move from ideology to pragmatism: the political parties are empty of ideology and filled with practical politics according to prevailing public views, expertise and individual conviction. Thirdly, along the same lines, politics has a lot to do with not creating failures that provoke the electorate to

turn its back to the party. A fourth reason why the system seems to be sustained is, as Beck claims, that '[p]olitisation obviously occurs issue-specifically'. When new groups seek power they make alliances with those who are prepared to listen and commit, whoever they are. A fifth point is that the administration and the expertise involved in preparing these policies are also challenged. There is always competing expertise that can be mobilized, or that can at least pose profound questions. Thus, 'reflexive scientification' (Beck 1997: 157) makes the municipality less authoritative than before. In addition, the public knows that there are always possible alternatives, and that it is possible to change strategies within the existing system, which is as much an arena for discussion and negotiation as an arena for decision-making. This is also how recent regulation and governance theory perceives modern regimes (Vincent-Jones 2002).

The cases in this study are examples of a reinvention of politics within the framework of an existing political system. Many cling to old façades and seem to reject ongoing and globalized developments. However, reality circa 2006 is about to change: politics is more open and inclusive, based on new types of actors, alliances and regimes. The remnants of the past – the left-wing hegemonies – are being eroded. There is a risk that in a few years' time the old, strong left will be history. It may be heritage as well: both towns are good examples of those willing to create political monuments or attractions of an important era in both Finnish and Norwegian politics. There is of course another alternative: that left-wing politics once more gains a position of power based on the new realities that these political factions seem to counteract these days.

References

- Aas, S. (2001) *Narviks historie. Byen, banen og bolaget*, Bind I. Narvik: Stiftelsen Narviks historieverk.
- Beck, U. (1997) *The reinvention of politics: rethinking modernity in the global social order*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Christensen, T., Egeberg, M., Larsen, H.O., Lægreid, P. and Roness, P.G. (2002) *Forvaltning og politikk*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Dahl, R. A. (1963) *Modern political analysis*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall
- Hall, S. and Jacques, M. (1990) Introduction, in Hall, S. and Jacques, M. (eds.) *New times: the changing face of politics in the 1990s*, London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Hood, C. (1995) The 'new public management' in the 1980s: Variations on a theme, in: *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 20, pp. 93–109.
- Jessop, B. (1999) Regulation theories in retrospect and prospect, in: *Environment and Society*, 19(7), pp. 153–216.
- Jussila, P. (2005) *Eikö sitä totuutta saisiakaan sanoa. Pohjolan Sanomien yhdeksän vuosikymmentä*, Kemi: Pohjolan Sanomat.
- Kemppinen, K. (1987) *Niin perkeleen punainen*, Kemi: Pohjolan Sanomat.
- Kriesi, H., Koopmans, R., Dyvendak, J.W. and Guigni, M.G. (1995) *New social movements in Western Europe: a comparative analysis*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Kooiman, J. (2003) *Governing as governance*, London: Sage.
- Lash, S. and Urry, J. (1994) *The economies of signs and place*, London: Sage.
- Regional council of Lapland (2006) *Lapin kuntien talous 2003 ja 2004*. Viewed 15 November 2006 at web page <http://www.lapinliitto.fi/tilastotkuvat/kt2004.pdf>.
- Silvennoinen, K. (1969) *Kemin työväenyhdistys 1887-1967*, Tampere: Kirjapaino Sanan Tie.
- Statistics Finland. (2006) Vaalit. Viewed 15 November 2006 at web page <http://www.stat.fi/>.
- Tarrow, S. (1991) *Struggle, politics, and reform: collective action, social movements, and cycles of protest*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University.
- Svendsen, O. (2002) *Narviks historie, bind 2. Storbetstid, brytningstid, framtidshåp*, Narvik: Stiftelsen Narviks historieverk.
- Tarrow, S. (1994) *Power in movement: social movements, collective action and politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vincent-Jones, Peter (2002) Values and purpose in government: central-local relations in regulatory perspective, in: Picciotto, S. and Campbell, D. (eds.): *New directions in regulatory theory*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Chapter 7

Control over resources in place reinvention: Kemijärvi in far-away Lapland

Seppo Aho, University of Lapland

Introduction

In economics, the main resources are traditionally defined as land, labour and capital. Land includes all the resources of nature: natural soil, forests, water basins and rivers, and minerals, but also natural scenery, fish and game. Of course, the quantity of land area as such is one aspect of this resource, too. Traditionally, land is controlled by its owners, but the use of its inherent resources is *also controlled by municipal plans* and legislation. Labour as a resource covers all those human features that are valuable in organizing economic production. Knowledge and skills are the basic qualitative characteristics of labour, but here, too, the quantity of labour is significant when assessing the production capacity of any unit. The labour market is the framework for the use and control of labour. Capital consists of various means that can be utilized in organizing production. Capital has two different main forms: financial and real. Financial capital can be used to buy companies, work and things, it can also lie idle in various assets. It can grow or diminish in financial transactions without anyone seeing it. On the whole, financial capital is rather abstract and usually not visible. But it always has its owners who control it, and this control may be closely or distantly operated. Real capital is concrete and visible: buildings, roads, vehicles, machines and other tools. Its basic feature is that it is built for some purpose. It may or may not be used for this – or any other – purpose, depending on the situation in demand and control.

There are other ways of categorizing resources. The World Bank defines four types of capital: physical capital, nature capital, human capital and social capital (Laukkanen & Pirinen 2002: 46-47). In this definition, physical capital corresponds closely to real capital above; so does nature capital to land above. Human capital, however, is a wider concept than labour – it also covers other aspects of human knowledge and participation than those paid for as work input. Social capital is understood to include common norms, networks, structures of trust, loyalty, local safety and ‘togetherness’. The quantity and quality of the three first-mentioned types of capital are usually relatively easy to assess, but social capital is more difficult to grasp and measure. Although abstract and often woolly, it is clearly important, especially when trying to analyse the real mechanisms of control over resources. *Social capital is also important in processes of place reinvention.*

The aim of this chapter is to consider one particular case, Kemijärvi, especially from the standpoint of how control over resources has influenced place reinvention there. This consideration utilizes various kinds of existing data sources (reports, statistics, publications), selected focus groups and individual interviews. According to the approach chosen in the overall framework of this book, the role of focus group interviews is essential.

The chapter continues with a presentation of Kemijärvi as a place – both on the basis of general information and in the light of the conceptual framework of this book (see Chapter 1). The third section reviews significant elements in the rich chain of various transformations and attempts to modernize the traditional structures of Kemijärvi. The use of and control over various resources is considered in each case. The fourth section includes conclusions about and a number of comments on the concept of place.

The place Kemijärvi

Kemijärvi is the most northern municipality with town status in Finland. It is located in Northeast Lapland, some 90 km north-east of Rovaniemi, the provincial capital of Lapland. The land area of the municipality is quite large, 3,900 km². Most of this area is covered with forests, swamps and lakes. There is one famous winter tourist destination, Suomu, within Kemijärvi, some 40 km south-east of its centre, and another one, Pyhätunturi, bordering it to the north-west. Kemijärvi is very old in comparison with many other settlements in Lapland; there has been a settlement there since the Stone Age. Unlike in the past centuries, the main traffic flows in Lapland nowadays are from the south to the north and vice versa, and Kemijärvi is not on these main routes. It is the end station of train services to the north-east in Finland, although the railway continues further up to the border with Russia. The distance to the nearest passenger airport, in Rovaniemi, is 80 km. The natural environment of Kemijärvi is beautiful; it includes much variety, consisting of hills, ridges, lakes and rivers.



Picture 8: Snow covers Kemijärvi for some six months of the year. The ice-covered lakes then offer fields for various winter leisure activities. The condensed pattern of the settlement, with the main road and the railway on the right, is seen from the east in this photo.

The population of Kemijärvi reached its peak in the mid-1960s at over 16,500 in 1966. Lapland as a whole had experienced strong redevelopment since the late 1940s, the entire province having been evacuated and badly destroyed during the last stages of the Second World War. However, the population peak in the province had already been reached in 1963 – only nineteen years after the evacuation. Out-migration started to grow rapidly during the following year, reaching its zenith towards the end of the decade and continuing until the end of the 1970s. Surprisingly, the population of Lapland began to grow again during the early 1980s and the situation was fairly stable until the early 1990s. Significant out-migration from Lapland has become a reality again since the mid-1990s and Kemijärvi has been one of the biggest losers. The population of Kemijärvi has decreased by 44% from a top figure of 16,600 in 1966 to 9,300 at the end of 2005, and by 24 % between 1990 and 2005. The number of jobs decreased from 5,001 in 1990 to 3,127 in 2003, a loss of 37%. The unemployment figures have been high for a long while, reaching a stunning 27.5% following three company bankruptcies (see the cases below) in 1993 and reducing to 19.4% in 2005. Cuts in college level education have increased the out-migration of young people and the age structure of the place has become notably older. (Kuosmanen 1978, 249; Kemijärven taskutieto 2006)

Quite a good variety of various types of new production in modern industries has not been enough to stop the decrease in population. There have been – and still are – several major efforts, and also promising projects to modernize the production structure of Kemijärvi by creating new vitality and sustainability. Many of these projects have been significant in various ways. Through new types of jobs, new employees and new work practices they have markedly influenced the way of life in Kemijärvi. Many of these projects have had dramatic life cycles

and they have offered a lot of hope, excitement and disappointment – and many well-known local stories that represent place reinvention. The birth, life cycle and aspects of resource control of these significant projects will be discussed in the following section.

Kemijärvi has experienced an exceptional number (for its size) of new, substantial themes and actors of production that have been reflected in place reinvention. The types, life cycles and controllers of resources have varied greatly between these cases. This exceptional history makes Kemijärvi a fruitful object for studies of place reinvention associated with changes of production structure and of control over resources in these changes. These changes – having also been rather widely presented in media – are in a way roots that have produced new realities and images of Kemijärvi, both for those living there and for outsiders. Current development efforts include further interesting features of post-modern production: they seem to contribute to the picture of an almost incredibly brave place in its fight against failure and recession. Jobs are in the key role in this fight, but the nature of these new jobs reflects a modernity in local thinking and policy-making.

A note on methods applied

Three types of printed information sources were used for the background research: statistics, official reports and more general writings on Kemijärvi. The official Finnish statistics describe changes in population, its age structure, employment and mobility very well from 1960 onwards, and thus offers a sound factual basis for considering the development of Kemijärvi. Official reports include the plans, policies and comments of local and regional administrations. Books on local history, newspaper articles and various studies offer additional insights into the place at various times. The writer of this chapter has carried out quite extensive research projects (e.g. Aho & Ilola 1985 and 2004) in Lapland since 1978 and this background knowledge is utilized here.

Gathering information from experts and other people followed the agreed guidelines for this project. Both focus groups and individuals were interviewed. Those heard were chosen because they either had a thorough knowledge of Kemijärvi in general or they had mastered a particular theme that has been significant in place reinvention of Kemijärvi. Five different focus groups were used:

- 1) senior experts in various fields with a strong professional or other personal role in Kemijärvi
- 2) experts in the modern information society with a personal background in Kemijärvi
- 3) experts in local economy and administration living in Kemijärvi
- 4) experts in the artistic and cultural life living in or visiting Kemijärvi
- 5) senior people from Kemijärvi now living in Oulu with a strong Kemijärvi identity

Group discussions covered a wide range of aspects. Place reinvention being rather an awkward concept for newcomers to this theme, development and place transformations were used as more concrete and familiar bridging concepts. Three broad themes were discussed: 1) the major sources of place transformation, development and reinvention in Kemijärvi from the 1950s until now, 2) the initiation of and control over resources by local politicians, administrators and other actors in these projects, and 3) factors influencing the cycles of the considered projects and prospects for the future.

The discussions in focus groups 1, 2, 4 and 5 were rather broad and spontaneous, while group 3 concentrated on the current situation. The first four groups were all oriented towards relating colourful narratives and personal comments on developments in Kemijärvi; in spite of many rather strong individualistic views, no disputes occurred between the participants. One conspicuous feature in many of the narratives was the paradox of various contrasts: the people of the place being rich and poor at the same time; the appearance of several types of appreciated new productions, with great opportunities, and their sudden disappearance later on; and feelings of both strong self-reliance and weakness. Many new aspects of local discourses were introduced.

The respondents found the theme of the project motivating. Discussions in the groups were lively and surprisingly informative. Focus groups, together with the individual interviews, disclosed various interpretations of place reinvention rather well. The voices of the people heard stamp the presentation of the cases presented in what follows. Unfortunately, it is not possible to display the richness of the material here in full. The lively narratives would expand this chapter into a book!

Major themes of development and place reinvention

In the case of Kemijärvi, it is appropriate to consider control over resources of place reinvention in the light of the major cases of development and place transformations that have taken place there. As discussed in Chapter 1, we understand place reinvention to be an overwhelming process, which covers mostly non-material elements, both intentional and unintentional. Some of these are rather diffuse and difficult to measure, or even describe, in an objective way. The term place transformation refers here to those changes that can be described at least fairly objectively. Development efforts are intentional, and they result in both place transformation and reinvention, the connection to the former being more concrete and to the latter more diffuse. However, local development efforts are not the only source of either, although often very important. Many significant production projects in Kemijärvi have taken place due to decisions made elsewhere. This emphasizes the aspects of resource control and motives in decision making – and represents a particular aspect of place reinvention in the Kemijärvi case. The variety of the considered cases and in their resource control reveals several different elements of place meaning in Kemijärvi. These aspects will be discussed in the following presentation of cases.

The statistical figures and general image of Kemijärvi – as often displayed to the public – easily give an impression of a place that is withering away. The main factors behind this impression are the heavy losses of population and jobs since the early 1990s. This trend has been systematic and is still continuing. However, Kemijärvi has already been surprisingly vibrant for a long time – it has produced quite a number of new openings in development, and has experienced rich place reinvention relating to these new themes of production. The following list includes ten major openings of development offering significant elements of place transformation and reinvention in Kemijärvi from the 1950s:

- the period of higher education: the teacher training college, from 1950 to 1970
- the catchment of water energy: Seitakorva hydro power station was finished in 1963
- the forest industry project: the new pulp factory started in 1966
- the opening up of tourism: Suomu, the first real winter tourist centre in Lapland, from 1965
- the clothes industry boom: the fashion holiday clothes factory *Torstai* started in 1975
- the unlikely medicine factory: a new producer *Salmed* started medicine production in 1980
- the modern technology opening: the production of electronics components started in 1986
- the fur exercise: a promising new field of training and production in the early 1980s
- the arts opening: with a strong international role of wood sculpting, from 1985
- the distance work technology opening: post-modern production of services, from 2004.

Clearly, Kemijärvi has been active and creative in presenting new, strong and often innovative themes to support its viability and development. In most cases they have proceeded to a productive and successful fulfilment for a period long enough for place reinvention and transformations. However, the life cycle of these projects has often been shorter than in comparable cases elsewhere: it has varied from fifteen years upwards – with one very short

exception. The essential question here is whether there is something special about Kemijärvi that influences the life cycle and vitality of new projects. Can the answer be found in the control of resources associated with these projects? Condensed reviews of the cases throw light on these questions.

The Seminar – the oven of human resources

The decision concerning a new Seminar (teacher training college) in Kemijärvi was made by the Finnish Parliament in December 1949. Six months later, the State Council decreed that the new Seminar should start on a temporary basis as early as August 1950. Through these decisions Kemijärvi became one of the very few places in northern Finland to offer higher education. All the essential decisions in this process were made by the state bodies, including those concerning the provision of resources, and so it remained all through the history of Kemijärvi Seminar until 1970. The only major exception was the site of the Seminar: a land area of 4.3 hectares was donated to the state-owned Seminar by the town of Kemijärvi.

The Seminar was a very essential factor in Kemijärvi from the standpoint of place reinvention. It contributed a lot to the modernization of various societal processes in Kemijärvi. First of all, it brought investments in new real capital – the Seminar buildings – and also a new kind of labour to Kemijärvi – and produced more of it there. The new elements of the labour contributed a lot to place reinvention: many Seminar people were locally active in various ways, and this had an effect on the spirit of Kemijärvi. They also initiated new processes of development, in both cultural and economic terms. The Suomu winter holiday resort, for example, was established by a local trainee teacher at the Seminar.

The closure of the Seminar in 1970 was also decided by the relevant state bodies in Helsinki. The resources for teacher training were withdrawn from Kemijärvi and the site, with its buildings was donated back to the town. The closure meant the end of an important factor in the image of Kemijärvi. At the same time as certain state resource flows for salaries and maintenance were drying up, Kemijärvi lost its students in higher education – a valuable resource in place reinvention (Kuosmanen 1978; Lämsä 1971). Somewhat ironically, an equivalent teacher training college was established in Rovaniemi just five years later. It soon served as the nucleus of the University of Lapland, which was established in 1979. The state first gave resources of higher education to Kemijärvi, and then – twenty years later – took them away. In doing so, the state curtailed an important engine of place reinvention in Kemijärvi – and recreated it in Rovaniemi.

Seitakorva – the water construction

Lapland has fairly ample sources of water energy. Their value was at its highest during the 1950s and 1960s, when nuclear energy had not yet been produced in Finland. The industrialization of the country continued and more energy was needed. Hydropower stations were built in the rapids of *Kemijoki* – the biggest river in Finland. One of the five biggest production units along the river was set up at *Seitakorva* in Kemijärvi in 1963, and since then it has been amongst six biggest hydropower stations in Finland. Its construction started in 1959 (Kemijoki Oy 1994).

All the essential decisions and resources for the Seitakorva project were provided by the then largely state-owned hydropower company *Kemijoki Oy*, which also operates the water power production along this river. Among the other owners of the company were riverside municipalities, including Kemijärvi. However, their role in decision-making was usually marginal. The board of the company is – at least in principal – supervised by a peculiar body called ‘the council of administration’ (*hallintoneuvosto* in Finnish) and manned by merited politicians, a Finnish speciality common in state-owned companies. This supervising body has, at least in theory, some influence on the company’s control of resources, but there are few indications of this in practice.

The Seitakorva project had, and continues to have, many significant effects on place reinvention and transformation in Kemijärvi. Some of them were temporary, some have been permanent. Large-scale employment at the construction project lasted for over four years and

this labour refreshed the local economy and other life in Kemijärvi. The power station itself offers only a little local employment because it is controlled from the company headquarters in Rovaniemi. The permanent effects of this energy production may be seen in the scenery at Kemijärvi: the water level of the river route is higher than it used to be for most of the year, but its regulation also means that quite big alterations are to be seen. These changes represent a concrete place transformation caused by hydropower production. While most major changes concerning the local physical environment are at the hands of the local administration, the changes along the waterfront are controlled externally by the hydropower company.

The Pulp Mill – the welcomed traditional factory

There are large forest areas in and around Kemijärvi. The initiative to build a pulp mill in the region was repeatedly raised by two Sámi members of the Finnish Parliament, one of them from Kemijärvi (Hänninen 2003, 141). The Finnish Ministry of Trade and Industry initiated the survey and evaluations during the mid-1950s. At the same time, there emerged a strong popular movement in favour of establishing forest industry in Kemijärvi. The motivation of this movement was largely based on private ownership of the forests: it was in the interests of the locals to increase the market for their raw material. Another motivation was that the new factory would also mean a lot of new jobs for locals. The supply of raw material and labour was in local hands, the capital resource was mainly externally controlled. This third factor was the key to opening a new factory.

The task of further evaluation was delegated to a new provincial body that was established for advancing industrial production in Lapland; this body was chaired by the governor of Lapland, the highest representative of the state in the province. Joint pressure from various actors finally resulted (in 1959) in a state decision that most of the money required to establish a new factory in Kemijärvi would come from the state budget. However, there was a condition that 40% of the cost had to come from provincial sources. Various partners got involved and a new independent company for forest industry was established and named *Kemijärvi Oy (Ltd.)* in 1961. Forest owners had shares of about 20%, and stock owners included municipalities, individuals, and local and regional companies. The ownership of the new independent company was thus divided between the state and the region.

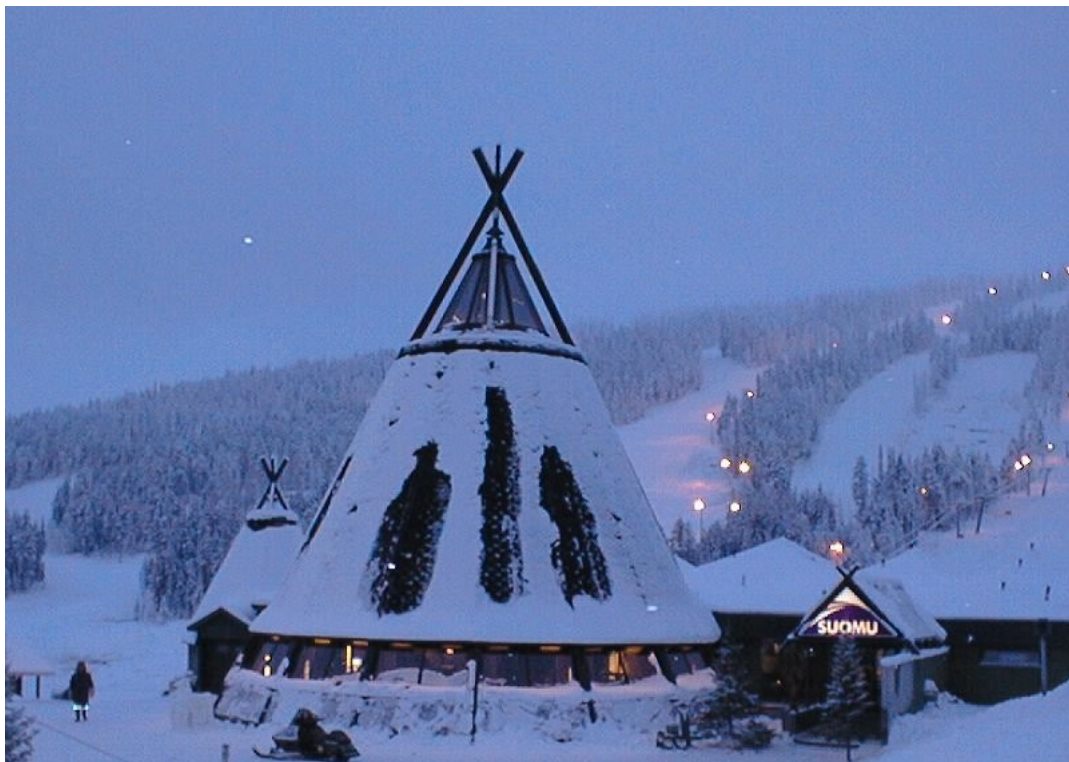
The factory started production in 1965. In fact, the independence of the company was not very significant since the production was standardized bulk pulp, the price of which was determined by the international market. In addition, the price of the raw material closely followed the market price. In only three years (by 1968), the situation had developed so that the Kemijärvi company merged with the bigger *Veitsiluoto* company based in Kemi. Ironically, this company had earlier refused to invest in new production in Kemijärvi. The Kemijärvi unit is now a part of *Stora Enso Oyj*, one of the biggest forest industry companies in the world. The control of its resources – and especially of investments – thus moved soon after its establishment to a bigger arm of the Finnish forest industry. But the ‘self-initiated’ birth and the short period of independent production had contributed to the identity of the people in Kemijärvi: it was their initiative and they contributed a great deal to its inauguration. (Hänninen 2003, 140–141; Kuosmanen 1978, 296–297; www.storaenso.com)

The new factory meant a big place transformation in Kemijärvi – both in the physical and visual scenery and in numbers of jobs and employees. The factory employed 453 people by the end of its first year (Kuosmanen 1978, 297). As a result of the new factory there was a boom in house building and the local economy grew strongly, with the supply of services increasing and diversifying. There were many kinds of influence on place reinvention in Kemijärvi – trade union activities and new elements of modern identities developed as a traditionally rural settlement became an industrial town. The factory now employs 250 people (www.storaenso.com). Being a medium-sized producer of standard forest products, the fate of the factory has already been threatened many times. This threat – like other threats experienced in Kemijärvi – has produced popular movements in favour of Kemijärvi, and a special type of identity: a readiness to fight for the survival of important activities.

Suomu – the first modern skiing resort

Martti Kinnunen and his wife *Annikki* were teachers at the Tonkopuro village school near Suomu fjell mountain in Kemijärvi. Both of them had studied at the Kemijärvi Seminar. He was enthusiastic about slalom and started to look for a suitable place to establish this activity in Kemijärvi. He found an ideal place in Suomu, a fjell mountain 40 km south-east of the town centre. Under his leadership a company, *Suomutunturi Oy*, was established in 1965, all the partners being local people. One strong supporter was *Jaakko Kellokumpu*, who later acted as the core individual at *Torstai* (see next case). Activity at Suomu started with two slalom slopes, one elevator and a little coffee cottage. A hotel, a stylish restaurant, another lift and a third slope were built with the help of a state loan in 1966 (Holma 2006; Korhonen 2006).

Suomu became soon popular and developed quickly. Within ten years, by 1975, it had become the number one destination in modern winter holiday activity in Finland. With 20,000 overnight stays it accommodated more guests than *Ruka*, its nearest competitor, which had started earlier. Suomu flourished until the mid-1980s, but was hit by economic problems at the end of that decade. It went bankrupt in 1990 at the demand of its two main creditors; one of these was a regional bank, the other one the state bank KERA, which had been established to support development in peripheral areas. One of the main reasons for the bankruptcy was the forthcoming economic recession, which meant reduced spending on leisure activities. Another reason, apparently, was the decline of the business itself, because Suomu had not been able to keep up with the rapid development of competing winter holiday centres in northern Finland. It had maintained its model and scale of activities, while other places grew from year to year. The accommodation capacity of Suomu was no longer one of the five largest by the beginning of the 1990s.



Picture 9: Suomu was well known all over Finland and was very popular among winter tourists during the 1970s. Visual attention was paid to the design of both the slopes and the premises.

The company was taken over – through bankruptcy – by the regional bank *Pohjolan Osuuspankki*, which had provided most of the necessary loans. However, the new management never got the business in Suomu back into profit again. Since then, there have been several attempts and business arrangements to get Suomu going well again, but they all have failed.

None of these attempts has been in the hands of local people alone. The new owners have come from Spain and Helsinki, with one temporary local partner. The owners advertised in 2006 that they would be willing to sell the place (Holma 2006; Korhonen 2006).

There are current plans to build a 'flight jump' for ski jumpers at Suomu. The municipality has taken an active leading role in the planning process. The preliminary planning started in 2002 and it continues in the form of project planning. The strong and traditional Finnish Skiing Union (Suomen Hiihtoliitto) supports this project, which should result in the first and only ski jump of its kind in Finland. This speciality is supposed to give new vitality to Suomu as a whole. The financing of this project is being worked on and is likely to be ready by the end of 2006. Agreements concerning construction should be made in 2007. Whether this project does come true or not, it has in any case sustained the myth of Suomu as a very special place. In doing so, it has contributed to the place reinvention of Kemijärvi as well.

The significance of Suomu is in many ways remarkable in the place reinvention of Kemijärvi. Modern winter sports and related activities started a new era in Finnish tourism, and for more than a decade Suomu was the highlight of this modernization of leisure. Secondly, Suomu offered good possibilities for young local sportsmen to practise modern winter sports. The results were surprising: the young sportsmen from Kemijärvi became world champions and won Olympic medals in modern winter sports on several occasions from the 1980s onwards. Janne Lahtela from Kemijärvi was and still is widely known as *Mr. Freestyle*. Thirdly, the stylish clothes of the Torstai company (cf. next case) were suitable and appropriate for this type of use, as required in Suomu. Thus, Kemijärvi was able to supply several valuable elements of modern winter life in Suomu: a popular resort for modern winter activities, world champions in modern winter sports, and a famous brand 'a' in stylish sports and leisure clothing – a strong cluster of modernism. Sports in general, and winter sports in particular, being very popular in Finland, Suomu has contributed a lot to Finnish consciousness and to the image of Kemijärvi at the same time. As a place, Suomu is a beautiful combination of nature and built structures (cf. Chapter 8), which has been a great advantage in TV picture terms.

As for control over resources in Suomu, this was in the hands of the locals – and especially of Mr. Martti Kinnunen – from the beginning until towards the end of its very successful first life cycle, from 1965 to the mid-1980s. A state loan was utilized but this did not impose conditions such as control of the project. The most important resource was, of course, the creative input of human resources – as is always the case when something completely new is initiated. All the creativity in the original planning of this project was local, mainly presented by Mr. Kinnunen. In addition, all the raw materials (mainly nature itself) were typically local. It seems that the problems started when the scale of the activity should have been increased and it was no longer possible to exercise control over the necessary resources – in practice, investments – locally. A change in the control of business operations did not help to raise its life cycle.

Torstai – outdoor fashion leisure clothes

Apart from Suomu, there were not many nationally-recognized success stories in Lapland during the 1970s. The population decreased as people moved elsewhere to work in factories, hospitals and offices. One surprising exception was offered in Kemijärvi, where *Torstai Oy* was founded in 1974 to produce trendy clothing for outdoor leisure. This was clearly a family company where the wife, *Ritva Kellokumpu*, already a recognized clothing designer, created the products and the husband, Jaakko Kellokumpu, managed the business. They succeeded in building a well-known and prestigious trade mark that had the letter 'a' as its brand sign. (The company name Torstai means Thursday.)

The trendy Torstai production fitted in well with the Suomu phenomenon – modern outdoor leisure and stylish clothes designs that were associated later in the 1980s with world-famous winter sports idols. These high-profile elements contributed to a more modern image and place reinvention of Kemijärvi, which had earlier been known as a very traditional place.

A modern factory building was built for the Torstai company in 1981 to 1982. Its stylish architecture and location by a lake near the town centre contributed to place transformation and reinvention in Kemijärvi. The factory soon became a popular destination for journalists, clothing experts and others. It offered more jobs and was for many years a most significant growth factor in the local economy (Kemijärven kaupungin kunnalliskertomukset 1981...1985). The company had an ambitious aim and vision. According to its managing director, it wanted 'to become an international trade mark' (Hakala 1988). It also wanted to increase its production rapidly: its plan was to double the number of employees to 300 between 1987 and 1992. Delicate co-operation with the public sector was an essential part of the company strategy: New employees were initially educated using publicly-paid training. In addition, factory investments were financed with the support of public loans and guarantees. Although operating with heavy loans and relatively little capital of their own, it seems that the company management succeeded in controlling all the business operations right up to the end.

Problems at the Torstai company became public in early 1989; it decreased its labour in March. Further reductions in production and labour soon followed. The ownership arrangements for the site and the factory building were changed so as to ease the company's economic situation in 1990 and the municipal estate company became the owner of the factory estate. By doing this the municipality wanted to help the company with its economic problems. However, the company went bankrupt by the end of the same year, 1990. One of the creditors, a regional bank, bought the factory building at the bankruptcy auction – without knowing what to use it for. The prestigious story of Torstai had come to an end. This was a serious year for the municipality of Kemijärvi, since three of the significant cases described here came to the end of their most vital life cycle at this time.

The managing director and main representative of the family company, Jaakko Kellokumpu, was the spirit and spokesman of the Torstai production – his interviews were published in local, regional and national papers and professional journals. He was also active in expressing general views on entrepreneurship and its barriers, and produced fresh thoughts concerning the development policies of Lapland. He and Martti Kinnunen of Suomu were excellent examples of Schumpeterian entrepreneurship in far-away Lapland. This resource was very scarce in Lapland at that time and both these two fine examples had started, lived and worked in Kemijärvi. These two enterprises produced much outside interest in and merit for Kemijärvi, and also contributed internally to the locale and sense of the place (cf. Agnew 1987: 28). In the case of Torstai, local human resources were supplemented and strongly supported by a highly professional in-migrant, the designer wife of the core individual.

Salcomp – the grand visit of electronics production

A significant new type of industrial production began in Kemijärvi in 1975, when a well-known TV producer and an electronics company *Salora* established a subsidiary company *Salcomp* there. The plan was to employ some 200 people. The municipality sold an appropriate site and willingly aided a rapid start-up in production by selling a suitable site and renovating temporary premises to provide a stop-gap. This was a most promising project for electronics production in Lapland, and its advent to Kemijärvi was a big thing indeed. Salora was then one of the leading Finnish companies in this field and obtaining its expertise in a place that had no tradition or experience in electronics production meant a great deal in employment terms, but it also had considerable potential in terms of modernizing production structures and place reinvention in a wider sense. All the resources for investment and the required expertise in production were to come through the main company from outside. Salcomp was founded to produce tuning components for televisions. Power source components for electronic devices were made later on, but in the middle of the 1990s it was decided to concentrate on the production of loaders for mobile telephones. They became the core of the Salcomp success story. The demand for these products closely followed the large-scale growth – and also the variation – in the number of mobile telephones in use. Salcomp's market share of the worldwide mobile telephone loader business grew rapidly: it is estimated to have been 25% in

2006. For many years, Salcomp has been the biggest employer in the open sector in Kemijärvi, the size of its labour force reaching almost 600 at its height.

The Salcomp life cycle has gone upwards and downhill. The company grew quite strongly until 1980, then there was a reduction of 44 jobs in 1981, but increases again in 1984 and 1985. Salcomp was able to enlarge its production during the big recession during the first half of the 1990s. It had become part of the strong and dynamic Nokia electronics company in 1983. The enlargement and renovations of the factory building was completed by 1997 and this was considered a very important milestone by the municipality (Kemijärven kaupunki 1997). And the number of employees was more than 600 at its height (Lukkari 2002). But worse times were ahead. Salcomp had to reduce its employees by almost 100 as early as 1998, and Nokia Group sold the company to a Swedish investment fund in 1999. Production units were founded in Brazil and China, and preparations were initiated for rearrangements in production. However, production grew strongly and more people were employed in Kemijärvi as late as 2000 (Lukkari 2002). Just the following year, however, demand for the product was clearly decreasing. Salcomp made 130 employees redundant and issued a warning to another 50 employees.

At the end of 2003, the company decided to move its entire goods production from Kemijärvi to China during the spring of 2004. The administration and part of the product development remained in Kemijärvi. The number of these employees totalled twenty in October 2006. There is a plan to move the company administration to Salo in Southern Finland, the home of the former parent company, where another small unit of Salcomp (45 employees as at October 2006) had been carrying out mainly product development. Fifteen Salcomp employees would continue in Kemijärvi after the end of 2006 (Halvari 2006). The Salcomp production in China has enlarged considerably and the company is building a new, big factory in India (Hängasjärvi 2006). The end of the vital business cycle of Salcomp in Kemijärvi was a typical example of the China phenomenon. According to the managing director, production in Kemijärvi was competitive until 2001 (Lukkari 2002). But the saturation of the European markets meant that the market share and further growth had to be guaranteed through business on other continents. A massive production of loaders in Kemijärvi and their distribution from there to other continents could not compete with production in China or South America.

One relevant question is whether a different pattern of ownership or control of resources might have saved production in Kemijärvi. The answer is most likely negative. The product being relatively simple and its technology widely known, it is difficult to believe that Kemijärvi products could have competed with a Chinese producer in supplying the Chinese market. Salcomp therefore decided to produce in China itself. Whether it would have been possible to continue producing for the European market is a more difficult question. It is known that much industrial production has been moved from Finland to Estonia and other countries with cheaper labour costs by companies fully controlled by Finns. Several Finnish family companies have been sold abroad and to various investment funds. There does not seem to be any straightforward pattern of how a control over resources could stop the China phenomenon in global business.

The overall role of Salcomp in the place reinvention of Kemijärvi is still difficult to assess, because the end of the company's vital life cycle has been so recent. However, it is clear that Salcomp will remain a very important element in place reinvention of Kemijärvi. It arrived rather unexpectedly, it introduced a modern culture of industrial production, it employed a surprising number of people in a new profession – and then it practically disappeared very quickly. Salcomp grew on the wave of a rapidly-growing demand for a new product and developed an excellent expertise in its production. However, rapid changes in demand were typical of this product, and Salcomp had to adjust quickly to the volume of production and use of labour. At the end of its grand life cycle in Kemijärvi it showed what being part of a globalized economy may mean in a far-away town in Lapland.

It is difficult to think that Kemijärvi – or any other average place of its size – would experience anything more remarkable in terms of company success, followed by a rapid retreat, than what Salcomp has offered. A new and surprising true story has been added to the colourful recent economic history of Kemijärvi. This withdrawal was a clear loss to its social life and sense of place; Kemijärvi became impoverished not only in terms of wage income but also in its image as the leading producer of a modern everyman's instrument that could even be viewed as a sort of symbol of our time. The price of one resource – labour – became the deciding factor. This was a more important factor in the decision to move than the control over capital or other resources. It may be concluded that local control over resources in a way loses its significance when a specific product competes on the open world markets and the technology used is known to competitors as well.

The Medicine Factory – an unlikely episode

The first note about a plan to start medicine production in Kemijärvi was made in the annual municipal report of 1977 (Kemijärven kaupungin kunnalliskertomus 1977). It was regarded as a most remarkable new project. Most of the financial arrangements were worked out over the following year and the town sold a site for the new factory. The construction of the factory started in 1979 and its operation under the name of *Oy Salmed Ltd.* began with the training of thirty would-be employees in 1980. Of these, 26 continued as full-time employees from 1981.

The new medicine company was plagued by economic difficulties right from the start: it had difficulty in paying its routine bills, such as heating, etc. It was stated in the national economic journal *Talouselämä* that the project had been very unsafe and doubtful in a business sense from the beginning (Luotonen 1982). It also acquired a political stamp when many noted politicians from a certain major party were found on the list of its spokesmen and other supporters. Despite this kind of support, *Oy Salmed Ltd.* went into liquidation as early as 1983. However, the production of medicine resumed from the summer of the following year onwards, when the big Finnish medicine company *Orion* took over the premises and employees. Its Kemijärvi unit remained very small, only 25-30 employees, and its production could be described as routine functioning. As a result of structural rearrangements in Orion, the Kemijärvi unit was closed in 2002 when the production and packing of penicillin ended in Finland. Control over the resources of this production, as well as the decision concerning its closure, happened far away from Kemijärvi.

Unlike the cases of Suomu and Torstai, there was no local initiative or creative input in the medicine project. The local interest consisted of new jobs and, possibly, a new modern element in the image of the place. The publicity for this project was mainly negative, especially at a national level. The number of people involved remained low throughout its life cycle. Its influence on place reinvention in Kemijärvi therefore remained much smaller than in the other six cases reviewed above. However, from the standpoint of resource control this is an interesting case: all the important decisions were always made outside the location. Why was the factory established in Kemijärvi? Apparently Kemijärvi was somehow a source of attraction for the project agent. Obviously he secured political support in Helsinki for gaining public support for this project if it was located in Kemijärvi – and utilized it skillfully. This presents an interesting view of the control of public finance capital: an outsider entrepreneur may benefit from it through a skilfully chosen location for his/her project.

The fur exercise – from a promising start to a sad failure

A completely new theme of production was introduced in Kemijärvi in the autumn of 1982 when a course of training in fur work started. The training program of two and a half years' duration was planned by a German expert in the field; the main teacher also came from Germany. As furs have been a valuable Lapland resource for centuries, their processing and the design of clothes made from fur seemed to fit very well with this long tradition. As a fortunate and valuable addition to the theme, the talented fur designer and artist Tarja Niskanen decided to establish her new fur studio in Kemijärvi in 1985, which at that time had the only fur processing training available in Finland. The main components for a cluster of unique training

– in good skills for modern processing, experienced design relating to the products and the traditional Sámi raw materials – were all available in Kemijärvi. Nor did transportation to the markets seem to be a big problem, in relation to the value of the products. One of the highlights of the fur theme was that the spouse of the President of the Republic opened the new fur training premises in 1986. The Tarja Niskanen company was described as a modern and up-to-date workplace in a national theme journal of working life in 1987 (Nevala 1987).

The promising beginning and great expectations did not last long. There was a big change in attitudes towards the use of fur that, surprisingly, resulted in a clear drop in demand in 1989. The Tarja Niskanen company went into liquidation as early as 1990. Although very short-lived, the fur exercise contributed to place reinvention in Kemijärvi: it offered an element of glamorous production and international expertise that very few places could boast of. It utilized the old fur myth of Lapland in a modern way. It also provided an example of very specialized modern training that was unique in Finland. People from the south of the country came to acquire fur skills and this was precisely the opposite of the mainstream. For a while, people in Kemijärvi were in control of all the necessary resources in modern fur production. Had it lasted longer, Kemijärvi would be different to what it is now.

This fur case is also specific in the context of having control of resources. It seems that general opinion – largely originated and propagated by the international mass media – was the most important factor in the downturn in demand for furs (Korva 2006). It became clear that the fur business was very sensitive in a way that cannot be influenced from the production side. Thus, control over resources of production does not necessarily guarantee success, at least not in fields where demand is based more on fashion and preference than on necessity and clear use value.

From a themed event to artists' heaven?

There have been wood-sculpting summer events in Kemijärvi since 1985. These have been arranged by the Kemijärvi Wood Sculpting Association, a voluntary group in the third sector. Wood-sculpting symposiums were arranged annually until 1994, and every two years since then. The latest biennale, lasting for one week in the summer, took place in 2005. It attracted participants from seventeen countries and five continents. These wood-sculpting weeks have become an essential element of place reinvention in Kemijärvi. Wood-sculpting activities take place largely outdoors in the market place in town. People can see artists at work and sculptures being created. According to a deal between the organizers and the town, some of the sculptures created have been and continue to be located in the central parks of Kemijärvi. Wood sculptures have thus become an element of the visual image of Kemijärvi (cf. Chapter 8). Being the only regular international art event of this kind in Finland, the Kemijärvi wood-sculpting symposiums have made the name of the town familiar amongst wood artists all over the world.

The Kemijärvi Wood Sculpting Association, together with the town, established a new supporting institution during the summer of 2003, called the Kemijärvi Sculpture and Culture Foundation. After only two years it was able to develop an old redundant dairy into a new form of a modern Artists' Residence, which opened in the summer of 2005. This has four very nicely furnished flats, four work studios, an exhibition room and all the usual social and technical facilities. Artists from various fields around the world can approach the foundation and apply for a period of residence. There have been people from European countries and Africa already resident for work periods. A theatre specialist and a textile artist from the Czech Republic and a poet and a painter from Hungary were guests at Artists' Residence in November 2006.

The art theme is already clearly a significant factor in the place reinvention of Kemijärvi. As for the location of the town, the wood-sculpting events and Artists' Residence have helped to put Kemijärvi on the map around the world, and in people's minds. For enthusiasts of wood sculpting, the geographical location of Kemijärvi has become well known all over the world. These art factors have contributed to the social life in Kemijärvi generally, too, and a special

new ambience has been created in the sense of the place, including creativity and internationalism. Wood sculpting and Artists' Residence are surely things to note and remember about Kemijärvi.



Picture 10: The Wood Sculpting Symposium also contributes to local life in Kemijärvi. The Artists' Residence, with its studios, is located by the Kuumaniemi market-place and the artists work there too.

Post-modern techno-openings with distant control

Big employment losses because of the the withdrawal of Salcomp production have led to a new situation in Kemijärvi. There has been a real threat that Kemijärvi would get the strong stamp of a place without a future in the eyes of the people in the place, and those elsewhere. It seems, rather surprisingly, that Kemijärvi has been able to produce new elements for its future and place reinvention again. There are promising applications of new technology in three different fields: call centre activity, distance service technology production and unmanned air vehicles.

The idea of *call centres* is based on the fact that the cost of long-distance telephone calls has decreased a lot. This has made it economically possible and motivating to move certain office and company services to call centres located far away from the main service units. Kemijärvi has been able to seize this opportunity. Two call centres were established in 2004. The first and biggest development in call centre service was made by the big Elisa telephone operator, which now employs more than thirty people in Kemijärvi. One of its main clients is the Ministry of Labour, whose 'human' telephone services are produced in Kemijärvi. The Elisa call centre is based in premises originally built for Salcomp and now called the Heralampi Business Service Centre. The other call centre produces switchboard facilities for notaries in Finland. For example, a person calling the notary service for information or other help in Helsinki or Tampere is guided and connected to the right person by one of the eleven employees of the notary call centre in Kemijärvi. The right person is often in the home area of the caller, but their connection is produced as distance work.

There are two other distance work centres utilizing modern telecommunications. Oy Silta is a company specializing in wage payments for its clients all over the country. Finland Post

Corporation is a client of theirs, for example. The headquarters of the company are in Helsinki and it employs around a dozen people in its service production at the Heralampi Business Service Centre. There is also a production unit for Oy Storage IT, a company producing a support service for computer systems belonging to small enterprises. Its headquarters are in Tampere.

One very exciting example of new technology application is the Unmanned Air Vehicles project. The idea is to develop Kemijärvi to become the leading testing-place for unmanned flights. There are certain advantages for this activity in being able to offer: an 'empty' (i.e. no flights) airspace the size of Belgium, sufficient infrastructure for various testing activities and good accessibility by aeroplane (to Rovaniemi, less than 80 km away from the Kemijärvi airfield), train, car and truck. The project of the Arctic test UAV Flight Centre started in the spring of 2006, and already they had their first customer from France: a test group came for three weeks and succeeded in launching an unmanned test flight for eleven hours. They plan to come again. This new activity is operated by *Oy Robonic Ltd.*, a Tampere-based company that specializes in unmanned air vehicle launching systems. (Luoma-aho 2006.)

These examples of the post-modern application of technology have not yet had much specific influence on place reinvention in Kemijärvi. However, they indicate the openness and readiness on the part of the place to commence quite new types of activities with partners from elsewhere. These examples also demonstrate a creative flexibility in the use and control of resources. Kemijärvi has idle labour after the loss of hundreds of jobs in recent years. Call centres are interested in permanent, loyal staff, who are readily available in Kemijärvi – unlike places of strong growth. This kind of loyalty appears to be an interesting aspect of the labour resource – and of place reinvention, too. Empty air space as a valuable resource is a good example of creativity utilizing a knowledge of development needs in technology. If the testing of unmanned air vehicles becomes a regular activity in Kemijärvi, this new activity is sure to contribute to place reinvention there. However, control over resources in this activity is very likely to remain outside Kemijärvi – as in the case of the distance work centres. The future level of human resource utilization in Kemijärvi is not yet known in these cases.

Conclusions on place reinvention and the control of resources in Kemijärvi

The local industrial history and culture of Kemijärvi is rather exceptional – paradoxical, in fact. The place has had a strong rural tradition, but this was spiced by the addition of an academic institution (the teacher training college) at a time when very few places in Finland had anything like that. Kemijärvi acquired a pulp factory at the time when this was considered to be a 'lottery win' for any forest-surrounded place in Finland. It was also one of the first places to develop a very successful winter holiday centre for tourists in Finland. Fashion clothes were created and produced in two trendy styles, with separate factories for the domestic and international markets. Kemijärvi has been active in several fields of high-technology and there has been strong evidence of expertise in both sports and the arts. All these specific aspects were discussed in the focus groups and they were considered to be essential components of place reinvention in Kemijärvi, since they have all contributed to prevailing images and the meaning of the place.

Kemijärvi is a town involved in forest industry, but certainly not only that. Kemijärvi has had, and still has, quite strong modern elements in its business structure. It has two dominant sectors: the production of public (mainly municipal) services and the pulp industry. Tourism is the third important sector, but in recent years this has clearly been less important. There have been several remarkable cases of modern production, although almost all of these have already come to the end of their life cycle. At any rate, it is clear that Kemijärvi has rather a peculiar history in terms of its place reinvention.

Belief in self-reliance is a specific feature in the local culture of Kemijärvi, and it has certain historical roots. This aspect was widely reviewed and agreed upon by the focus groups. It is

remarkable that most of the cases reviewed above have been initiated in Kemijärvi, at least to a great extent. This indicates the strong potential of human resources for place reinvention. Local agents of change with local politicians have in many cases been able to influence decisions concerning control over resources at regional and national levels. This has often helped in the acquisition of resources for the necessary investments, and to train competent employees, too. Poor control of capital resources has not been a severe barrier to development in Kemijärvi for most of the time under review.

There are, however, clear cases where outside control has produced significant changes in the work and life of the people of Kemijärvi. Firstly, the closure of the Seminar by the Ministry of Education in 1970 was a big loss for Kemijärvi, and influenced its place reinvention through a decline in cultural life and decreasing potential for local innovation. An inflexibility in a regional bank's credit arrangements during the years of declining business was a major reason for the bankruptcy of the Suomu success story in 1990. Although part of the international sports success story still lives on through the occasional victories of those trained in Suomu, and the hey-day of this destination lives on in the memories of people there and elsewhere, the psychological basis of its continuing place reinvention – the spirit of Suomu – has diminished. As expressed in the interviews, few people nowadays even know who operates the place and it is not nearly as emotionally close to the locals as during the time of Martti Kinnunen, whom everyone knew. The promising fur business failed, partly due to changes in external attitudes towards the use of furs – these attitudes being influenced by new popular movements and mass media. Some informants stated that this was most unfair to Kemijärvi; the image of modern fur design and processing would have suited Kemijärvi extremely well. The removal of the Salcomp factory is a straightforward example of the China phenomenon: new locations for industrial production, offering cheap labour near the new fast-growing international markets, became possible and relocation was then fully motivated on the basis of simple business expediency. As one informant put it, the forces of globalization are allied with business rationalism in such a way that it is impossible to resist this kind of move, even as a local patriot.

It seems possible to distinguish five main patterns of control over resources in the case of developments and, indirectly, place reinvention in Kemijärvi:

- the monolithic state model: the state of Finland has control over the essential resources (the Seminar)
- the state-partnership model: the state finances investments in the form of a partnership (Seitakorva and the pulp mill in the beginning); the state retains partial control
- the pure open sector model: all the essential resources are controlled by the production enterprise, the ownership structure of which is subject to change (Suomu, Salcomp, StoraEnso, distance work companies); the control is in the hands of 'market forces'
- the mixed model: private local enterprise receives public support in the form of advantageous loans and/or training support; the control remains local as long as the business goes well (Torstai, the fur company)
- the third sector model: local voluntary organizations receive large-scale public support for their projects and the control remains local (wood-sculpting events, Artists' Residence).

The cases reviewed show that the relevance of control over resources is clear in place transformation and reinvention, resulting from various development projects and their deterioration. By creating both strong images, and many stories that remain to live on in the place, the development cases are resources for place reinvention. Of course, the effects on place reinvention are much more diffuse and complex than those on industrial structures and in the concrete environment, where everything is interrelated. All the cases reviewed above have created many narratives that represent the place reinvention of Kemijärvi, long after the life cycle of the projects themselves.

Control is not necessarily the most important factor. Local creativity, entrepreneurial spirit and other peculiarities of place seem to be equally or even more important. All the relevant resources are not even necessarily known, let alone controlled. It is worth noting that many of those interviewed who left Kemijärvi even decades ago stated spontaneously that they still feel that their roots remain there and they like to view this place as their original home. Kemijärvi apparently has a large amount of social capital with no control being applied – or this resource even being fully recognized.

References

- Aho, S. and Ilola, H. (1985) *Lapin pienyrittötoiminnan tukemiskokeilu. 'Lapin lisän' yrittäjät ja yritykset*, Työvoimapolitiittisia tutkimuksia nro 57, Työvoimaministeriö, Suunnitteluosasto, Helsinki.
- Aho, S. and Ilola, H. (2002) *Hyvien osaajien aluepreferenssit ja liikkuvuus. Lapin vetovoima - tutkimusprojektin raportti*, Lapin yliopiston yhteiskuntatieteellisiä julkaisuja B, Tutkimusraportteja ja selvityksiä 39, Rovaniemi.
- Aho, S. and Ilola, H. (2004) *Maaseudun elinvoimaisuus – nykyisyydestä aineksia tulevaisuuteen*. Lapin yliopiston kauppatieteiden ja matkailun tiedekunnan julkaisuja B, Tutkimusraportteja ja selvityksiä 1. Rovaniemi.
- Agnew, J. (1987) *Place and Politics. The geographical mediation of state and society*, Boston: Allen and Unwin.
- Ilola, H. and Aho, S. (1988) *Lapin pienyrittötoimintakokeilujen seurantatutkimus*, Oulun yliopisto, Pohjois-Suomen tutkimuslaitos. Sarja C 88. Oulu.
- Hakala, H. (1988) Tavotteena kansainvälinen merkkituote, in: *Pienteollisuuden Keskusliitto 1988*. Pienteollisuuden Keskusliitto ry:n juhlaulkaisu, Vammalan Kirjapaino, pp. 62–63.
- Hangasjärvi (2006) Interview in *Lapin Kansa* 11.11.2006.
- Holma, P. (2006) Myytävänä muistojen tunturi, in: *Lapin Kansa* 8.4.2006.
- Hänninen, N. (2003) Kemijärven tehdas, in Massa, I. and Snellman, H. (eds.): *Lappi. Maa, kansat, kulttuurit*, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki, pp. 140–141.
- Ilola, H. and Aho, S. (1988) *Lapin pienyrittötoimintakokeilujen seurantatutkimus*, Oulun yliopisto, Pohjois-Suomen tutkimuslaitos, Sarja C 88, Oulu.
- Kemijoki Oy (1994) Seitakorva project brochure.
- Kemijärven kaupungin kunnalliskertomus 1977*, Koillis-Lapin Kirjapaino 1978.
- Kemijärven kaupungin kunnalliskertomukset 1981...1985*. (The annual municipal reports of Kemijärvi 1981...1985.)
- Kemijärven kaupunki. Toiminta- ja tilinpäätöskertomus vuodelta 1997*.
- Kemijärven taskutieto 2006*.
- Kuosmanen, R. (1978) *Kemijärven historia II, Kemijärvi 1870-luvulta 1970-luvun alkuun*, Kemijärven kaupunki, Kemijärven seurakunta. Koillis-Lapin Kirjapaino, Kemijärvi.
- Laukkanen, J. and Pirinen, K. (2002) *Läbelle on pitkä matka?* Helsingin yliopiston Maaseudun tutkimus- ja koulutuskeskus, Mikkeli, Julkaisuja 77.
- Lukkari, J. (2002). Salcomp siirtää tuotantoa Kemijärveltä Kiinaan, in: *Tietoviikko* 8.5.2002 (www.tietoviikko.fi).
- Luotonen, J. (1982) Pitkä käynnistys toi ankan rahapulan, in: *Talouselämä* 10/1982, pp. 32–34.
- Lämsä, E. (1971). Kemijärven seminaari 1950–1970, in: *Kemijärven seminaari 1950–1970*, Koillis-Lapin Kirjapaino, Kemijärvi, pp. 7–24.
- Nevala, T. (1987) Työnä minkin kosketus, in: *Työ, terveys, turvallisuus* 5/1987, pp. 44–46.
- www.storaenso.com

Chapter 8

Concrete messages – material expressions of place reinvention

Karl Benediktsson, University of Iceland, and Seppo Aho, University of Lapland

Introduction

A ‘place’ is a multifaceted phenomenon. As discussed in the previous chapters, places are social-political as well as symbolic-cultural constructs. Not least, they are material: the *genius loci* is shaped in no small way by the material aspect. Therefore, the reinvention of place inevitably involves a reinvention of its material fabric. This has always been so, of course. In the early 20th century, the arrival of industrial modernity carried with it some highly visible material transformations in many Nordic peripheral towns. A new – ‘modern’ – aesthetic, which was part and parcel of a broader trajectory of social and economic change, was put to work in the landscape. Current reinvention of towns in the north is likewise accompanied by material changes – in part by design, in part by default – that express some of the values lying behind the drive towards reinvention. The aesthetic of postmodernity has made some inroads. New landscapes of cultural and material consumption are evident. ‘Nature’ is reinvented as a landscape of pleasure for townspeople and tourists. Certain urban planning ideologies and utopias are being put to work.

This chapter looks at these and other outward expressions of place reinvention, and probes their meaning for local inhabitants and visitors. Of the three dimensions of place delineated in the first chapter, it is concerned above all with a *sense of place*. In addition, we are proposing that the material shaping of place is an essential aspect – if not a dimension in its own right – of the concept of place.

Sculpting the material landscape

Winston Churchill was famous for his wit and genial comments. He once said: ‘We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us’. Visual features of the built environment are generally accepted as being an important component of societies. They have been considered important both for the well-being of people in general and for their inspiration to many sectors of creative work, especially the arts. Nature is the original basis of the landscape, but the built environment tends to be very dominant in the material landscapes of all towns and cities. The physical environment is therefore a significant field of attention in considerations of place reinvention.

With reference to Chapter 1, we recognize John Agnew’s almost classic definition of the three criteria of place as a useful starting-point. However, one more major aspect needs to be emphasized: process as an essential and indispensable component of place. As Allan Pred put it as early as 1984:

Place...always involves an appropriation and transformation of space and nature that is inseparable from the reproduction and transformation of society in time and space. As such, place is not only what is fleetingly observed on the landscape, a locale, or setting for activity and social interaction... It also is what takes place ceaselessly, what contributes to history in a specific context through the creation and utilization of a physical setting (Pred 1984: 279)

Place may thus be partly conceptualized as an instantiation of processes that transform space and nature. Doreen Massey (2005: 9) argues that space is the product of interrelations spanning various scales ‘as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny’. Towns are somewhere in the middle. They have come into being and have been developed in order to serve as venues for various interactions, to which their built environments have been tailored, adding to nature in material landscapes. Towns and cities also reflect the *multiplicity* that, according to Massey, is the second important aspect of space. This criterion is certainly typical of cities and, to a lesser extent, of small urban communities. Massey’s third point about space fits our considerations of place re-invention very well: ‘space is always under construction’ (Massey, 2005: 9). In this article we try to figure out the material expressions of interactions reflected as multiplicity and constructions in the environment of the two chosen places, Egilsstaðir in Iceland and Kemijärvi in Finland.

The term ‘material expressions’ can in fact be seen to include several different phenomena. The most obvious meaning of the term is linked to ‘the concrete’: to buildings and other material structures. In our usage it also refers to the processes and practices of urban physical planning, whereby street patterns are fashioned and basic locational decisions are made. These, together with local natural forms and characteristics, create in each town a certain morphology: a townscape. Once the basic features of the townscape have been worked out, its material imprints are extremely influential and durable, yet amenable to gradual change and the reworking of meanings. The morphology thus becomes simultaneously an input into and an output of reinvention processes. As Hubbard (1996: 1442) says, speaking of ‘entrepreneurial landscapes’ in cities, ‘these new urban landscapes are not simply an expression of the broader economic and social processes effecting Western cities, but ... centrally implicated in such processes’.

Material expressions of place reinvention are thus concrete and visual reflections of various processes that have occurred, and are occurring, in particular geographical locations. They may be the result of an intentional reshaping of a limited space – like a square – or of the city picture as a whole. The skyline of Chicago is an excellent example of the latter. But economic decline also has its (usually unintentional) material expressions in space. The two towns providing the examples in this chapter are very different in their development – Egilsstaðir is on a very dynamic growth path, whereas Kemijärvi is fighting against decline and loss. But both of them are good examples of place reinvention as well. This makes the town picture more varied – and maybe more exciting – in Kemijärvi, as there are material expressions of both decline and genuine place reinvention. The big challenge of intentional reinvention also involves pasting over the cracks of decline there.

Changes to the material landscape are often deliberate, and explicitly intended as part and parcel of place reinvention, e.g. with the formulation of a new plan. Moreover, such changes are often indirectly charged with ideological premises. In the case of Birmingham, England, Hubbard (1996, 1453) speaks of ‘the cultivation of a new urban aesthetic [as] an important ideological instrument used by the city council to convince people of the benevolence of its entrepreneurial policies’. In the context of a small rural town in New Zealand, Panelli et al. (2003) describe the explicit reinvention of its townscape from that of service functions to a new consumer role in the cultural economy of tourism. Similar tendencies, together with others, are to be found in the two sample cases in this chapter.

However, not all such changes are intentional or deliberate. Towns are never static. New buildings are constructed, old ones are torn down or renovated. In addition, decline inevitably puts its stamp on the place. Any such development, however small, changes the town fabric. New migrants bring new aesthetic values, which may or may not find their way into the existing townscape. Gradually such sedimented changes may result in a visual transformation, which may be seen as an ‘indifferent’ aspect of place reinvention; not planned, but more like an unavoidable side-effect. The impact of local residents on the sense of place can range from positive to negative.

Expressions of place reinvention are also found in more ephemeral materialities: in shop-front signage and outdoor advertisements, for example, which play a substantial role in a town's overall character. New factories, studios and buildings for administration and culture are material expressions of change – likewise their closures. Last but not least, place reinvention often involves a revaluation of and physical changes to nature itself, beyond the immediate urban core. Tourism development strategies, for instance, often have particular material expressions in nature – pathways and board-walks in the forest, or ski pistes in the mountains. Modern tourist centres represent remarkable material expressions of place, both in their own form and in the functions they foster.

While some developments may be seen as positive from one angle, e.g. by virtue of job creation, they may have 'visual costs' that are almost universally perceived in a negative light. On occasion, place reinvention may have consequences that are generally considered by local people to impact negatively on the material and visual quality of the place in question. The interests of corporate actors sometimes run counter to what local inhabitants value in their immediate environment. Official plans and entrepreneurial development proposals are contested. These can and often do bring to the surface – literally – power dimensions that are otherwise hidden (cf. Crump, 1999). Mitchell (1998) claims that the commoditization of local cultural particularities in the name of tourism can often lead to a local backlash. Moreover, cultural-economy development strategies based on large investments in buildings and in the visual transformation of the townscape are often quite risky. It has been claimed that since many large projects take the form of public-private partnerships, the cost of failure is more often than not borne by local residents (Crump, 1999; Panelli et al. 2003).

The material expressions of place reinvention are thus quite diverse and this diversity needs to be kept in mind. Universal celebration of public and/or private capital refashioning of material townscapes is clearly unwarranted, but neither is it sensible to portray this important aspect of place reinvention in unduly pessimistic terms, through a narrative of nostalgia and 'paradise lost'. As Lowenthal (quoted in Mitchell, 1998: 274) has observed, nostalgia is 'memory with the pain taken out'. Some changes to the sense of place may, indeed, be very welcome.

Two empirical cases of place are considered in the light of these background thoughts. As mentioned above, Egilsstaðir is on a path of strong growth and positive development. Kemijärvi, on the other hand, has been experiencing a decline for years, but the spirits of its inhabitants have been lifted by the many attempts to fight this negative trend. It therefore represents a peculiar example of both decline and renewal.

Egilsstaðir

The town of Egilsstaðir belongs to a small group of Icelandic towns where one's nostrils are unable to detect a whiff of the sea. Instead, the scent of *Betula pubescens* (mountain birch) and *Populus trichocarpa* (a North American species of aspen) characterizes the town in summer. The visitor's impression is that this is a tidy little town, unusually leafy by Icelandic standards. One also senses that this is a rapidly expanding population centre, with a built environment presently in a state of flux. Much of the housing stock is recent. The epicentre of the town, in terms of movement and action, is the area close to the road junction where the 'ring road' meets the road from/to the fjords. The heartbeat is felt most keenly in the food bar/kiosk/petrol station, run by the regional *kaupfélag* (co-operative), KHB, located at this junction (Picture 10). A new café and the local *vínbúð* (liquor store) are to be found across the road, as is a new hotel belonging to the Icelandair Hotels chain. On the other hand, there is no 'proper' pub and young people complain that the town does not offer good venues in which to socialize.



Picture 11: View from the south-west towards the centre of Egilsstaðir, June 2005. The KHB supermarket and petrol station are in the centre of the picture. The new Bónus supermarket is in the far left of the picture; the college and church are on the hill behind. (Source: *Miðbar Egilsstaða*, 2005: 17)

New residential areas have gradually been added to the town as the need has arisen, and at the present time Egilsstaðir may be said to be undergoing something of a ‘building boom’. Most of the housing stock consists of detached houses with a sizeable garden and a single or double garage. Notable among the newest houses are imported Canadian kit houses with horizontal weatherboard-imitation aluminium cladding, quite different in style to most of the others. A whole new part of town is now characterized by this imported style. It has become known colloquially as ‘Little Canada’ (Picture 11).



Picture 12: The newest additions to the housing stock in Egilsstaðir (Photo: Björn Júlíusson)

A few blocks of flats are also to be found. Some of these elongated three-storey concrete buildings were built in the 1970s, in the rather bland style that is to be found in most Icelandic urban centres. But there are also some very recent blocks of flats, built by developers in the past few years in anticipation of the growth spurt associated with the power project. Although not skyscrapers, these blocks are considerably higher than the rest of the housing stock, adding a ‘high modernist’ touch to the town’s constructed fabric, ironically in marked contrast to the more ‘vernacular’ look of the imported Canadian houses.

Although the local co-operative has long dominated the retail sector, this is now no longer the case. The jolly pink pig that is the logo of the *Bónus* discount supermarket chain now graces a new, grey, metal-clad building by the side of the main road. Whereas the operation of the co-operatives was – at least in the past – oriented as much towards the community as towards commercial profit, this is not at all the case with *Bónus*. However, it has been warmly received. The arrival of the Reykjavík-based retail giant was a great leap forward in the region’s development for many, cementing the central place function of Egilsstaðir. Outside the building that houses the supermarket the flags of the *Orkan* petrol station flutter in the wind in a gaudy pink colour that matches the pig.

Planning: inventing an urban feel

During the focus group interviews, town planning frequently came up as a topic for discussion. One participant – an artist – complained about a certain lack of respect for the past in this young town. While houses and buildings were generally well-kept and painted, everything in the built environment that reached a certain age seemed to be torn down! Another source of discontent was the way in which the commercial centre has become somewhat cut off from the ‘cultural’ centre of museums, schools and sports facilities. Many people complained about piecemeal development in the past and a lack of good planning sense, which they alleged had led to the industrial activities occupying the nicest parts of town, whereas some of the residential areas had been sidelined onto lower ground, with less attractive views and vegetation. The present boom has meant that decisions have had to be made rather quickly at times. The residential area currently under construction is located towards the east of town, in a pretty bushland setting in fact, but right beside the main road down to the fjords.

Planning is, however, very much on the municipal agenda. In late 2005, an architectural bureau commissioned by the municipality finalized a plan aimed at improving the somewhat haphazard-looking town centre of Egilsstaðir (Picture 12). The plan has become an important part of the town’s reinvention strategy. The chief objective is to ensure ‘that people will be comfortable in the town centre and will spend more time there than otherwise’ (*Miðbær Egilsstaða*, 2005: 18). The importance of a well-defined and well-formed centre to the image and identity of the town is acknowledged.



Picture 13: The current state of the centre of Egilsstaðir. (Photo: Björn Júlíusson)

The plan involves moving the present main road a little and establishing an elongated public park in the southern part of town, which is currently mostly in use as industrial land, but which is being developed for new housing. At the heart of the plan, however, is the creation of a pedestrian street (Picture 13). This is intended to ‘contribute to an interesting urban landscape and space ... where most people can enjoy themselves’ (*Miðbær Egilsstaða*, 2005: 20). The idea is that most shops and commercial service establishments should line this street, but many are currently scattered throughout the town, some in private garages. At the northern end of the pedestrian street a building for cultural activities is planned, together with the municipal offices, which are currently to be found in a nondescript building originally intended for industrial use.



Picture 14: The new plan for the centre of Egilsstaðir. Note the proposed pedestrian street (the red strip) and tree-lined public park. (Source: the municipal web site)

High hopes have been pinned on this proposal by many officials and private entrepreneurs. In the recently released ‘Growth Agreement for Eastern Iceland’⁵⁸ (*Vaxtarsamningur Austurlands* 2006), this is mentioned as a central plank in a strategy to cement the position of Egilsstaðir as a regional retail and service centre. It is seen as important for both locals and tourists – foreign as well as domestic – even opening up the possibility of developing Egilsstaðir as a destination for winter weekend tourism. Echoing moves towards public-private partnerships in similar projects in other countries, it has been suggested that a private company should be formed by interested parties around this ambitious reinvention project, with the local co-operative KHB and the municipality of Fljótshálsa specifically mentioned.

The new plan for the town centre is thus a good example of a deliberate refashioning of urban materiality; of material change being part and parcel of place reinvention. The people taking part in the focus group discussions in Egilsstaðir seemed to have very diverse views about it. Many participants have welcomed this bold attempt to carve out a measure of distinctiveness in an otherwise rather characterless townscape, which would give the small town a more urban feel. But some have made it known that they dislike the emphasis on establishing a commercial axis to the detriment of ‘culture’, as they see it. The town already has a centre of culture and education, where the schools, sports facilities, swimming pool, and not least the local museum are located. These critics have argued that this centre needs to be strengthened, rather than pandering on the fantasies of private capital (cf. Picture 14).

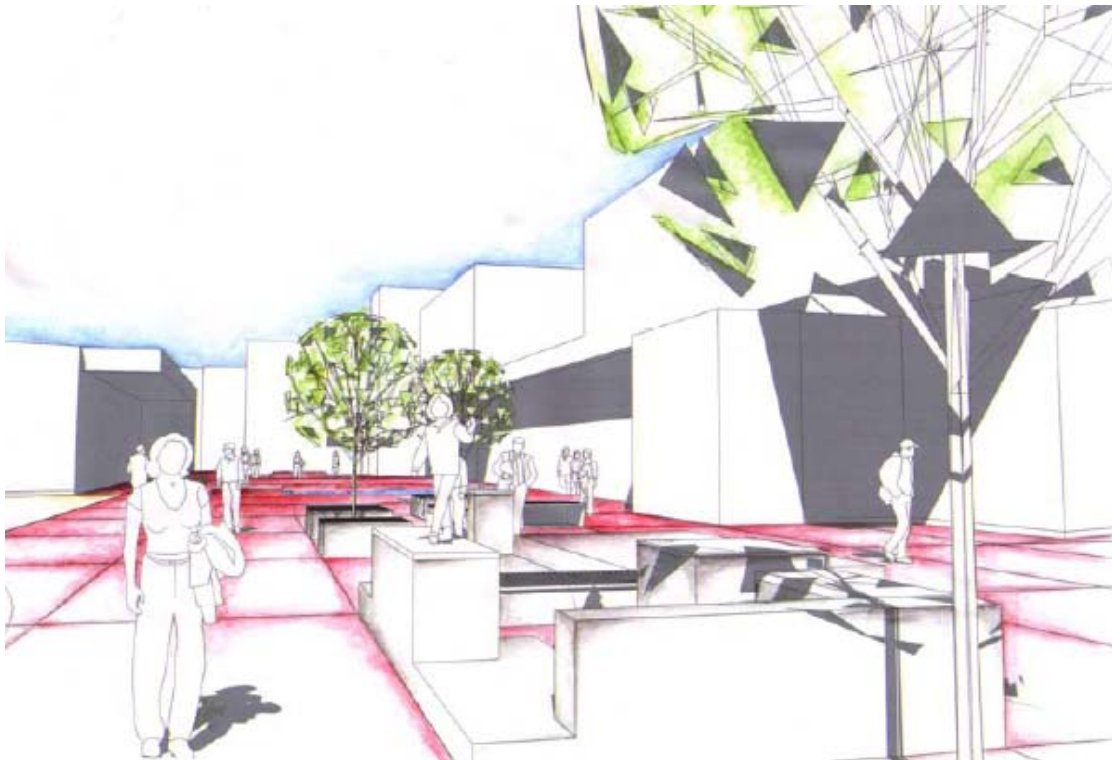
It was also hinted that the local municipal elite was getting too big for its boots – it had become somewhat removed from small-town reality in matters of planning. Those who argued

⁵⁸ An explanation is necessary: ‘Growth Agreement’ is the name given to the latest regional policy formula that has been taken up by the Icelandic government. As implied to some extent by that nomenclature, the current policy emphasizes economic growth and competitiveness above all, and places considerable faith in the entrepreneurial energy of the local people. The Ministry of Industry and Commerce – which handles matters of regional development in Iceland – has initiated the formulation of a Growth Agreement for each region, which is intended to serve as a guide to the allocation of central government monies. This has been prepared in collaboration between local municipalities, development agencies and private businesses, and includes a ‘wish list’ of projects that are seen as viable. In practice, a great variety of projects have been proposed in the Growth Agreements, many of which involve cultural economy related strategies. The idea of clusters has also been extremely influential (cf. *Vaxtarsamningur Austurlands*, 2006).

in this vein had practical reservations about the wisdom of establishing an extensive pedestrian zone in a small town – in a country where the motor vehicle reigns supreme:

Look, pedestrian areas do not work, neither in Reykjavík nor in Akureyri, but people seem to think they can work here. I find that wildly optimistic!

Yet another criticism related to the name of the proposed pedestrian street. It has come to be somewhat boldly called *Strikið* – a reference to Strøget in Copenhagen, for which many Icelanders have a special affection. One participant in the discussion considered this to be a particularly kitsch idea, and rather insensitive to local culture and history. As far as we can gather, however, the name was coined neither by the architects nor by the municipal authorities, but emerged in the community itself, following the initial release of the town centre plans. This seemingly small issue reveals a number of tensions about who controls the place reinvention process and exactly how it is expressed in the local material fabric.



Picture 15: Utopian reinvention: ‘faceless moderns’ wandering in the pedestrian centre of Egilsstaðir in the future (Source: Miðbær Egilsstaða, 2005, 20).

Kemijärvi

Pine-clad hills, water and swamplands characterize the natural landscapes in Kemijärvi, the northernmost town in Finland. The *Kemijoki* river forms part of the biggest waterway system in Finland. The visual shape of the water environment in Kemijärvi town centre is the result of building dams in Kemijoki for hydropower production. The area of the actual town centre is only about one square kilometre, bounded by the river to the north, a dam lake to the east and Lake Pöyliöjärvi to the west (Picture 15). The river broadens into the *Kemijärvi* lake (*järvi* = lake, *joki* = river in Finnish) near the town centre. The two parking lots by Highway 5/E75 are good places from which to admire the impressive landscape of waters, fells and urban structures (cf. Kemijärvi Service Guide, 2005).

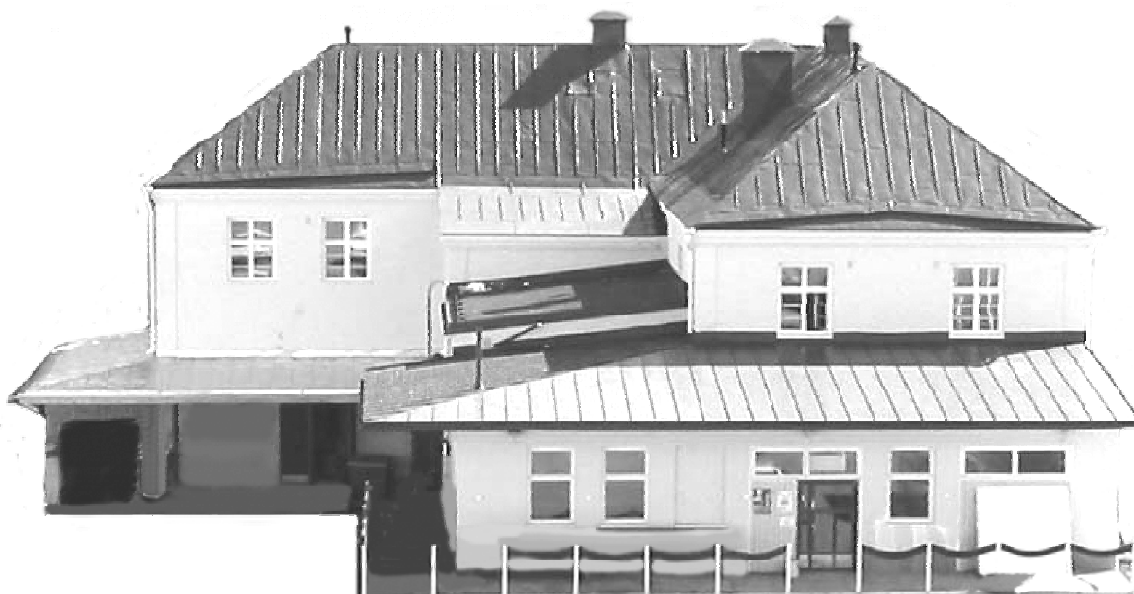


Picture 16: Kemijärvi in the summer, The Cultural Centre down in the middle, the town beach to the right of it, the sites for Lidl and the ABC multiservice station to the left of it, by the main road, smoke from the pulp mill on the other side of the lake to the left. (Photo: Lentokuva Vallas Oy/Hannu Vallas)

Like most of the urban centres and villages in Lapland, Kemijärvi was burnt down during the Second World War. Consequently, only a few old buildings are left. One is the wooden bell-tower built in 1774 beside the church (which was built in 1951). The buildings in the centre are mainly blocks used for trading, office and housing purposes. The newish Cultural Centre (built in 1987) combines traditional and modern features in its style. It includes a library, display halls, a youth centre and a video workshop. In the vicinity of the Cultural Centre, a music school (built in 1998) and a sculpture park are to found – wood sculpting being a new ‘brand function’ of Kemijärvi.

Two hotels are located in the centre. The camping site is centrally situated beside the sandy beach of Lake Pöyliöjärvi. Near the camping site, almost in the town centre, there is a holiday village with log cabins and a hostel. There is also a spa-swimming hall within the central area of the town.

Two substantial changes have been made recently to the architecture of the town centre: the renovation of the town hall (inaugurated in February 2006) and the renovation of the old dairy building that for years was unused. The latter has been reinvented as an *Artist Residence* (Picture 16) by the Kemijärvi Sculpture and Culture Foundation (Kemijärvi Artist Residence at the Arctic Circle). The dairy building is one of the few stone buildings in the town centre to survive the Second World War. The renovation was carried out between 2003 and 2005. The purpose of the Residence is to attract international artists to stay in Kemijärvi. The aim is that visiting artists should participate in developing local art skills during their stay and add to the cultural life, too. Next to the Residence there is a market-place, a site for social life – and cars. Artist Residence is closely connected to the already well-established *International Wood Sculpting Symposium*, held in Kemijärvi since 1985 (see Chapter 7).



Picture 17: Kemijärvi Artist Residence. (Source: Kemijärvi Artist Residence at the Arctic Circle)

There are also some impending changes. The German company *Lidl* is planning to build a new chain store in the centre of Kemijärvi. The town council accepted the necessary amendments to the town plan in September 2006 (Kemijärven kaupunginhallitus, kokous 25.09.2006). According to the preliminary agreement, building will begin in the summer of 2007. When it is ready, this new shopping venture is sure to provide a new and rather strong visual element in the town centre.

The future of the bus station area has been the subject of discussion – the building is in bad condition and it is too big for current use. A proposal was made that the building should be preserved because of its cultural historic value, but a decision was taken in December 2005 to sell the property to *Koillismaan Osuuskauppa*, a regional retail co-operative. The decision means that the old, once stylish building will be pulled down and the site offered for a new *ABC multiservice station*, including services for cars and people, both local and visitors (Kemijärven kaupunginhallitus, kokous 16.12.2005).

A new undertaking with consequences for the town picture is a plan to build a nine-hole golf course around *Kuumalampi* pond in the immediate vicinity of the town centre. This plan, devised by the recently-founded local golf club has met with some resistance from local people, who are afraid of losing some of their recreational area. On the other hand, the golf club has argued that a new golf course would enhance the quality of the urban environment. Only in Kemijärvi are a camping site, the warehouse *Lidl*, and possibly also the *ABC multiservice complex* and a golf site can *all* to be found in or very near the town centre! It may become a very interesting example of compressing the scale of commonplace international material and visual urban structures in the middle of an almost empty region. (Kemijärven kaupunki, tekninen lautakunta)

To the south, the town centre immediately turns into a residential area, with blocks of flats, terraced houses and detached houses. In this southern area are Lapponia Hospital and the sports field. The latter also serves as starting-point for ski tracks to the hill *Pöyliövaara*, these snow tracks being quite a rare element in an urban structure.

A quarter of the population (totalling about 9,300 in 2005) lives in the town centre or very nearby (Kemijärven taskutieto 2006). Another quarter of the inhabitants lives in *Särkikangas*, the largest residential area in Kemijärvi, situated approximately 2-4 km west and north-west of the centre. Most of the buildings are detached houses, but there are also terraced houses and blocks of flats. The road to Rovaniemi divides this area into northern and southern sections.

There is a shopping centre along this main road, the railway station (under threat of redundancy), an arts and crafts museum, the *Puustelli* arts centre, a sports hall, an ice hockey hall and a vocational school – which for twenty years served as the respectable *Seminar* (see Chapter 7) – in *Särkikangas*. On the outskirts of the area there are industrial estates. Just a little way off there are also the buildings of the former *Salcomp* factory – the biggest visual manifestation of the ‘China phenomenon’ in Lapland. For years, the architecturally stylish buildings symbolized modern technology and hope in this far corner of Lapland. They now accommodate only a group of some twenty Salcomp employees and eight other companies, half the building complex having no proper function.

A few kilometres to the east of the town centre there are two smaller residential areas, *Sipovaara* and *Kallaanvaara*, which are (statistically) also included within the central area. To the north of these areas there is the visually impressive pulp mill of *Stora Enso*, a leading forest industry company in the world. The fumes, the lights and the shapes of the factory reflect traditional Finnish industrial success – now threatened by far-away newcomers to the bulk markets. Psychologically, it would be very difficult to compensate for the closure of this factory. Materially, its useless buildings would become a very heavy visual element in the town picture.

Empty apartments due to a diminishing population is a particular problem that has struck Kemijärvi in recent years. Since the late 1990s, an effort has been made to sell empty apartments as second homes for people living outside Kemijärvi. In *Särkikangas*, two empty blocks of flats were renovated and successfully sold. The process of renovating and selling empty apartments is still going on and Kemijärvi offers a rare example of second homes being situated in the town centre, whereas these are usually situated in rural areas. However, not all the empty houses are attractive to second home buyers, and a decision has therefore been made to pull down two empty blocks of flats in *Kallaanvaara* – ominously near to the factory (see e.g. Hautala 2006).

Dual development

This polarized development of revitalization, with newcomers – albeit part-time dwellers – at one end and a contraction of residential structures at the other end, is a particular feature of material reinvention in Kemijärvi. As a whole Kemijärvi offers, for its size, a remarkable example of attempts, successes and bitter defeats of place reinvention, each having their clear material expressions.

As noted in Chapter 7, Kemijärvi often has a strong presence in the minds of people who come from there: it maintains a significant role in their identity even decades after they have moved to live in other places (cf. Shields 1991, referred to in Chapter 1). On the basis of the outsiders’ focus group interviews, it seems that the visual aspects of the place, its experiences in history and its spirit are all important elements in this loyalty: ‘I am from Kemijärvi and it is a pleasure to remember and say it.’

The modern myths of Kemijärvi (see Chapter 7) have probably fed this loyalty of identity. Many of these chequered success stories are like prolonged star flights: the Seminar, the Suomu ski resort, the fur theme, the Torstai clothes, the medicine factory, and the Salcomp factory. They all live on in the remaining material expressions in Kemijärvi and – in many cases – in the minds of people. And there are new projects to create new modern myths: Artist Residence, wood sculpting, the ‘throw jump’, world success in modern winter sports – again, all of them strongly expressed visually and materially.

Important economic, cultural, sports and leisure projects have their clear material expressions in Kemijärvi – the recent history of various endeavours and achievements can be demonstrated with reference to their physical framework. There are four main types of remarkable material expression of major functions and place transformations:

- 1) The water environment of the town centre, transformed for the requirements of hydropower production

- 2) The industrial faces of the place: the pulp mill and individual smaller sites of modern industry (for medicine, fur, Torstai clothes and Salcomp)
- 3) The Suomu ski resort, for both sporty tourists and world-class top sports training
- 4) Arenas for culture, especially wood sculpting

While there is a long tradition of constructing fine and beautiful public buildings for people to respect and admire in other places, this has not been the custom in Kemijärvi. The remarkable sight of the pulp mill represents a different idea – it is a reminder of employment and vitality. Other industrial producers have also paid attention to the visual aspects of their production sites – they each have their own style.

The Suomu ski resort was the first modern winter leisure centre to be developed in Lapland. The visual virtues of the resort – the beauty of the natural place, transformed to the requirements of skiing, slalom, accommodation, restaurant and other services – were an essential part of its success story. As a whole, it still exists in the minds of many people as the most beautiful winter tourist resort in Lapland. But its life cycle reached the stage where a new phase of place transformation would have been necessary as early as the early 1990s. Other, competing centres grew more rapidly, and the stable beauty lost its momentum. Plans have been made to build a ‘flight jump’ in Suomu (see Chapter 7). If this project is realized, Suomu may recover again, thanks to becoming the only ski-jumping place of this kind in Finland. The material expression of this project is sure to become a new and remarkable element in the image of Kemijärvi.

The newest theme of place reinvention in Kemijärvi is in the arts. The tradition of a wood sculpting week since the summer of 1985 has produced a large number of material expressions – with a small representation on display in the wood sculpture park near the Cultural House. Another remarkable component of this theme is the aforementioned Artist Residence, located in the very centre of the town. By attracting visitors from various parts of the world it is likely to transform the spirit of Kemijärvi in the future.

Considering its size, Kemijärvi appears to be a town rich in its material expressions of place reinvention. All of these material and visual expressions also have a rich emotional framework, in the form of chronicles, stories, memories and anecdotes. Matter and spirit are closely linked in all these cases.



Picture 18: The Stora Enso pulp mill is a dominant visual element in Kemijärvi. It joins nature and town life both materially and psychologically. (Source: Lentokuva Vallas Oy/Hannu Vallas).

Conclusion

The two cases offer very different examples of how place reinvention is expressed materially. Here it is useful to identify three types of change, as seen in such material expressions: newly-built structures for new purposes; new uses of existing structures, possibly with adjustments and reshaping; and decline without adjustment. Newly-built structures – and plans that have yet to materialize – are typical of Egilsstaðir, while Kemijärvi has clear examples of all three material expressions of change.

Egilsstaðir is a young, service-oriented town that has escaped some of the fluctuations in economic fortune that have dictated life in the coastal towns of Iceland. As a place to live it also enjoys a generally favourable image among Icelanders, not least by virtue of its natural environment and the perceived quality of its climate. The surrounding landscapes are being altered rapidly, through increased forestry and other land use changes. The town itself is also undergoing an intense phase of material reinvention at present. New layers of meaning are being added to the townscape, with new housing developments that architecturally reflect increasing internationalization and global connections. The physical townscape of Egilsstaðir, like that of other urban centres in the north, is thus a repository of ‘concrete messages’: of ‘texts’ that are gradually composed over time (often without a coherent storyline – the town does not have a particularly coherent look).

However, the townscape is more than simply a text. It is also ‘raw material’ for a deliberate reworking of local identities and ideals. Through a bold new plan for the centre of town, the municipal authorities of Egilsstaðir have set about endowing it with a firm focus as a service centre for the whole eastern region of Iceland. The new plan projects the ideas of a modern and dynamic society. It represents a somewhat new emphasis on the quality of material surroundings as a precondition for vibrant local life – of an emerging ‘urban’ lifestyle in what is essentially a very small regional town, with increased attention paid to the importance of consumption (cf. Hubbard, 1996; Hankins, 2002). The plan has not been universally lauded, however. The entrepreneurialism and highlighting of the commercial functions that the town embodies is perceived by some inhabitants as inappropriate. These people want to see a stronger emphasis on the cultural institutions and grass-roots initiatives that are also to be found in the town. In other words, the processes for deliberate material reinvention inevitably involve a contest of ‘social representations’, as Hubbard (1996) has described.

Two major material place transformations took place in Kemijärvi during the 1960s: the pulp mill and the hydropower construction. The pulp mill in Kemijärvi offered a clear material expression of the basic industrial production considered to be typical of Finland. However, in the far Lapland this was something completely different to the appearance of traditional production. Even the material expressions of the hydropower construction are visually less striking, although in their own way equally wide or wider in scope. The role of other visual signs of production and societal functions is less pronounced in the townscape as a whole, although they are remarkable in their own micro-environment.

Modern tourism has shaped Suomu, a part of Kemijärvi, into becoming one of the highlights of winter leisure activity in Finland. This picturesque destination served for two decades as a very popular sporty winter oasis, where the charms of nature were combined with stylish architecture and a modern reshaping of nature for activity purposes. Modernism was also visually reflected in education and in the processing of fur products, the medicine factory, and the design and production of trendy sports clothes in Kemijärvi, with modern attractive premises built for all of these ventures. The establishment of the Salcomp factory was a real visual lottery prize: its architecturally remarkable buildings reflected its modern production in a fine way. The visual framework still holds, even though the type of production has been changed as a result of the ‘China phenomenon’.

Material expressions of art have become a new trade-mark in Kemijärvi – the wood sculpting theme is visually well presented in the town centre. A visual upgrading of the town

hall has contributed to a mixture of modern and traditional, with elements of reinvention and decline. Plans to build new, large premises for commonplace services will again partially reshape the visual impression of Kemijärvi – towards national and international standards, albeit probably without remarkable signs of the location or the spirit of the place. A forthcoming Finnish television programme in twelve parts will increase the visual publicity of Kemijärvi, but its other effects on place reinvention cannot be considered yet.

Kemijärvi has produced a surprising chain of visual changes over the last half-century. Material expressions of reinvention, produced in the private, public and third sectors, are numerous and they clearly reflect various themes and phases of development. In spite of its general trend towards a decline in population and production, and considering its size and location, Kemijärvi therefore represents a very good example of a place where, in many cases, surprising new themes of reinvention have resulted in permanent material expressions. Their presence in the visual reality of the place gives a special flavour to the locale and a sense of Kemijärvi – rich efforts to survive, develop and reinvent have left their material expressions in the everyday environment as a reminder to the observer. New hopes and failures, creativity and nostalgia have their visual grounding here.

It may be concluded that these two examples provide good evidence of the apparent significance of material expressions of a place in what are basically very different cases. These may be indications of a trend emphasizing the role of visual environment in the welfare of people in general.

References

- Crump, J. R. (1999) What cannot be seen will not be heard: the production of landscape in Moline, Illinois, in: *Ecumene*, 6(3), pp. 295–317.
- Hankins, K. (2002) The restructuring of retail capital and the street, in: *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 93(1), pp. 34–46.
- Hautala, E. (2006) *Kemijärvellä jatketaan kakkosasuntojen myyntiä*, Koillis-Lappi 26.06.2006.
- Hubbard, P. (1996) Urban design and city regeneration: Social representations of entrepreneurial landscapes, in: *Urban Studies*, 33(8), pp. 1441–1461.
- Kemijärven kaupunginhallitus, kokous 25.9.2006. Pöytäkirja. Pykälät 291 ja 292.
- Kemijärven kaupunginhallitus, kokous 25.9.2006. Pöytäkirja. Pykälä 244.
- Kemijärven kaupunki, tekninen lautakunta. Kokoukset 7.6.2005, pykälä 46; 2.3.2006, pykälä 21; 14.9.2006, pykälä 85.
- Kemijärven taskutieto 2006.
- Kemijärvi Service Guide. (2005). <http://www.kemijarvi.fi/matkailijalle/pdf/palvopasENG.pdf>
- Kemijärvi Artist Residence at the Arctic Circle. <http://www.kemijarvi-artresidence.fi>
- Massey, D. (2005) *For Space*, London: Sage.
- Miðbær Egilsstaða: Tillaga að deiliskipulagi. (2005). Egilsstaðir: Fljótsdalshérað & ARKÍS. Accessed on 28 October 2006 on <http://www.egilsstadir.is/umhverfi/files/skilmallokaugt.pdf>
- Mitchell, C. J. A. (1998) Entrepreneurialism, commodification and creative destruction: a model of post-modern community development, in: *Journal of Rural Studies*, 14(3), pp.273–286.
- Panelli, R., Stolte, O., and Bedford, R. (2003) The reinvention of Tirau: landscape as a record of changing economy and culture, in: *Sociologia Ruralis*, 43(4), pp.379–400.
- Pred, A. (1984) Place as historically contingent process: structuration and the time-geography of becoming places, in: *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 74(2), pp. 279–97.
- Shields, R. (1991) *Places on the Margin: Alternative geographies of modernity*, London: Routledge.
- Vaxtarsamningur Austurlands (2006) Reykjavík: Iðnaðar- og viðskipta-ráðuneytið. Accessed 28 October 2006 on http://idnadaraduneyti.is/media/Rafræn_afgreidsla/austurlandLowRes.pdf

Chapter 9

Governing place reinvention: obstacles and challenges

Torill Nyseth, University of Tromsø, and Cecilia Waldenström, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Introduction

The main focus of this chapter is the relationship between governance and place reinvention. Systems of governance vary between different policy fields. We define place reinvention as a policy field in this context. What forms of governance are produced in the place reinvention field? Can place reinvention be governed at all? Who is the 'governor' in such a process: the markets, the hierarchies or the networks?

Governance arrangements have a history. They are deeply embedded in the social, political and economic history of the country, and the locale. In this chapter we look at governance arrangements in Övertorneå in Tornedalen, Sweden and in Narvik and Kirkenes in Norway. The analyses are based on data produced in fieldwork in these three places that was carried out during the spring of 2006. The data consists of personal interviews with key actors in local government, businesses and cultural institutions. All the places have a dramatic history. They have all undergone a number of severe transformations relating to major shifts in their economic basic structures. The discussion will focus on differences and similarities between the cases, relating to how reinvention is governed and who the central actors are. What role does local government play in governing these processes? From a theoretical point of view, we shall structure the discussion within the new governance discourse. Although the governance discourse has its origin in a central European context and is first and foremost related to urban development, we find the concept to be relevant in the north as well. There is also a growing literature on governance relating to rural areas (Goodwin 1998). There are similarities between the north and some of the more central urban areas in Europe. The driving forces are similar, as we shall see from our cases. Economic crises have also hit hard in the north. There has also been a weakening in municipal economy, even though there is considerable variation between municipalities dependent on other types of income, e.g. from power plants, or taxes from manufacturing companies, and so on. The state funding of the municipalities has changed, however. Even if the state is not 'rolling back', it is not as dominant and therefore allows room for other actors. There are therefore good reasons to ask questions about those institutions and networks that emerge within this new space for action.

There are also contrasts with urban European contexts. The public sector is still powerful in the Nordic countries, and in smaller municipalities it is the most important provider of incomes, as a major employer, and of services. On the other hand, there has always been a close relationship between local government and civil society in the Nordic countries. This is more or less institutionalized in the strong lay democratic element of local government. The system has been hierarchical but not closed, and there has been scope for local groups to use their influence through diverse channels and personal contacts (Sørensen and Stroth 1997). The way from government to governance, then, may not have been so long since the governance model has, in a sense, always been there.

New forms of local governance and place reinvention

The debate on governance is diverse. In this article, governance refers to the development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred (Stoker, 1996: 2). Governance reflects a complex web of interdependencies between a diverse set of actors and agencies. The term is also used to refer to a new process of governing (Rhodes, 1996: 652-3). The use of the term governance captures an understanding that there has been a period of change in governing arrangements at a local level (Stoker 2005). The search for reformed local governance may be understood as a response to working in a post-industrial, post-bureaucratic and post-welfare state expansion period. This period of transition is also reflected in the governing institutions. Although new forms of governance are often related to financial crises in the local economy, there is more to it than a legitimate way of cutting costs. Pierre and Peters argue that new forms of governance are a reaction to globalization and the sheer complexity of the governing challenges that now have to be confronted (Pierre and Peters, 2000, 52-5). Governance may be '*...seen as a process in which local political institutions implement their programs in concert with civil society actors, and within which these actors and interests gain influence over (urban) politics*' (Pierre 1998: 5).

New forms of local governance draw attention to the ways in which governmental and non-governmental organizations work together, and the ways in which political power is distributed, both internally and externally to local government. Local governance today is populated by a more diverse and varied set of institutions and processes. First of all it has to do with a new role of government, from a strong, dominant player as the provider of all kinds of services towards the involvement of society in the process of governing, for instance in various forms of partnership between public and private actors.

The particular forms that these new forms of governance assume are through governance networks (Stoker, op.cit., Sørensen and Torfing 2005), forms of governance that are oriented towards local problem-solving. The network governance perspective offers a contrasting framework of organization, with wider, looser organizations joined by a complex mix of interdependencies.

Entrepreneurial or deliberative forms of governance?

In this paper, governance is analysed in relationship to place reinvention. Governance in this policy field can take many forms. The idea is to explore what types of governance institutions have developed in the field of place reinvention. What we shall explore is how place reinvention might affect governance differently in different local contexts. One likely form of local governance relating to place reinvention is linked to neo-liberal ideas and New Public Management. In this narrative, place reinvention strategies could be seen to be part of the new entrepreneurialism that nearly all city regions have adopted more or less uncritically (Jessop 1997). This form of governance is related to a shift from local government oriented towards welfare and redistribution to new types of network-based forms of policy formation that stress flexibility, innovation and entrepreneurship. In this narrative, the old top-down government model has been part of the problem and has had to be replaced by a more bottom-up, market-driven form of governance oriented towards performance and action. In Bob Jessop's words:

I suggest that we can begin to make sense of the twin facts that: (a) the city is being re-imagined – or re-imaged – as an economic, political, and cultural entity which must seek to undertake entrepreneurial activities to enhance its competitiveness; and (b) this re-imag(in)ing is closely linked to the re-design of governance mechanisms involving the city – especially through new forms of public-private partnerships and networks... (Jessop 1997)

This new context of competition in which some localities seem to define themselves means that the town or city has to appear as an innovative, exciting, creative and safe place to live in, visit, play or consume in (Harvey 1989: 53). Governance regimes have thus become much more

oriented towards the provision of a 'good business climate' and the construction of all sorts of lures to bring capital to town (op. cit.: 55). Changing the image of a locality is seen as a central component of entrepreneurial governance. Places are renewed in order to face the competition. Since the 1970s, the rise of this entrepreneurialism may be illustrated by the local authorities' increasing involvement in economic development, by supporting small firms, and by closer links between public and private sectors and in promoting local areas to attract new businesses. The neo-liberal shift has been accompanied by fragmentation (Cars et al. 2002). Fragmentation implies that the actors involved are spread out among a wide variety of agencies across public, private and voluntary sectors. A lack of sensitivity towards the public in this perspective may, however, undermine the competitiveness of the place and erode confidence in public institutions (Susskind and Field, 1996).

Against this perspective, a more deliberative, citizen-sensitive understanding of governance represents an alternative approach (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003). Governance in this sense may be seen as a process in which local political institutions implement their programmes in concert with civil society. This closely links governance to a network model of managing collective affairs, for instance the collaborative consensus-building model developed by Judith Innes, Patsy Healy and others. Collaborative governance approaches can, in certain circumstances, add value and create incentives for the development of alternatives to those achieved by traditional methods of decision-making.

Any transformation towards more place-focused governance is likely to involve all kinds of struggles with inherited centres of power over agenda formation, and with competing initiatives for transforming governance. The concept of governance, then, is ambiguous and embodies both analytical and normative notions.

The changing role of local government: metagovernance

As a consequence of new forms of governance, the role of local government has also changed, particularly the role of the politician. Local government has become a metagovernor – governing at more of a distance. Metagovernance represents a means by which to produce some degree of co-ordination, despite an increased interdependency between autonomous actors and a changed institutional environment. The role of the metagovernor might exist through framing or by shaping the political, financial and institutional context of a particular place reinvention project that will be implemented by a network of actors, or by carrying out strategic plans for the community by means of dialogue with a diverse set of actors. More institutionalized arenas, where actors from different societal sectors meet on a regular basis to discuss development issues, provide another example. Metagovernance might also be exercised through participation. Metagovernance through participation occurs, for instance, when local government establishes public agencies to implement a particular policy, or where local politicians are given responsibility by being appointed as board representatives.

What type of metagovernance structure actually occurs and works in different contexts is an empirical question. Our focus will be on what characterizes such structures, and the difficulties that have to be solved in the process of establishing them.

Kirkenes: from state hierarchy to self-organized networks and multilevel governance

Once a company town dominated by a weak local government, dependent on the state-owned company to perform most of the public services, Kirkenes' situation is today quite different. As a company town, Kirkenes was a society that was governed from above, through hierarchical structures that permeated almost every section of the local community. The governance structure in Kirkenes was indeed authoritarian. The town was in practice run by the company. The company ran the local services in almost all areas, from the technical

infrastructure to social services, planning, housing, and so on. Kirkenes was in many ways a society where 'central government' has marked local development to an extreme degree. That is history. What is the situation today? Are the old structures still working, or are new networks taking over the old regime? The 'old' model of governance is being challenged. The one-party system that characterized the governance structures for almost a century is about to vanish and new governing structures are evolving.

Governing the Barents town

In the policy field of place reinvention, we discussed in Chapter 4 how Kirkenes is being reinvented through the narrative of the Barents identity and the construction of the Barents town. How is the Barents town governed? The Barents town is not a particular project, in the sense that a particular policy, activity or institution by which the Barents town is managed can be identified. As a narrative, the Barents town works as a vision that guides the actions of a number of institutions and networks at a local, national, even global level. The networks involved are run partly through some of the formal institutions and partly by operating outside of them.

At a local level, the most important formal institution is The Norwegian Barents Secretariat, of course, but also the municipal administration and the formal arenas established on many levels to administrate aspects of the Barents region. As the defined centre of the Barents region, Kirkenes is host to institutions like The Norwegian Barents Secretariat and The Barents Institute. The Barents Norwegian Secretariat was established in 1993 as a service and support institution for the Barents Regional Council, the formal head of the region. From this position, things have developed, more or less co-ordinated to give the town more national and even global status. A *network institution* is probably the most precise definition of The Norwegian Barents Secretariat. Eight people work there, together with six people employed in Murmansk and one person in Karelia, Russia. As a result of the activities and networks of this institution and the role it plays in the new interplay between East and West, the town has become a political destination. A large part of the activity of the secretariat is related to hosting delegations from all over the world because everybody wants to have 'a piece of the pie', both in terms of the Barents Sea as a new energy centre in global terms and in terms of opportunities to do business with a politically more liberal and increasingly wealthy Russia. They all use Kirkenes as a gateway to Russia, and The Norwegian Barents secretariat as a source of information about what is happening on the other side of the border. By creating arenas for cross-border co-operation and by defining Kirkenes as the Barents town, they are participating in a reinvention of place.

One particular network is represented by 'Pikene på broen'⁵⁹. They are located in Kirkenes, but operate mostly on supra-local arenas. They showcase professional artists in different fields of performance. The most important project in this respect is Barents Spectacle, which they arrange annually. Part of their project is to redefine the Kirkenes identity into a Barents identity. Those who participate in their projects come from all the countries in the Barents region and perceive themselves as an arena for multicultural dialogue.

The third institution that is central to governing the reinvention of Kirkenes as the Barents town is The Business Park. The Business Park organizes the industrial actors in Kirkenes within a network institution. Some of them are located in The Business Park itself, a factory building in the centre of Kirkenes, but not all of them. The Business Park has 44 business members; only eight of them are located in The Business Park itself. All types of industries are members, however, encompassing those involved in old and heavy industrial activities, and in new and lighter ones such as technology and consultancies. Even The Girls on the Bridge are members. Two groups of actors do not participate, however: the commercial community and the tourist industry, businesses that are perhaps most involved with the new business

⁵⁹ 'Pikene på broen' – The Girls on the Bridge – is named after a painting by Edvard Munch. It is not easy to summarize their activities, but the key words are: cultural work, project organization, public funding, contemporary art, networking, promoting Kirkenes as 'the Barents town'.

opportunities created by the town's location near the Russian border and its role as a Barents town. The basic goal is to increase the profits of the member companies, so they are not carrying out development work such as stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship, like Futurum did in Narvik. One of the most important projects with which The Business Park is involved is the railway from Kirkenes to Nikel in Russia. This is an infrastructure project, not just a business project, even though it is of vital importance for business development. Nevertheless, the project has been initiated and is run by The Business Park, not the municipality. This is a project that will, if and when it is finished, strengthen Kirkenes' role as a node in the Barents region.

What about local government?

Local government has of course been challenged as a consequence of the transformations taking place in the whole community relating to the loss of the once so dominating state owned mining company and the opening of the border with Russia. For several years, the municipal administration has been involved in cross-border co-operation between the Sør Varanger municipality⁶⁰ and the other border municipalities (in Russia, Finland and Sweden). This is an important aspect of the Barents image. The co-operation started as a people-to-people interaction and has ended up as a more policy-oriented governance network. This is a new arena for cross-border co-operation and multi-level governance. As a consequence, Kirkenes has become more internationally oriented, including its governmental policies. The municipal administration administers its own foreign policy through the position of 'Minster of Foreign Affairs'. The woman who holds this position was previously head of the municipal administration and a leading figure in cross-border co-operation.

Local government has also successfully managed to integrate new inhabitants, particularly those from Russia, into the local community. The tension and local scepticism about getting so close to the Russians, which was apparent during the first period after the border with Russia was opened, has developed into ordinary forms of social practice, very much due to local government efforts and a policy of 'normalizing' relations with Russian immigrants.

Local government does, however, keep a low profile with respect to the networks they do not themselves control. They do not co-ordinate or guide the actions of The Norwegian Barents Secretariat, Pikene på broen or The Business Park. These networks work with almost no local government co-ordination, following their own agendas. There is informal co-ordination, however, partly through personal relationships and overlapping networks, partly guided by a common vision. In a small town, overlapping networks are quite common and almost impossible to avoid.

The relationship, then, between the networks, institutions and local government is rather weak. The contact between The Business Park and local government is surprisingly weak, even though The Business Park was initiated by local government to improve the development of new businesses: by the end of the transition period, the state money had run out. During the transition period there was also a development agency, financed using public money, which ran the transition processes for the municipality, but it closed down at the end of this period. Instead, The Business Park evolved as a new actor. The rationale was that the business community had more competence in business development than the municipality. As a result, there is no business administration in the municipality administration any more. The head of The Business Park had previously been the head of the business administration in the municipality and when he ended his employment there, that was also the end of the department. The head of The Business Park comment on the situation is as follows:

In a way, we are occupying space for action that should have been in the control of the municipality.... We do not have a bad relationship with the municipality: it's just that there is a lack of co-ordination.

⁶⁰ Sør-Varanger is the name of the municipality of which the town of Kirkenes is the centre.

The personal links between The Business Park and local government should, however, at least in his opinion, be quite close. But there is almost no contact, except for more or less ritual information exchange meetings or meetings relating to concrete projects where the municipality is involved either financially or as part of the decision-making process, or both. The division of labour and role in business development have not been discussed between The Business Park and the municipality. There are no formal agreements about who does what. There seems to be a gap here that a governance system involving all the actors might have solved, but because of a lack of contact and perhaps also a slight mistrust, such a gap still exists. The head of the board of The Business Park elaborates on their relationship with the municipality:

We do try to co-operate with the municipality on projects we think they should be involved in. You send letters and applications, but you get no answer, even after sending a reminder. They are positive in their meetings with us, but they don't do anything, there is no action.

The Norwegian Barents Secretariat does not have a close relationship with local government either. They seem to operate in different arenas and with different authority, even though they both define themselves as co-ordinators of cross-border co-operation. The activities of the institution do not, however, involve many people in the local community, and the same goes for local politics as well. In one sense, they live in different worlds. On the other hand, the institution is playing a considerable part in constructing Kirkenes as the Barents town.

Seen from a governance perspective, the network is more of a locally independent, state-related international political network. Their involvement in local governance, however, is rather weak. There are regular meetings, but no real co-operation, even though the local administration has its own cross-border co-operation network with the municipalities in both Russia and Finland. This lack of co-operation is due to a fragmented political leadership, according to the head of The Norwegian Barents Secretariat:

We have decided now that we want to look more into what they are doing and see what we can do together, but it has not been easy, there is no dynamic. The political leadership is very fragmented.

'Pikene på broen', on the one hand, do have a closer relationship with local government, since part of the funding for some of their projects comes from the municipality. On the other hand, they are not involved with local institutions other than themselves, and the organization is characterized as an individualized network. They are not involved with more basic cultural activities in civil society or the municipal administration. They operate outside these institutions, partly to retain their autonomy, partly for professional reasons.

We can find very little trace of metagovernance from the municipal side. They are not central in co-ordinating different networks and initiatives and they are also weak in framing these networks, since they are weakly integrated within the formal institutions of local government.

Kirkenes is positioning itself as a potential base in the new economic dynamic relating to petroleum sources on the Russian side of the Barents Sea, which will strengthen the Barents town in this economic sector. The Norwegian Barents Secretariat operates within this landscape; so do The Business Park and the municipality, but not together. The networks do not overlap, and are therefore not co-ordinated. Development in Kirkenes seems to be dominated by an incremental logic, not well planned or co-ordinated by local government.

In a strange way, 'politics' in Kirkenes is not only related to what local government does or does not do. Politics are also practised in networks outside the political system. Networks within what we might call the Barents elite, i.e. the most central actors involved in the development of the town, do not involve the local political community, at least not in a close way. The Barents elite seem not to be formally involved in local politics: their activities are beyond the local level and their networks also stretch far beyond the locality. Despite little contact and few alliances, however, it may be that they all act according to one another through

the vision of the Barents town, which works like a dynamic co-ordinator in the absence of formal co-ordination.

Narvik: from hierarchy to fragmentation

In the case of Narvik we find, in contrast to Kirkenes, a history of strong government in the hands of the municipality. In this context, strong government is related to one party dominating the political agenda for a very long period of time, a strong majority that retained its position over a long period during the critical restructuring phase, and a strong municipal economy that enabled public investment in a lot of public welfare and infrastructure relating to the population on a quality level that did not have the same reference in other parts of Northern Norway. In Narvik the tax money from the LKAB company was diverted into public funds, which made the community rich until the 1980s, when everything changed in the company and a process of restructuring began. This period of strong government ended about ten years later, in the 1990s. Today, the situation is quite different. The fragmentation of the power structure is very clear. From a stable one-party political majority with the Labour Party in power for a long period of time, a more pluralistic picture is now evident, with no real majority. The Labour Party is still in power, but not with a clear mandate: they are only able to remain in power with the help of the Socialist Party.

In the policy field of place reinvention, city development is a 'hot issue' in Narvik. To transform the town from a company town dominated by LKAB and the railway company into something else has been difficult, however. 'Something else' is not yet clearly defined, which is one of the reasons why the image project 'Narvik – sterke opplevelser' (described in Chapter 5) came into being. However, the search for new businesses and new pillars of the community has been a sustained effort for the past 10-15 years. Business development is largely concentrating on developing the transport industry, tourism and technology, basically by building on spin-offs from the competence seated in Narvik University College, which is located in the town. Enhancing these efforts to encompass a search for a new place identity as well is, however, a more recent development and linked to the more strategic aim of developing the tourist industry. At the time, the town had 'multiple identities', according to our informants, which became a problem and a search for a more united profile was commissioned.

In the field of local development and place reinvention, a number of actors, networks and agencies are operating, partly together, partly with their own agenda. The number of actors is partly the consequence of intentional government policy. Local government delegated a lot of policy tasks to publicly-owned companies during the 1980s and 1990s. More than twenty publicly-owned companies are in operation. In the field of place reinvention alone there are at least three different agencies:

- 1) *Futurum*, a business developing agency, with the municipality holding 20% of the shares,
- 2) *Narvikgården*, a property development agency, 100% owned by the Municipality
- 3) *Destination Narvik*, a tourism development agency, owned by Futurum

Futurum has been the node in the middle of these three networks since they were established as the primary development agency in Narvik during the transition period. The other two companies were established much later and are more or less spin-offs from Futurum, or activities run by Futurum. In addition to these agencies, there is also an association called Narvik Business Forum, an organization that co-ordinates business actors in the town, an important network organization within the local development policy field. As the co-ordinator of business development during the state-funded transition period, Futurum became the most important actor in this policy area, a position they apparently maintained even after the state money run out. Futurum has been involved in almost every business innovation and industrial planning since then, operating on behalf of local government in most cases, some of them resulting in considerable success. For instance, they initiated the Northern East West (N.E.W.)

freight corridor⁶¹, and their involvement was significant in establishing one of the biggest industrial companies in Narvik today, Scancell; in the course of a couple of years, this company has been growing immensely and at the moment employs nearly 300 workers in Narvik. The increased optimism with regard to future development in Narvik that we registered among the locals is probably linked to the efforts of Futurum and others over many years.

Narvikgården has a particular history. A particular piece of land in the town centre called The Triangle is at the centre of a discourse about the future of Narvik. As well as being in the centre the area is quite big and is defined as a strategic development area for future business development. The area was owned by Norwegian State Railways (NSB) and sold to the municipality or, to be exact, to a publicly-owned agency called Narvikgården Ltd. The history about the land in Narvik is that, from the beginning, two companies, LKAB and NSB, owned all the land below The Mountain. So when NSB discontinued their involvement in Narvik and LKAB downscaled their activities this provided an opportunity for the local community to gain possession of this central piece of land in the middle of the town centre. LKAB owned most of the land, but they sold some of it a number of years ago. The idea was to sell it to the municipality but the municipality had, at that stage, no capital reserves to buy it and was prohibited by specific state regulations from financing the purchase through fund-raising. The solution was a government-owned company, Narvikgården Ltd. This company was able to raise a loan to buy the land on behalf of the municipality. The intention was also that this company should be run in a commercial way, the company should earn a profit from publicly-owned property, a profit that would be diverted back to the municipality and contribute to the financing of public goals. The company earned money and became profitable. This financial success is part of the problem today. You do not close down a profitable business.

All these companies are involved with place reinvention. However, it seems a bit strange that probably the most profound place-promotion initiative, 'Narvik – sterke opplevelser' (see Chapter 5) was run by Narvikgården, a property development agency, and not by Futurum, for example, or the local government itself. Constructing a new image like this is not primarily about property. It has more to do with the symbolic construction of identity, at least to our mind. The reason was simply this: Narvikgården had the money to run such a project, whereas Futurum did not have that kind of funding. The personal links between these three companies are in any case strong, so in reality the project has been a joint project. At any rate, even if this has a rational explanation the consequences are far from rational, and the chief officer in the municipality evaluates the situation as follows:

Narvikgården has its own history, and was established to take over and manage the real estate properties for the railroad company when they withdrew from the community. The company was intended to be used as a tool to develop The Triangle, the central area of the town, and was to be closed down after that, when the job was finished. Instead, this company has developed over the years into something else. And therefore we have to evaluate: is this what we want? ... For the time being we have 22 different companies with which we are involved. Of course we lose control.

This sort of place reinvention, then, is not in the hands of the political actors. Although the project is presented to the city council, the politicians do not act as metagovernors in such a case, even if board members are politicians. Only a few politicians have adequate knowledge and information about the project, in their capacity as members of the board of the company. Besides, as a consequence of the political turbulence, political members of the board have been voted off on several occasions over the past few years. This in itself is a signal that the situation is out of control.

At least the discussion of these questions has started in Narvik. Taking back control of local development issues is at the top of the agenda and, as a consequence of that, how to

⁶¹ A proposed global trading route between China and the USA with Narvik as the port for reloading between sea and rail.

organize all local government owned or partly-owned companies. The deputy major describes the situation thus:

Business development issues should be in the hands of the municipality, or at least not delegated to a company where the municipality is a minority shareholder but still putting in all the money to run it, as in this case. We are now standing at the cross-roads. We have to take some sort of action. ... At the moment we are considering different means of gaining control again. Right now we are losing control and we have too many companies.

The discourse on municipal ownership in public companies is therefore being contested at the moment. Municipal engagement in everything, including business development, energy, tourism destination agencies, and so on, is all tied up with publicly-owned companies that have a board governed by local politicians.

The development dialogue has also become fragmented, partly due to there being insufficient arenas where such a dialogue could take place, and partly due to the fragmented system of governance and lack of political co-ordination of the arenas that exist. New arenas for development exist, but they are more closed and less deliberative than those operating when local development works were in local government hands. Such dialogues were frequent and there was a lot of participation on the part of lay citizens in the processes relating to comprehensive and strategic planning during the 1990s. Open arenas for deliberation have been closed or have disappeared. Since comprehensive planning has been out of the question for the past ten years the public sphere, where a lot of people participated in relation to these processes, has disappeared. The new arenas are of a different, more closed character, constituting the boards of the public and private development companies, with more or less the same individuals participating; a closed shop, you might say. However, there are signs of a new policy emerging, with a greater focus on both comprehensive and strategic planning, and the opening of new arenas for participation.

Fragmentation and a lack of political control

One consequence of the large number of companies and agencies acting on behalf of the local government in many strategic development fields relating to place reinvention is fragmentation. The municipal organization has in one sense been 'hollowed out'. One informant told us this:

... the political leadership (in business development) has been completely absent, they have handed over responsibility to a number of individuals, but there has been no co-ordination whatsoever. The process has been unstructured and ungoverned.

What this person was particularly referring to was that there have been personal conflicts and competition between some of the governmental companies, which partly explains a situation characterized by a lack of trust between actors in vital positions. However, the local government should, in his opinion, have resolved such conflicts. The main problem seems to be weak political leadership, as the result of having no stable majority. Even though local politicians head the boards of all these companies, there still is no co-ordination between them. Some politicians sit on several boards and in this way also exercise power over some of the most valuable resources in the town, such as energy resources, buildings, land, and so on. Some of them have many 'hats', as they also have other positions in the community, and all these roles have become mixed. At the same time, the regime is becoming more fragmented because of all these companies, although all of them are publicly owned, at least partially, and local politicians occupy some of the board positions. But, as one informant said, '*when you delegate power to a company, it will start to live its own life, independently of its owner*'. As a consequence, political control is vanishing and this has led to conflicts of a rather personal character, where the lack of trust between the politicians and the companies is becoming an increasing problem that seems to paralyse the development dialogue. Such conflicts might be seen as the sign of a lack of metagovernance and political leadership.

There seems to be a lot of action but not much political co-ordination. Action relating to future development involves many actors in separate networks that do not seem to co-operate. Although they are all related to local government in one way or another, local government does not seem to act as a metagovernor: they do not co-ordinate their own agencies in an efficient and legitimate way.

Övertorneå: from hierarchy towards deliberation and metagovernance?

How has the governing role of a municipality changed over time? In this section we compare two place reinvention projects in the municipality of Övertorneå. Both projects began in response to economic decline and as an urge to find new ways ahead. The *Eco-Municipality Project* began in 1983 and the *Expedition Övertorneå* project began twenty years later, in 2002. The role of the municipality differs between these projects in ways that point towards the development of a more metagoverning and deliberative role.

The eco-municipality: top-down mobilization

Like most municipalities in the north of Sweden, Övertorneå saw a marked change and the beginnings of a decline in general economic development during the 1970s. Rationalization in agriculture and forestry and the related secondary industries affected the entire economy. The crisis during the early 1980s in LKAB, in the neighbouring municipality of Kiruna, also had an effect in Övertorneå. People moved back to the municipality and unemployment increased in the villages. This situation spurred several municipalities in the county to seek new ways ahead and to make conscious attempts to 'reinvent' the municipalities. The Eco-Municipality Project in Övertorneå was one such attempt.

A central stage in the emergence of the Eco-Municipality Project was when the mayor volunteered Övertorneå as a case in a national study run by the Institute of Future Studies in Stockholm and Umeå University. In a study entitled 'The Future Municipalities', alternative methods of development were explored for five Swedish municipalities. In Övertorneå the preconditions for agriculture were relatively good and agriculture and forestry were still important industries. Building on this in a proactive fashion in such a way that ecology and economy could be combined became the focal vision in the Övertorneå section of the national study. Inspired by the Finnish municipality of Suomussalmi, Övertorneå became the first municipality ever to declare itself an 'eco-municipality' in 1983.

The national study supplied a national context, backing and focus, and national funds as well. A project was set up that aimed to support ecological production and the development of sustainable lifestyles and economy. A project manager was employed and mobilizing activities, investments and support for organic cultivation projects were funded. The project continued until 1990 and received a total of 75 million SEK in public funding from various sources.

Initially the focus was mainly on supporting organic farming and horticulture. Later, projects in children's day care centres were started, fostering a sustainable lifestyle, for example by children cultivating vegetables that were cooked for meals. Cultivation projects in secondary schools contributed to reclaiming land that had been abandoned on islands in the river. Municipal purchases of organic local produce supported production. Towards the end of the project, a housing area close to the municipal centre was built as an 'ecological village'. Mobilizing and development projects in the rural villages were also aspects of the overall eco-municipality project. All in all, educational activities, seminars and study tours were important parts of the project and several universities and researchers were involved in different areas.

Although a lot of local people were involved in the different parts of the project – cultivators, teachers and staff at the day care centres, schoolteachers, parents, the eco-village developers and house owners and villagers – the project can essentially be seen as a mobilizing project in which the overall vision of how to re-invent the municipality was developed by the actors in municipal leadership through the project and its network of expertise. The mayor and

the project manager, especially, were repeatedly mentioned in interviews as the focal individuals on whom the project depended. The fact that the project ended and the project leader left was stated as the main reason why the eco-municipality idea lost momentum. Another important reason mentioned was that the mayor left office. It was also evident in interviews that although there was a consensus in the municipal council about declaring the municipality an eco-municipality, the project contained contentious aspects. It was managed by a foundation, Ecotopen, which was not located in the municipal building but in town. In interviews this was explained as a way of being more accessible and less connected with the formality of the municipality, but it was also described as a way of handling conflicts about the eco-municipality project that apparently existed within the municipal organization.

The project gained external recognition and attention for Övertorneå, winning prices and media coverage. In hindsight, the Eco-Municipality Project may be said to have been a success. It was kept going for at least twelve years. Today, however, most of the activities that were originally initiated have ended. Many farmers were apparently hesitant about or critical of turning to organic production; most of the farmers who joined the project had small farms and several of those have ceased production. Some have turned back to conventional methods. Day care centres and schools obtain their meals from a central kitchen and no longer cook for themselves, and today municipal purchase is subject to EU regulations.

However, Övertorneå is still an eco-municipality and the project still has repercussions in the municipal organization and among people concerned about ecological and environmental issues. Although the scale of activities has dwindled there are new activities all the time, which contribute to the image of Övertorneå as an eco-municipality. These are mainly concerned with issues that the municipality itself controls. Ecological aspects were taken into account when a new school was built, for instance; the heating systems in all the buildings managed by the municipal organization have been changed to bio-fuel; eco-driving is taught at school; and public transport is free of charge throughout the municipality.

The eco-municipality status is no longer emphasized when the municipality presents itself. Today there is an eco-municipality association that sets its own standards for the denomination, something that leaves it open to criticism as to what this should imply. One informant who had been involved with the mobilization projects in the Eco-Municipality Project claimed, for instance, that this has been a participatory and democratic project that has been failed by the municipality. Compared to the Expedition Övertorneå project that began almost twenty years later, however, the Eco-Municipality Project may be characterized by 'government' and by top-down mobilization, rather than by participation.

Expedition Övertorneå: towards deliberation and metagovernance

In 2001, two sawmills and a dairy closed down in Övertorneå. This led to a sense of urgency and a two-year project for strategic development, co-financed by the county and the municipality, was set up. The idea was originally to co-ordinate municipal development activities, but the project manager was inspired by participatory work in another Swedish municipality. The project was therefore reshaped into a participatory visionary process that aimed to lay the foundations for future long-term development processes.

Over a period of two years, four participatory workshops were held to which every household in Övertorneå was invited. The first workshop, which was held in the town of Övertorneå in November 2002, consisted of an analysis of challenges, discussions about what to do and the formation of working groups under three given headings: *The Entrepreneurial Municipality*, *Education for the Future* and *The Good Life*. During 2003, two workshops, one in the northern part and one in the southern part of the municipality, continued these processes and the groups were able to present and check out their work. People were invited to join the project by several means: in the workshops, in working groups, in discussions on a web site or by contacting the project manager directly. In order to broaden involvement, the project manager travelled around the municipality holding meetings in villages and in schools. Other

actors approached included local banks and businesses. In the spring of 2004, the final meeting laid the ground for how suggestions not yet realized were to be followed up.

The project was called Expedition Övertorneå, as it was to be a journey discovering the potential of the municipality and including the people in the process. This was in contrast to a TV series popular at that time, 'Expedition Robinson', in which competing participants were continuously excluded. Expedition Övertorneå aimed instead to encourage a shared sense of responsibility for the future and enhance cross-sectorial and professional contacts. The project manager emphasized that such contacts were important, since

Essentially this has been about changes in attitudes and understanding that we need to work together for the future of Övertorneå, building on the resources we already have. People need to meet to get new insights and hear about other people's experiences. How do people react when we don't answer the 'phone in the municipal organization? What do we really think about business people? Why should people care about the business climate here? Why should teachers care about it?

To achieve such changes in attitudes and understanding, the project aimed to create settings that would enhance sharing, listening and re-evaluation:

This is not something that we can create through administration. It can only happen in an open and accepting setting. We have to create such settings and bring up issues that haven't been discussed before.

Some of the ideas that emerged in the project fed into the municipal growth programme, but the intention was not primarily to gather proposals for the municipality's work. The role of the municipality was to initiate a process that would produce synergy and ideas that could also be realized by other actors. In this last ambition, the project was not so successful. But activities were initiated within the thematic groups, some of which have had tangible effects, such as the opening of the summer farm Hanhinvittikko as a tourist attraction. The effects of contacts between local entrepreneurs and schools and mentoring programmes among businesses were less tangible. The networking results and the matter of who participated in these activities have not been explored. However, they may well have contributed to the presently strong economic growth in Övertorneå. The present municipal slogan, 'A Good Life in Övertorneå', also emerged from the project.

In this project, as well as in the previous project, the project manager was an important actor. She suggested the participatory nature of Expedition Övertorneå. Yet although the municipal leadership supported the project and showed interest all along, the project manager experienced both a lack of feedback and a lack of clarity regarding municipal expectations. It was a completely new way of working and of handling development issues. Participation was not an invitation to take part in a given vision, but to participate in a visionary process.

New roles and preconditions for reinvention projects

By comparison with the Eco-Municipality Project, Expedition Övertorneå can thus be seen to be a metagovernance attempt through deliberation, in which the municipality *stages the procedures but not the content*. The three themes proposed in Expedition Övertorneå (The Entrepreneurial Municipality, Education for the Future and The Good Life) are broad and uncontroversial. Whereas the Eco-Municipality Project aimed to renew the local economy by supporting a particular kind of production, Expedition Övertorneå sought to involve actors in networking, foster a sense of joint responsibility for the future of the municipality and generate ideas for development in general. One central idea was that it is not only the municipality that has a responsibility for development. The role taken by the municipality in this reinvention process was that of a facilitator and partner. This is in contrast to the role as a central actor leading the transformation of particular sections of the local economy, which was the aim of the Eco-Municipality Project. In the Eco-Municipality Project, an awareness of sustainability and ecology was to be advanced and practised; in Expedition Övertorneå, facilitating contexts for actors to explore challenges and opportunities were to be arranged. This implied setting up deliberative process.

The two projects may also be seen as examples of *sectorial and territorial approaches* to development policies. In the Eco-Municipality Project, the municipality took on the role of a central actor leading the transformation and place reinvention processes by supporting a particular sector. For this purpose, networks were developed on many levels, local as well as national and international. These networks related to activities in the project and included expertise on, for example, organic cultivation and ecological construction. The main networks to be developed in Expedition Övertorneå were within the municipality, since the aim was to stimulate the development of local synergy. These networks did not necessarily need to include the municipality, be formal, or even be directly related to any joint activity. Familiarity with other actors' preconditions was a goal in itself. Essentially, this may be seen as an attempt to support local cultural processes in order to spur development.

The municipality's concurrent withdrawal in order to focus on activities within immediate municipal control, adopting the slogan 'A Good Life in Övertorneå' and, at least in the case of the Expedition Övertorneå project, taking on a metagoverning role characterized by deliberative policy practices, should be viewed in the light of changed preconditions for governing reinvention processes. Compared with the 1980s the preconditions have changed with the turn of the century. As in many municipalities, business development is today managed by a separate company, Övertorneå Utveckling AB, of which 53% is owned by the local business association and 47% by the municipality. Many of the activities initiated in the Eco-Municipality Project would be difficult to set up today, since national and EU regulations limit possibilities. Today there is also little to be expected in terms of outside support for the development of particular sectors. The economic development in any business sector is today increasingly nested in international contexts beyond municipal control. Organic agricultural production may still hold promise for the future and the municipal purchase of local products would of course support production within the municipality. But in the end, decisions at a national and EU level, and developments in other sectors, will influence land use and agricultural production. In addition, ecology has been politicized in Sweden, with the Green Party becoming part of government coalitions and acquiring significant political influence. The national and international policy agendas have changed. This has consequences for what the municipal leadership has control over and how they can position themselves in reinvention processes.

Conclusion

A common feature of all three municipalities is the outsourcing of local development tasks to public or public/private agencies, particularly in the policy field of economic development. Business parks and developing agencies are now the standard method of organizing such questions. What was once a powerful local government, with a high degree of control over the political economy of the territory, has been replaced with a more or less fragmented collection of agencies, where the political and economic power lies not with one powerful governing body but with a multiplicity of agencies and interests. The most striking example of this is in Narvik, where we have observed the most entrepreneurial form of governance – which is being questioned, however. What is more surprising in this context is that these agencies, initially established to take care of business development, are also handing over other tasks relating to local development issues, tasks that would previously have been taken care of by the municipal organization, e.g. those relating to place identity, cultural heritage and local planning. These are tasks that under normal circumstances would have been managed by the cultural office, a planning department or even the local council.

The general economy of the local government is also a factor to be considered in this context. Although the municipality of Övertorneå has a balanced economy today, and even some reserves, the general demographic and economic development is very problematic. Both Narvik and Kirkenes were wealthy municipalities in the good old days, until the 1980s, but not any more. Today, they have an economy that, compared to other Norwegian municipalities, is more average, or even below that; Narvik, in particular, was forced to downscale its

administration and activities in a hard-line fashion some years ago. From a situation where the income from the companies made it possible to be proactive in a lot of development fields and at the same time was able to offer the inhabitants a level of service that no other municipality was able to match, the municipalities now find themselves caught in a financial trap, deprived of development vitality and initiative. Narvik, for instance, ceased all strategic planning activity at the beginning of the 1990s and closed down its planning department completely, which resulted in the current situation of not being able to resume such activity again because of a lack of planning competence.

The governance system in Narvik could be described as fragmented, with no centre and no single actor in control of urban development. It seems to be necessary to achieve a balance between the need to stimulate innovation through more flexible and self-organized agencies outside the local government system and the need to control the networks. Local government seems not to have achieved this balance: in other words they have not succeeded in co-ordinating and regulating the networks. The agencies are partly operating in the same field of place reinvention and, to some extent, even competing with each other. Perhaps the reason is simply that there are too many companies working on parallel issues; this is not very cost-efficient, of course, and is also causing co-ordination problems. In order to achieve a successful resolution of these problems, the conflict between market-based and non-market-based organizational forms will need to be balanced.

In Kirkenes the situation is a bit different. Kirkenes is in many ways a deviant case, due to its location near the Russian border and the new political climate between East and West, which in this case is influencing the development of the town in vital areas. Local government seems to struggle to find its role in this situation. One answer lies with their 'minister of foreign affairs', who takes care of the many cross-border co-operation projects with which the municipality is involved. However, the municipality is on the outside of many of the other networks and arenas relating to the border town and the future possibilities that these offer. This, at least, is the case on a policy level. On a more practical level, the municipality is preparing for growth relating to these new activities by, for instance, controlling the regeneration strategies in some parts of town, particularly in those areas that have been released by the mining company, by organizing and preparing new areas for petroleum activity, by making plans for new residential areas, etc. But they are not the central arena for the discourse about what the future will bring and the important questions relating to Russia, the Barents Sea and the High North, which is the most important policy issue at the moment. The exception to this is the focus on immigration policy, where the municipality has played an important role on integrating Russian immigrants to the community.

Although there are other arenas of power and influence outside the local government in Kirkenes, the system of governance does not seem to be out of control, even though there are many independent groups and networks working on questions relating to place reinvention at different levels and in different spheres of society. Actors in different networks seem to have room to act. The independent networks that we see operating in Kirkenes do not, however, seem to result in the problems of a lack of metagovernance that are evident in Narvik. On the contrary, the independence seems to be fruitful: there is room for action and entrepreneurial activity, not only related to business. We can also find entrepreneurship in the cultural field and in the sense of global networking.

The examples from Övertorneå explore the differences between two place re-invention projects and offer a recent example of a deliberative attempt to govern these processes. Expedition Övertorneå has been described as an example of metagoverning, in contrast with the more hierarchical form of governance in the Eco-Municipality Project. The municipality has taken on the role of facilitator to promote networking and communicative processes that may enhance place reinvention and development. How can this new role be understood in terms of governing political processes? Is it a depoliticization of local politics, as issues are moved from general political debates and electoral control to be managed by those actors who are best able to use the opportunities provided? Is it a deepening of the democratic process,

since it offers opportunities for a common reflection over development and place identity issues that are rarely provided and may contribute to social and cultural processes that would be beneficial to multi-faceted developed processes and increased participation? These questions relate to theoretical questions of power and deliberation, often summarized in terms of the confrontation between, or complementarity of, the work of Foucault and Habermas (see e.g. Flyvbjerg 1998, Boonstra 2006). However, they may also be seen as primarily empirical questions that in each case need to be clarified.

Such empirical research seems all the more relevant since the cases we have described indicate that the role of the municipalities in governing place reinvention processes is in flux. In the introduction we raised the question of whether place reinvention can be governed at all, and the role of local government in such a situation. Local government is an important actor in municipal development and the cases explored in this chapter point to the fact that local governments struggle with place reinvention issues. How can they position themselves in the new landscapes of preconditions and actors? The old hierarchical governing styles are no longer applicable. New roles emerge and the examples above point to the contextual character of the forms of governance that are produced in the place reinvention field, and to the difficulties faced by local governments in positioning and organizing themselves for this. The governance of shaping and reinventing places is complex. As a policy field it involves the qualities of a place, e.g. the quality of life, the economy and the environment, as well as place identity issues. Depending on the values informing the policy community, different patterns of governance regimes come to the forefront. Such regimes may well be restricted to certain groups with an immediate interest in particular place reinvention processes, leaving out other groups who may be strategic to municipal development, but who do not perceive their involvement in such activities as relevant, or even possible. In Kirkenes, tourist entrepreneurs and commerce seemed not to be connected with the self-organized networking that is developing the Barents town identity. In Expedition Övertorneå, attempts to bring school teachers and entrepreneurs closer together were mentioned as an example of an important task. By developing metagoverning roles that include deliberative and collaborative approaches, local government may find ways to include groups who are strategic to place reinvention but not included in self-organized reinvention processes. They may also find ways to reposition themselves in the place reinvention governance field and counter processes of fragmentation and marginalization with regard to place reinvention processes, an issue that implies the need to challenge existing forms of organization, planning procedure and networking.

References

- Boonstra, W. J. (2006) *Polder Limits. A case study of value-conflicts on rural land use*. (dissertation). Dept. of Rural Sociology. Wageningen University.
- Cars, G., P. Healy, Madandipour, A. and De Magalhaes, C. (eds.) (2002) *Urban Governance, Institutional Capacity and Social Milieux*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Flyvbjerg, B (1998) Habermas and Foucault: thinkers for civil society?, in: *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol 49. No2. pp 210–233.
- Goodwin, M (1998) The Governance of Rural Areas; some emerging research issues and agendas, in: *Journal of Rural studies*, vol 14. No. 1. pp. 5–12.
- Hajer, M. A and Wagenaar, H. (eds.) (2003) *Deliberative Policy Analyses. Understanding Governance in the Network Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Harvey, D (1989) From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism; The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism, in: *Geografiske annaler*, pp. 50–59.
- Healy, P (1997) *Collaborative Planning. Shaping places in fragmented societies*. Hong Kong: Macmillan Press.
- Hubbard, P. and Hall, T. (1997) The entrepreneurial city and the new urban politics, in: Hall, T. and Hubbard, P. (eds.): *The entrepreneurial city. Geographies of politics, regime and representation*. John Wiley & Sons.

- Jessop, B. (1997) The entrepreneurial city. Re-imaging localities, redesigning economic governance, or restructuring capital?, in: Jewson, N. and Macgregor, S. (eds.): *Transforming cities*. Routledge.
- Osborne, D. and Gaebler, T. (1992) *Reinventing Government*. Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley.
- Pierre, J. and Peters, G. (2000) *Governance, politics and the state*. Basingstoke, Macmillan.
- Rhodes, R. A. W (1997) *Understanding governance. Policy networks, governance, reflexivity and accountability*. Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Stoker, G. (1996) Redefining Local Democracy, in: Pratchett, L. and Wilson, D. (eds.): *Local Democracy and Local Government*. London: Macmillan.
- Stoker, G (2004) *Transforming Local Governance*. London, Palgrave.
- Susskind, L and Field, P. (1996) *Dealing with an Angry Public: The Mutual Gains Approach to Resolving Disputes*. New York: Free Press.
- Sørensen, E. og Torfing, J. (2005) *Netværksstyring – fra government til governance*. Roskilde Univertitetsforlag.
- Sørensen, Ø and Stroth, B. (eds.) (1997) *The cultural construction of Norden*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.

Chapter 10

Towards an understanding of place reinvention

Torill Nyseth, University of Tromsø

Introduction

A new wind is blowing in the North. The North is facing a new reality. This reality is linked to the processes of globalization, representing new opportunities related, for instance, to the richness of scarce natural resources, and at the same time there is a new uncertainty that follows in the footsteps of globalization and increased competition. Seen from below, these are processes of enhanced competition, not only among world cities but also between the towns and regions of the northern periphery. Some places are exposed to this new reality more than others. Some places are being completely altered by this global race, for energy for instance; in other places the changes are less dramatic but still quite significant, in the sense that the place as a lived space is changing. The search for a new identity is strong in places where such an economic shift is dominant, particularly in towns marked by one industry.

In this study we have been concerned not so much with the broader picture of globally enforced change itself, but about how places in the north are reinventing themselves within the context of globalization and a new economy. In the post-industrial society place is becoming more important. It has become more important than ever to appear attractive, not only towards newcomers and potential investors but also in respect of the inhabitants. Place image has become an issue. Drawing on the work of Agnew and others, place has been understood both as geographical and physical location, as a sense of place – the subjective experience one has of a place – and its social context, the arena for everyday activity. Such a broad understanding of place has opened up new approaches to understanding how places have been changed and transformed in a variety of ways, not only relating to economic restructuring or minor ‘face-lifts’ for former industrial towns.

To read and conceptualize this rediscovery of place, this increased focus on place image and place development, we have introduced the concept of place reinvention. Place reinvention is related to the overall changes going on, but it goes beyond mere economic change or globalization as such. The transformation or change that we have tried to grasp with this concept is a change in the image of a place, which involves more than the economics of the community: it also embraces the meaning of the place and how people identify with place.

Through the preceding chapters, this concept has been further developed, elaborated and modified, based on the analyses of the empirical cases. These new forms of change have been discovered through a close study of eight individual places in the north. We have been concerned with how local actors define their situations in local development discourses, and how they act upon them; how place is animated as a social context through everyday discursive practices. We have also analysed how places are being reinvented through planned, intentional, material and physical strategies, and how, as a consequence, the sense of place has changed as well.

To what extent has the place reinvention concept produced new knowledge of place development? In this last chapter we shall highlight some of the main findings of the study. By comparing and contrasting the development discourses in a number of localities we shall reflect on these issues. To what extent are places in the North being reinvented, and what forms does place reinvention assume in this region? What was reinvented, and how was it done? What dynamics were behind this? How were these processes governed? The approach in

this study has been more on the explorative than the deductive or verifying side of the research field. Our intention has been to understand what this new field of place reinvention is all about, rather than to confirm certain pre-given hypotheses. What might be defined as 'findings', then, are consequently more in line with providing better descriptions of the phenomenon that we call place reinvention such as, for instance, developing concepts and categories that cover different aspects and dimensions of place reinvention, and outline more of the social and political dynamics to which processes of reinvention are linked. The concerns and approaches of the authors of this chapters are thoroughly eclectic. Producing a conclusion that reviews these approaches to their fullest extent would have been impossible.

The multiple forms and dimensions of place reinvention

Common to the places we have studied is the fact that in all of them, some form of place reinvention, as we have defined it, is taking place. However, such forms of reinvention follow quite different routes. Some forms of reinvention are quite strategic and intentional. Some are physically materialized and visual, relating for instance to regeneration projects or to the construction of flagship projects. Others are strategic, but not necessarily physical, operating more on a symbolic level like, for instance, place promotion campaigns. In some of the places studied, it might be hard to see what the 'invention' consists of. In almost all cases there is a continuity of local development: in only a few has there been a clear break with this continuity. There may not be any visual or material expression of any reinvention at all, although the local economy may, for instance, have been completely restructured. The only visual expression of what has been going on is perhaps a closed factory building. People's sense of place is changed, however, and this is expressed in how they perceive the place and the way they talk about it.

More important, perhaps, is the fact that neither place images nor place identities develop in isolation on the basis of strategic or intentional development projects. Both the images of a place and the inhabitants' identification with a place change through local practices or with the help of other, more latent agents. Since place is never made once and for all, and since it always is in the making, always becoming, so, too, is place identity building a continuous and quiet process outside the scope of policy initiatives and municipal planning efforts.

Diversity, then, is perhaps the most precise description of what form place reinvention takes. The different types of reinvention could be summed up as follows:

Deliberate, planned or long-term place reinvention

This is the form of reinvention that is most observable and receives the most public attention because it is linked to the intentional policies of a local government, with the municipalities themselves or agents operating on their behalf in charge. Such reinvention could be linked, for instance, to different kinds of regeneration projects or 'townscaping': by constructing new urban landscapes for consumption and entertainment, transforming industrial sites for housing, developing harbour areas from transport and business sites to cafés, restaurants and apartment buildings. Certain urban planning ideologies and Utopias are put to work. When, for example, industrial plants are transformed into cultural centres they also transform the image of a place by adding a certain 'urban touch' to the place. The highly visible material transformations in many Nordic peripheral towns, sustained by the arrival of industrial modernity in the early 20th century, are being supplanted by a new postmodern aesthetic. New landscapes of cultural and material consumption are evident. Even 'nature itself' is reinvented as a landscape of pleasure for townspeople and tourists. In some instances we observed with a certain astonishment the introduction of very urban structures in tiny places located in nearly empty regions. Egilsstaðir, discussed by Karl Benediktsson and Seppo Aho (Chapter 8), is probably the best example in this volume of this form of reinvention, but there are elements in the other places as well. Such place reinvention is material, physical and visual, all at the

same time. Reinvention of place therefore inevitably involves a reinvention of its material fabric.

Sometimes planned or deliberate forms of reinvention have been going on for quite a while, following a line of development from years back, constructed brick by brick to develop the community in a particular direction. The best example of this is also from Iceland. In the region of Fjarðabyggð, discussed by Karl Benediktsson and Leena Suopajarvi (Chapter 2), the three small communities had combined their efforts and worked at a strategic political level since the 1970s before they succeeded with the establishment of the aluminium smelter.

Reinvention based on particular events or flagship projects

Some places have 'placed everything on one horse'. Typically, such horses might be characterized as flagships: one project that is meant to carry the community into a new future. It might be a particular architectural or cultural heritage project, something that colours the place with a unique image. The SnowCastle in Kemi, discussed by Karl Benediktsson and Leena Suopajarvi (Chapter 2), is probably the best example of such a material flagship, even if it is transitory (it melts in the summer). It still reflects the important change going on in the community, from a community based on the paper pulp industry alone towards a more diverse economy with a growing tourism industry as one of the key elements. The SnowCastle symbolizes this change even though it materializes for only part of the year.

Reinvention based on particular events is even more common, particularly those relating to cultural events. In Pajala, discussed by Magnfríður Júlíusdóttir and Yvonne Gunnarsdotter (Chapter 3), there are a number of such events relating to Pajala as a cultural municipality, particularly events following in the footsteps of the success of Mikael Niemi's book, *Popular Music from Vittula*. In Kirkenes, discussed by Arvid Viken, Torill Nyseth and Brynhild Granås (Chapter 4), the annual festival in January, Barents Spectacle, provides another example. This festival carries the new Barents identity, which is defined in the hegemonic narrative of Kirkenes. Similarly, we find the Winter Festival in Narvik to be important as well, celebrating the railway heritage transformed into the stuff of legend in modern times, and the wood sculpting weeks discussed by Seppo Aho (Chapter 7) have become an essential element of place reinvention in Kemijärvi. Cultural events like this are important both as identity markers and as a way of increasing the well-being of the people, locals as well as visitors.

Flagship projects, and to some extent cultural events too, contribute to the local economy by producing new jobs, particularly those relating to tourism, like the SnowCastle in Kemi. These new jobs, even if they are few in number, contribute to a more diverse labour market and to a small, but important 'creative' industry in these communities.

Reinvention through branding and symbolic communication

Place branding is perhaps the most typical form of place reinvention, particularly in more urban regions. We find only one example in this study, in Narvik, discussed by Brynhild Granås and Yvonne Gunnarsdotter (Chapter 5). However, several of the most rural places have been involved in place-promotion campaigns of some sort in order to attract more inhabitants to the community, for instance in Egilsstaðir. This form of campaign is very common in rural Norway, at both a municipal and a regional level. In Egilsstaðir the slogans in newspaper advertisements for these campaigns were 'flourishing culture' and 'energetic cultural life'. Such place reinvention is based on symbolic communication. This represents a shift at least from what Norwegian municipalities had been promoting in their earlier efforts to attract new inhabitants to the community, where the focus was on the quality of the public welfare services, e.g. day nurseries and housing, and perhaps also beautiful and relaxing nature and good sports facilities – attributes that were quite objective and possible to verify. These forms of place branding are still important, but when targeting new groups such as tourists, symbols of a more exotic and spectacular character are now added, for instance in the marketing of the extreme steep ski slope in Narvik, experiencing wild reindeer in Eastern Island, fishing for king crabs in the Varanger Fjord, and so on. Adding cultural activities to the list is also a new trend. Such activities have traditionally been associated with urban regions. A lack of cultural

activities was even one of the main variables explaining the out-migration of young people from these regions. Now we find experimental film festivals, modern art festivals, performing arts, film making, opera productions (there is even an opera house under construction in the very small community of Egilsstaðir) in even the smallest places, all examples of cultural activities that we normally associate with the big urban centres. Creativity seems to be flourishing. In a way this suggests that almost anything is possible, even in very peripheral locations – perhaps this is another expression of globalization? The use of symbolic communication in place reinvention is not, therefore, restricted to place branding. In pamphlets or brochures addressed to tourists or other visitors, the use of place-related symbols is accelerating. Even on municipal web pages this has become more common, as the use of the Internet as a channel for communication over distance increases dramatically.

Unintentional and contingent place reinvention

The last form of place reinvention we should like to highlight is reinvention that is more spontaneous. Unintentional place reinvention may appear to be a contradiction in terms. When something is reinvented, it is more or less explicitly assumed that some sort of agency or strategy lies behind this. In order to invent or reinvent something there must be some intentional activity related to it. However, in this study we have described how places are changing continuously, but not necessarily as a consequence of intentional action. This is also the case with the meaning of place, of course, which may change as part of an informal, discreet and continuous process of development, possibly beyond the scope or control of local leaders and also linked to external forces of political, economic, social or cultural change. The transformation of Kirkenes from an industrial town into a border town as a consequence of social change of a political nature that occurred far from the local arena, discussed in Chapter 4, is the best example in this study. The best explanation for what has happened in Kirkenes is perhaps as a result of contingent rather than strategic action by local actors. Today, more than a decade after the fall of the Soviet Union, local development is in the hands of local actors in Kirkenes to a much greater extent. Place reinvention in Kirkenes has progressed from being contingent in nature towards a more strategic form, although not in the hands of local government alone. Several actors and networks in the business sector, the cultural sector and those operating at a supra-local political level are probably still more important than local government. Kemijärvi, discussed in Chapter 7 as well, has been marked by external actors, resulting in a highly fluctuating situation with ups and downs, sometimes very promising but alternating with periods of bankruptcy and new businesses closing down or moving out. Through the initial success and then the rapid retreat of the Salcomp company, Kemijärvi was impoverished not only in economic terms but also in image terms as a town of new technology.

Dynamics and triggers

How does a process of reinvention start? Does it have to have a trigger that sets it all off? What is common to all these cases is that the foundation of the traditional local economy started to shake at some point. This ‘shaking’ has been more severe in some of the places than in others, for instance in Kirkenes and Narvik in Norway, and also in Fjarðabyggð in Iceland. In all these places the economic structure was changed dramatically and over a short period of time. In Kirkenes and Narvik the actual trigger was a defined crisis in the economy, a crisis that led to a state-funded transformation process. The reinvention was therefore state-initiated in the first phase of the process. These are probably also the three places where a change in place image is most explicitly expressed: in Fjarðabyggð from a fishing village to an energy producing town; in Kirkenes from a mining town to a border town (in Kirkenes the opening of the border with Russia was also a trigger, combined with the closing of the mine). The change in image has been less profound in Narvik, as the economy is still very much linked to the transport industry and the railway. In Kirkenes, however, the change is not only related to the

economic sector but also definitely to the new political climate between the East/West border of Europe.

Another ‘trigger’ that also seems to be almost global in its character is the new competition between places, not only within their own region, for instance with the neighbouring town, but also with places in other regions. This competition has been partly forced and stimulated by new indexes produced by researchers and consultancies, e.g. ‘creativity’ indexes, sustainability indexes, urban indexes, and so on.

The unique in the ordinary

Competition seems to stimulate creativity and the search for uniqueness, even if the result is sometimes isomorphism, copying ideas from others. All the places are highlighting their uniqueness through different forms of symbolic communication as part of a local identity development. Even if places want to enhance their uniqueness, they may nevertheless end up being very much like everyone else. The SnowCastle in Kemi is promoted as the biggest snow castle in the world, and that may still be the case, but with snow castles now popping up in several other communities in the North Calotte, this uniqueness is rapidly vanishing.

There are, however, also examples of uniqueness in the sense of building on local culture and cultural heritage. In Pajala, for example, where place reinvention is linked to Pajala as the ‘Cultural Municipality’, and where the cultural heritage of the Finnish language and culture is one of the cornerstones of their image. In Narvik, similarly, we find the steep mountain reflected in the new image of the town, symbolising not only an extreme ski slope but also the spirit of the people and their history. An industrial town can also be unique. As a couple of fishing villages, Eskifjörður and Neskaupstaður in the Fjarðabyggð region were just ordinary places, like all the other places on the Icelandic coast. With the aluminium smelter they became unique. In Övertorneå (Chapter 5), the once-unique environmental profile has become rather ordinary. On the other hand, ordinariness could also be described as unique. ‘The Good Life in Övertorneå’ is described as their uniqueness. Even politics can contribute to the uniqueness of place. Politics imprints a place in certain ways, not only with its sense of place and the local culture, but even its physical structure. Kemi as ‘The Red Town’ (Chapter 6) is one example where the socialist majority defines a certain planning policy that does not permit the privatization or exploitation of the most attractive marine landscapes in town. This is unique in itself, compared to the policies practised almost everywhere else.

Some places, then, seem to retain and even strengthen their uniqueness, whilst others are losing their local distinctiveness in the struggle to survive.

Continuity and discontinuity

Places seem to follow different patterns of development. This is perhaps most clearly expressed in the economic sector. Some places are moving towards a more knowledge and consumer based economy whilst others remain in a Fordist economy, or even reinvent the place within such a traditional mode of production, which in itself reflects a different path of development. Some places are still heavily marked by manufacturing industry, but the unstable character of manufacturing industries in the new world economy influences how ‘the industrial place’ is developed. This new economy produces, in Ulrich Beck’s terminology, a new ‘insecurity’ (1992). The paper-mill industry in Kemi is but one example of this.

Exploring place meanings in development work is an approach that makes it possible to identify lines of continuity and discontinuity. For example, a cultural or mental lag may be identified – the places in this study have undergone severe economic restructuring, but it was several years before people left the past behind, before they gave up hope that the good old days would return. Continuity in this way represents a form of path-dependency (North 1990). In other words, history matters – it has an enduring influence. Choices made on the basis of transitory conditions may persist long after those conditions change. The perspective is closely linked to historical institutionalism, which embraces the idea that individuals act within

institutional arrangements that are embedded in history (Steinmo and Thelen 1999). This concept is useful in explaining why policies may be difficult to reform. In some of our own cases we have observed that despite economic crises, de-industrialization, high levels of unemployment and net out-migration, there seemed to exist only a very strict and limited room for innovation, for instance for entrepreneurs who want to start up a new business. This was particularly the case in Kirkenes during the first years after the production of iron ore had stopped. Until then, the community had been highly dependent on a single company, not only for employment but also to provide some of the public services for the inhabitants. Even local private businesses depended on the company as their main customer.

Political cultures and practices are also part of what imprints a place identity and the image of a place. Towns that are former bastions of social democracy have a political culture from the past imprinted on their everyday life. Such processes have been described in Chapter 6, particularly with reference to Kemi and the continuation of its socialist political regime. This form of continuity goes even deeper: it embraces and intervenes with the political culture, with the class structure, with the competence of the workforce, with the material constructions that hold back or underpin development, with the way in which development processes are organized, and so on. Added to this is a certain ambivalence towards change. Such pathways of cultural lag must be moulded and challenged to make room for change through the creative work of active agency.

On another level, independent of this continuity/discontinuity of the economy, people experience a new perception of place. The place is not like it was before: some sort of unrest exists. There is insecurity about the future and which path to follow. A closed factory represents insecurity on the one hand, but on the other hand new possibilities as well.

Place reinvention elites

Place reinvention is more often than not driven by new elites in the community. These elites are those with competence, vision, creativity and also the motivation to make a difference in their communities. They also have networks stretching beyond the community that are often necessary to gain access to new ideas, expert knowledge and the funding that has to be mobilized in order to make progress. These elites are often motivated by a strong local identity, though without being parochial. Elites may proceed at the forefront of identifying a new identity or image for the place. It is this identity that has made them move back to their home communities after years away occupied with education and their personal careers. Coming back, they are strongly motivated to use their competence for the good for their communities and also for themselves. This was most prominent in Kirkenes, but also in Narvik and Pajala to some extent.

A commodified cultural turn?

This study started with the hypothesis of an emerging cultural turn in the economy of the north, inspired by the analysis of Lash and Urry dating from 1994. Culture in this study has been understood either 1) in an anthropological sense, as local identity building, 2) as those cultural activities that improve the quality of life, or 3) as a commodity, a way of creating new jobs and attracting tourists.

The findings from this study are contradictory and point in different directions. There has been a cultural turn-round in many of the places studied. The cultural activity field is a part of the cultural economy and a priority field for economic growth in many places, particularly relating to tourism. The inhabitants themselves also lobby for new cultural activities. Places therefore try to arrange for the place to appear attractive and suited to different groups. How a place looks becomes important: whether it is pretty, whether it is picturesque, whether it is a unique and interesting place to visit. The commodification of culture was most strongly emphasized in Chapter 3, based on the study of Pajala and Egilsstaðir. This commodification was based on observations of how people working in cultural fields strategically adapted their

arguments in support of culture to the dominant neo-liberal discourse because the economic growth potential in a competitive, global market-place was perceived as the global, money-spending tourist.

The growth in the tourist industry has been significant in the North, and this growth influences the growth of every other industry or business as well. Attractive tourism places are also places that are attractive to live in. Tourism adds value to a place. It represents extensive new consumer services and involves place-marketing. Culture is definitely one of the driving forces in place reinvention.

Can place reinvention be governed?

Any type of place reinvention involves governance, though not necessarily with local government as the main actor. Processes of place reinvention may have a base in civil society or in the business sector or, as has become more common, in co-operation between public, civil and business actors. The governance concept refers particularly to processes of governing where actors from more than one sector are involved. The dynamics of interplay between formal and informal processes involved in place reinvention seem to challenge the field of local governance to a substantial degree. Place reinvention initiatives evolve in a process interdependent with changes at local government level. Today, local governments are under pressure to deliver more services using fewer resources and transform their organizational structures into a more management-like style. What is the nature of the governance structures in the policy field of place reinvention?

One consequence of the downscaling of municipal administration and activities as a consequence of budgetary deficits during the 1980s and 1990s was that local development issues were handed over to other actors, particularly in the business field. Public and private agencies were invited to fill the gap that was left by the withdrawal of the municipalities from some of its planning and development activities, for instance. New forms of governance emerged in this policy field, particularly more entrepreneurial forms of governance that may be defined as systems of governance representing pro-growth economic development. Within this perspective there exists a strong narrative of producing images that can enhance economic growth. Many of the reinvention strategies are linked to entrepreneurial growth strategies.

Outsourcing local development issues to private or public-private companies and partnerships is seen as the most efficient means of achieving growth. Even very small communities have established business agencies that are run partly by the business community and partly by local government, which is represented on the board and/or by partial public funding, as in Pajala and Egilsstaðir, for example. In this northern Nordic context, with limited access to private capital, regional municipal actors are central within the networks. Development organizations are represented at a local, regional and state level, for example. As new actors come into the field, new developing policies are being constructed. In Pajala PUAB, and in Egilsstaðir BRDC are examples of new governance structures where the local business community and municipality are together working out strategies for future economic development according to a new regional policy framework.

One consequence of entrepreneurial forms of governance, at least in some cases, seems to be that the emphasis is on competition, partnerships with the local private business sector and a preference for large-scale flagship projects that reinforce male power within policy making. The discourse on business and entrepreneurship marginalizes women. This was the case in Pajala, Egilsstaðir and Kirkenes.

New governance institutions, such as business agencies initially established to enhance economic growth are in some cases also taking care of much softer policies, e.g. identity and image building, even cultural heritage projects. The reason why such non-governmental actors are being entrusted with issues of such vital importance to the community often relates partly to a lack of political control and partly to economic deficits in the municipal budgets that prohibit local government from undertaking such entrepreneurial activity itself. PUAB in Pajala

is not only a business-developing company, it has also been involved in every cultural activity taking place, even in the arrangement of a religious celebration, the 'Læstadius Festival'.

Developmental processes that involve place perceptions are also matters concerning power and resources. Specific resources, for example hydropower in Iceland, or particular political systems, for example in Kemi; a strong local identity in Kemijärvi or a particular physical location, such as Kirkenes and its proximity to the Russian border: all of these make a difference. Who controls these resources is a key question that is discussed in particular detail in Chapter 8.

The powerful discursive simplifications of the world, which are linked to the processes of image building, mobilize and legitimize a particular set of actions or policies. Place reinvention is a power struggle, a struggle concerning who changes what in alternative representations of any place, present and future (Smith 2001). Promotional activities are linked to strategic projects, where power games are played out through coalition building, and manipulation, in the form of power games concerning politics. Explicit struggles occur over access to the power to frame formal rules and resource flows, and over ideologies and policy principles that inform this framework. The situation is constrained by the particular capacities and interests of the actors involved, and also by more deeply-embedded cultural assumptions. A governance culture may encompass dynamics that evolve to challenge the power of the strategic actors (Healey 2003). The question of who has the power to change place symbols prepares the ground for any effort to govern place reinvention processes. Images constructed by elites within an entrepreneurial governance structure may be contested, and may be in conflict with how local people perceive the place. New place narratives of this kind were most contested in Kemi and Pajala. On the other hand, reinvention can also be deliberate, for instance when linked to an oppressed local culture. In revitalizing a forgotten and oppressed language, like Meänkieli in Pajala, the process has contributed to a strengthening of the local identity.

Place reinvention policies are locally mediated and governance structures are therefore contingent upon a number of locally specific factors. Local politics, governmental contexts and local urban contexts differ, and so do governance practices.

As we have argued for reinvention processes, governance processes do not change merely through the acts of a strategic public or private actors, or the pressure of broad contextual forces such as economic globalization: governance processes evolve through complex interactions between localized practices, ways of thinking and ways of acting that have built up over the years, and broader forces that introduce new players, new ideas and new forces to be recognized, interpreted, mediated and struggled over (Vigar et al. 2000).

One central question relating to forms of governance is what qualities they have. Are they merely a reconfiguration of elites, a new form of local corporatism? Or do they increase the potential for a more broadly-based form of governance, in which a much wider range of stakeholders will be able to have a voice? What types of governance forms will have influence, and what place reinvention strategies are developing: who is involved, who has the power to define the image of the place, and who is excluded? A transformation of existing governance cultures in the municipalities is required so that new actors, discourses and perspectives become integrated in town-promoting activities. Generally, the ability of policies to factor in power-aspect adaptations is linked to the cultural and social sustainability of the outcomes of place reinvention processes. Transformative strategies are needed to penetrate both discourses and practices (Healey 2002:196). They need to build on real changes that are going on in the community, the interests involved and, at a deeper level, views concerning cultural assumptions and values: the ground upon which identities are shaped. Without such a strategy there is a risk that people will disconnect from the process and feel alienated from what is going on. The image becomes just more empty rhetoric, without any link with reality.

Conclusion

Place reinvention in this study has been used to capture the way in which places change meaning as a result of continuous and strategic processes of place making and identity building. Place reinvention directs attention towards the relationship between symbolic and imaginative change and planned regeneration or place-making initiatives. Place reinvention is a concept that can perhaps only be addressed at a very abstract and aggregated level. At the same time, it involves processes that are very concrete, physical and material, in the sense that places are actually being changed through these processes. Places are reinvented through continuous practices. Place relates to both materiality and identity (Hillier 2001). Signs, meaning and materiality come together. The total congregation of people and materiality creates a patchwork of meaning that people assign to this material reality. These meanings are symbolic representations as well as the products of direct experience. However, the change of 'place image' or place 'identity' is linked to such place making in various ways.

Through this approach we have tried to grasp some of the complex dynamics between the intentional and strategic processes of change, e.g. place-marketing projects and the continuous process of change that proceeds more or less unintentionally, but nevertheless contributes to changing the image of a place. In that sense, place reinvention has to do with processes of local development that change the meanings and images of the place and, in the long run, the local identity as well. Place identity is changed by globalization, but also by everyday life. As places change, the nature of the place becomes increasingly complex and contested. People constantly act and reflect upon local developments. The meaning of place is being renegotiated.

A 'place' is therefore a multi-faceted phenomenon. Not only are places social-political, they are also symbolic-cultural constructs.

Does this understanding have any policy implications? We believe that it does. How we think about a place is important because conceptions of place are translated into policies that are significant in our concern about the quality of life, economic competitiveness and environmental sustainability. Concern for the quality of place is embedded in a place's economic and social change. The re-imaging of places to address the needs of a new economy depends on what qualities can be promoted.

Our study seems to indicate that processes of place reinvention are complex, and therefore difficult to govern. The system of governance is challenged by place reinvention, partly because of its complexity. Place development is not a policy issue that can be handled as a singular policy area, nor by local government alone, since it involves a whole range of both public and private actors. There seems to be a need for other, more collaborative forms of governance. Övertorneå, with its Expedition Övertorneå project, represents an example where this has been made possible. Collaborative governance approaches can add value to local development processes (Innes and Booher 1999). Such collaborative capacities should build on what is already present, but involve a broader spectrum of actors and stakeholders in discussions about which place qualities should be improved or promoted. Processes of place reinvention should focus attention on key qualities with which many stakeholders can identify, to avoid transient marketing images. The challenge re to a presented by this change from government to governance calls for local government to adjust situation where political and economic power no longer lie within the hegemonic power of their own government but in a multiplicity of agencies and interests. In some cases, these new forms of governance in the policy field of local development have resulted in the fragmentation of local government and a lack of political control over issues of vital importance to the community. To avoid such consequences, the local government role as metagovernor should therefore be strengthened.

References

- Beck, U. (1992) *Risk society*. London: Sage Publications.
- Healey, P. (1997) *Collaborative planning. Shaping places in fragmented societies*. Hongkong: Macmillan.
- Hillier, J. (2001) Imagined Value: The Poetics and Politics of Place, in: Madanipour, A., Hull, A. and Healey, P. (eds.); *The governance of place. Space and planning processes*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Innes, J. and Booher, D. (1999) Collaborative Policymaking: Governance Through Dialogue, in: Hajer, M. and Wagenaar, H. (eds): *Deliberative Policy Analyses. Understanding Governance in the Network Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- North, D.C. (1990) *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schildes, R. (1991) *Places on the margin*, London: Routledge
- Steinmo, S., Thelen, K. and Longstreth, F. (eds.) (1992) *Structuring politics: historical institutionalism in comparative analyses*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vidal, A.C. (1997) Can Community Development Reinvent Itself? The Challenges of Strengthening Neighbourhoods in the 21st Century, in: *Journal of American Planning Association*, Vol 63, No. 4, Autumn 1997.

List of contributors

Professor Seppo Aho, Director of Development, Faculty of Business and Tourism, University of Lapland, FI-96101 Rovaniemi, seppo.aho@ulapland.fi

Dr.. Karl Benediktsson, associate professor, Department of Geology and Geography, University of Iceland, IS-101 Reykjavik, kben@hi.is

Brynhild Granås, researcher, Department of Planning and Community Studies, University of Tromsø, N-9037 Tromsø, bgranaas@sv.uit.no

Dr.. Yvonne Gunnarsdotter, assistant professor, Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SE-750 07 Uppsala, yvonne.gunnarsdotter@sol.slu.se

Magnfríður Júlíusdóttir, assistant professor, Department of Geology and Geography, University of Iceland, IS-101 Reykjavik, mj@hi.is

Dr.. Torill Nyseth, associate professor, Department of Planning and Community Studies, University of Tromsø, N-9037 Tromsø, torilln@sv.uit.no

Dr.. Leena Suopajarvi, director, Regional Research Services, University of Lapland, FI-96101 Rovaniemi, leena.suopajarvi@ulapland.fi

Arvid Viken, associate professor, Finnmark University College, NO-9509 Alta, arvid.viken@hifm.no

Dr.. Cecilia Waldenström, researcher, Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SE-750 07 Uppsala, cecilia.waldenstrom@sol.slu.se