

# **Emerging critique of Norwegian oil**

A discourse analysis of letters to the editor in three  
national newspapers in 2013

By

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## **Declaration**

I, Stine Kvanvik Hopen, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date.....



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# Abstract

The oil industry has been immensely valuable to Norway in regards to employment and economy. However, with climate change, economic vulnerability and the increase in sustainable alternatives to oil in mind, there is now an opportunity to move away from oil. Previous oil-discourses that the oil industry and pro-oil politicians promote can be considered as slowing down this change. This master's thesis aim is to discover emerging discourses that are critical to the Norwegian oil industry and discourses that are counter to the positive oil-discourses. Discovering such discourses can enlighten Norwegians about the flaws of the oil industry and give reasons to move away from oil.

Letters to the editor published in three national newspapers, Aftenposten, Dagens Næringsliv and Verdens Gang, were examined throughout the year 2013. In these newspapers emerging discourses were discovered through a critical discourse analysis. With the thesis objective *Understand and identify discourses critical to the oil industry produced by the Norwegian people in Norwegian media during 2013* seven emerging discourses were discovered: *Division of the Norwegian economy*, *Pro-oil politics*, *A happy ending to the oil adventure*, *Oil is bad for the environment*, *Listen to the global community*, *Turning a blind eye (Climate sinners with a good conscience)* and *Spewing oil onto global markets*. Some of these discourses are fairly new and others are based on thoughts that have been circulating for a while. This thesis also discovers that the authors of these discourses and their supporting narratives are powerful individuals, such as businesspersons, scientists and politicians, with the credibility it takes to form emerging discourses. The conclusion of this master's thesis is that there are in fact emerging discourses critical to the oil industry on the rise and that there is a chance for them to be adapted by the Norwegian society.



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**Figure 1:** Three-dimensional conception of discourse and method of discourse analysis p. 22

## List of abbreviations

### Discourse analysis:

CDA	Critical discourse analysis
DA	Discourse analysis
LTE	Letter to the Editor

### Climate terminology:

CC	Climate Change
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon Dioxide
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
SD	Sustainable Development

### International authorities:

EU	European Union
IEA	International Energy Agency
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development

### Norwegian political parties:

Ap	The Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet)
FrP	The Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet)
H	The Conservative Party (Høyre)
MDG	The Green Party (Miljøpartiet De Grønne)
Sp	The Centre Party (Senterpartiet)

### Norwegian Authorities and Organisations:

KLD	The Ministry of Climate and Environment
NFD	The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries
NGU	Geological investigation agency
NHO	Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise
OD	The Norwegian Petroleum Directorate
OED	The Ministry of Petroleum and Energy
OLF	Norwegian Oil and Gas Association
SSB	Statistics Norway

### Newspapers:

AP	Aftenposten
VG	Verdens Gang
DN	Dagens Næringsliv



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Problems regarding the Norwegian oil industry

The aim for my master's thesis in International Environmental Studies is to discover and analyse emerging discourses criticising the Norwegian oil industry. Discourse analysis can help understand how the Norwegian oil industry is debated, why these discourses are used and what power the discourses hold over the Norwegian society and politics.

The oil industry has for a long while had a positive impact on the Norwegian society. The discourses used to describe the industry have been dominated by positive arguments shaped by the oil industry and pro-oil politicians. These arguments are not unsubstantiated as the Norwegian oil industry has been an immense benefit for Norway as a country: it has provided jobs, increased national standard of living, provided us with an oil fund, increased development, welfare, wealth and consumption. However, in more recent times, public views of the oil industry seem to be changing. Citizens increasingly understand what effects the industry (i.e. its pollution) has on our climate and environment (Gallup, 2014). There is also concern about what the oil industry does to other industries and our economy regarding economic vulnerability (Ihlen, 2009). In addition there is a worry about how the oil industry is changing the moral image of Norway (Norgaard, 2006).

However, Norway as a nation continues to extract and export oil regardless of its well-documented negative environmental and economic impacts. Indeed, just as with climate change, the facts about oil are highly disputed despite the vast amounts of academic research on the impacts of the oil industry (Boykoff, 2013). This issue could be explained by Norway's economy currently being highly dependent on the oil industry (Ihlen, 2009). However the public image of Norway seems split, we also want to be a 'pioneer<sup>1</sup>' in regards to climate change (DagensNæringsliv, 2013). I argue in this thesis that it is a paradox that Norway's politicians invest such effort in sustaining an unsustainable oil industry at the same time as they portray Norway as an environmentally friendly nation at the global level.

In essence, while oil is intimately connected to Norway's foundation as a modern nation with an environmental image, is a polluting, non-renewable source of energy. The amount of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in our atmosphere has fluctuated through time, but research shows that since the industrial revolution there has been a drastic increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emitted into

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<sup>1</sup> Original quote: Foregangsland

the atmosphere. We extract CO<sub>2</sub> in the form of oil, coal and gas and emit CO<sub>2</sub> through industry and transportation (Robbins, Hintz, & Moore, 2010). From these three main sources of pollution, the biggest emitter of greenhouse gasses is oil. Oil is considered a highly polluting, unsustainable source of energy that is contributing to climate change (ibid). Many international governmental environmental organisations, and non-governmental interests groups argue that given the linkage between fossil fuels and emissions, oil should be replaced with renewable and sustainable alternatives that are not polluting or depleting our natural resources (Dincer, 2000). In Norway, hydropower is the main source of energy, but the oil and gas industry is large (Seljom et al., 2011). “The emission contribution from power and heat production is quite low ... but emissions from the oil and gas sectors stand out” (Gebremedhin & De Oliveira Granheim, 2012, p. 7310). Although the the Norwegian government takes climate change seriously and aims to reduce emissions, the Norwegian oil adventure seems to be expanding without many attempts to reduce extraction or to replace oil production with sustainable alternatives (Gebremedhin & De Oliveira Granheim, 2012).

There are several reasons to why we have not yet decreased our oil production here in Norway. Some suggest that Norwegian oil is one of the ‘cleanest’ in the market, and as a result Norway should increase its production of oil to improve the overall global climate (Norgaard, 2006). Another argument is that if we reduce our ‘clean’ oil production other ‘dirtier’ suppliers will cover the demand (Fæhn, Hagem, Lindholt, Mæland, & Rosendahl, 2013). Others believe that it is more economically viable to reduce emissions through initiatives such as carbon offsetting, than to change Norwegian consumption habits (Ihlen, 2007). Norgaard (2006) also suggests that many Norwegians are in fact in denial about the emerging environmental problems caused by oil and that this is limiting action from the public.

However in this master thesis, my focus will be on the role of discourse in the Norwegian oil adventure and how the portrayal of oil influences the Norwegian public. My motive to undertake this study is inspired by a persona belief that Norway has the capacity, and must, move away from oil. I believe oil is a curse that will only hinder us in the future and that we should use alternatives. I am interested to study here why we have not started moving away from oil and what role discourses has in this. This research is relevant in International Environmental Studies as oil pollution as a contributor to climate change is a current environmental issue (Griggs, 2011). It is my contention that this study will help understand why Norway has not yet started reducing its emissions by moving away from oil

and what encouraging counter discourses are emerging, influencing people's perceptions of the oil industry.

## **1.2 Emerging discourses**

Considering the essence of Norway's biggest industry and the changing attitudes towards the impact of oil, it certainly makes a good climate to study emerging discourses. Interest in environmental issues is increasing (Austgulen, 2012; Gallup, 2014), we have a green party in the Storting and scientists argue that climate change is already upon us. This climate also makes a good foundation for understanding what emerging counter arguments do to the oil industry's discourses. It is through letters to the editor I plan to identify emerging discourses, as the media is a source of trusted information in Norway and a way for the public to adopt discourses. If the media leads the way on a move away from oil and provides space in news columns for letters critiquing the oil industry, it is likely to provoke people to adjust their own discourse and understanding. I thus use discourse analysis for tracking discourse and document the shift in discourse and media narratives about this topic (Altheide & Schneider, 2013).

Such a change in discourse from a grassroots level is based in the theory of emergence. Old discourses merge into new discourses about a topic. "The effect (or lack of effect) of emergent phenomena in social processes and text depends on whether they are selected for incorporation into the strategies of social groups, and the success or failure of competing strategies in processes of hegemonic struggle" (p. 368, Fairclough). In the big picture emerging discourses can lead to organisational change regarding Norway's policies and the oil industry itself, as within a realist perspective external pressures can be internalised in organisations (ibid). However this thesis will only focus on which discourses are emerging and their wider meaning.

## **1.3 Objectives and RQ's**

Bearing in mind the climate vs. oil image-paradox in Norway, I consider it immensely important to consider emerging counter discourses. I have decided to use 2013 as a time frame as 2013 was the year I began gathering ideas for my thesis and thus also had an overview of what was being published in letters to the editor on the oil industry. General elections that year, and the public hope and aspiration for change in the government's position

in the oil debate added certainty to my choice in time frame. The **objective** for my thesis thus became to:

*Understand and identify discourses critical to the oil industry produced by the Norwegian people in Norwegian media during 2013.*

To carry out this research I think it crucial to answer the following research questions:

- (1) What emerging critical discourses focused on the Norwegian oil industry can be identified in letters to the editors in 2013?*
- (2) What narratives can be found supporting emerging discourses in 2013?*
- (3) Who are the key critics of the Norwegian oil industry in 2013?*

## **1.4 Thesis structure**

Bearing the aim of this thesis in mind, the outline for the rest of this thesis will be as follows: **Chapter 2** will give an in-depth historical background on the Norwegian oil industry. It will explain how the industry came to be and how it has shaped Norway with its income since. It will also include an account of the entry of the climate debate in Norway and how this has interacted with the way we view and communicate about the oil industry today. **Chapter 3** will give an overview of the theoretical framework on which this thesis is based. It will explain how I theoretically view the word and explain the reasoning behind using discourse analysis and narratives as an analytical tool for this thesis. In **Chapter 4** I will elaborate on how the discourse analysis will be conducted and give reasoning for all steps in the discourse analysis process. **Chapter 5** contains the emerging discourses and supporting narratives I found throughout my discourse analysis. And finally in **Chapter 6** are the concluding remarks of this thesis. Here is the relevance of the emerging discourses accounted for and an explanation of their importance placed in the context of discourses on the Norwegian oil industry.

In the main body of the thesis, footnotes have been used continuously to give additional information on certain points and to explain Norwegian expressions for the foreigner. Furthermore, given the importance of text in discourse analysis, Norwegian extracts from letters to the editor have been translated to English in the main body of the thesis and the original quotes are placed in footnotes as to give notion that the translated extract is merely a

product of my capacity to translate from Norwegian to English. At the very end of this thesis there is a list of all the letters to the editors I refer to in this thesis. There will also be scanned copies of some of these letters in the appendix, each illustrating one of the emerging discourses found in my discourse analysis.



## 2 The Norwegian oil adventure and media discourses

### - Historical Background

In this chapter I discuss earlier literature on the history of the Norwegian oil industry and its discourses. This historical background will lay the foundations for the thesis. It will explain how the Norwegian oil industry began, has developed in the face of growing environmental concern and how it affects Norwegian day-to-day life. This information will help us to understand the Norwegian populations relationship to the oil industry and common ideas of its value to society and development (Svennevig, 2009). To identify common discourses we must furthermore understand the social context and detect the key players in their creation (Fairclough, 2010). This historical background is written as a literature review and indicates some of the key authors and texts within the history of the Norwegian oil industry and its discursive formation.

### 2.1 History of the Norwegian oil industry

#### 2.1.1 The Oil Adventure<sup>2</sup>

Today, the oil industry and its benefits are present in most parts of Norwegians lives. It provides the plastic used in our consumer goods, household and industry chemicals, the income that support our welfare state, and it provides jobs that employ our citizens. The benefits are many and the oil industry and the management of said industry has had an important role in Norway's development. However, it has not always been this way. Norway used to be a lot poorer.

In the book, *Vi fant, vi fant. Norge feirer 40 år som olje- og gassnasjon*<sup>3</sup>, commissioned by OLF<sup>4</sup>, Aftenposten journalist Alf Ole Ask<sup>5</sup>, gives a detailed overview of the history of the Norwegian oil industry. The Norwegian oil adventure began when Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a request to Norway's geological investigation agency (NGU) about whether it was likely to find mineral sources offshore in the continental shelf. In 1958 the reply clearly sounded that one should disregard the notion that sulphur, oil or coal

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<sup>2</sup> In Norway the oil industry is popularly referred to as *Oljeeventyret* (the oil adventure)

<sup>3</sup> Translation: *We found, we found. Norway celebrates 40 years as an oil and gas nation.*

<sup>4</sup> Then: Oil Industry Association, Now: Norwegian Oil and Gas Association

<sup>5</sup> Aftenposten journalist who specialises on oil and energy issues.

could be found under Norwegian waters. Despite this statement, the optimism for discovering oil outside the coast of Norway was kept alive due to Dutch gas discoveries. Four years after the discouraging statement from NGU, the American oil company Phillips Petroleum requested sole rights to petroleum extraction on the Norwegian continental shelf. It was established that oil extraction was a viable option, however, given national concerns with sovereignty, the rights and management of potential oil should be kept within the nation. This criterion was established with experience from preceding Norwegian hydropower development in mind.

The process of establishing a Norwegian oil industry started in 1963, when Norway claimed rights to the areas outside the Norwegian coast and the following division of the continental shelf between Norway, United Kingdom and Denmark. The search for oil commenced, and in 1969 a successful drilling rig, Ocean Viking, discovered a large oil deposit outside Norway's shores. The discovery of what would come to be known as the Ekofisk field started the Norwegian oil age and in the following years a great deal of oil was discovered at other sites on the continental shelf.

From the beginning it was political consensus that whilst an immensely valuable resource had been found, the oil from the Norwegian continental shelf should be carefully regulated by the state and slowly extracted as to not interfere with other industries or the environment. The law surrounding the previously established hydropower development laid the basis for the concessionary structure used by the oil industry today. In 1972, a Norwegian state owned oil company, Statoil, was founded to ensure the keeping of Norwegian interests and supremacy over the oil and its revenue. The same year the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (OD) is founded. This authority's main task was (and still is) "creating the greatest possible values for society from the oil and gas activities by means of prudent resource management based on safety, emergency preparedness and safeguarding of the external environment" (OD, 2010) and ensuring that the 10 commanding achievements, later known as the *10 oil commandments*<sup>6</sup>, were followed. Six years after the establishment of Statoil and OD, the government also established a Ministry of Petroleum and Energy (OED) detached from The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries (NFD) to further protect Norwegian oil interests. With these precautions and governance structures the model for the Norwegian oil industry was established. Income flows and the industry are managed by the

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 1 - "10 oil commandments"

state with low levels of conflict. However, in the 90s, the oil extraction's pace adjustments are being eased and increased revenue is placed in a *Government Pension Fund - Global*<sup>7</sup>.

In the book that celebrates 40 years of a Norwegian oil adventure, Ask (2009) seem to leave out the more conflicting issues regarding the beginning of the Norwegian oil industry. This trend can be seen repeated in many similar books about the history of the Norwegian oil industry, such as *34/10 Olje på norsk – en historie om dristighet* by Lerøen (2006), *Norsk Oljehistorie vol I, II & III* by Hanisch and Nerheim (1992), Nerheim (1996) and Ryggvik and Smith-Solbakken (1997), and *Norges oljehistorie* by Kindingstad and Hagemann (2002). In these books there is a subtle omitting of discrediting facts and the portrayal of Norway is purely as a successful oil nation.

### 2.1.2 Trial and error

In his book *Til siste dråpe. Om oljens politiske økonomi*<sup>8</sup>, Ryggvik (2010) critically assess the foundations of the Norwegian oil industry and argues that the history of the Norwegian oil industry has been more complicated than popularly portrayed and suggested by other writers. Ryggvik (2010) expands this history by demonstrating that the Norwegian oil industry really came into being on the basis of trial and error, and was therefore not the fairy-tale that it is often claimed to be. Early governmental regulations for the oil industry focused on ensuring Norwegian access to and control over revenue. However, being a country with no experience in extracting oil, procedures had to be designed and implemented as the industry unfolded and regulations created when necessary. One of the major issues with the desire for state control was to communicate and negotiate with the international oil industry's business moguls and learn how to succeed in this fast paced industry. However, in the hope of future revenue, both Norwegian politicians and the international companies wanted prompt and high pace development of Norwegian oil fields. This aim conflicted with the *10 oil commandments* decision to have a moderate speed of extraction. The enthusiasm for future revenue conflicted with the immaturity of the Norwegian oil industry and could be reflected in the industrial standards and regulations that had its shortcomings. This affected the planning and quality of the work, which the Norwegian industry did not have the skills to safely execute in the first place.

Unsatisfactory work was performed and thorough safety regulations were not implemented throughout the first decades of the Norwegian oil industry's existence. This

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<sup>7</sup> Popularly known as the *Oil Fund – Oljefondet*

<sup>8</sup> Translation: To the last drop. About the oils political economy

made the North Sea “a technological laboratory” (Ryggvik, 2010, p. 158) where oil workers lives were at stake. The 60s, 70s and 80s saw the loss of many offshore oil workers. For example, 123 lives were lost in 1980 when the offshore accommodation-platform Alexander L. Kielland sank in a storm. It is argued by (Ryggvik, 2010) that blame for this accident should be assumed by the Norwegian government for its failure to put safety regulations in place and its haste to extract oil. After a long period of trial and error, OD implemented bigger demands and stricter requirements to all oil companies and the safety of people and the environment improved significantly. Ryggvik (2010) draws attention to the fact that it was the oil workers themselves who demanded changes to the safety regimes used on platforms. Indeed, it was their pressure through strike that led to the inclusion of offshore activities in *Arbeidsmiljøloven*<sup>9</sup> in 1979.

### 2.1.3 The Norwegian model

However, taking the trial and error approach into consideration, we can argue that the Norwegian discovery of oil has been successful compared to other countries. When one compares the Norwegian approach to building an oil industry and oil economy to for example the UK, which also found oil at about the same time as Norway. One can see that Norway made the right choices early on, even though this was not known at the time. In the book *Flammable Societies*, Cumbers (2012) states that there are some similarities between the two nations management of the oil, however the points of differentiation are clear. In the UK the government was afraid to place too many demands and restrictions on foreign oil companies, in fear that this would scare them off and that they would not invest in UK’s offshore development. On the other hand, the early decision by the Norwegian state to closely manage the oil industry and procure a high part of the revenue from the oil industry, helped them claim money and knowledge from foreign oil companies.

Norway secured “a direct financial investment in oil and gas developments” (Cumbers, 2012, p. 230) which allowed them to set up the *Government Pension Fund – Global* in the 1990s (Regjeringen, 2015). This provided Norway with a long-term revenue, whilst the UK focused on using foreign companies to get the oil up as quick as possible. Norway also required foreign companies to provide them with knowledge about the oil industry so that they could further develop their own. This resulted in a growing industry of oil suppliers in Norway. Later on Norwegian policies favoured Norwegian supplier companies, again allowing them to further develop. The British however, had no requirement

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<sup>9</sup> Translation: Working Environment Law

to use British suppliers for the oil industry. The differences in approach and the benefits Norway gained, in the form of wealth and a growing industry, came down to the fact that the UK's oil policy was driven by multinational oil companies and their market oriented interest to quickly extract oil whilst Norway's policies were highly protectionist in the beginning.

The Norwegian approach can also be seen in the light of that of developing countries. Countries such as Nigeria and Angola, where the "oil revenues have been squandered, mismanaged and appropriated by wealthy elites or foreign multinational corporations" (Cumbers, 2012, p. 222), have been less fortunate with their find than Norway. Oil finds have in some cases resulted in severe social and political instability for countries due to the oil that have been discovered on their territory (Sætre, 2009). Due to socio-economic complexities in many countries it is difficult to change the negative effects of the oil industry. It seems like there is no *one size-fits all* approach to a successful oil nation. However, the Norwegian oil adventure, despite its early trial and error approach, has resulted in what is often called an exemplary system. Other oil-countries, especially third world countries, strive to follow Norway's success story on oil extraction (OD, 2012).

#### 2.1.4 Entry of the climate debate

With the entry of the climate debate, celebration of the Norwegian oil adventure somewhat stifled/stagnated. In the late 80s, Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland and the United Nations published the report *Our Common Future*<sup>10</sup>. The report placed climate change (CC) on the Norwegian political agenda, urging the importance of sustainable development (SD) and situated emission reduction in Norwegian climate policies. The report defined SD as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987, p. 41). This definition conflicted with Norway's recent development as an oil industry. This is an industry that contributes to CC and is potentially harming future generations (Nilsen, 2001). Nevertheless, the Norwegian people and politicians saw the urgency in 'saving the planet' and in the late 80s it was political consensus in the parliament (except FrP), and supported by the environmental movement, that Norway should strive to cut its emission nationally. At this time we see the creation of a *national action* discourse in climate politics (Hovden & Lindseth, 2004) and in 1991 Norway introduced a CO<sub>2</sub>-tax as an instrument to directly impact domestic emissions (T. Moe, 2010).

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<sup>10</sup> Also known as *The Brundtland Report*

However, the national focus on emission reductions did not last long. With the formation of international climate treaties<sup>11</sup> in the 90s, cost-effective emission reduction mechanisms were introduced. These mechanisms allow countries that are obligated to reduce their own emissions under the commitment to the Kyoto Protocol to write off emissions through mechanisms such as trading emission quotas or support emission reduction initiatives in other countries. The focus on *national action* faded and a focus on cost-effective measures in climate politics took hold. The new political discourse placed an emphasis on *thinking globally*. This discourse allowed for a growing oil industry to fit in an image of Norway as an environmentally concerned nation. It was not just the opportunity to use cost-effective emission reduction mechanisms that changed the political climate discourse. It also proved to be an easier way for politicians to grant their international climate obligations.

Even Gro Harlem Brundtland<sup>12</sup>, Norway's Prime Minister in the early 90s and the chairman of the report that placed climate policy on the Norwegian agenda, moved from a local to global view. She supported the argument of cost-effective measures that would offset the country's emissions and help create reductions elsewhere (Hovden & Lindseth, 2004). Giving notion that the oil industry is irreplaceable as a source of energy, the mid-90s gave the impression that it was possible for Norway to be both an "oljenasjon"<sup>13</sup> and a "klimapolitisk foregangsland"<sup>14</sup> (Nilsen, 2001, p. 130). However this compatibility is questionable.

There has been a great deal of academic discussion about the evolution of climate policies in Norway, from the time when they first became widely discussed as a domestic issue to they developed into a hot potato with an international focus (Andresen & Butenschøn, 2001; Fæhn, Hagem, Lindholt, et al., 2013; Hovden & Lindseth, 2004; Lafferty, Knudsen, & Larsen, 2007; T. Moe, 2010; Nilsen, 2001; Ryggvik, 2010, 2013; Ytterstad, 2012). A common critique within this writing is that Norwegian climate policy is doing nothing to reduce the oil industry or to phase it out. Rather a common emphasis by state and public is on Norwegian climate policies that counter-intuitively seek to balance the expansion of the oil industry with the idea of Norway as an environmentally friendly nation. As stated by Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg<sup>15</sup> in the foreword of *Vi fant, vi fant. Norge feirer 40 år som olje- og gassnasjon* "We can not choose either energy or climate, we have to choose both".

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<sup>11</sup> eg. the Earth Summit in Rio and the Kyoto Protocol

<sup>12</sup> Prime minister in Norway: 1981, 1986–89, 1990–96.

<sup>13</sup> Translation: Oil nation

<sup>14</sup> Translation: Climate-political pioneer

<sup>15</sup> Prime minister in Norway: 2000-01, 2005-13

### 2.1.5 Oil today, a paradox

The pace of oil extraction in Norway has intensified in recent times. During the 90s Norway went from an earlier emphasis on moderately extracting oil to tapping the resource with increasing speed. There are several reasons to this change. Firstly, the “Norwegian state has relaxed, although not completely discarded its protectionist stance as part of an ‘internationalisation’ strategy, geared towards improving efficiency and enhancing competitiveness” (Cumbers, 2012, p. 234). In line with this relaxation the Norwegian politicians claimed in 93 that “the activity in the petroleum industry is to a considerable extent depending on factors we cannot control”<sup>16</sup> Ryggvik (2010, p. 150) referring to international pressure, an oil industry that was difficult to control and a system they found challenging to interfere with. In addition the Norwegian oil industry had grown and now defends its own interests. Part of the oil industry’s strength comes from their ties with OED (ibid). There is also a consensus that the world has an increasing energy demand that Norway must help cover. Because the Norwegian oil industry are fronting their oil as being sustainable and cleaner than that of other countries it justifies increased oil extraction as part of a greater good (Ihlen, 2007). However the fact is that oil is a non-renewable, CO<sub>2</sub> emitting resource that contributes to CC (Raven, Hassenzahl, & Berg, 2013). Claiming that the Norwegian oil industry is sustainable directly contradicts, and at the core attempts at redefining definitions of, sustainability (Ihlen, 2007). It is difficult to accept the coexistence of Norway’s image as an oil nation and climate nation. In the present the words themselves constitute a paradox.

The discourses surrounding Norwegian climate policies still emphasize *thinking globally*, however there is a growing criticism to our lack of national emission reductions. With international efforts to reduce emissions in the shape of flexible mechanisms and the CO<sub>2</sub>-taxes from 91 more than 70 per cent of Norwegian GHG<sup>17</sup>-emissions are covered (T. Moe, 2010). However this this does not make up for the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that are coming out of Norwegian oil fields directly causing CC. CC must be addressed, and emission reduction can successfully be achieved through other national efforts such as downscaling the oil industry, thus going directly to the root of the problem (Fæhn, Hagem, Lindholt, et al., 2013). As T. Moe (2010) puts it: “To think that one can subsidize ones way out of this, or rely only on technological miracles, is probably an illusion” (ibid, p. 26). In 2008, the political focus on

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<sup>16</sup> Original quote: Aktiviteten innenfor petroleumsvirksomheten er i vesentlig utstrekning avhengig av forhold vi ikke kan kontrollere.

<sup>17</sup> GHG = Greenhouse gas

climate change in Norway “is unfortunately characterised by a quick-burst mentality rather than long term and determined work”<sup>18</sup> (Brende, 2008, p. 131).

It is difficult to move away from oil and focus on local measures because there is a strong recognition of the petroleum industry’s importance for employment and the welfare state (Lafferty et al., 2007; Ryggvik, 2013). These reasons justify Norwegians and our politicians’ to turn a blind eye to the role our main industry’s play in climate change (Norgaard, 2006). Despite its benefits, the Norwegian people cannot overlook what the oil industry does to our economy in the long term. Even though it was established early that the oil industry should not compete with other industries, it now is the biggest industry in Norway and other industries have decreased as a result. Some will even go as far as to suggest that we do not really have any other successful industries other than the oil. Many suggests that the petroleum industry solely drives and feeds Norway (Lafferty et al., 2007). The dominant position of the oil industry in Norwegian economy is worrying as it makes us vulnerable for shocks in the global economy.

After years of dominating the Norwegian economy, the trouble the Norwegian oil industry brings is apparent. However, there are several solutions to climate change and economic issues. We can move away from oil, focus on other industries, and diversify. Ytterstad (2013) and Ryggvik (2013) suggest that we have to introduce a precautionary measure and that it is better to change Norway now whilst we have the resources to change. When the opportunity emerged in the 60s, Norway decided to develop the industry and become an oil nation. It is now possible to replace offshore and oil supplier jobs with green and sustainable jobs. As the energy demand is still a pressing argument to continue extracting oil, the ‘dirty’ energy can be replaced with ‘clean’ energy. Norway can decide to become a sustainable and renewable nation (ibid & ibid). As of now renewable energy in Norway is managed by the OED, not the Ministry of Climate and Environment (KLD). It is a paradox that what we have to replace oil and gas is run by the same people that have the oil industry’s best interests at hand (Brende, 2008). However, change must be done not only in the economy and industries. Norwegian citizens attitudes must change and there must be political will for restructuring (Ryggvik, 2010).

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<sup>18</sup> Original quote: preges dessverre mer av skippertaks-mentalitet enn av langsiktig og målrettet arbeid



## 2.2 Norwegian oil discourses

### 2.2.1 Oil communication

There are many interests involved in keeping the status quo. The current economic model benefits the oil industry, our politicians and the Norwegian people. In keeping with this the oil industry actively attempts to influence its discourses. In his book *Petromania*, Sætre (2009) states that the fairy-tale of the Norwegian oil adventure is told by the heroes themselves, the oil industry. There is a substantial amount of literature published that analyses the Norwegian industry's reputation and communications. Here, several of the arguments that the oil industry uses to justify continued and growing petroleum activity are pinpointed. In most of the literature covering the oil industry's reputation, counter arguments and critiques are also made. Especially Ihlen (2007) has made a thorough contribution in summing up what arguments the oil industry use to affect peoples perceptions of the industry in the book *Petroleumsparadiset. Norsk oljeindustri strategiske kommunikasjon og omdømmebygging*<sup>19</sup>. Amongst other arguments he highlights the key discourses of *social responsibility*, *energy demand*, *sustainable oil* and *overseas expansion*.

The Norwegian oil industry claims that they have instituted *social responsibility* as part of the national model for extracting oil, as our society, economy and the environment benefits from the industry (Ihlen, 2007). It is (as stated above) widely accepted that currently the industry is necessary for employment and the economy (Ryggvik, 2013). However, the environmental impact the oil industry have is debated (Ihlen, 2009). Several authors have argued that Norway can cope without the oil industry, thus leaving this strategy of having a *social responsibility* in regards to our society, economy and the environment flawed. As stated by Ihlen (2007), the aim of the oil industry is fundamentally capitalistic and not community involvement.

Covering an ever-increasing *energy demand* is another of the responsibilities the Norwegian oil industry embraces. We need oil to cover local and global energy needs. In addition they claim to have a responsibility to produce energy in order to respond to 'energy poverty' in the Third World. In light of the knowledge around CC and the role oil plays in this issue, the oil industry has made a change in branding. Labelling themselves as energy companies instead of oil companies gives the impression that oil can cover the energy demand whilst also being environmentally sound (Ihlen, 2007, 2009; Nilsen, 2001). Oil companies investing in renewable energy extend this approach. Critics call this a case of

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<sup>19</sup> Translation: Petroleum paradise. Norwegian oil industry's strategic communication and reputation building

“Grønnvasking”<sup>20</sup> (Ihlen, 2007, p. 114). The oil industry is asserting indispensability by claiming that renewable energy is the energy of the future. They suggest that as of now the technology is not good enough to replace oil as a source of energy (Ryggvik, 2013). This makes the *energy demand* an issue whose only solution is oil. Subsequently we have moral reasons to continue to extract oil from our offshore fields, as we are prepared for the future with the investments in renewable energy. In addition the oil extraction can continue in the present with a clear conscience, as we have *sustainable oil*.

The argument of *sustainable oil* production has been present since the entry of the climate debate. This image supports the impression of the oil industry as “green” (Ihlen, 2009, p. 61). However there is abundant academic criticism to the oil industry adapting this term (Ihlen, 2007, 2009; Lafferty et al., 2007; Nilsen, 2001; Ryggvik, 2010, 2013; Sætre, 2009) as “Oljebransjen overdriver sin miljøvennlighet”<sup>21</sup> (Ihlen, 2007, p. 114). According to Ihlen (2009) the oil industry claims to be sustainable in that it

(1) strives to cut its emissions and (2) manages oil resources with a long-term perspective until such time as technology will provide solutions. The industry then uses the topic of comparison to (3) discredit other energy sources as ‘unrealistic’ options and (4) compare the production in Norway with more polluting oil production elsewhere

(Ihlen, 2009, p. 53)

This definition considers sustainability in its broadest sense. It is, however, generally accepted that Norwegian oil is ‘cleaner’ than that of other countries and thus the oil industry justifies increased oil production. Increased oil production rationalises oil exports as reducing emissions globally (Nilsen, 2001). This is despite knowing that ‘clean oil’-export contributes to worldwide emission growth rather than reduction (Fæhn, Hagem, & Rosendahl, 2013; Ihlen, 2009). It is also argued that sustainability is achieved through Norway’s competence within oil technology. The industry would rather have technological solutions to CC, such as carbon capture and storage (CCS), than a move towards renewable energy (Ihlen, 2007). But by claiming that Norwegian oil is sustainable and comparing it to foreign oil companies’ practise, the Norwegian oil industry justifies *overseas expansion*.

By expanding overseas, the Norwegian oil industry claims that it has the opportunity to save other countries from bad oil practice (Sætre, 2009). According to the industry, Norwegian oil companies have high ethical standard and lower emissions that benefit other

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<sup>20</sup> Translation: Green washing

<sup>21</sup> Translation: the oil industry exaggerates its environmental friendliness

countries. *Overseas expansion* also allows Norwegian companies to pay fewer taxes and access more oil. In addition, going abroad moves the direct risks involved in setting up facilities, such as oil leaks or empty wells, to another country (Ihlen, 2007). In addition to the oil companies themselves going abroad the Norwegian Government have set up an *Oil for Development* programme. Here the aim is that “Poverty reduction and democracy are expected to ‘trickle down’ as an indirect result of the increased capacity in the ministries of oil and the subsequent expected increase in oil revenues” (Solli, 2011, p. 81). Through this programme the Norwegian government is attempting to justify that Norwegian oil abroad is ensuring social benefits in foreign countries. However the programme is flawed in the way that it is building up foreign oil industries, fuelling their government with money without any ways to monitor whether the ‘trickle down’ will occur (Solli, 2011). This is however, according to Ihlen (2007), not the Norwegian governments concern. Their concern is using the programme as a communication strategy to justify *overseas expansion*. A support that is very much needed after several *overseas expansion* scandals, including the corruption sin Iran in 2003, the oil sands debate in Canada around 2007 and the terrorist attack in Algeria in 2013.

### 2.2.2 Climate critiques of the Norwegian oil discourses

The central discourses about the Norwegian oil industry, fronted by the oil industry and the politicians, are clear when one considers Ihlen (2007) findings. Firstly, oil is necessary for the Norwegian welfare and our energy demand. Secondly, it is better than that of other countries and Norway does a good thing by expanding abroad. In relation to the pressing issue of climate change, the oil discourse *thinking globally* is a strong discourse (Eide & Ytterstad, 2011). These positive views on the Norwegian oil industry are often reflected in media and society. There is criticism to the positive oil discourses, however there is no literature on emerging counter discourses. Even though, amongst others, SSB have put forward research about how decreasing the Norwegian oil industry can cause climate benefits (Fæhn, Hagem, & Rosendahl, 2013).

Norwegian media enable positive views of the Norwegian oil industry to roam freely. Journalists criticise the nation for being bad for the environment, however criticism toward Norway’s pollution and the oil nation does not reach far when the same people that allows for this to continue, the politicians, are presented as heroes in media’s climate debate (Eide & Ytterstad, 2011). This coincides with findings by Naper (2014), where in newspapers commentaries it seems like the oil industry’s and politicians views are printed without any

critical filter. When Norwegian newspapers criticise the oil industry they do so inconsistently as the same newspaper can later on celebrate Norway's role within the climate debate. The two topics are rarely seen in the light of each other (ibid).

As we can see, the discourses shaped about the Norwegian oil industry have been used to determine political, social and economic action. Whilst the politicians allow for the oil companies to continue expansion unhindered, the Norwegian public does not see past the benefits the oil industry brings and our economy is highly dependent on its income. Because the Norwegian oil industry discourses are have a strong position in the Norwegian society, it increases its stakeholder's power and justifies its arguments (Benjaminsen & Svarstad, 2010). The information acquired through the historical background supports a need for counter discourses that can weaken the power held by the industry and politicians. It is necessary in the light of climate change and regarding the direction oil nation is taking the Norwegian economy.

### **3 Theoretical framework**

Discourses regarding the Norwegian oil industry are very much a result of the power held by the industry itself and pro-oil politicians. To discover how to replace these discourses I must look at emerging *counter discourses* and whether the Norwegian media and society can produce any discourses that are critical to the oil industry. It takes more than the deconstruction of the oil adventure and new discourses to make the necessary political and institutional changes Norway will need to stop contributing to CC and help save its economy (Kjærnet, 2010). However discovering counter discourses is a start, and a big enough scope for a 30 credit master thesis.

As stated by Klotz (2008) a strong “dialogue over methodology force us to state the goals of our research, clearly define our core concepts, and set our theoretical assumptions” (p. 2). For the sake of clarity, this chapter will be split in to two main parts where my theoretical assumptions will be discussed. First I will explain how I see the world by explaining how constructivism is an appropriate theory to use to study discourses in media. The second part will cover how I appropriate knowledge about the world and will illustrate how discourse analysis can be used to identify how individuals form a critical discourse of the oil industry. I will also explain how I use a theory of critical discourse analysis to conduct appropriate research.

#### **3.1 Observing discourse**

##### 3.1.1 Socially constructed reality

Before conducting research it is important to establish how one sees the world. My ontological approach for this thesis is constructionism. Constructionism suggests that “an evidently natural object, idea, or process is, at bottom, an expression of the human imagination, suffused with political and cultural influences” (Robbins, 2012, p. 123). Bryman (2012) explains that this “implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision” (p. 33). As Fairclough (2010) suggests, many of the concepts we presume to be true are not applicable in other places or time frames. One source of such constructions are the discourses we find about the oil industry in the Norwegian society (Altheide & Schneider, 2013).

To decipher socially constructed discourses, one must look at the social and political processes behind them (Robbins, 2012). Through a discourse analysis of media output, one can show how discourses are constructed and what powers and intentions are behind them. However, it can also be used to distinguish between socially accepted representations of facts and scientific facts. Different media sources can also enhance the validity of discourses and strengthen their position in society (Neumann, 2008).

The challenge with a constructivist view is that it can downplay the environmental certainties of our external world (Stott & Sullivan, 2000). Meaning it can lead to relativism and thus question the absoluteness of all knowledge and also the researchers and scientists role in creating such knowledge. The answer to this dilemma, as suggested by Dunn (2008), is that one should ensure the validity of ones research with the use of supporting evidence and that any conclusions should be convincing and reasonable. The aim of this research will thus not be to unveil ‘reality’ behind the emerging discourses of criticism towards the oil industry presented in Norwegian media, but rather present a thorough understanding of these discourses and the people who create and support them.

## **3.2 Unveiling discourse**

### 3.2.1 Discourse analysis in post modernism and critical realism

Authors such as Dunn (2008), Klotz (2008) and Neumann (2008) argue that when conducting discourse analysis one should place this in post modernist thought, focusing on socially constructed discourse and world view. However, authors such as Fairclough (2010) question these anti realist arguments and suggest that critical discourse analysis is best executed through a critical realist perspective. This means that discourse analysis is part of a “generative mechanism” (Bryman, 2012, p. 537) where external certainties are taken into consideration instead of looking at the discourses in a ‘bubble’ where they exclusively exist as socially constructed entities without being grounded in any certainties.

These views may seem as methodologically opposites, however to a certain extent they can compliment each other. On the one side post modernism argues: “the ‘true’ essence of the object is always unknowable to us. Therefore we must interpret representations of it” (Dunn, 2008, p. 79). On the other side critical realists argue that there is a knowable natural world, but that the social world clouds our interpretation of the natural world. There is then a difference between the *nature of reality* and our *knowledge of reality* (Fairclough, 2010, p.

355). However science and research can guide us to understand which representations of reality are more accurate than others. Facts are nonetheless only temporal as they are scientist interpretations of external reality (Bryman, 2012).

What post modernism and critical realism have in common is that knowledge is constructed. People communally construct discourses, both about the *nature of reality* and our *knowledge of reality*. Klotz (2008) suggests that representations of reality are based on language and that it is important to analyse language, in the shape of discourses, as they can be considered ‘true’ even whilst they are being constructed. In this thesis I will use critical discourse analysis to unveil *emerging* constructions that aim to change flawed existing discourses that dominate the debate about the oil industry in the Norwegian media. Thus I am appreciating both the worldviews of the post modernists and the critical realists within discourse analysis theories.

### 3.2.2 Political Ecology - *interactions of power*

Constructionism is implicit in political ecology (Forsyth, 2004). Political ecologists believe that socially constructed ideas or entities are used to serve the interests of the elite or leaders in certain settings. It acknowledges “that relationships among people and between people and the environment are governed by persistent and dominant, albeit diverse and historically changing, *interactions of power*” (Robbins et al., 2010, p. 6). Political ecologists believe that it is their task to uncover power laden social constructions and reinvent them so that they best serve more common interests (Robbins, 2012).

One example of a power laden political ecology case is the Global Climate Coalition. The oil industry used the coalition as an instrument to understate the importance of man-made climate change that the oil industry had been accused of contributing to. Oil companies can perform great power in such matters as they often have monopoly on energy and economy, and an undisputed technological knowledge base substantiating their credibility (Warner, 2000). In this case the oil companies failed their mission, however this shows how great powers can be involved in constructing discourses and influence matters that seem self-evident. Discourse analysis is an important tool to identify and recognise how this can occur.

### 3.2.3 Discourse analysis

A discourse is language used to create a powerful representation of reality. Further, Neumann (2008) elaborates that

“discourse maintains a degree of regularity in social relations, it produces preconditions for action. It constrains how the stuff that the world consists of is ordered, and how people categorize and think about the world. It constrains what is thought of at all, what is thought of as possible, and what is thought of as ‘the natural thing’ to do in a given situation.”

(Neumann, 2008, p. 62)

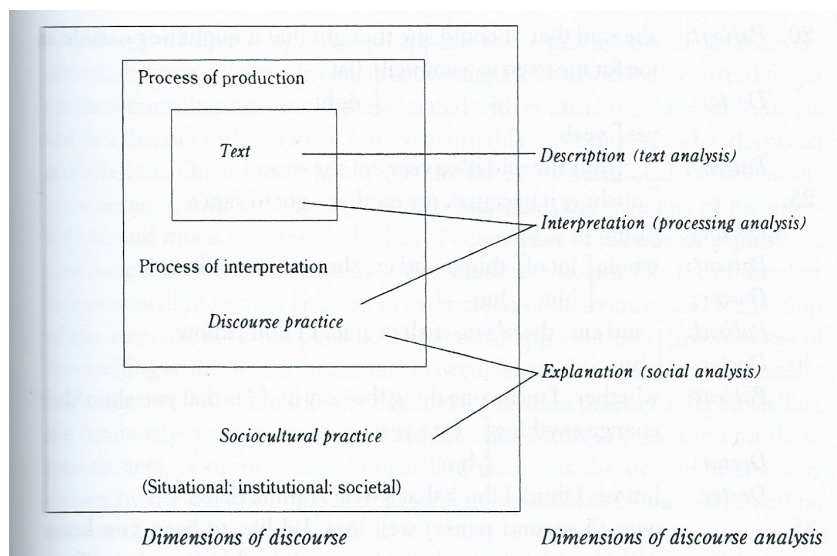
One can say that prior to 2013 the positive discourses about the Norwegian oil industry were still dominant in Norway, even though there has been a great deal of information about what the oil industry does to our economy and our environment. It seems that what surpasses these facts is that Norwegian oil is considered a necessity for Norway and the rest of the world. However, discourses are not comprehensive, they are dependent on support from multiple actors. As a result, we cannot only analyse but also potentially change discourses.

The term discourse originates from the work of French philosopher Michael Foucault (Bryman, 2012; Fairclough, 2010; Forsyth, 2004; Robbins, 2012). Foucault suggests that knowledge and discourse are based on power. “Ideas are not powerful because they are true ... they are true because of power” (Robbins, 2012, p. 124). This means that those in power are powerful enough to change and create knowledge. There are many types of power including the power of media representations. Altheide and Schneider (2013) suggest that the media are influential and can impact on the thinking of many with their discourses; the public internalise and apply the discourses received from media. The problem with media is that that they do not always provide receivers with neutral messages. Some of the messages and discourses the media broadcast originate directly from powerful actors, such as the Norwegian oil industry (see historical background). Recognising this, it is important to conduct discourse analysis of media output as the media holds great social power. If one separates between discourses one can find and understand underlying power relations and ambitions (Altheide & Schneider, 2013). Through analysing media discourses, one can appreciate that discourses have the power to encourage, promote and legitimize action and ideas (Bryman, 2012), such as those held by the Norwegian oil industry.

The process of analysing discourse and its impact on social processes is called critical discourse analysis (CDA) and originates in Foucault’s theories of power and knowledge. A critical discourse analysis is both systematic and normative, meaning it must contain an in-depth systematic analysis that also considers flaws in discourse or immoral discourses and how they can be improved (Fairclough, 2010). According to Adger, Benjaminsen, Brown, and Svarstad (2001) discourse analysis should contain the following elements: “analysis of regularities in expressions to identify discourses; analysis of the actors producing,



reproducing and transforming discourses; and social *impacts and policy outcomes of discourses*” (ibid, p. 684). This coincides with the three-dimensional framework for critical discourse analysis presented by Fairclough (1995). This framework expresses the importance of the following three elements: 1) *Text* – here the actual significance and design of the spoken or written text is examined, 2) *Discursive practice* – at this stage the discursive interactions that communicate beliefs and meaning are examined, 3) *Sociocultural practice* – where one analyse the discursive event in a social context and how it is internalised in social practice (Bryman, 2012, p. 538). This is also visualised in the figure below:



**Figure 1:** Three-dimensional conception of discourse and method of discourse analysis retrieved from Fairclough (2010), p. 133.

### 3.2.4 Narratives

In the process of analysing discourses it is also possible to identify supporting narratives. It is relevant to look for narratives when studying discourses as narratives present an audience with a story that is easy to follow and redistribute. Just like discourses, narratives make the public speak about a topic in a certain way. Thus narratives can support discourses in dominating the way we communicate about a topic (Adger et al., 2001).

According to Robbins et al. (2010) narratives are stories with a beginning, a middle part and an end. They contain characters such as the hero, the villain and the victim(s). As we have seen in the historical background, the dominating discourses about the oil industry in Norway are portraying the Norwegian oil industry positively. These discourses are very much shaped by the powerful actors within the oil industry themselves. To support the discourses

they have also constructed supporting narratives. Sætre (2009) explain how it is the heroes in Norway, the oil industry, which tells a story through our media about how our oil is greener and more sustainable than the oil in in other countries. The story elaborates on how dependent Norwegians and Norway are on oil and that since our oil is ‘good’ we should continue extracting it for our own and other countries sake. The villains in this story are the environmentalists trying to reduce the oil extraction and replace the oil industry. The victim in this narration is the general population in Norway who will suffer economically if there is any interference with the oil industry. According to this narrative the rest of the world will also suffer. If we implement a reduction in the Norwegian oil industry, oil companies from other countries will take over the Norwegian ‘green’ oil in the market and replace it with more polluting oil.

Roe (1991) suggests narratives such as this should be ‘de-narrativised’ as all facts should be present before narratives are created. The facts lacking from the current discourse of the oil industry are, amongst others its ‘sustainability’ (Ihlen, 2007), that cut in Norwegian oil production will increase emissions on a global scale (Fæhn, Hagem, Lindholt, et al., 2013) and the need for oil in the Norwegian economy (Ytterstad, 2013). However, if flawed narratives and discourses have already been created, Roe (1991) suggests that factual counter-narratives are created. Counter-narratives tell a different story and it is the intention of this thesis to explore whether theses can be detected in the Norwegian media.

### 3.2.5 Discourse coalitions

When discourses and narratives join forces discourse coalitions are formed. Forsyth (2004) suggests that “Interactions between different narratives and arguments may, therefore, lead to the enforcement of a perceived reality and framing of the external world that is a product of the argument” (ibid, p. 98–99). Although powerful oil discourse coalitions have been unveiled, counter discourses are on the rise. I will use the criteria presented by Adger et al. (2001) and Fairclough (2010) to uncover discourses and narratives that criticise the current portrayal of the Norwegian oil industry in Norwegian media. I will answer questions regarding the discourses such as *what are these, what do they mean, how are they presented and who creates them*. It will be interesting to see how emerging counter discourses find their place in the Norwegian society with the pro-oil discourses. This framework will be built on in the methodology section, where I also will explain how I will conduct my research and apply the framework in the following sections.

## 4 Methodology

For this masters thesis I have used a qualitative research methodology. This fits with my thesis objective *Understand and identify discourses critical to the oil industry produced by the Norwegian people in Norwegian media during 2013* and the research questions presented in the introduction, which are themselves qualitative in nature. (1) *What emerging critical discourses focused on the Norwegian oil industry can be identified in letters to the editors in 2013?* (2) *What narratives can be found supporting emerging discourses in 2013?* and (3) *Who are the key critics of the Norwegian oil industry in 2013?* The research questions can best be answered, as have been established above, through a critical discourse analysis.

As qualitative research is the exploratory study of text, words and social action (Bryman, 2012) I decided to look for discourses in newspapers. The data was collected from Letters to the Editor (LTE)<sup>22</sup> written by members of the Norwegian public as “In qualitative research, the stress is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants” (Ibid, p. 380). LTE’s are a suitable starting point to find emerging critical discourses as LTE’s have traditionally been an arena for introducing new topic into public debate (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2007). I will further clarify what methods I used to execute the discourse analysis based on a combination of the framework set by Adger et al. (2001) and Fairclough (2010) and how I discovered supporting narratives based on the framework set by Robbins et al. (2010).

### 4.1 Discourse analysis as a framework

The importance of discourse analysis has been explained in the theoretical framework chapter and I will thus only briefly go into how this fits with my research questions in this chapter. Following this explanation, I will in detail describe how I conducted the discourse analysis and then in the next chapter the discourses will be presented and discussed.

The framework used in this discourse analysis examines (1) the actual meaning, structure and content of the text, (2) the discursive interactions that communicate beliefs and meaning and (3) the discursive event in a social context and practice (Adger et al., 2001; Bryman, 2012; Fairclough, 1995, 2010). Applied to my discourse analysis this means that in

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<sup>22</sup> In Norwegian: Innlegg, Debatt and Kronikk

(1) the text dimension, I looked at what the LTE's says, what kind of topics they cover and what concerns the author had when writing the LTE. In (2) the discursive practice dimension, I studied what the shared beliefs and meanings between my LTE's were. For example: what sources they refer to, what made the authors write the LTE's, and who the authors themselves are. This information can explain how the LTE's as a genre and the authors can participate in forming discourse. In (3) the social practice dimension, I examined how the discourses placed themselves into a Norwegian setting. Or in the words of Ashraf (2013) I aimed at "understanding discourse as a social practice by analysing the sociocultural realities in which these letters have been constructed" (p. 2).

As my theoretical framework was continuously implemented whilst both collecting data and discovering the discourses, it is in accordance with grounded theory. Grounded theory is the most commonly implemented framework used for conducting qualitative research. Grounded theory generates theory (in this instance discourses) from data continually as data is collected and analysed (Bryman, 2012). One of the criticisms towards grounded theory is that it does not necessarily take into consideration theories that pre-exists in the field of research. The philosophy of grounded theory is that it aims to be free of theory until one emerges from the data. However, it is widely accepted that observation is not necessarily 'theory-neutral' as research is often built on others work (Bulmer, 1979 found in Bryman, 2012). This is the case with my own work, which is built on a gap in existing literature about discourses regarding the Norwegian oil industry. I can therefore enter my data collection, vis-à-vis analysis, without ethical concerns with regards to my knowledge about previous theories on discourses regarding the Norwegian oil industry.

This argument is supported by Neumann (2001) who argues that a researcher should have cultural competence on the subject before conducting discourse analysis. This is to understand the setting in which my data is placed so that I can cherry-pick important elements of the discourse. With my media-studies background, writing experience and Norwegian heritage I can understand the setting in which Letters to the Editor are placed, what part of the written language is important and how it fits in the Norwegian context.

## **4.2 Newspapers as source of information**

There are several reasons to use newspapers as data: they are read by a lot of people, they are supposed to mirror reality and they influence the way Norwegians view the world and how we view ourselves (Hågvar, 2007). In Norway, newspapers are a trusted source of

information. According to Østnor (1998) Norwegian journalists and media strive to be ‘the fourth estate’ i.e. the ‘watchdogs’ of society and thus support democracy, protect freedom of speech, provide objective and comprehensive information and critically provide information about those with power. There is however some issues regarding considering Norwegian newspapers as providing neutral and value free content to the average Norwegian citizen. Norwegian newspapers are corporations, whose survival is dependent on circulation and readership. Being profit driven, their content may sometimes strive to increase sales rather than reflect their role as ‘the fourth estate’ or ‘watchdogs’. Norwegian newspapers are also only as good at their job as their weakest journalist or editor (Lindholm, 2004). In addition, research conducted by Naper (2014) show that editorials and editorial comments in Norwegian newspapers regarding the Norwegian oil industry<sup>23</sup> have been found to have inconsistent standpoints. Despite these limitations, I suggest here that newspapers can help us grasp the underlying meaning and influence of everyday information most of us take for granted. Newspapers reflect to some degree what is important for the Norwegian people, and therefore represent an important source of discourses critical to the Norwegian oil industry.

To collect data that reflects the information most Norwegians would have access to, I chose to focus on the output of Norway’s three biggest newspapers in 2013 i.e. Aftenposten, Dagens Næringsliv and Verdens Gang (Medienorge, 2014). In the following chapters these names will be shortened to AP, DN and VG, and used with the date of publication when referring to pieces within these newspapers (e.g. AP1101, DN0404, VG3009). Aftenposten, Norway’s biggest newspaper “is a high quality national daily newspaper” (Painter, 2013, p. 110). The newspaper used to have a right-wing ideology, however this is less so reflected in today’s issues (ibid). It was founded in 1860 and is now owned by Schibsted Norge AS, Norway’s biggest media company (StoreNorskeLeksikon, 2014). Dagens Næringsliv is “Norway’s largest business newspaper” and owned by NHST Media Group AS (NHST-MediaGroup, 2014). The newspaper was established in 1890 as a maritime newspaper, but in 1912 it developed to also include trade and in 1987 it was further developed into the DN we know today. The newspaper now features Norwegian news material, debates, analysis, commentary and reporting with a main focus on business and economy (StoreNorskeLeksikon, 2014). Verdens Gang is a “national daily tabloid” (Painter, 2013, p. 110) and is also owned by the company Schibsted Norge AS (ibid). It was founded in 1945 and grew quickly; between 1981 and 2010 to be the leading newspaper in Norway. VG has a

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<sup>23</sup> and its relation to climate change

large online reader base. I will, however, only use print versions of the newspapers to get a more manageable and consistent data.

### **4.3 Letters to the Editor**

I chose to focus the attention of my research on Letters to the Editor (LTE) rather than standard newspapers articles and editorials because I wanted to explore the public discourses criticising the oil industry and not the discourses created by media, even though I recognise the two are interlinked. LTE's are not necessarily only critical to the oil industry, but through sampling I have selected the ones that unveil critical discourses. LTE's are a vital part of newspapers, however, according to Young (2011) LTE's is a place "where standard media norms are weakest and non-journalistic narratives have an opportunity to leak in" (p. 446). Ideally, LTE's are a way for the general public to participate in the production of public discourses and narratives in mass media (Ashraf, 2013; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2007; Young, 2011). Unlike standard media output, letters allow for "fringe topics" (Young, 2011, p. 456) and thus also *fringe discourses* to evolve, as they are not bound by the same rules as journalists. The discourses created through the letters are validated and accepted because LTE's go through a process to gain editorial approval. The purpose of this thesis is to identify discourses about the oil industry and not the newspapers selling points. As a result I have chosen to focus my attention on newspaper content that is more influenced by others than journalists.

The newspapers letters section offers an arena for the public to participate in public debate by sending in letters for debate. Even though the newspapers have online forums where the common man can publish their 'comments' in public debate, the LTE section of newspapers reflect legitimacy upon arguments as the letters need editorial approval before being published (Young, 2011). The process of sorting out which letters are to be published and which ones are not is a complicated process with ethical implications. Even though the topics and perspective that are allowed within the letters sections are more 'free' than that of the newspapers themselves, the criteria for form are still important and this can be linked with the authors of the LTE's.

Traditionally the authors of LTE have been politically active, well-educated, wealthy, older males. These are individuals whom can and have the time write well-formulated arguments and are under the impression that their letters are worth publishing (Reader, Stempel, & Daniel, 2004). This is contrary to the purpose of LTE's, which is to reflect the opinions of a broad spectrum of inhabitants in a country. This skewed representation is not

due to deliberate choices made by newspaper editors, but rather found in the format of the received letters. Letters that are well written and open for debate are preferred over those who are written in coarse and pedantic language. The passionate and less-educated ‘common man’ mainly writes the latter type (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2007). Often those letters are considered extremist or insane and can frighten others from engaging in debate about a certain subject. The editors of the letters will invite *elite members of the community*, that write in a more inclusive and well-written manner, to engage in public debate to show other readers that the debate is open for all opinions. This makes “The public appearing on letters pages (...) a constructed public” (Young, 2011, p. 456). Another reason as to why the majority of the public is not represented, is that they find that they “are simply too busy, poor, and hard-working to have the luxury of contributing to democracy” (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2007, p. 162). However, the newspapers practice of choosing authors that are *elite members of the community* can undermine public discourse and “eliminat(e) the evidence of diversity and conflict so crucial to the democratic process” (ibid, p. 156). Thus going against what was the newspapers aim with the LTE section in the first place. However, in line with discourse analysis theories, one needs the voice of powerful *elite members of the community* to make durable counter discourses to the positive ones set by the Norwegian politicians and oil industry.

Aiming to uncover the formation of discourses that are critical to the oil industry, I will look at all letters expressing views that are critical to the Norwegian oil industry. I will analyse them as they are written by prominent members of the Norwegian public and thus will hold discourses made by and ‘agreed’ upon by the Norwegian public. However, as this chapter have illustrated, I am aware that the authors of the letters are not necessarily everyday members of the public. The views, expressed in the letters, are communicated differently than they would have been in other arenas and are read and accepted as serious and trustworthy content by the Norwegian public. Even though there has been scarce research on discourse analysis within LTE, I argue that letters are an untapped source of discourses that fall outside mainstream media. I agree with Young (2011), when he states that analysis of letters to the editor “is critical to understanding how non-standard arguments about (the oil industry) enter the mass media universe and, by consequence, earn a measure of legitimacy as editorially “vetted” claims” (ibid, p. 446).

#### 4.4 Range of data

I chose to collect letters to the editors from the beginning to the end of 2013. This time frame is especially interesting because of the national election of 2013, termed by environmental organisations *Klimavalg 2013*<sup>24</sup> (DN2207). Political parties and organisations hoped that the election would bring climate change into the new political discussion. However, the elections proved disappointing in this regard (Høiby & Ytterstad, 2014). Additionally, 2013 was an interesting year because publications released before this establishes that the Norwegian oil industry more often than not held positive discourses (see historical background). With this in mind prior to data collection I was interested to find out if the climate optimism regarding the elections would be reflected in the letters criticising the oil industry. It felt logical to end the search at the end of the year 2013, the year of my starting this study, as it also kept the quantity of data to a manageable level.

To collect data I used *Retriever's online media archive* (RetrieverMediaArchive, 2014). This archive allowed me to effortlessly access all Norwegian print newspaper content from 2013. It was more difficult, however, to find and select appropriate content. Retriever does not offer search options to select only letters to the editor, and I thus had to manually go through all the results to select the ones I could use. In some instances with DN I had to manually go to the newspapers website and access their archives to determine whether a text was in fact a letter to the editor or not. The selection process was tedious with 6833 hits from my search with the keywords: [klima\* OR olje\* OR petroleum\* AND (klima\* OR olje\* OR miljøvennlig OR bærekraftig OR global oppvarming)]<sup>25</sup>. Adding a \* to the end of the words allowed for a broader search with root words that have multiple endings. This technique is especially useful when conducting a search in Norwegian, because the language consists of many compound words. The keyword olje\* allowed for results such as: oljeindustri, oljefelt and oljebrønn. However *olje*<sup>26</sup> also gave hits on articles containing food recipes with oil and stock exchange listings for the oil industry. Other times my key words came up with LTE's that were not criticising the oil industry, although they had sentences highlighted that could have been used, such as:

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<sup>24</sup> Translation: Climate-election 2013

<sup>25</sup> Translation: [climate\* OR oil\* OR petroleum\* AND (climate\* OR oil\* OR environmentally friendly OR sustainable OR global warming)]

<sup>26</sup> Translation: oil



Is this yet another example that people do not dare tackle the key reasons as to why the petroleum industry has obtained a dominant role in the Norwegian economy? Has the elephant become so large that no one dares to address it?<sup>27</sup>

(DN2111)

The process of selecting and collecting data from this selection was tedious, but delivered a decent insight in to what the newspapers wrote about the oil industry. The reason why I included ‘climate’, ‘environmentally friendly’, ‘sustainable’, and ‘global warming’ is that I knew from the historical background that the oil industry is often linked with the climate debate and I did not want to overlook any LTE’s. In the end I located a total of 80 letters that could be used as the basis of my discourse analysis. The first LTE is “Oljejaktens bakside”, written by Mette Newth and Bente Bakke for Aftenposten 03.01.2013. The last being “Verdens heldigste land?”, written by Kristin Clemet for Aftenposten 19.12.2013. All 80 LTE were being analysed continuously along the lines of grounded theory.

#### **4.5 The process - Interweaved data collection and analysis**

I was struggling to find a how-to guide on how to go about gathering data on emerging discourses. I had found a solid framework on analysing the discourses by Fairclough (2010), however the process of data collection was rarely described in detail in discourse literature. I thus crafted a procedure that was inspired by the varying data collection methods of many discourse analysts, including Adger et al. (2001), Altheide and Schneider (2013), Fairclough (2010) and Neumann (2001), as there seems to be a lack of consistency on the how-to in the discourse analysis literature. The result was very much along the lines of the data collection approach used in grounded theory and thus I used this approach to guide me through the process. It is clear that I am not the only person that sees a need for this. In the words of Phillips and Hardy (2002), there is a “relative shortage of methodological writings” (p.11) on discourse analysis. They argue that there is not enough material to steer newcomers in the current discourse analysis literature. Following is a description on how I collected and analysed the data that led me to discovering emerging discourses critical to the Norwegian oil industry.

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<sup>27</sup> Er dette nok et eksempel på at man ikke våger å gå inn på sentrale årsaker til at petroleumsvirksomheten har fått en så totaldominerende rolle i den norske økonomien? Er elefanten blitt så stor at ingen tør å ta bort i den? (DN2111)

When conducting research based on grounded theory, theoretical sampling is key (Bryman, 2012). Using this sampling method, my segment emerged whilst I continuously collected, coded and analysed the letters found in Retriever. However, using grounded theory as a data collection framework holds some methodological challenges. The issue with seeing the world through a constructivist perspective and using grounded theory as a framework to find the discourses critical to the Norwegian oil industry, is that I am in theory supposed to have a mind empty of pre-set ideas of how to find the discourses. Thus my data collection framework is supposed to emerge from data (Bryman, 2012). However, as social sciences have developed, constructionism “recognizes that the categories, concepts, and theoretical level of analysis emerge from the researcher’s interaction within the field and questions about the data” (Charmaz, 2000. p. 522 found in Bryman, 2012. p. 575). This allowed me to make a protocol with concepts I wanted to use during data collection.

The process of creating a protocol for analysing data in grounded theory is called coding. Coding in grounded theory aim to break up text to find theories. The method of coding I have implemented in this thesis is open coding. When undertaking open coding you start off by labelling your data into concepts and then sorting these concepts into suitable categories. The concepts are constantly revisited and revised and this process occurs during data collection. However, it is suggested that coding and splitting up texts like this can result “in a loss of a sense of context and of narrative flow” (Bryman, 2012, p. 575). As my texts do not necessarily contain the discourses individually, the text must be split up and rearranged for the discourses to emerge. Their context is not lost as I constantly returned to the original texts to find all relevant information necessary to validate and support the discourses and narratives. To fully understand them, the discourses must also be placed in a greater social context than what we can find within the individual letters.

To conduct coding I had to create a data collection sheet by combining grounded theory coding (Bryman, 2012) with the guide on how to construct a protocol for qualitative document analysis by Altheide and Schneider (2013). A protocol is a list of elements that help guide your research and draw information from documents. I started by listing concepts relevant for my research questions in a data collection sheet. Second, I carried out an initial data collection to test my protocol and then revised it to suit my research question as recommended by Altheide and Schneider (2013). Then I went through my data and filled in the protocol with relevant information. Along the lines of grounded theory, I kept my concepts to a minimum in the beginning. However, as I explored the data, emerging relevant concepts were added to the protocol. As I draw on grounded theory, my items were mainly in

the shape of open concepts and they were continuously revisited to discover suitable categories.

The concepts I had after my initial data collection can be found in *Appendix 2 – Original concepts in protocol*. The concepts were designed to fulfil the thesis objective of answering the research questions. I considered whether I could use a LTE in my data collection by using concept number 8, asking the question *General criticism of oil industry?* Research question 1: *What emerging critical discourses focused on the Norwegian oil industry can be identified in letters to the editors in 2013?* was followed by the question *How do they show that they are negative towards the oil industry?* and search criteria: *Extract about the oil industry* and *Key words/descriptions about the oil industry*.

The concepts in the completed protocol provided me with an encyclopaedia of all the collected LTE, including information such as author, time of publication, and sources of information and references. This information was beneficial to shape and understand the discourses that later emerged and answer research question 2: *What narratives can be found supporting emerging discourses in 2013?* And research question 3: *Who are the key critics of the Norwegian oil industry in 2013?* The concepts about the LTE's narrative helped indicate explanations of the narratives in the discourse coalitions. Although the initial concepts guided the data collection, it was through the concepts in the final protocol that most information was stored. The concepts in the final protocol were then shuffled around to create categories. These categories ended up as preliminary discourses (see *Appendix 3 – Categories, one step closer to discourses*). After being revisited again and re-organised the categories resulted in the final discourses and were ready for discussion.

Within the data collection and coding process I repeatedly analysed the discourses that emerged. I used the discourse analysis framework by Adger et al. (2001) and Fairclough (2010) established above. Once I had recognised the emerging discourses it was time to see if they matched with the narratives I had discovered during data collection or whether the discourses themselves shed light on any undiscovered narratives. The discourses and narratives that were discovered and their discussion is presented in the next chapter.

Finally, my data collection ended when the categories were saturated, meaning there was no new data to discover, and the discourses had emerged. I knew that this point has been reached when “(a) no new or relevant data seem to be emerging regarding a category, (b) the category is well developed in terms of its properties and dimensions demonstrating variation, and (c) the relationships among categories are well established and validated” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 212 found in Bryman, 2012, p. 421).

## **4.6 Reliability and validity**

When conducting qualitative research it is important to evaluate reliability and validity (Bryman, 2012). Reliability in this thesis is reached by making sure the study can to a certain extent be tested. In the course of this chapter I have explained and justified all of the research decisions I have made in the process of writing and executing this thesis. By using discourse analysis I am also applying a well-known theoretical framework. This information will allow other researchers to test my findings, however due to the qualitative setting in which my research is conducted it is difficult to replicate.

By looking at the social practice dimension of the discourses I found, I added *thick description*. Thick description increases the validity of discursive identification by giving “rich accounts of the details of a culture” (Geertz, 1973 found in Bryman, 2012. p. 392). This technique provides others with enough knowledge to understand and validate the results of my discourse analysis. Ashraf (2013) adds that using letters to the editor as a source of information further increases validity in research such as mine. This is because they themselves refer “to actually occurring events, figures, factual evidence, past incidents, and binary opposition” (p. 9) to increase their own validity. Through the use of illustrative examples and quotes in my discussion of the discourses I build on both thick description and the LTE’s own validity.

If my research had been simply quantitative one could say that my data sample is too small. However, as Fairclough (2010) suggests it is the quality and not the quantity that matters in this research. I have gone in depth within my sample to find the discourses looking at (1) the actual meaning, structure and content of the text, (2) the discursive interactions that communicate beliefs and meaning and (3) the discursive event in a social context.

## **4.7 Ethical considerations and limitations**

In this thesis I use a social science approach to discourse analysis where one “uses discourse to point out similarities between statements within the same discourse” (Benjaminsen & Svarstad, 2010, p. 76). I am using this approach opposed to a more linguistic discourse methodology as I am translating text from Norwegian to English and thus some meaning might get lost in the translation. It has been a challenge using a research method where language is key. The whole process of collecting and coding data was conducted in Norwegian and the discourses I had established in Norwegian were then translated to English before I discussed them. Thus, to make up for shortfalls in translations and verify the

information in the discourses themselves I will examine central claims in the discourses within the discussion as recommended by Benjaminsen and Svarstad (2010). In addition to being aware of personal shortfalls in language, as English is not my mother tongue, it is important to consider my role as a researcher within this thesis. As a researcher it is important that I place my predispositions outside the research and instead attempt to see through the eyes of the people being studied in order to better understand my data (Bryman, 2012). I have done that to as great an extent as possible. However, being a state financed International Environmental Studies masters-degree student and daughter to a father working in the oil industry I recognise that I am very much a product of the benefits the oil industry has granted Norway. It has been challenging to look at the oil industry from a neutral position as I can see both its drawbacks and its blessings.

## 5. Discourse Analysis

In this chapter I will explain what characterises the emerging discourses within the oil critique and discuss the discourses themselves. By looking at the emerging discourses it is clear that the authors believe the oil is damaging to our economy and environment and that it is a political matter that needs political and institutional change. I will go through each emerging discourse and look at how they manifest in the LTE's and how they have come about. Doing so will answer the research question 1 *What emerging critical discourses focused on the Norwegian oil industry can be identified in letters to the editors in 2013?* I will also identify any overarching narratives supporting the discourses and thus answer *What narratives can be found supporting emerging discourses in 2013?* In addition I will also look at who the key actors within the discourses are, and thus answer research question 3 *Who are the key critics of the Norwegian oil industry in 2013?*

I found several discourses within my data selection. The most prominent discourses are listed below and they are carefully explained and discussed in the following sections.

1. Division of the Norwegian economy
2. Pro-oil politics
3. A happy ending to the oil adventure
4. Oil is bad for the environment
5. Listen to the global community
6. Turning a blind eye (Climate sinners with a good conscience)
7. Spewing oil onto global markets

I will show how I came to identify these central discourses by using extracts from articles represented within the discourses. As this is a qualitative and not quantitative task I have not let the discourses be shaped by how many articles shape them, but rather on the content and the arguments from the articles themselves. However, so as to avoid the identification of thousands of little discourses, the material to build a discourse had to be substantial and reflected in several LTE's. Some of the discourses had one or more than one way of looking at an issue. I have decided to name the different versions of the discourse for angle, as they are different ways of considering the same discourse. When I have found a narrative that supports a discourse I have included the narratives discussion within said discourse.

The LTE's I have referred to have been coded in brackets in the text. A list of the full titles of the letters I have used can be found in a separate reference list at the end of this thesis. In the appendix there will be scanned copies of some of these letters, their purpose is to illustrate the different discourses. I translate the quotes from the letters to the editors in this chapter myself. For the sake of clarity I have added footnotes when necessary to explain challenging quotes that do not translate easily from Norwegian to English or words and sayings that are very culture-specific and in need of interpretation.

## **5.1 Division of the Norwegian economy**

Letters that was critical to the way the oil industry affects the Norwegian economy dominates this discourse. It explains how the Norwegian economy is suffering from a split in industries. Within this discourse there is a problem oriented angle, *Carbon-bubble and Norwegian disease*, that focus on the issues that can arise from the split in the economy. There is also a solution oriented angle, *Don't put all your eggs in one basket*, that focus on how to avoid the potential downfalls of an oil dependent economy.

As an economic newspaper, DN's role in this discourse is noteworthy. Different types of newspapers focus on different content – one would think that DN would not publish many negative letters about the oil industry as it is the biggest industry in Norway and they are a business newspaper. However LTE's in DN have expressed worry about the economy's dependence on the oil industry in the recent times with climate agreements and financial crises that could potentially knock the oil industry off its feet. Even though this discourse is dominated by economic characteristics, LTE's in AP and VG also make significant contributions.

Within my data the economy debate sparked in the beginning of 2013 with, amongst others, the economic forecasts from the central bank of Norway (Norges Bank) and their annual meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2013. The arguments within the letters were that Norwegian economy was too dependent on the oil industry and its revenue. It was suggested that this relationship is causing an unsustainable future for Norway.

“There are clear signs of a split in the Norwegian economy, where the petroleum-driven sector of the economy is gradually killing traditional industry” (DN0204) Kristin Clemet writes in DN. This view is supported by Hilde C. Bjørnland and Erling Røed Larsen, both professors BI Norwegian Business School. In AP (AP2401), Røed Larsen argues that the oil industry is putting financial strain on other industries. Whilst Bjørnland argues in DN that

most of the successful industries in Norway are tied to the oil industry and that if the oil price falls it will affect the whole of the Norwegian economy negatively (DN0702).

Whilst the oil industry seems to be booming, other industries can be seen lagging behind. On one side traditional industries or export industries are negatively affected by the oil industry through increased costs, high salaries and tax bases that comes with the high prices caused by the oil industry, their salaries and the following taxes. On the other hand the oil industry is ever gaining stronger foothold from the issues in the struggling industries the letters argue. More money is invested in the oil industry and activity kept up because of the financial value the industry has for the Norwegian economy. The high levels of salaries attract more people to the oil industry and to its suppliers rather than competing industries.

The Norwegian welfare is built on the income from the oil industry. If there is a fall in either oil prices or oil demand, Norway's main industry and its suppliers will struggle. This will leave Norway with the challenging task of maintaining the welfare built up based on the oil industry. It is simply not feasible for other industries to maintain the Norwegian economy and welfare system at its current level. As Knut Anton Mork, chief economist in Handelsbanken, states in AP, the oil fund and its management has become a cushion for the Norwegian economy and welfare, however "when the oil age is over, it is not enough to have money in the bank. We must also build an economy with other drivers than oil and gas" (AP3010). Bjørnland also argue "To think that we are not oil-dependent is to deceive ourselves" (DN0702).

Our economy is highly dependent on the "black gold" (DN0802) whilst "traditional industry based on everlasting resources disappear" (DN0802) farmer Svein Guldal argues. He refers to the oil industry in the Niger Delta, where the governing of the oil industry is widely considered a failure as it does not benefit the majority of the country's public and damages their natural resources (Cumbers, 2012). Connection is also made to statements earlier on in history in which politicians promised that the oil industry would not affect the other Norwegian industries. The Norwegian oil industry has turned in to a curse for the Norwegian economy, just like the 'black gold' is considered a curse for people in the Niger Delta.

To say that the national economy is dependent on the oil industry is not new information to Norwegians. This dependence has previously been discussed by several authors including Sætre (2009) and Ryggvik (2010). However a unified Norwegian oil discourse about the benefits the oil industry brings Norway and the rest of the world in the form of welfare and 'clean oil' has this far outclassed the negative discourses about the split and oil dependent economy. Because we have made our economy dependent on the income



from the oil whilst not ensuring the sustainability and endurance of other industries, the concern in this discourse is that in the future we will reach a point where we are even more vulnerable to changes in the global economy and reduced energy demand (Fæhn, Hagem, Lindholt, et al., 2013). Within this discourse the authors consider two fatal outcomes of this situation: our very own *Norwegian disease* or the bursting of the *carbon-bubble* Norway is currently in. However, some authors gives the discourse a brighter future which looks at two options to solve the economic mess the authors of this discourse claim the oil industry have placed us in.

### 5.1.1 Carbon-bubble and Norwegian disease

According to the economists contributing to this discourse we cannot be sure about what the oil is doing to the structure of the Norwegian industry and our citizens productivity. However, the scientists at Statistics Norway (SSB) suggest that “over four decades the oil and gas industry has claimed a large space in the Norwegian economy, and most are now agreeing that aspects of this development has made us more vulnerable to oil price shocks” (AP1906). Christine Tørklep Meisingset from Storebrand argues that his vulnerability has placed Norwegians and our economy in a “Carbon-bubble” (VG0205) and in DN economist Per Richard Johansen explain that “Should the activity in the sector fall markedly, either as a result of a fall in oil prices or other factors, it will have a strong negative impact on the overall activity in the Norwegian economy” (DN0703). The value of the Oslo stock exchange will be lowered, industries will be affected, purchasing power will decrease and so will GDP in Norway. The bursting of the *Carbon-bubble* can also transpire in the event of successful climate agreements, where if Norway does decide to follow the recommendations from reports, such as IEA (2012), we can only extract a limited amount of our oil resources and thus be left without any sustaining industries.

The Norwegian oil industry strong footing in our economy can lead Norway’s economy to a state typically called the *Dutch disease*<sup>28</sup>. As Norway’s currency grows stronger due to the oil industry, it “is showing clear signs of the Dutch disease. The Oil-boom creates a pay and cost level that squeeze out other production. Rapid measures are required to cure the patient” (DN2502). Further Chr. Anton Smedshaug from AgriAnalyse and Olav A. Veum from Norwegian Forest Owners Association argues in DN that “It is obvious that the scope of the oil and gas sector is so large that it lubricates everything from the state budget to an

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<sup>28</sup> Description of the unfortunate Dutch development from 1959 to 1977 in the wake of a gas find. The term coined by The Economist refers to a situation where “commodity booms cause economic trouble” (C.W., 2014)

inflated private consumption through amongst others, high income growth beyond what other activities can tolerate” (DN2502). Both authors have an interest to ensure that a *Norwegian disease* does not occur and thus affecting the rest of the Norwegian business sector that they are a part of.

For better or worse we are tied to the oil industry. As economist Steinar Juel argues, ”It is great that an industry expands and contributes to strong revenue growth. However it is unfortunate that it happens to such a strong degree when we know that the oil age is time limited” (DN0310) and when we do not have anything substantial to fall back on. The split in Norwegian industries and its potentially devastating effect on the economy was very much a hot potato during the pre 2013 elections. Several political parties were involved in the debate, however most prominent were the arguments by MDG. MDG expressed concerns about the role of the Norwegian oil industry on the economy, however they focused on the solutions presented below in respects to the discourse *Don't put all of your eggs in one basket*. In relation to the *Carbon-bubble* and *Norwegian disease*, the pre-election debate did not provide any solutions to the problem. However, in the words of economist Roger Bjørnstad, in DN: “Talking about measures against making the Norwegian economy dependent on oil without addressing the activity in the petroleum industry, is not fruitful. It will get us nowhere in the debate. This is the way it turned out. The elections could not determine what we should do to avoid outperforming our own businesses” (DN1909).

#### 5.1.2 Don't put all your eggs in one basket

The discourse shaped by those concerned about the oil industry's effect on the Norwegian economy also presents a solution to the potential problems brought about by the split in the Norwegian economy in the form of a ‘Carbon-bubble’ or ‘Norwegian disease’. This angle focuses on spreading risks and ways to make our economy less dependent on oil. In DN, professor Erling Moxnes suggests that firstly “The activity in the petroleum sector must be reduced to ease the pressure on the economy” (DN1111). Secondly, Professor Hilde C. Bjørnland and PhD Leif Anders Thorsrud argue in DN that conditions for other Norwegian industries “that does not boom with the oil” (DN0509) should be improved. “After a skewed distribution of growth for 10 years is a more balanced development in the Norwegian economy not to despise” (VG0611).

To counteract its flaws, Norway has to “create an economy with more legs to stand on<sup>29</sup>” (DN1409) and spread the risks. Traditional industries have to be enhanced and new industries must be motivated. Executive Vice President in Norges Gruppen, Torbjørn Johannson writes in a letter to VG that “Most economists agree that Norway needs a gradual reduction of the oil economy and a more robust and competitive mainland-Norway” (VG3009). There are, however, some internal disagreements within this discourse about the timespan until we have completely moved away from oil. Though the agreement is that we have to start the process, as it is also good environmental policy.

The oil industry, Norway’s main source of income and the consumption it brings, is also the main driver in man-made global warming. Having an economy fuelling the problems for future generations is ethically questionable. And if the *carbon-bubble* bursts or the *Norwegian disease* infects us, we are in trouble, both financially and environmentally. However this discourse offer solutions to both these problems. We have to move the skills we have acquired from the oil industry, to green and renewable industries. What Bård Vegard Solhjell SV’s Minister of the Environment<sup>30</sup> in DN call: the “future growth industries” (DN0409a). The pro-environment politicians in SV and MDG highlight the importance for a new generation of Norwegian industries and their need to be sustainable. However there is also an emphasis on existing industries in this discourse.

This discourse, alongside the discourse on how to create *A happy ending to the oil adventure* are highly interlinked as they both recommend a future pathway for Norwegian industries and economy. What distinguishes them is that this discourse focuses on how to prevent a ‘Norwegian disease’ or ‘carbon-bubble’ situation occurring in Norway whilst the other presents a brand new ‘green’ path for political reasons that are highlighted in the two following discourses.

### 5.1.3 Narrative - Split in the Norwegian economy

The authors of these letters tell the story of a country whose economy is split, with one booming part of the economy and one lagging part. It is the growth of the oil industry’s fault and the risk of total economic collapse is eminent. There are two outcomes for this discourse. First, a history of a *Norwegian disease* – with a broken economy is presented. Second, a new sustainable ‘green’ economy is presented, where the ruin is prevented through increasing other industries or focusing on industries oriented towards a sustainable future.

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<sup>29</sup> Norwegian idiom, meaning spreading of risk. Can be considered the Norwegian equivalent to the English idiom: *Don’t put all your eggs in one basket*

<sup>30</sup> Minister of the Environment from 2012 to 2013

The victims in this narrative are the Norwegian people and Norway's economy. These are interlinked, as the Norwegians are essentially dependent on the economy. There is also a clear villain in this narrative, the oil industry. However the 'crisis' they have created is by no means solely their own fault. Norwegian politics, politicians and policies have allowed for this to happen because they failed to follow their previously established oil commandments that dictates that the Norwegian oil industry must not interfere with existing industrial activities (see *Appendix 1 – 10 oil commandments*). In the scenario where the *carbon-bubble* bursts and we have a *Norwegian disease* there is currently no hero to save the day. However, the hero can be any politicians or businessperson that initiates a restructuring of our economy. This narrative can be seen in light of other popular narratives or discourses about how the oil industry's input in the economy is a blessing to Norway. The narratives presented in this chapter provide counter narratives to these and thus also substantiates the discourse.

In this discourse it is also noteworthy to observe that that contributors are mainly economists and business people. The authors have a direct interest in protecting other industries and thus ensure the longevity of a strong Norwegian economy.

## 5.2 Pro-oil politics

In this discourse, authors' express concern about Norwegian politicians and their governing of the Norwegian oil industry. Authors of the letters agree that Norwegians are conscious about the economic dependency we have regarding the oil industry. However the Norwegian politicians does not ensure that changes in our industries are implemented to prevent the potential downfalls from this dependency. As professor and Economist Erling Røed Larsen argue in AP, this is because "The oil creates an impression that it can solve everything" (AP2401) due to the vast income it is currently contributing to the Norwegian state. Before the 2013 elections the parliamentary majority was described as "black as oil"<sup>31</sup> (DN2207) by the 'green' parties SV and MDG, criticising the general pro-oil politics in Norway. These parties' politicians contributed vastly to this discourse both before and after the elections.

This *pro-oil politics* discourse reflects the paradox illuminated by the historical background in this thesis and the information we have today regarding oil dependency and the oil's impact on the climate and environment. The pro-oil politics discourse contains two angles. In angle 1, *Teaming up with the oil industry*, authors write about how our politicians seem to be teaming up with the oil industry and not doing what is good for the Norwegian

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<sup>31</sup> Oljesvart – brings negative connotations to the oil industry

voters. In the second angle *oil politics vs. environmental politics* we can see how the politicians seem to go against their own ambitious climate and environmental politics, by supporting the oil industry, even though more than sufficient evidence has been provided arguing that we need to reduce the oil industry. However, as we will discover in the next discourse (discourse 3: *A happy ending to the oil adventure*) the political climate somewhat evolved after the elections of 2013.

In this discourse, the political debate in the LTE sections of AP, DN and VG included authors letters published in relation to on-going debates and often as answers to rebuttal letters. Their motivation was to convince the opposition of their views, but also to enlighten the readers of their political oil arguments and disprove the counterpart's argument.

### 5.2.1 Teaming up with the oil industry

The law maintains that the state shall provide the people with a sustainable future (OD, 2010)(see appendix 1). However, with the current oil policy the state goes directly against their duty. With similar arguments the authors of the letters provide this discourse with specific examples of how the majority of Norwegian politicians team up with the Norwegian oil industry against the interest of the public. In a LTE early in 2013, Professor Beate Sjøfjell from Concerned Scientists Norway argues that the Norwegian government have

a Minister of Trade and Industry who seems to want to use shareholder power for power's sake, and an Oil and Energy Minister who is Statoil's ally and would like to extract as much oil possible as quickly as possible. This is abuse of state resources.  
(AP0303)

Further, it is argued by Aleksander Melli in AP that "Without demonizing the oil industry and what it has meant to Norway, we must begin to condemn those who have political responsibility for intolerable cases of violence towards future generations" (AP2408) meaning: leaving a vulnerable economy and a trail of environmental problems.

It is argued that current political policies support the oil industry and not what is best for Norway and Norwegians. Ola Borten Moe<sup>32</sup> and Espen Barth Eide<sup>33</sup> are especially criticised for not having Norway's best interest at hand and siding with the oil industry. The Norwegian oil industry has been important for the Norwegian economy and Norwegian employment, and thus holds a lot of power within the country. "It means that this industry has

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<sup>32</sup> Minister of Petroleum and Energy from 2011 to 2013

<sup>33</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2012 to 2013

a decisive influence on energy policy. The Norwegian fossil lobby is part of the global, powerful lobby that is the biggest barrier to avoid catastrophic warming” (AP1101) states Arild Hermstad leader of Fremtiden i våre hender. Going against the powerful lobby of the oil industry and looking away from the benefits the industry has bestowed upon us, seems like a tough challenge for the politicians. This is understandable as the oil industry makes more money for the treasury<sup>34</sup> than other sectors.

This emerging discourse about how Norway should not ‘team up’ with the oil industry was ridiculed in AP in a LTE posted by Ola Borten O. B. Moe (2013). According to Wahl-Jorgensen (2007) it is the active, minority voices that are ridiculed when it comes to LTE’s and politics. The mainstream image of the Norwegian oil industry is seen as positive and when someone wants to change the state of affairs in Norway they become the subject of public mockery. We can see that the people in power, the ones who have views supported by the majority of the people and represent them are allowed to ridicule the newcomers in the debate.

### 5.2.2 Oil politics vs. environmental politics

The oil industry holds great power within the Norwegian industry and Norwegian politics. The paradox is, as previously mentioned; that we are fully enlightened about the consequences it holds for our economy and environment. It seems however, as suggested by Anders Bjartnes, daily leader, Norsk Klimastiftelse<sup>35</sup> in AP that ”the oil interest - when things are put to the test – (will) regardless trump climate policy” (AP1004). In this angle, oil and climate seem irreconcilable. However the authors argue that Norwegian politics seem to think we can sustain both. In the words of Marius Holm, the leader of Zero<sup>36</sup>, our

Politicians and researchers with their eyes firmly fixed on failed international negotiations and fossil-dominated energy scenarios have blinders on and ignore the power of change in the green shift. The establishment have lulled themselves into a belief that nothing changes.

(AP0411)

The debate around oil politics and environmental politics opened up the playing field for LTE concerning the *Climate-Election 2013* with MDG paving the way. MDG’s critique towards Norway’s oil friendly politicians gained support from other environmentalists. The authors

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<sup>34</sup> Popularly referred to as *Statskassa* in Norway

<sup>35</sup> Norwegian Climate Foundation

<sup>36</sup> The Zero Emissions Resource Organisation

supporting this angle express a unified wish for a change in government and government policy and argue that the politicians are not doing the best for the environment in the long run. The politicians are accused of only focusing on current revenue and are criticised for their lack of dedication to mitigate CC. There is a wish to restructure the economy in order as to transition away from oil and oil dependency. MDG and others call voters to “not let the bear in the room sleep in peace<sup>37</sup>” (DN2808).

### **5.3 A happy ending to the oil adventure**

In this discourse, the authors suggest that the politicians should wind down the oil industry. There are some differences in the arguments about how soon we should begin this process and whether we should completely phase out the industry, slowly reduce it to encourage other industries and tone down our oil dependency or stop the search for new oil whilst emptying all our already discovered oil fields. However their overall message is, in the words of Kathrine Aspaas, AP journalist and economist, that “Oil-Norway needs a solid redundancy package<sup>38</sup>” (AP0505). Both business leaders and other economists, who argue that a move away from oil is good for the economy and good economic policy for the politicians, share this view. MDG is a follower of this view and credits themselves for having placed this discussion on the agenda. However, this is a view few other political parties shared with them around the 2013 election. Instead of following the economic voices and MDG’s advice, the governmental politicians seem to support “a policy that prevents green economic development and that will weaken competitiveness, diversity and the innovation capacity in the Norwegian society” (AP0805). This argument was suggested in commentaries written by Bente Bakke<sup>39</sup> and Svein Hammer, both of who are former Conservative politicians. By using the title as former Conservative politicians, instead of MDG, in the letter (which is the political party they both now support), they discredit the Conservatives by indirectly saying that the party did not have a good enough environmental profile for them to stay.

Often suggestions to phase out the oil industry are met with accusations that this change would be “unrealistic and naive, fanatical idealism, not to say outright irresponsible and destructive” (DN2708) writes Dag O. Hessen, professor and candidate for MDG to the Norwegian Parliament in DN. Wahl-Jorgensen (2007) explain why MDG is ridiculed, as most

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<sup>37</sup> Based on an Norwegian children’s rhyme, referring to the politicians as the sleeping bear

<sup>38</sup> Sluttpakke – “The employee receives a predetermined compensation leave employment voluntarily” (Hornslien, Leirvaag, Olsen, Annaniassen, & Andersen, 2003)

<sup>39</sup> Note how Bente Bakke’s title has moved from MDG to former Conservative politician

of those being active in politics within the LTE debate are an easy target for such. It is claimed that it would also not be in the best interest of pro-oil politicians, oil companies nor the Norwegian people that this discourse gets hold. This is because of our current dependency on the oil, which other politicians such as Borten Moe, continue to sustain. However MDG and others argue that ending the oil adventure is possible without too much damage, if politicians look further than the next elections and actually put in measures before it is too late for our economy and environment.

There are two solutions presented within this discourse that aim to solve the issues the oil industry brings. *Money and means to reduce the oil industry*, and *Sustainable industries* which is very much linked to the arguments of the first as sustainable industries need money and means to thrive. In this discourse we find cooperation between different types of authors. As stated by politician Bård Vegar Solhjell (SV)<sup>40</sup> in a letter to DN after the elections “An exiting development in the oil debate is the alliance between environmentalists and financiers that both say we must plan for the future we believe will come, not the one we fear” (DN0409a). These groups both have interest in moving Norway away from the pollution and oil dependency the oil industry brings, without it negatively affecting the Norwegian economy.

### 5.3.1 Money and means to reduce the oil industry

Several of the authors within this discourse argue that we have the money and means to provide Norway with a happy ending to the oil adventure. However it seems like the biggest barrier to this alternative is that the Norwegian oil industry is already occupying the financial resources the state should use to phase out the oil. Today, almost four-fifths of the investments in Norwegian production go to the petroleum sector. Arild Hermstad leader of Fremtiden i våre hender, argues that this is reprehensible, as when it comes to the oil industry

The state takes a very large part of the risk, both through subsidies in the form of *leterefusjonsordningen*<sup>41</sup> (about ten billion per. year) and because oil companies through the tax system can push 80 per cent of their investments over on the public budget

(AP1101)

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<sup>40</sup> Minister of the Environment (2012 – 2013)

<sup>41</sup> Reimbursement system for oil search expenses



As oil investments need subsidies to be profitable, it is bad for the overall economy and it strengthens our oil dependency. Instead Norway, as a rich country, has a special responsibility towards its citizens in order to guarantee the move away from oil.

Authors contributing to this discourse agree that Norway could use the finances that go to the oil industry to instead increase development in a sustainable direction. Investment should be in renewable energy and sustainable future industries. The state-owned oil companies, especially Statoil, should be forced to change the course of their business. It is claimed in this discourse that they have a financial, political and ethical responsibility to do so. Norwegian money should support a sustainable future with renewable energy and the oil companies have already started to invest in these technologies. Authors argue that our economy can handle a reduced production rate in the oil industry without it resulting in a collapsed economy. By reducing the oil industry and shifting investments, the technicians from the oil industry are free to develop a 'green' Norwegian industry instead.

It is argued that just as we have the skillset to begin an oil adventure, the same skills, Nina Jensen from WWF-Norway suggests, "can enable us to ensure a safe and sustainable future for both people and nature" (DN1203). However the authors appreciate that the process will not be simple, "A restructuring towards climate neutral energy requires innovation, investment, and will be more labour intensive than today's irresponsible oil policy" (AP1008).

### 5.3.2 Sustainable industries

Authors of the LTE within the *A happy ending to the oil adventure* discourse agree that 'green' energy and sustainable industries represent a new suitable path for Norway. The motivation behind this is both environmental and economical. However, the authors within this discourse argue that changes have to be made on a political level. Authors appreciate that we cannot effortlessly transit from the oil age to a sustainable future without teaming up with important influencers of discourse, the politicians. The politicians need to be convinced that, as seen above, the transition is feasible as we have the money and means to alter our industries.

Opponents of this view repeatedly argue that renewable energy is not profitable. Still, in the words of Kathrine Aspaas in AP: "They could just as easily have called it investments - said that renewable energy is not profitable - yet ..." (AP0505). The fact is that in Norway we are dependent on the oil industry. And to "not move out of the industry in the near future will be a great risk to the environment and our economy" (AP1308) according to Anna Synnøve Some Jenssen. The phase-out of the oil industry is a must, regardless of what government is

in power. Some argue that making the transition now is too soon. However, "much of the point of production cuts for climate considerations will be giving a symbolic effect, and to enter the role as a pioneer"<sup>42</sup> (AP2706). Prior to the 2013 elections, Jens Stoltenberg claimed in a political debate that Norway is a frontrunner in emission reduction. However, the then prime minister also suggested that what Norway is doing to safeguard ourselves for the future is enough, despite our huge oil and gas industries (DagensNæringsliv, 2013). Regardless the extensive 2011 and 2012 oil and gas finds in Norway and a situation where "Optimism in renewable technologies was replaced by renewed petroleum optimism" (Painter, 2013), the authors within the *a happy ending to the oil adventure* discourse are still holding the torch for a 'green' and sustainable future.

### 5.3.3 Narratives within the political discourses

The *Pro-oil politics* and *A happy ending to the oil adventure* discourses are very much dominated by a view that the Norwegian politicians are the biggest obstacle to moving away from the oil industry. The narrative portrays the Norwegian government as dominated by pro-oil politicians who actively prevent Norway from becoming a nation whose economy is based on sustainable industries. The villains in this story are the politicians and the victims are the future Norwegians whom will suffer from climate change and a vulnerable economy. The professors, organisation members and economists who are contributing to shaping these discourse are encouraging the politicians to create opportunities for change and see them as potential heroes in the desired renewable adventure. In this scenario Norway can truly be a frontrunner and an international role model regarding both sustainable development and climate change. MDG has embraced this scenario and portray themselves as heroes in the Norwegian politics. MDG's power regarding shaping discourse as *elite members of the community* were further strengthened when Rasmus Hanson MDG's first parliamentary candidate to entered the parliament after the 2013 elections and continued writing letters under the title Member of Parliament. With the change in titles the party's power in the political sphere changed, but also the value-laden power held when addressing the public.

Historically, LTE's have been used for debate by politicians, activists and social movements in relation to organised campaigns (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2007). Letters from politicians, economists and organisations who all have an interest in Norway's political future

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<sup>42</sup> Foregangsland – common word used to describe how Norway is aiming to be a climate action pioneer internationally.

dominates these discourses. It can be seen in the light of the 2013 climate elections campaign, aiming to place climate change higher on the Norwegian political agenda (Klimavalg, 2013).

When the authors refer to politicians, political parties, the parliament, government or governmental departments they refer to the enablers and obstructers regarding the oil industry. Those who considered the oil industry as irreplaceable and supported their work were criticised and commented on. Especially oil-friendly politicians and political parties, such as Borten Moe, were written about before the 2013-elections. Emphasis was given to the entities that had the will to change what is here considered an oil-dependent nation. Here MDG and Rasmus Hansson were frequently mentioned. Political entities were especially referred to as a source for arguments within the selected LTE's, as it is these people who are generally considered to be in power and this could help develop the discourses.

#### **5.4 Oil is bad for the environment**

Oil comes from the conversion of dinosaurs and old plants to fossil fuels and denotes a material process. Its connotations are only visible when we place it in a context, in this case an environmental context (Naper, 2014). The authors in this discourse collectively agree that the oil industry and oil itself is solely negatively impacting our environment. They argue that the reason to scale down the oil industry is as good for the Norwegian economy as for our planet. Scaling down the oil industry will lead to lower global GHG-emissions, as the world has already found more GHG-emitting oil and gas than the climate can withstand. According to a letter from professors Peter M. Haugan and Gunnar Kvåle in DN it is also considered unethical that the oil industry is considering extracting five times more oil than the planet can manage. Especially when the emissions from this industry are over 70 per cent higher than they were in 1990.

In addition to emitting greenhouse gasses the oil industry also causes oil leaks. Oil leaks can harm wildlife, our environment and local economy. The fear for oil leaks is especially concentrated around the north: the Norwegian Sea, Barents Sea and Arctic. Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja are especially mentioned in the letters concerned about oil this. Nina Jensen from WWF-Norway suggests in DN that the alarm is based in the knowledge of extreme weather conditions in the North that both indirectly can cause oil leaks and make clean-ups challenging. This and other letters were published in the wake of the International Arctic conference in Oslo.

The political debate about oil extraction in the North involved critics of the oil industry. Bente Bakke and Svein Hammer stated in a letter published in AP: “Parties who see oil drilling in the Barents Sea as a victory, and that wishes to open Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja, does not give much hope for the future” (AP0805). The concerns about opening these areas for oil drilling were the base for many of the LTE’s throughout 2013 describing oil as being negatively affecting the environment.

The environmental and climate impacts the oil industry cause are strongly documented. Authors within this discourse refers especially to the numbers by the International Energy Agency (IEA, 2012). Even though evidence has been presented for the contrary, Norwegian oil is often perceived as being environmentally friendly and the government is actively trying to gain a name for Norway as an environmentally friendly nation. The authors within this discourse are critical of these portrayals. Their arguments can be found in the two sections below where the first angle explain how it is unacceptable that Norwegian oil is considered as *environmentally friendly oil* and the second angle explain how it is a paradox that we are trying to represent our selves as an *environmentally friendly nation*.

In this discourse the contribution from AP is noticeable. As AP have a newly acquired independent characterisation, this new focus allowed them to focus more on climate change (Eide & Ytterstad, 2011) and this is the reason why this newspaper have so many LTE’s criticising the oil industry and its contributions to climate change

#### 5.4.1 Environmentally friendly oil

The statement *Norwegian oil industry emits less pollution than that of other countries* is one of the main arguments from those who suggest Norwegian oil is environmentally friendly. By supplying the global markets with Norwegian oil we are also reducing the production of other countries ‘dirty’ energy. Nonetheless, this argument has been refuted by Fæhn, Hagem, Lindholt, et al. (2013) and others. However, just like climate change having it sceptics “and remain a considerable wildcard in public understanding” (Young, 2011, p. 444) is the notion that Norwegian oil is more environmentally friendly than other countries sticking in the opinions made by the Norwegian public. Through considering the Norwegian oil industry as environmentally friendly, the Norwegian oil industry, pro-oil politicians and the Norwegian public have shaped a resilient discourse. The authors of the letters in this emerging counter discourse, do, however, argue that oil is at the core, a GHG-emitting substance and no matter how one portrays it is not environmentally friendly. As author Aleksander Melli argues in a letter to AP: The

Oil pedagogues in politics describes the Norwegian continental shelf as a kind of brave defence against the dirtier forms of energy. But behind the fairy tale about the Norwegian different-oil<sup>43</sup>, with its alchemical favourable effect on the climate, there is a single moral calculation that is often hushed in the current debate: Norwegian oil and gas exports are the source of close to three per cent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions

(AP2408)

On a global scale we pollute considerably, our oil does not emit less greenhouse gasses than that of other countries politician Lars Egeland<sup>44</sup> argues:

(the) oil and gas industry claim that we produce oil and gas with less emissions per unit of production than other countries. This is primarily due to two major fields that are operated with clean power from shore. Disregarding this, the Norwegian production has higher emissions than the international average

(DN2207)

In addition to this, it is important that each oilfield is considered individually as production, markets and size has an effect on a field's emission and are not necessarily reflected in national averages. Another argument is that increased Norwegian oil production is better for the climate than coal, and without Norwegian oil there would be more coal. "However, there is little that support that the increased production of Norwegian oil and gas has resulted in reduced consumption of coal" (DN0404) argues Beate Sjøfjell, professor and chair of Concerned Scientists Norway.

#### 5.4.2 Environmentally friendly nation - paradox

The authors in this discourse have already established that the oil industry is bad for the environment and for our climate, in an attempt to reverse the existing *environmentally friendly oil* discourse. They voice clear concerns with that whilst Norway is promoting itself as environmentally friendly; our main source of income remains the oil industry. In their view this is a case of double standards. In the words of comedian, Espen Thoresen in a AP letter: "We are talking, world wide, about the damages caused by using fossil fuels, while Norway is one of the world's largest oil exporters" (AP0308).

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<sup>43</sup> Norwegian: *Annerledesoljen* playing on the Norwegian term *Annerledeslandet*, often used with irony referring to Norwegians being fond of considering ourselves as different (Nylenna, 2006)

<sup>44</sup> Member of Parliament, SV

Overall, the trend with the politicians seems to be that they want to increase oil extraction and this adds to the paradox of Norway taking on the role as both an oil nation and an environmentally friendly nation. MDG's Rasmus Hansson argues that it is immoral that

Norway knows all about environmental problems, says the right things and invests in increased global warming through massive oil investments. The surplus creates additional global warming through the oil fund's investment in the global financial market that is the engine behind climate change

(DN1307)

In this discourse we can find one clear narrative. We have disapproval of labelling the Norwegian oil industry as sustainable. Authors shaping this narrative argue that no matter how you twist and turn the issue, the Norwegian oil industry and Norway as a country, are not environmentally friendly. There seems to be no obvious heroes in this story as the both the Norwegian general public and politicians support the oil industry. They are thus, the villains of the narrative. The victims in this story are those who are affected by climate change, both on a national and international arena. This makes the Norwegian people victims of their own ignorance. There is however an apparent presence of environmental organisations in this narrative. They are the people who actively seek to shape a discourse critical to the oil industry in environmental terms and the ones who act outside the letters.

## **5.5 Listen to the global community**

It is not only Norwegian scientists and other op-ed authors who have contributed to the *oil is bad for the environment* discourse. Globally there are multiple actors who are setting up climate agreements and are sharing advice about how to reduce emissions from the oil industry. Here the advice given by the International Energy Agency (IEA) is particularly heeded. This publication states that "No more than one-third of proven reserves of fossil fuels can be consumed prior to 2050 if the world is to achieve the 2 °C goal" (IEA, 2012, p. 25). The letters authors aim for "truth validity by referring to actually occurring events, figures, factual evidence, past incidents, and binary opposition" (Ashraf, 2013).

The authors of this discourse argue that no exceptions should be made for Norway. Norway must reduce its emissions; however there seem to be no stopping the oil industry nor their political support. Even though, as suggested by Anna Synnøve Some Jenssen in AP: "reducing the emissions will (...) be the best for the climate" (AP1308). This is also the view of the international treaty on climate change, United Nations Framework Convention on

Climate Change (UNFCCC). Their objective is the “stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system” (UN, 1992, p. 9). However, the failure of any international climate agreements and not following the IEAs recommendations will allow Norway to continue to gain money on the oil industry, as we will see in the first angle of this discourse. However, if a successful international agreement occurs or the rest of the planet follows IEAs and UNFCCC’s advice Norway will face big issues, as will be illustrated in angle 2.

#### 5.5.1 Failure of an agreement is our success

Given that politicians do not want to change the course of Norway’s industries and Norway’s oil-dependency economy and its expanding future: it would be best for us Norwegians if the world, as Lars Haltbrekken, leader in Naturvernforbundet suggests, “does not take the threat of climate change seriously” (VG0806). Currently Norwegian economy and policies are relying on global climate agreements to fail. This mind-set lies incorporated in Norwegians. In the words of Norgaard (2006) “we don’t really want to know” (p. 347). Kathrine Aspaas adds to this: “We are simply optimistic on oil’s behalf. It can be expensive” (AP0505). Even if Norway does not follow the climate treaties, we are also dependent on other countries *not* making themselves less dependent on fossil fuels. After all, our oil economy is very much dependent on export.

We are told that for now Norwegians do not need to worry. There is no reduction in oil dependency globally and Norwegian politicians are still fully supporting the ‘business as usual’-approach of the oil industry. Anders Bjartnes argues in AP that this also reflects in the 2013 politics, “the Minister of Foreign Affairs allows the foundation for his assessment of the future energy market be that climate policy fails” (AP1004). This approach is problematic and according to Arild Hermstad, the question is: ”How long will the Norwegian public piggy bank be invested in an industry whose survival depends on climate collapse?” (VG2205).

#### 5.5.2 Triumphant agreement is our misfortune

The answer to Arild Hermstad’s question is that we cannot wait and see. We are an oil-dependent nation. It will have dire consequences for the Norwegian economy if the international society agrees to do something about climate change and follow scientists, IPCCs and IEAs advice. Understandably the need for fossil energy in a world that manages the climate threat and focus on renewable energy will be lower than in a world that fail to do so. Christine Tørklep Meisingset argues that most of Norwegian reserves will be worthless

and if we cannot extract more oil there will be "large decline in the value of oil companies" (VG0205). Anders Bjartnes implies that this can lead to financial collapse as the "Oil companies' strategies are rational given a situation where greenhouse gas emissions are not under control. However the same strategies are also recipe for financial collapse if climate policy succeed" (VG1302).

Norway's politicians do not seem to see the issue from this angle. Minister of Foreign Affairs Espen Barth Eide (Ap) "ignores the risk that large parts of the fossil energy reserves, especially in northern areas, can be worthless" (AP1004). Prime minister Jens Stoltenberg's "determined belief (...) has contributed to prevent knowledge-building debate and policy development on how Norway should handle the dilemmas that arise for a small oil country when the climate policy intensifies and the energy restructuring takes off" (VG2304). And the Minister of Petroleum and Energy Ola Borten Moe (Sp) is being questioned about Norway's interests in Statoil

But what does (...) Borten Moe do when it turns out that an oil company we own and control will lose billions if the climate policy succeeds? Closing one's ears and eyes and hope it goes away? Or does one take one action to adjust the company's course?  
(VG1302)

From this, one can understand that Norway is not prepared for any successful climate treaty.

In this discourse the narrative is the story of a hypocritical country who publicly claim to be environmentally friendly but is also very much dependent on the success of their GHG-emitting oil industry. Here, the villain is the politician who spreads this two-sided message. The victims are still people who are affected by climate change, both on a national and international scale. But the hero is the climate treaty who at least brings a beacon of hope, despite its non-successful climate actions.

## **5.6 Turning a blind eye (Climate sinners with a good conscience)**

In 2009 the concern for climate change declined in Norway. Painter (2013) argue that this links to how materialistic Norwegians have become. The oil industry has brought Norwegians the opportunity to become ignorant consumers that overlook the consequences of our actions. Journalist Simen Tveitereid agrees:



Our lifestyle is the drive force in man-made global warming. Our demand for energy. The consumption. Can we rely on the market as manager of the Earth's resources? Must we make every effort to increase the supply of energy? Finding the last oil, capture carbon and store it in an unsafe way in the Earth - or are we going to have to discuss the demand for materials and energy itself? Finding other measure of a good society than economic growth.

(AP2608)

In this discourse the authors consider the Norwegian lifestyle to be unethical. The Norwegian oil industry increases national consumption and consumption is the source of environmental and climate issues. "We are by far the climate crisis biggest pusher" (AP1901) argues author and journalist Bjørn Vassnes. The LTE's argue that it is a paradox that our culture allows us to be climate sinners with a good conscience. We have turned a blind eye towards the negative consequences of our oil industry because of the income we get from it. The moral change has happened fast, from Brundtland's sustainable development, to a consumerist nation longing for more oil-money. The oil wealth has allowed us to snooze through our own shortcomings as a nation. Oil has become our drug of choice; we have become *oljedopet*<sup>45</sup>. In the words of Dag O. Hessen, professor and MDG representative:

Norway sails on, and in these oil-lubricated waters dwell captain, crew and passengers in mutual, happy neglect of the waterfalls roar in the distance. Because we, the passengers in first class, we believe that someone should do something - just not me, that something should be done - just not here, and that the environment is important, it must just not cost or demand anything. We want our SUV's, our flights, our consumption and our illusions.

(DN2708)

The authors in this discourse suggests that Norway as a country and community should change our lifestyles, our industry and the way we look at the oil revenue. We have showed interest in changing by saying we want to be an environmentally friendly nation, we have the means to change our economy and in this discourse the authors also target peoples conscience to move away from denying the negative impacts of oil industry on an individual basis.

Within this discourse a worry for future generations is also expressed. It is suggested that our current choices and actions (or inability to conduct certain choices and actions) negatively influence those that will live in Norway after us. They will have to live with the vulnerable economy and the impacts of climate change. In addition we continue educate our citizens within the petroleum sector occupations and as researchers for the oil industry. These

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<sup>45</sup> Translation: high on oil

students are Norway's future. However they are educated within an ethically questionable sector that has no future if the authors of this discourse get their way. Educating students within this field is not a step in the right direction.

#### 5.6.1 Can't turn a blind eye to future generations

Authors argue that we can educate students to reduce our dependency on oil. As Rasmus Hansson argues: "What tomorrow's welfare state needs the most (...) is not research on «environmentally friendly» oil activity" (AP0712), it is a sustainable future. Education in sustainable professions is as important as political and economical measures to move away from oil.

However, right now, the outlook for future generations is not that bright. As can be seen in the papers' previous discourses, authors argue that the majority of Norwegian politicians seem determined to continue the oil adventure and claim that the Norwegian economy is dependent on this. "By supporting the sky-high pace of extraction in the oil industry, the Conservative Party rejects our responsibility to create an ecologically safe future" (AP0805) Bente Bakke and Svein Hammer argue. An ethical responsibility to administer nature so that it can also benefit future generations is placed upon the shoulders of our elected leaders. Author Aleksander Melli puts this responsibility in poetic terms:

To quote a beautiful and bittersweet clause of the Constitution, which could have been written by a poet: «Nature's resources should be allocated on the basis of long-term and comprehensive consideration, which also protects this right for coming generations.» Today's prevailing policies contain an unwritten agreement to break the environmental clause. Many of the state's priorities and omissions in the time of climate crisis is so grossly negligent that in some cases it may be justified to break the law in nonviolent, civil self-defence.

(AP2408)

A continued search for oil is only causing problems for our environment and future generations and hopefully "ordinary people are beginning to understand that their grandchildren will have to live with the devastating consequences of our relentless pursuit of oil (and) excessive consumption of the earth's resources" (AP0301) argues Mette Newth and Bente Bakke of the *Besteforeldrenes klimaaksjon*<sup>46</sup>. Reformation must be made. Future generations' environment, climate and quality of life is dependent on the choices we make now.

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<sup>46</sup> Grandparents Climate Campaign

In this discourse the narrative tells a story where Norwegians are disregarding the negative impacts of the oil industry. Here the Norwegian people - the climate sinners, are the villains. The victims in this narrative are the future generations of Norwegians who will have to tackle the issues the oil industry brings later, instead of us approaching them now. The heroes in the narrative are all the climate organisations contributing to the discourse. These persons do attempt to change people's perception about Norwegians role in the ethical aspect of the oil industry. In this narrative the authors advance the everyday Norwegians common sense and "weave scientific and moral claims into grand but simplistic narratives" (Young, 2011, p. 456). Using arguments that play on our emotions in the form of guilt. It convinces the public that reducing the oil industry is the right thing to do.

### **5.7 Spewing oil onto global markets**

Norwegian oil is not only affecting Norwegians in the future. As previously mentioned, Norwegian oil contributes to pollution and emission of climate gasses. These harmful pollutants are also causing harm on a global scale. Rasmus Hansson and Petter J. Karal argues that "Oil and gas is the one arena in which Norway is a major player in a global context, and thus also the arena where our ethical behaviour is of global importance" (DN0409b). It has been argued that Norwegian oil is 'cleaner' and 'greener' than that of other countries, and thus benefit the climate, Norwegians and other countries. Many are still under the impression that the global community is dependent on Norwegian fossil fuels and if this is the case there is no issue in continued Norwegian oil production. Rasmus Hansson and Petter J. Karal oppose this line of argument by suggesting that the Norwegian oil is not necessarily benefitting other countries:

The answer lies in the old maxim "do no harm" or "sweep for your own door"<sup>47</sup>. When we are spewing oil on the world market, we know that it is consumed, and that this release gases that destroy the earth's climate. If we are going to argue that we do this for the climate and the common good, we must be quite sure.

(DN0409b)

Thus, in this discourse analysis one can say that this claim has been disproved. Along the research of Benjaminsen and Svarstad (2010) one can say that this represents a counter discourse to such views. According to the authors contributing to this discourse, a reduction

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<sup>47</sup> *Fei for egen dor* is a Norwegian saying, meaning sort your own problems before you tackle others.

in Norwegian oil production will result in less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions worldwide and be of benefit for the global community. There are two angles to this discourse. The first focuses on how Norwegian oil on the world markets actually fail to benefit other countries. The second angle look at whom has the right to pollute if oil extraction and production is to be continued.

#### 5.7.1 Our oil does not benefit the poor

As stated in the introduction of this discourse, Norwegian oil is claimed to be 'green'. However, as suggested by Ingeborg Kjøs:

The oil we use and export contribute to large CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and the list of oil spills in the ocean is long. Climate change is caused by the richest countries and is most noticeable in the poorest countries. They get even bigger problems to obtain food and clean drinking water.

(AP2210)

The international community suffers enough from the negative consequences of the oil. In addition to pollution as an issue, is the presence of civil unrest and unequal distribution of wealth. Some argue that "Population growth and poverty is creating a need for Norwegian petroleum extraction to create more wealth in the world" (DN0404). However, since Norwegian oil and gas is being sold to Europe and North America, it only contributes to making the differences in global economy even bigger.

Another argument against reducing oil production in Norway is that it might negatively affect the world's poor and we should instead increase our oil extraction, as the world needs our energy and that our oil industry help keeping energy prices low. Authors disprove this, as Norway is not selling their oil to the developing world and as stated by Arild Hermstad "Norwegian oil productions do not have significant impact on price fluctuations of oil in the short or long term. The worlds poor need renewable energy, not Norwegian oil" (DN0309). Thus, in the words of professor Knut Einar Rosendahl: there is "no reason to worry about the poor" (DN0909).

#### 5.7.2 Who has the right?

Authors in this angle are aware that oil advocators have two arguments to keep on extracting oil and those are a) the world needs energy from fossil fuels and b) when two-thirds of the worlds fossil recourses needs to stay in the ground, we can still extract that one-third. The letters in this discourse suggest that the issue is: who has the right to extract this oil? Is it an already wealthy nation such as Norway or should poorer countries be given the quota?

As has been agreed upon above, Norway cannot just terminate the oil industry; it will have to be slowly phased out. However, Norway is still extracting fossil fuels without concern for climate restrictions. It is questionable that Norway allows itself to continuously extract excessive amounts of oil, when we have the finance to restructure our industry to focus on renewable energy. There are poorer countries that need the oil quotas we are spending, for their own development and energy supply. “Countries that have not benefited from these for almost 50 years, like us (...) Such countries should have the right to the «rest» of the oil industry” (AP1308) is the argument put forward by Anna Synnøve Some Jenssen. It really is a moral question about who reduces oil extraction and who continues. Arild Hermstad argues that: “When only one-third of the world’s detected fossil resources can be extracted and burned, we must ask if there is solidarity in that the world’s richest country should be allowed to pump up all their reserves” (AP1101). The answer this discourse suggest is no. Norway ought to realise that it is time to phase out the oil industry and rather support other countries with sustainable oil technologies.

In the *spewing oil onto global markets* discourse there is a grand narrative about who has the right to produce oil and who has the right to emit GHG-emissions. The villains in this narrative are the Norwegians. We are the villain as we still extract oil, whilst the ‘quota’ of oil that can be extracted runs out (IEA, 2012). The victims in this narrative are poorer countries whose ‘quota’ the Norwegians are occupying by arguing that our oil is cleaner than theirs. There is no hero in this narrative as Norway is still producing oil with no signs of reducing their extraction pace.

## **5.8 Discourse Analysis Summary**

In this chapter I have defined and discussed seven emerging discourses. In conclusion the situation with the oil discourses in Norway is that we are still at a stage where the oil industry is dominating. However, these emerging discourses are all shedding light on how the situation in Norway can viably evolve and, most of all, why we need to move towards sustainable industries and a low-emission future. This is crucial for the environment, the Norwegian economy and it is ethically sound. All of the discourses uncovered in the data selection are gathered from 2013, however some of them have been emerging prior to 2013 and they will continue to evolve as the debate about the oil industry progress.

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to discover emerging discourses criticising the Norwegian oil industry. Meaning that at the start of this project I expected that my selection of letters to the editor from 2013 would allow me to identify a number of emerging discourses. The research process has lived up to my expectations and I believe that this thesis can contribute to the field in the following ways:

- It identifies a set of emerging discourses criticising the Norwegian oil industry
- It shows that we are starting to communicate about the oil industry in new ways and that there is an arena for such discourses and supporting narratives
- It shows that LTE's are useful to spot emerging discourses
- It shows the importance to conduct research on LTE's

Letters to the editor have proven to be an arena for contribution to the media discourses by authors such as Ashraf (2013), Wahl-Jorgensen (2007) and Young (2011). The validity of the newspapers, the argument that Norwegians use media as a source of reference (Eide, Elgesem, Gloppen, & Rakner, 2014) and the notion that letters' authors are in essence authoritative actors but does also contribute as the 'voice of the people' makes the possibility that discourses found here (and others criticising the oil industry) will be adapted in to everyday discourse even more encouraging. The findings in this thesis is representative of the new sociocultural trend in Norway – voices that criticise the oil industry are being heard and there is increased understanding for why we should reduce or completely phase out the oil industry. However, to summarise how I answered this thesis objective *Understand and identify discourses critical to the oil industry produced by the Norwegian people in Norwegian media during 2013* we have to look back at the research questions.

### 6.1 Emerging discourses

First of all research question 1 *What emerging critical discourses focused on the Norwegian oil industry can be identified in letters to the editors in 2013?* allowed me to discover seven emerging discourses criticising the Norwegian oil industry. Looking at the discourses, some of them are direct counter discourses to well-established oil discourses, some are emerging

with climate concerns, others with concerns about our economic stability and some are directly criticising the way our country are being run and emphasising on our responsibilities as a wealthy, developed nation. Some of these discourses have been emerging for a while now, and others are fairly new.

Discourse one *Division of the Norwegian economy* criticise the direction the Norwegian economy is taking. There is a concern that the oil industry is negatively affecting it and a determination to hinder this trend. This discourse is challenging the popular beliefs that the Norwegian oil industry is our economy's corner stone and that it is solely benefitting Norway and that we are dependent on its income. The second discourse *Pro-oil politics* is criticising many of Norwegian politicians tendency to look past the oil industry's drawbacks and seemingly support the industry blindly. However the third discourse *A happy ending to the oil adventure* offers an alternative to the drawbacks of the oil industry and provide the politicians and our economy alternatives to the oil industry in the shape of a phase out. This discourse is presenting new ideas to how we can cope without the industry we are very much relying on. The discourse *Oil is bad for the environment* have been around for a while, especially at the time of the publishing of the Brundtland Report. However, the discourse has not been fully adopted by the Norwegians and does not considerably affect political or economic decisions. This discourse is aiming to emphasise the negative consequences of the oil industry, allowing it to become an important argument when speaking about oil. Instead of participating in failing climate summits and not following international advice of emission reduction, the discourse *Listen to the global community*, urge Norwegians and Norwegian politicians to follow international recommendations. This discourse emphasises that Norway does not do enough to prevent global warming and effortlessly continue with an unsustainable industry. The sixth discourse *Turning a blind eye* suggests that Norwegians are indeed climate sinners with a good conscience. The discourse argues that Norwegians could do more to prevent the negative effects of the oil industry. There seems to be a collective denial of the ethical implications and paradox it is that we are an oil nation that portray ourselves as an environmentally friendly nation. The last discourse *Spewing oil onto global markets* emphasise the ethical implications of Norway's oil export. When there are, contrary to popular belief, no need for Norwegian oil internationally. Neither as a 'cleaner' source of oil nor to cover the world's energy needs.

None of the discourses are hegemonic and as they are only emerging they might evolve further until they are being used in everyday speech and thus deviate from the ones that have been found in my research. However, this thesis does show that there were distinct

discourses emerging in 2013 and that they hopefully can challenge the way we previously have discussed the oil industry. Along with these discourses come narratives that give an easier way to understand the new ways of communication about the oil industry.

## **6.2 Discourse coalitions**

The narratives that have been unveiled in connection with the discourses are consistently trying to change the way Norwegians speak about the oil industry. Research question 2 *What narratives can be found supporting emerging discourses in 2013?* is asked in order to understand that if discourse is to evolve, so must the narratives on a subject as well. Just as with the discourses, older narratives are also being challenged. The narratives we can see emerge in the data selection from 2013 frame the Norwegian oil industry as negative. The oil industry and politicians unwilling to change the course of the oil nation is the villain in what could be a more sustainable and environmentally friendly world. Norwegian politicians, business leaders and citizens are all potential enablers or heroes in the narratives. Thus the victims are all those who suffer from the negative impacts of the oil industry. These impacts are amongst others climate change, economic vulnerability and unsustainability. Narratives provide the Norwegians with tales that are easy to recite and replace the existing ones. As an example: instead of talking about how the oil industry provide Norwegians with an income supply, the story is changed to the one about how the Norwegian economy is pushing other industries out and making the economy vulnerable.

## **6.3 Key critics in letters to the editor**

The creators of the discourses and narratives are prominent members of the Norwegian society. In its essence and in theory the authors of letters to the editor are supposed to reflect everyday members of a country's population (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2007). However the authors of LTE's are a constructed public (Young, 2011) and this can also be seen in the findings of this thesis. Answering research question 3 *Who are the key critics of the Norwegian oil industry in 2013?* we see that the critics are mainly business persons, scientists and politicians. Although, as discourses need to be presented by powerful actors to be adapted (Fairclough, 2010) these authors radiates a certain level of power to legitimise their claims, making them occur legitimate to the Norwegian public. Combing the legitimacy of these authors and their



appearance in media, which is a trusted source of information and also where people acquire ideas and discourses, the adaption of these emerging discourses seem promising.

#### **6.4 Did the 2013 elections put oil and climate on the agenda?**

By choosing 2013 as a reference point for emerging discourses I was hoping to see a boost in letters critiquing the Norwegian oil industry, especially around the 2013 elections. To my disappointment my expectations were not met, mainly due to the election debate not focusing enough on the issues regarding the oil industry (Høiby & Ytterstad, 2014). Even though I have established that there certainly are emerging discourses critiquing the status quo about the oil industry, the discourses seem to not have been affected much by events occurring throughout the year 2013. Instead the emerging discourses seem to be emerging from a group of concerned citizens worried about the oil industry's implications for Norway. Further research on emerging oil critique would allow me to understand why, how and when this trend began and how it will develop. Unfortunately, this is not manageable within the scope of this thesis.

Nevertheless, the research questions of this thesis have helped me *Understand and identify discourses critical to the oil industry produced by the Norwegian people in Norwegian media during 2013*. They have done so by not only giving an insight in to what the emerging discourses were in 2013, but also how they, with the Norwegian society, can help shape new discourses. However, in the words of Kjærnet (2010), “we are enlightened by deconstructing the glossy picture version of the Norwegian oil-history, but it does not in itself lead to political changes”<sup>48</sup>. Political, economical and structural changes regarding the oil industry must come from social pressure (Eide et al., 2014). However, understanding how we talk about the Norwegian industry, what discourses we use and what narratives stick, will allow us to constructively reconsider our choice of words.

#### **6.5 Contributions to the field and further research**

My work has helped pinpoint the lack of a good critical discourse analysis data collection method and suggested how this can be executed with a method based on grounded theory.

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<sup>48</sup> Original quote: Vi blir opplyste av å dekonstruere glansbildeversjonen av den norske oljehistorien, men det fører ikke i seg selv til politiske endringer

However, as this master's thesis main objective, it has contributed to the literature within the field of Norwegian oil discourse, by establishing seven emerging discourses and their supporting narratives. This research can be used by others whom are looking at how we communicate about oil in Norway.

Further research that could support and expand this thesis could look into how and why concerns about global warming are on the rise again after a low and how this is reflected in discourse. In 2006 Norgaard (2006) argued that the interest about global warming and climate change had dropped both nationally and internationally. However, as can also be reflected in my research, this trend is changing and the issue is back on the agenda (Gallup, 2014). One can also look into how this thesis plays in with the oil vs. environment debate. It would also be interesting to dig deeper into the oil discourses in themselves and look at the conflict between those seeing oil as a pressing issue and those who do not. This research could also be conducted on a global scale, as issues with the oil industry discourses are not only a Norwegian dilemma.

## Reference list – Letters To The Editor

The letters of the code indicates what newspaper the LTE was published in and the numbers signify what date it was published.

AP0301 «Oljektivens bakside», Mette Newth & Bente Bakke

AP1101 «Ti grunner til å dempe norsk petroleumsiver», Arild Hermstad

AP1901 «Bortforklarings-prosjektet», Bjørn Vassnes

AP2401 «Norges økonomi i 2013», Erling Røed Larsen

AP0303 «Aktiv statlig aksjonær - for hva?», Beate Sjøfjell

AP1004 «I oljens favn», Anders Bjartnes

AP0505 «Olje-Norge trenger sluttpakke», Kathrine Aspaas

AP0805 «Høyre har glemt forvalteransvaret», Bente Bakke & Svein Hammer

AP1906 «Oljekutt er effektiv klimapolitikk», Taran Fæhn, Cathrine Hagem, Lars Lindholt, Ståle Mæland & Knut Einar Rosendahl

AP2706 «Oljekutt og regneferdigheter», Morten Tønnessen

AP0308 «Vi snakker og vi snakker», Espen Thoresen

AP1008 «Selvmotsigelser i klimadebatten», Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Andrew Kroglund & Dag O. Hessen

AP1308 «Usikkert uansett», Anna Synnøve Some Jenssen

AP2408 «Sviket mot livet», Aleksander Melli

AP2608 «Naiv. Grønn.», Simen Tveitereid

AP2210 «Rike, kalde Norge», Ingeborg Kjos

AP0411 «Markedet tvinger frem et grønt skifte», Marius Holm

AP0712 «Kunnskap for fremtidens Norge», Rasmus Hansson

DN0702 «Tåler vi halvert oljepris?», Hilde C. Bjørnland

DN0802 «Tåler vi en høyere oljepris?», Svein Guldal

DN2502 «Fra hollandsk til norsk syke», Chr. Anton Smedshaug & Olav A. Veum

DN0703 «Ubalansert vekst», Per Richard Johansen

DN1203 «Kappløpet ingen er utstyrt for», Nina Jensen

DN0204 «Mer effektiv offentlig sektor», Kristin Clemet

DN0404 «Borten Moes uholdbare oljepåstander», Beate Sjøfjell

DN1307 «Den grønne musa brøler», Rasmus Hansson

DN2207 «Musebrøl holder ikke», Lars Egeland

DN2708 «Trenger grønn vekker», Dag O. Hessen

DN2808 «Fra olje til vann og vind», Jens Ulltveit-Moe

DN0309 «Usmakelig fra Borten Moe», Arild Hermstad

DN0409a «Fakta må ha makta», Bård Vegar Solhjell

DN0409b «Bekvem konklusjon», Rasmus Hansson & Petter J. Karal

DN0509 «Oljeringvirkninger», Hilde C. Bjørnland & Leif Anders Thorsrud

DN0909 «Sannsynlighet, ikke fiksjon», Knut Einar Rosendahl

DN1409 «Ti forslag til Solberg», Rasmus Hansson

DN1909 «Gjøkungen i norsk økonomi», Roger Bjørnstad

DN0310 «Den norske boblen», Steinar Juel

DN1111 «Start nedtrappingen», Erling Moxnes

DN2111 «Det uevnelige», Jens Ingvald Olsen

VG1302 «Trusselen mot Statoils verdier», Anders Bjartnes

VG2304 «Det store veddemålet», Anders Bjartnes

VG0205 «Stresstest for pensjonspenger», Christine Tørklep Meisingset

VG2205 «Investerer i klimakollaps», Arild Hermstad

VG0806 «Gass for klimaet?», Lars Haltbrekken

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# Appendixes

## Appendix 1 – “10 oil commandments”

Source: (OD, 2010)

### **First commandment**

National supervision and control must be ensured for all operations on the NCS.

### **Second commandment**

Petroleum discoveries must be exploited in a way which makes Norway as independent as possible of others for its supplies of crude oil.

### **Third commandment**

New industry will be developed on the basis of petroleum.

### **Fourth commandment**

The development of an oil industry must take necessary account of existing industrial activities and the protection of nature and the environment.

### **Fifth commandment**

Flaring of exploitable gas on the NCS must not be accepted except during brief periods of testing.

### **Sixth commandment**

Petroleum from the NCS must as a general rule be landed in Norway, except in those cases where socio-political considerations dictate a different solution.

### **Seventh commandment**

The state must become involved at all appropriate levels and contribute to a coordination of Norwegian interests in Norway’s petroleum industry as well as the creation of an integrated oil community which sets its sights both nationally and internationally.

### **Eighth commandment**

A state oil company will be established which can look after the government’s commercial interests and pursue appropriate collaboration with domestic and foreign oil interests.

### **Ninth commandment**

A pattern of activities must be selected north of the 62nd parallel which reflects the special socio-political conditions prevailing in that part of the country.

### **Tenth commandment**

Large Norwegian petroleum discoveries could present new tasks for Norway’s foreign policy.

## **Appendix 2 – Original concepts in protocol**

(Translated from Norwegian to English for the sake of presentation)

1. Headline
2. Author
3. Newspaper
4. Date
5. Type (of article)
6. Topic
7. Sources of information/References
8. General criticism of oil industry?
9. How do they show that they are negative towards the oil industry (definition of problem)
10. Extract about the oil industry
11. Key words/descriptions about the oil industry
12. Extract narrative in article
13. Narrative in own words
14. Hero
15. Villain
16. Victim
17. Notes/Other

### **Appendix 3 – Categories, one step closer to discourses**

(Translated from Norwegian to English for the sake of presentation)

1. (Expanding) Norwegian oil industry is not beneficial for other Norwegian industries
2. Our industry and our economy is too dependent on the oil (split in economy)
3. We will be alright if EU / the world do not take climate issues seriously
4. What gives us the right to continue polluting while others must reduce emission
5. Oil is oil, it is not environmentally friendly. Paradox. Double standards.
6. Oil policies / the Norwegian oil industry in direct conflict with climate policy
7. Politicians and the state sits in the pocket to the oil industry
8. What environmental / climate for future generations?
9. What about the economy of future generations?
10. Increased emissions from the oil industry in recent years
11. Must follow IEA recommendation
12. Oil increases the Norwegian consumption
13. Risk of foil leaks
14. Norwegian oil industry takes too much of Norwegian money
15. Oil riches affects Norwegians morality / culture
16. It benefits no other country that we continue our oil production
17. We ought to pursue renewable energy / sustainable future and reduce oil operations
18. Competence can be moved from the oil industry to other industries
19. We have the money, we can make changes and terminate the oil industry

## Appendix 4 – Scanned copies of LTE's

### 1) Illustration - *Division of the Norwegian economy* discourse

#### DagensNæringsliv

##### Fra hollandsk til norsk syke

Dagens Næringsliv Morgen. Publisert på trykk 25.02.2013. INNLEGG, ØKONOMI. Side: 28.

**Norge viser klare symptomer på hollandsk syke. Oljeboomen skaper et lønns- og kostnadsnivå som presser ut annen produksjon. Raske grep må til for å kurere pasienten, skriver Chr. Anton Smedshaug, AgriAnalyse og Olav A. Veum, Norges Skogelerforbund.**

Den norske økonomien går tilsynelatende godt. Lønnsveksten er høy, boligprisene stiger og statens inntekter er relativt høye. Likevel retter stadig flere søkelyset mot sterkt bekymringsfulle trekk i norsk produksjon.

For det første er det bred enighet om at industrien todeles. Mens leverandøri industrien og alt som er innenfor oljeboomen går bra og tilsynelatende stadig bedre, sliter tradisjonell industri som ikke har et bein innenfor høykonjunkturen i oljesektoren. Særlig er dette tydelig i den norske treforedlingsindustrien, som tradisjonelt har vært en av våre største industrier. Sterk valuta og høyt kostnadsnivå svekker konkurransekraften i et krevende globalt marked.

Dette er dramatisk også for utnyttelsen for en av våre viktige naturressurser. Norge har nær 900 millioner kubikkmeter skog stående på rot, hvis mulig anvendelse er helt avhengig av en norsk foredlingsindustri på grunn av høye transportkostnader ved eventuell eksport.

Videre har vi en sterkt økende matimport som svekker norsk næringsmiddelindustri gjennom fallende hjemmemarkedsandel. Den er nå under 80 prosent mot 86 prosent for ti år siden. Samtidig har importen øket fra under 20 milliarder kroner til over 45 milliarder i 2012. En dobling også de neste ti årene vil bety at denne delen av industrien, som sysselsetter om lag 50.000 personer vil bli vesentlig svekket.

For det tredje synker sysselsettingen i industrien totalt sett. I 2010 var 9,2 prosent av arbeidsstokken sysselsatt i industrien, mot 12,4 prosent ved starten av tiåret. Det betyr at for

tiden stiger helse- og omsorgssektoren og bygg og anlegg mest i økonomien, og ikke den tradisjonelt største verdiskapende sektor.

Videre går investeringene i norsk produksjon i hovedsak til petroleumssektoren. Petroleumssektoren står i dag for nesten fire femtedeler av investeringene innenfor norsk produksjon. Nødvendige og lønnsomme investeringer i fornyelse og effektivisering av annen produksjons- og foredlingsindustri vil derfor bli svært utfordrende dersom utviklingen i Norge holder fram.

I hvilken grad leverer denne økonomien?

Sentralbanksjef Øystein Olsen tok opp dette i årstalen 14. feb. Der viser han blant annet at produktiviteten falt siste år. Vi produserte knapt mer pr time i 2011 enn i 2010. Da er det egentlig svakt grunnlag for lønnsvekst totalt sett, så lenge man ikke produserer mer per år. Dette illustreres også ved at bnp per person faller. Det nådde toppen i 2008 og har siden forlatt trendveksten.

Hva holder da dagens økonomi i gang?

Det er åpenbart at omfanget av olje- og gasssektoren er så stor at den smører alt fra statsbudsjett til et oppblåst privat forbruk gjennom bl.a. høy inntektsvekst utover det annen aktivitet tåler. Dessuten stiger fortsatt gjelda i husholdningene slik at norske husholdninger er Europas tredje mest forgjeldede etter Nederland og Danmark. Forskjellen er at i Norge så stiger gjelda fortsatt, mens den synker i de øvrige landene.

Dette ligner dessverre alt for mye på det som har fått navnet "hollandsk syke" etter at tidsskriftet The Economist beskrev utviklingen i Nederland i perioden 1959-1977. Da hadde gassfunn på nederlandsk sokkel gjort landet en altfor sterk valuta som førte til høy import og lav eksport av annet enn gass og tilknyttet teknologi. De fikk en lønnsvekst langt utover det annen industri kunne klare, opprettholdt av lønnsvevnen i gasssektoren. Dette ga industridød og et ensidig råvarerettet næringsliv. Man fikk feilfordeling av kapital, med bobler i uproduktive sektorer og sterkt vekst i en skjernet nasjonal tjenestesektor. Altså ikke ulikt det Norge i dag



opplever.

Hva må til?

Først og fremst må det være mer lønnsomt å investere kapital i verdiskapende produksjon fremfor boligmarkedet. Det kan styres av skatteregimet. Like viktig er en helhetlig strategi for norsk produksjon og eierskap, der begrepet næringsnøytralitet må vekke.

Norge må legge til rette for utnyttelse av landets egne ressurser slik at vi kan satse med en bred norsk produksjonsplattform i årene framover. For øyeblikket snevres den inn og gjør oss stadig mer sårbare for oljeprisfall, konkurranse fra Østen

mot leverandørindustrien, samt at boligboblen sprekker.

Det vil tjene oss til liten ære om begrepet hollandsk syke byttes ut mot "norsk syke" om noen år når historien skal skrives om "anderledeslandet", fordi vi unnlot å ta grep mens det ennå var tid.n Chr. Anton Smedshaug, AgriAnalyse og Olav A. Veum, Norges Skogelerforbund

© Dagens Næringsliv

### Facsimile:

Retriver/Dagens Næringsliv, 25.02.2013, «Fra hollandsk til norsk syke», Chr. Anton Smedshaug & Olav A. Veum

## Aktiv statlig aksjonær - for hva?

Statsråd Trond Giske (Ap) erklærer i Aftenposten 27. februar at Nærings- og handelsdepartementet skal være «aktive, fremoverlente og tydelige» som aksjonær i de statskontrollerte selskapene.

Giske har rett i at det som noe misvisende kalles «Eierskapsmeldingen» annonserer at staten skal være en aktiv aksjonær.

Både denne og den forrige meldingen sier imidlertid også noe om hva aksjonærmakten skal brukes til.

Eierskapsmeldingene understreker hvor viktig det er at statskontrollerte selskaper utviser samfunnsansvar, også av hensyn til den norske stats legitimitet som lovgiver og i internasjonale forhandlinger. Grunnloven vår forplikter staten til å fremme en bærekraftig utvikling for oss og våre etterkommere. Staten bestemmer selv hvordan dette skal virkeliggjøres, men ikke om det skal oppfylles – det er en plikt, ikke et hypotetisk mål.

Staten må gjøre det som er nødvendig, inkludert å bruke sin økonomiske makt. Staten er majoritetsaksjonær i våre største selskaper, i tillegg til at vi har verdens mest innflytelsesrike pensjonsfond. Slik Nils Christie påpeker i Aftenposten 26. februar, forspiller staten her en fantastisk mulighet. Den norske stat kunne bruke disse finansielle musklene til å bidra til å snu utviklingen i en bærekraftig retning, med storsatsing på fremtidsrettede næringer, fornybar energi og ny teknologi.

I stedet har vi en nærings- og handelsminister som ser ut til å ville bruke aksjonærmakten for maktens skyld, og en olje- og energiminister som er Statoils beste allierte og vil at det skal hentes opp mest mulig olje fortrest mulig. Dette er misbruk av statlige ressurser.

**Beate Sjøfjell**  
professor dr. juris, styreleder,  
Concerned Scientists Norway

Facsimile:

Aftenposten, 03.03.2013, «Aktiv statlig aksjonær - for hva?», Beate Sjøfjell

### 3) Illustration – *A happy ending to the oil adventure discourse*



Produksjonen av olje og gass er den største kilden til norske klimagassutslipp og den setter rike fiskeressurser og annet maritimt liv i fare, skriver Arild Hermstad. Her Statfjord B i Nordsjøen. FOTO: STIG B. HANSEN

**Olje- og gassboom.** Midt i klimakrisen er Norge inne i en ny olje- og gassboom. Bare i år skal 200 milliarder kroner investeres. Det er 37 ganger mer enn Miljøverndepartementets årsbudsjett.

# Ti grunner til å dempe norsk petroleumsiver

## Kronikk



**Arild Hermstad leder, Fremtiden i våre hender**

Norsk oljepolitikk har preg av desperasjon. Profitt og inntekter skal holdes oppe. Klimaforskernes meldinger preges også av desperasjon. En fersk studie viser at temperaturen vil stige med over fem grader innen 2100 hvis utslippene øker i

dagens tempo. Det betyr katastrofale klimaendringer, ikke i en fjern fremtid, men for mennesker som allerede er født. Den norske storsatsingen på olje- og gass må reduseres, fordi:

**1. Den tar for gitt at alle fossile reserver kan pumpes opp og brennes.**

Maksimalt en tredjedel av verdens påviste fossile reserver kan brennes de neste 40 år hvis vi skal unngå mer enn to graders oppvarming. Norge er nødt til å overse dette når landet legger opp til et «oljeeventyr» i Arktis. Infrastrukturens levetid låser oss fast til «fossil-alderen» i flere tiår.

**2. Den forsterker det norske forbruket.**

Kjøpekraften i Norge er høyere, vokser forttere og utløser større utslipp enn om vi hadde vært uten milliardene fra petroleumsvirksomheten. Det gir økende miljøskader og klimagassutslipp, først og fremst i land som produserer varene vi kjøper, som Kina.

**3. Den gjør det krevende å redusere Norges nasjonale utslipp tilstrekkelig.**

Produksjonen av olje og gass er den største kilden til norske klimagassutslipp. Utslippene fra denne sektoren er over 70 prosent høyere enn de var i 1990. Norge er forpliktet til å redusere egne utslipp





kraftig. Olje- og gassproduksjonen gjør det vanskelig.

#### 4. Den setter rike fiskeressurser og annet marint liv i fare.

Norskehavet og Barentshavet er rikt på liv, og er samtidig utsatt for ekstremvær. Havet utenfor Senja, Lofoten og Vesterålen er spesielt rikt, der finnes sjøpattedyr, fuglefjell, korallrev – og ikke minst svære fiskebestander. Vi bør derfor høre på det statsråd Ola Borten Moe (Sp) mente da han var stortingsrepresentant: «Det er i første rekke miljøkonsekvensene som bør telle inn. Det vil være galimatias å true vårt største matfat. Her dreier det seg om enorme fiskeressurser, som i motsetning til oljen er en evigvarende ressurs». Borten Moe mente at en oljekatastrofe utenfor Lofoten og Vesterålen vil få enorme negative konsekvenser. (ANB 2008).

#### 5. Den suger til seg hoder og hender.

Lønnsomheten i olje- og gassnæringen gjør at gjennomsnittslønnen i næringen nå er over én million kroner. Lønnsnivået tiltrekker seg arbeidskraft, ikke minst folk med høy teknisk, naturvitenskapelig kompetanse. Blant taperne er næringer som bidrar langt mindre til klimaproblemet. Det oppstår også mangel på fagfolk som trengs for å gjennomføre utslippsreducerende tiltak i andre sektorer.

#### 6. Den suger til seg penger fra staten.

Våre felles penger blir brukt til å stimulere gigantiske investeringer i fossil energi. Staten tar en svært stor del av risikoen, både gjennom rene subsidier i form av leterfusjonsordningen (ca. ti milliarder per år) og fordi oljeselskaper gjennom skattesystemet kan skyve 80 prosent av sine investeringer over på offentlige budsjetter.

#### 7. Den er økonomisk risikabel.

En forlengelse av det norske «oljeeventyret» avhenger av at land som kjøper olje og gass ikke gjør seg mindre avhengig av fossil energi, eller eventuelt får kjøpt den billigere fra andre land. Skifer gass kan bi-

» Det er lite sannsynlig at verdens nasjoner i overskuelig fremtid vil bli enige om en bindende avtale som setter et tilstrekkelig lavt tak på klimagassutslipp, eller innfører en global skatt på utslipp

dra til lavere priser og lavere etterspørsel etter norsk gass. Fornybar energi, særlig sol- og vindenergi, vil i løpet av de nærmeste årene vinne betydelig konkurransekraft.

#### 8. Den har medført en «fossil» lobby med avgjørende innflytelse.

Statoil er ti ganger større enn det nest største selskapet på Oslo Børs, Olje- og gassindustrien sysselsetter direkte og indirekte mer enn 200 000 personer i Norge, og står for rundt 25 prosent av statens årlige inntekter. Det gjør at denne industrien har en avgjørende innflytelse på energipolitikken. Den norske fossillobben er en del av den globale, mektige lobbyen som er det største hinderet for å unngå en katastrofal oppvarming.

#### 9. Den rammer produsentland som er langt fattigere enn Norge.

Når bare en tredjedel av verdens påviste fossile ressurser kan hentes opp og brennes, må vi spørre om det er solidarisk at verdens rikeste land skal ha lov til å pumpe opp alle sine reserver. Skal vi be land som Øst-Timor, Angola og Bolivia om å stanse pumpene? Er det rimelig å tro at langt fattigere land enn vårt vil gi opp utvinningen av fossil energi, og dermed gå glipp av veldige pengesummer, mens vi fortsetter utvinningen i stort tempo, fordi vi ellers ville gå glipp av veldige summer?

#### 10. Regjeringens prioriterte klimatiltak har svakheter og tar tid.

Karbonfangst og -lagring vil i beste fall spille en rolle først etter 2020. Teknologien er dessuten bare anvendelig for utslipp fra kraftverk, petroleumsutvinning og større industrianlegg, samtidig som størsteparten av verdens oljeforbruk skjer i transportsektoren, og betydelig deler av gassforbruket skjer i boliger og mindre bedrifter. Norge kjøper kvoter fra utviklingsland for å oppfylle egne klimamål. Men flere av kjøpene har gitt økte utslipp av klimagasser, lokal forurensning og beslaglegging av områder som har vært brukt til å produsere mat. Norge har satt av tre milliarder kroner årlig til regnskogbevaring og har med det bidratt, særlig i Brasil, til mindre avskoging og dermed mindre karbonutslipp. Men det har vist seg tidkrevende å finne gode, sikre prosjekter til pengene som settes av.

#### Innsatsen på hjemmebane

Inngåelse av internasjonale avtaler har vært prioritert av Norge. Men det er lite sannsynlig at verdens nasjoner i overskuelig fremtid vil bli enige om en bindende avtale som setter et tilstrekkelig lavt tak på klimagassutslipp, eller innfører en global skatt på utslipp.

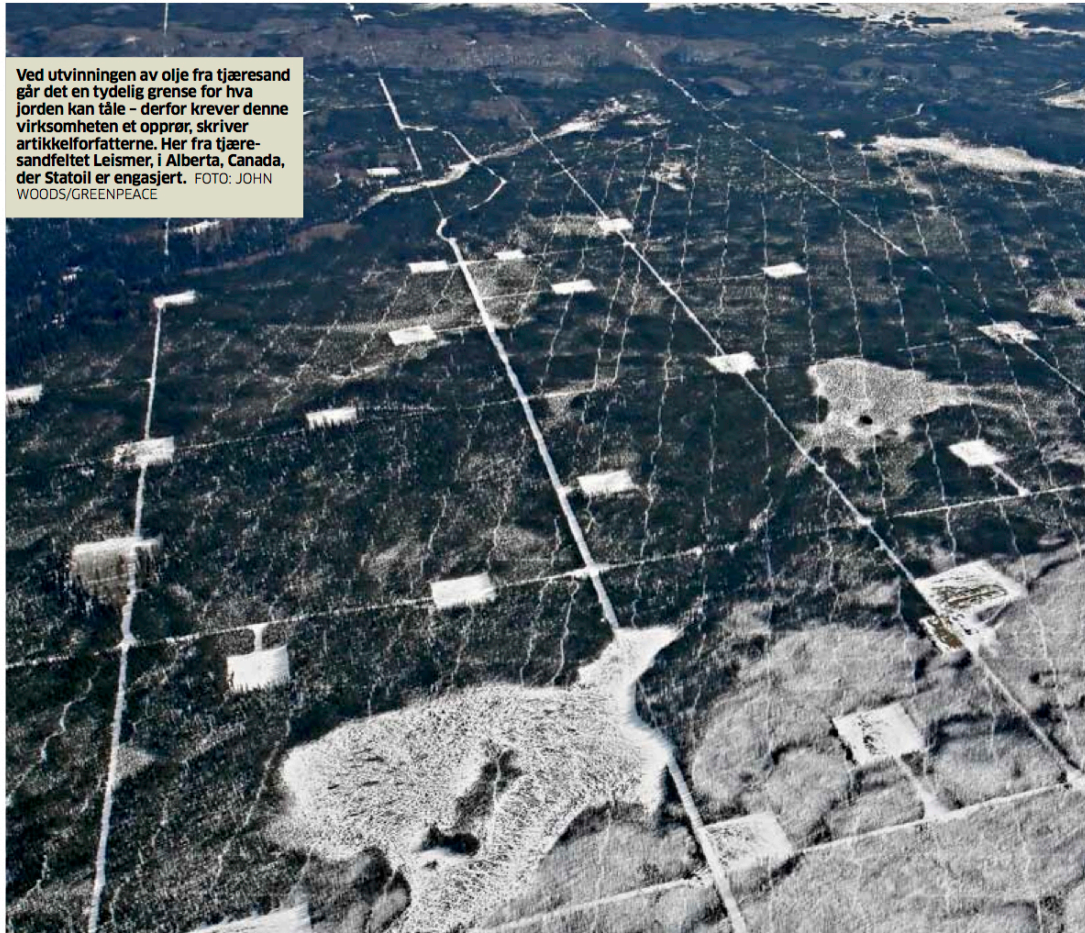
Dermed må innsatsen for å kutte utslippene av klimagasser på hjemmebane intensiveres, og hvorfor ikke starte med petroleumssektoren som har økt sine utslipp formidabelt siden 1990?

### Facsimile:

Aftenposten, 11.01.2013, «Ti grunner til å dempe norsk petroleumsiver», Arild Hermstad



#### 4) Illustration - *Oil is bad for the environment* discourse



Ved utvinningen av olje fra tjæresand går det en tydelig grense for hva jorden kan tåle - derfor krever denne virksomheten et opprør, skriver artikkelforfatterne. Her fra tjæresandfeltet Leismer, i Alberta, Canada, der Statoil er engasjert. FOTO: JOHN WOODS/GREENPEACE

**Klima.** Mange av statens prioriteringer og unnlatsessynder i klimakrisens tid er så grovt uaktsomme at det i noen tilfeller kan forsvares å bryte loven i ikkevoldelig, sivilt nødverge.

## Sviket mot livet

### Kronikk



**Aleksander Mell**

Medforfattere: Styret i «Forfatternes klimaaksjon – \$110b»: Freddy Fjellheim, Espen Stueland, Elisabeth Eide, Mette Newth, Kristian Bjørkdahl, Nina Dessau, Sidsel Mørck, Arild Stubhaug.

Når nordmenn snakker om klima, bruker vi gjerne ord som endringer, krise, utfordring, trussel, problem. Undertegnede vil slå et slag for en hardere ordbruk i omtalen av Norges strategiske valg i den senere tid. Etter gjeldende lov og konvensjoner forvalter vi Oljefondet, Statoil og ressursene på

norsk sokkel i god overensstemmelse med utviklingen globalt, som peker mot en verden som kan bli seks grader varmere. Sett med litt andre øyne er vi medskyldige i en klimatisk utrensning av sårbare medmenesker og andre arter i et omfang uten sidestykke i jordens historie. Overlagt eller ikke - i dette lys er vi en liten forbrytelsesnasjon.

#### Sprenger karbonbudsjettet

Menneskeheten er på stø kurs til å forbrenne langt mer karbon enn mengden som er forenlig med et stabilt klima. I en kompleks klimatisk og geopolitisk virkelighet, er vår tids imperativ krystallklart: To tredjedeler av alle oppdagede fossile ressurser må bli liggende i bakken. Punktum. Men det globale kappløpet etter nye fossile reserver ligger an til å sprengte karbonbudsjettet vårt på under to tiår. Forandringene vi ser og måler i dag er forsiktige vardøyer for det som kan skje: Havforsuring, koralldød, svekket matsik-

kerhet i utsatte områder. Supertyfonen Utor på Filippinene i august kan betraktes som enda en tidlig angrepsbølge i krigføringen vi driver mot oss selv.

Er dette å male fanden på veggen? Nei. Marerittet er fagfelleverdert. Selv om vi baserer oss på et konservativt tverrsnitt av dagens kunnskap, som for eksempel FNs klimapanel gjør, er risikoen reell for utstrakt kollaps i økosystemer mange steder på jorden i dette århundret.

Land som Tyskland viser vei med en rask omlegging av industri, teknologi, forbruk og tankesett. De fleste andre puster kunstig liv i oljealderen, og baserer sine økonomiske fremskrivninger på utslippsscenarioer som i beste fall innebærer en uakseptabel risiko for at millioner av mennesker vil lide og dø av klimaomveltninger. Norge har for lengst gitt stilltende samtykke til denne utviklingen. Vi deltar med andre ord i en ny form for forbrytelse mot menneskeheten - og bi-





osfæren. Oljepedagogene i politikken beskriver norsk sokkel som en slags tapper skanse mot skitnere energiformer. Men bak eventyret om den norske Annerledesoljen, med sin alkymistisk gunstige virkning på klimaet, finnes det et enkelt moralsk regnestykke som ofte forties i dagens debatt: Norsk olje- og gassseksport er kilden til oppimot tre prosent av verdens klimagassutslipp. Vi fortsetter utvinningstakten som om den virkelige krisen er atmosfærisk underskudd på karbon og metan. «Dette er galskap, Norge,» sa den viden anerkjente klimaforskeren James Hansen under et nylig besøk her. Kriminell galskap, vil vi legge til. Med Hansens kritikk i mente lyder Statoils slagord «Vi støtter morgendagens helter», som et mørkt kapittel i kosens kulturhistorie. Den minner oss også om den berømte replikken til Hitlers propagandaminister, Joseph Goebbels: Forteller du en stor løgn mange nok ganger, vil folk til slutt tro på den.

➤ **Sett med litt andre øyne er vi medskyldige i en klimatisk utrensning av sårbare medmennesker og andre arter i et omfang uten sidestykke i jordens historie**

Slike sammenligninger er selvsagt usmakelige. Men hvis det haster å få øynene opp for en påbegynt, kollektiv ugjering, haster det også å provosere frem nye former for etisk debatt. Ansvarsfraskrivelsens banalitet er jevnt fordelt i vårt samfunn, med elleve tonn utslipp pr. person, og med tafatte partiprogrammer som vi selv stemmer frem. Men noen har mer ansvar enn andre. Uten å demonisere oljebransjen og det den har betydd for Norge, må vi begynne å fordømme dem som har det politiske ansvaret for utålelige tilfeller av vold mot kommende generasjoner.

#### **Forbrytelse mot naturen**

Den engelske juristen Polly Higgins arbeider for at FN skal etablere en internasjonal konvensjon om *økocid*: forbrytelser mot naturen, som en femte forbrytelse mot freden. Slike juridiske rammeverk hører kanskje fremtiden til. Etisk praksis kan imidlertid endres langt raskere og ikke bare ved hjelp av utrettelige aktivister.

Også vanlige mennesker kan med mot og verdighet berøre vår moralske fantasi og utvide medfølelsens rekkevidde. Rosa Parks gjorde det i Alabama i 1957. Folkeopprøret mot Apartheid gjorde det i Sør-Afrika. Klimakrisens etikk er mer innfløkt, men ved utvinningen av olje fra tjæresand går det en tydelig grense for hva jorden kan tåle – derfor krever denne virksomheten et opprør. Oljeutvinning i Arktis og Barentshavet er i samme klasse. Og Lofoten, Vesterålen og Senja blir ikke mindre viktig av at grensen til dels er symbolsk.

Veivalget 9. september blir ett av vår tids viktigste. Norge har ingen klimalov ennå, men det er på høy tid at vi gjør de klimalovlydige tingene. Noen er relativt enkle og hyggelige – velge bort varer og tjenester som er tungt karbonbelastet, dyrke økonomisk og økologisk vinn-vinn. Andre er mer krevende. Flere intellektuelle kan heve stemmen. Journalister kan bli mindre servile i møtet med det oljeindustrielle kompleks, avisredaktører bedre orientert om naturvitenskapelig forskning. Flere unge kan aktivt delta i kampen om egen fremtid. Høy valgdeltagelse er et minstekrav for en generasjon som har fått så mye og risikerer å miste så mye mer.

#### **Planlegger aksjoner**

Hvordan kan forfattere og andre skribenter bidra? En god start er å skrive. Forfatterens klimaaksjon vil på det sterkeste oppfordre kolleger til det. Vi fikk med oss mer enn 250 forfattere til å undertegne et opprop mot Statoils tjæresandutvinning, vi deltar på Klimavalg 2013s markeringsdag i dag og vi planlegger aksjoner i forbindelse med Grunnlovsjubileet i 2014. Det er ikke tilfeldig. For å sitere en vakker og bittersøt paragraf i Grunnloven, som kunne ha vært skrevet av en poet:

«Natures Ressources skulle disponeres ut fra en langsiktig og allsidig Betragtning, der ivaretager denne Ret også for Efterslægten.» Dagens rådende politikk innebærer en uskreven avtale om å bryte miljøparagrafen. Mange av statens prioriteringer og unnlattelsessynder i klimakrisens tid er så grovt uaktsomme at det i enkelte tilfeller kan forsvares å bryte loven i ikkevoldelig, sivilt nødverge. Det er derfor vi har kalt vårt nystiftede initiativ § 110b. Lite i Grunnloven er viktigere i dag.

#### Facsimile:

Aftenposten, 24.08.2013,

«Sviket mot livet»,

Aleksander Melli



# Trusselen mot

- En ny analyse fra storbanken HSBC viser at Statoils verdier kan bli radert ut.
- Regjeringen bør kreve at Statoil legger fram en strategi for lønnsomhet i møte med klimakrav og lavere oljepris.

## KLIMA



**Anders Bjartnes,**  
daglig leder  
Norsk  
Klimastiftelse.

En fersk analyse fra storbanken HSBC burde få alarmklokkene til å ringe hos Jens Stoltenberg og Ola Borten Moe. Det truende budskapet: Statoils verdier vil rammes knallhardt om klimapolitikken lykkes.

### Taper stort

De store europeiske oljeselskapene vil alle tape stort på en forsterket klimapolitikk og en energiomstilling som øker i takt og styrke.

Årsaken er helt enkelt at oljeprisene vil falle. Analysen fra HSBC – «Oil & Carbon revisited, value at risk from unburnable reserves» – viser at Statoil har posisjonert seg på en måte som gjør selskapet uhyre sårbart for virkningene av en mer aggressiv klimapolitikk.

### Statoil er faktisk verst stilt blant de europeiske oljeselskapene.

Store verdier kan bli radert ut hos alle sammen, men både BP, Shell, Total og Eni er mindre utsatt enn Statoil, ifølge HSBC-studien.

Det er bred enighet om at politikkerne ikke skal legge seg opp i Statoils daglige drift. Selskapets styre og ledelse må få fred til å styre butikken fra dag til dag. Men når det kommer til langsiktige strategiske veivalg, bør det være like selvsagt at eierne har en mening. I Statoils tilfelle er den største eieren, som vi alle vet, den norske staten. Et

verdifall på petroleumsreserver inntreffer ikke over natten. Analysen fra HSBC peker frem mot 2030.

### To graders målet

Norge bekjenner seg i likhet med nesten samtlige land til FNs togradersmål. Det er en klimautvikling i den retningen regjeringen sier den ønsker. Men hva gjør statsminister Jens Stoltenberg og olje- og energiminister Ola Borten Moe når det viser seg at et oljeselskap man eier og kontrollerer vil tape milliarder hvis klimapolitikken lykkes? Lukker man ører og øyne og håper det går over? Eller tar man grep for å justere selskaps kurs?

HSBC tar utgangspunkt i en matematisk kjensgjerning. Store deler av de allerede påviste fossile energireservene må bli liggende i bakken hvis togradersmålet skal nås. Dette er det bred internasjonale aksept om, blant annet uttrykt gjennom de årlige rapportene fra Det Internasjonale Energibyrået (IEA).

**Omkring to-tredjedeler av de fossile energireservene er «unburnable karbon», ressurser som ikke kan brennes. De blir derfor verdiløse i økonomisk forstand.**

### Det dyreste

Det er selvsagt krevende å påvise hvilke fossile energireserver som er mest utsatt for verdifall, men HSBC konkluderer i tråd med kapitalismens logikk. Det dyreste blir liggende i bakken.

Essensen i HSBCs analyse er følgende. Vellykket klimapolitikk betyr kraftig fall i oljeetterspørselen. Lavere oljeetterspørsel betyr lavere priser.

**Oljeselskapene taper på to måter. For det første blir en del av reservene verdiløse, helt enkelt fordi det ikke vil lønne**

**seg å utvinne dem. For det andre faller verdien på resten av porteføljen på grunn av de lavere prisene.**

Samlet gir dette store tap i form av svekkede inntekter.

Fordi Statoil har mange kostbare prosjekter i sin portefølje, vil selskapet bli hardt rammet. Oljesandinvesteringene i Canada og de dyreste prosjektene på norsk sokkel vil ramle ut.

**HSBCs analyse bekrefter at oljeselskapene ikke tror at klimamålene blir nådd – og at de opptrer deretter.**

Fremtidsscenarioene BP, Exxon, Statoil og de andre selskapene jevnlig presenterer, viser at de legger til grunn en utvikling i det globale energiforbruket de neste tiårene som langt overstiger det togradersbanen tåler.

### Rasjonelle oljeselskap

Oljeselskapenes strategier er rasjonelle gitt en utvikling der klimautslippene ikke kommer under kontroll. Men de samme strategiene er samtidig oppskrift på finansiell kollaps hvis klimapolitikken lykkes.

**For den norske staten reiser dette noen spørsmål som må luftes i det offentlige rommet.**

**Etikken:** Kan den norske staten sitte stille å se på at Statoil agerer ut fra en forventning om at klimapolitikken mislykkes?

**Finansene:** Kan den norske staten se bort fra risikoen for at man vil oppleve et dramatisk verdifall på Statoils reserver?

**Politikken:** Kan den norske staten bli drevet i retning av internasjonale partnerskap som motvirker en effektiv klimapolitikk?

### Krever en strategi

Som Statoils største eier burde staten be selskapet komme opp med en strategisk plan som viser

# Statoils verdier



**KLIMAKAMERATER?** Helge Lund i samtale med Dr. Faith Birol fra Verdens energibyrå på Statoils årlige høstkonferanse. Foto: SCANPIX.

hvordan selskapet kan oppnå langiktig og lønnsom vekst innenfor rammene togradersmålet setter. Vegrer regjeringen seg for et slikt grep, bør Stortinget –

eventuelt det sivile samfunn – iverksette et slikt arbeid. Statoil håndterer enorme verdier på vegne av det norske folk. Det vil være dypt uansvarlig,

både etisk, politisk og finansielt, om selskapet ikke legger om kursen.

Facsimile:

Verdens Gang, 13.02.2013, «Trusselen mot Statoils verdier», Anders Bjartnes



## 6) Illustration - *Turning a blind eye* discourse

### Debatt



Simen  
Tveitereid  
journalist

**Miljø.** I kampen mot klimaendringene kan det mest naive være å tro at det går an å vente på teknologien.

## Naiv. Grønn.

Da miljø og klima faktisk var i ferd med å bli en del av valgkampen måtte miljøbevegelsen begynne å krangle. Da Miljøpartiet De Grønne stormet frem på meningsmålingene måtte Frederic Hauge og Bellona komme med den vanlige merkelappen: «Naivt». De Grønne er naive, partiet er gammeldags og snakker for lite om ny teknologi, mener Hauge.

Bellona er teknologioptimistene i den norske miljøleiren. Men de har ikke klart å tenne noen gnist i folket eller få miljøsakene høyere opp på den politiske dagsorden ved å snakke om karbonfangst. Det ser det ut som om Rasmus Hansson og De Grønne har klart, tross det leie budskapet om at vi må redusere forbruket og at levestandarden på 80-tallet kanskje var grei nok.

I enhver debatt får Rasmus Hansson høre at han lever i en drømmeverden. Men kanskje er det heller alle dem som tror at velstanden kan fortsette inn i himmelen som er naive drømme- re? Kanskje er det enormt dyr rensing av olje som snart er gammeldags? Troen på karbonfangst er basert på at den grønne omstilling ikke lar seg gjøre.

De siste 60 årene har menneskene brukt mer av Jordens ressurser enn alle de foregående generasjoner tilsammen. Om økonomien fortsetter å vokse med fire prosent i året, vil den om 100 år ha blitt 50 ganger så stor som i dag. Det er en umulighet, uansett hvilke nye energiformer som måtte dukke opp. Likevel tror de fleste at veksten kan fortsette. Det må den jo. For fremtidige generasjoner vil ikke være fornøyd med dagens velferdsnivå, de vil kreve mer, kan vi ofte lese. Uten at noen nevner ordet naivt.

#### Soveputen

Troen på teknologi er behagelig, som en sovepute. Karbonfangst, elektrifisering, kvotesystem – slikt ligger på trygg avstand fra vårt liv. Vi kan fortsette som før, leve som andre gjør, markedet og teknologene vil ordne dette.

Kan vi det, fortsette som før?

Klimakampen vinnes ikke ved at nordmenn sykler til jobben. Nei. Men vårt levesett er selve drivhjulet i den menneskeskapt globale oppvarming. Vår etterspørsel etter energi. Altså forbruket. Kan vi stole på markedet som forvalter av Jordens ressurser? Må vi sette alt inn på å øke tilbudet av energi? Lete opp den siste olje, fange karbon og lagre den på risikabelt vis i Jordens indre – eller er vi nødt til å diskutere selve etterspørselen etter varer og energi? Finne andre mål for et godt samfunn enn veksten siste kvartal.

Den var «bare 0,2» prosent, som det denne uken sto i Aftenpostens omtale av siste Statistisk sentralbyrå-rapport om norsk økonomi. Skuffende svakt, kommenterte meglerhuset DNB Markets. «Det er likevel lyspunkter», la journalisten til og dro frem 2,6 prosent vekst i industriproduksjonen, takket være «full fart i oljeinvesteringene». Slik lyder det nøytrale referentspråket. Selv Statistisk sentralbyrå snakker om «god vekst».

Hvem lever i en drømmeverden?

Å være naiv kan noen ganger være nødvendig. Hva er det motsatte av naivitet? Kanskje å vente til man har total oversikt, erfaring og sikker viten. I kampen mot klimaendringene kan det mest naive være å tro at det går an å vente på teknologien

#### Facsimile:

Aftenposten, 26.08.2013,

«Naiv. Grønn.»,

Simen Tveitereid

## 7) Illustration - *Spewing oil onto global markets discourse*

### Dagens Næringsliv

#### Bekvem konklusjon

Dagens Næringsliv Morgen, Publisert på trykk 04.09.2013.  
INNLEGG, POLITIKK, Side: 43.

**Ola Borten Moe og Nicolai Astrup kritiserer Jens Ulltveit-Moes utspill om at det kan lønne seg å starte nedbyggingen av oljesektoren nå. Konklusjonen deres er politisk og økonomisk bekvem, men dårlig fundert, skriver Rasmus Hensson og Petter J. Karal.**

I DN 28. august ga Jens Ulltveit-Moe støtte til De Grønnes budskap om at vi må starte nedbyggingen av oljesektoren nå. Tidligere har både samfunnsøkonomer og næringslivstopper gått ut med samme syn. Det er klarere og klarere at en omstilling bort fra olje og gass er god økonomisk politikk.

Ola Borten Moe (Sp) og Nicolai Astrup (H) har begge kritisert Ulltveit-Moes utspill, og sagt at det er dårlig klimapolitikk å la oljen være i bakken. De hevder med andre ord at vi har en etisk forpliktelse til å fortsette å pumpe.

Dette bygger de på antagelser om at kutt i vår produksjon vil føre til større utslipp andre steder, slik at totaleffekten for verdens klima blir negativ.

Dette resonnementet er uten sidestykke Norges viktigste i dag. Olje og gass er den ene arenaen der Norge er en stor spiller i verdenssammenheng, og dermed også den arenaen der vår etiske opptreden er av global betydning.

Dersom resonnementet om at "vi erstatter skitnere energi" faller, er dagens oljepolitikk uetisk og uten legitimitet.

Det første spørsmålet man må stille seg er hvor bevisbyrden ligger. Hva hvis vi ikke kan forutsi klimakonsekvensene av å fortsette å pumpe som før?

Svaret ligger i den gamle leveregelen "do no harm", eller "fei for egen dør". Når vi spy ut olje på verdensmarkedet, vet vi at den blir forbrukt, og at dette frigjør gasser som ødelegger jordens klima. Skal vi hevde at vi gjør dette i klimaets og

fellesskapets beste, må vi være temmelig sikre.

Så hvor godt fundert er da Borten-Moes og Astrups teori om ringvirkningene av et høyt norsk utvinningstempo?

Ved første øyekast kan teorien virke besnærende. Masse norsk olje på markedet holder kullforbruket nede. Ø kuttes oljeproduksjonen, vil det bli brukt mer kull.

Men teorien er høyst usikker. Den tilbakevises faktisk av en fersk rapport fra Statistisk sentralbyrå. Det at Borten-Moe "ikke tror" på rapporten, oppfyller knapt nok den bevisbyrden som påligger hans syn.

Videre avhenger teorien av at andre land skal sitte igjen med større kullreserver på lang sikt, takket være vår oljepumping. Det kullet som angivelig blir i bakken fordi vi pumper, må altså aldri utvinnes, selv ikke etter at vår olje tar slutt. Dette er selvsagt noe vi kan håpe på, men det er både usikkert og utenfor vår kontroll.

Det er kanskje mer nærliggende å anta at dette kullet vil bli utvunnet når Norges olje tar slutt. Det er så langt ikke mange land som lar være å produsere alle fossile forekomster som kan utvinnes med overskudd.

Til sist antar teorien at Norge finnes i et politisk vakuum. Ø at hvorvidt Norge pumper på fullt eller kutter produksjonen ikke påvirker andre lands beslutninger. Hvor sannsynlig er det? Vil grønne krefter i store kullland som Tyskland, USA og Australia ignorere et norsk eksempel og ikke presse sine regjeringer til lignende kutt?

Det er altså mange, svært usikre antagelser bak teorien om at Norge bør produsere olje for fullt. Det er grunn til å mistenke at viljen til å tro på denne teorien er styrket av at den er så politisk og økonomisk bekvem.

Når omstillingen bort fra olje kommer, så vil dette skape utfordringer for dem som styrer landet. Arbeidsplasser i oljesektoren gir mer penger i statskassa enn arbeidsplasser i andre sektorer, slik at politikerne slipper å gjøre vanskelige prioriteringer. Man får også fort noen sterke aktører mot seg, for eksempel NHO, LO og oljebransjen.

Det er all grunn til å sette spørsmålstegn ved et Borten-Moes og Astrups etiske resonnement, når det er så store egeninteresser inne i bildet.

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- Rasmus Hansson, stortingskandidat for Miljøpartiet De Grønne, og Petter J. Karal, siviløkonom/MBA og daglig leder i Seatower AS

Facsimile:

Retriver/Dagens Næringsliv, 04.09.2013, «Bekvem konklusjon», Rasmus Hansson & Petter J. Karal



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