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Competing stories about Environmental Impact Assessment: Exploring local perceptions in Fauske and Sørfold in Northern Norway

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Abstract

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), a widely recognized tool in environmental governance, plays a crucial role in assessing and determining the socio-environmental impacts in the license process for wind power projects in Norway. However, its influence has sparked controversies, due to asymmetrical cost-benefits considerations. This thesis uses a qualitative case methodology to unpack perceptions on EIAs at municipality level by focusing on a pre-licensing process in the municipalities of Fauske and Sørfold –Northern Norway – which was marked by conflicting views on a proposed implementation of an EIA for large-scale wind power. Through applying concepts from political ecology and decolonial theory, this thesis aims to explore how and why divergent ways of understanding the EIA unfold.

The findings reveal diverse interpretations of the EIA's capabilities, function, and purpose, as well as varying levels of confidence in the tool. My findings show that positive perceptions of the EIA stem from regarding the license process as an entrusted system where local decision-power is preserved, and participatory mechanisms generate inclusion. When coupled with an appreciation of nature as quantifiable through scientific lenses and positive to wind power, this seems to generate a view of the EIA as capable of identifying and measuring impacts in a nuanced manner. My findings further point out that perception of the EIA as unreliable is rooted in lack of confidence or insecurity in the license process, which represents a removal of local democracy and giving green light to wind power development. Moreover, opposing perceptions see the EIA is incapable of objectively addressing socio-environmental impacts and recognizing other ways of knowing. As a result, a refusal of the EIA is perceived as the beneficial way to protect irreplaceable nature and local influence.

In sum, my findings point out a number of EIA's multifaceted challenges across epistemological, structural, and political scales. Furthermore, the thesis argue that EIA-perceptions are influenced by broader narratives concerning climate change mitigation and knowledge spheres. The thesis contributes with improved insights into how and why EIAs create tensions in wind power license processes, moreover it emphasizes the need for an increased focus on epistemological tensions in environmental governance.

Key words: environmental impact assessment, local acceptance, wind power development, political ecology, decolonial theory

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List of Abbreviations

EA - The Energy Act

EIA - Environmental Impact Assessment

NNV - The Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature/ Naturvernforbundet

NSR - Norwegian Sámi National Association/ Norske Samers Riksforbund

NVE - The Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate

KDE - Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

OED - The Ministry of Petroleum and Energy

PBA - Planning and Building Act

Chapter 1

Introduction

The green transition has gained widespread recognition and power, leading to fast-emerging dynamics in key sectors such as energy and industry. Multiple stakeholders across the policy landscape are calling for an acceleration in its speed and scope to tackle the climate crisis. Widespread controversies surrounding green development points to its recurrent tendencies to fail in aligning with local realities, reproducing socio-ecological and epistemological harm, and violating human rights (Avila, 2018; Siamanta & Dunlap, 2019; Brugnach et al., 2017). The controversies around growing wind power development in Norway in recent years illustrate comparable tendencies.

The called-upon transformations, especially when speedy, require solid decision-making and careful consideration. Preexisting before the era of the green transition, but equally relevant, is a broad spectrum of established policies and mechanisms aiming at facilitating the necessary decision-bases through participation. Alongside is a longstanding call for inclusion and acknowledgment of local- and indigenous knowledge in environmental decision-making which is now receiving increased recognition and visibility within climate agendas (Agrawal, 1995; Wheeler et al., 2020; IPCC, 2019). However, research indicates that the integration and transportation of knowledges in decision-making processes and policies encounter multifaceted challenges that remain inadequately addressed (Brugnach et al., 2017). A widely recognized and actively used tool within decision-making is the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which aims at assessing and evaluating future-oriented impacts and risks of proposed land use projects. The so-called "global tool for accountability" (Li, 2009) which yields influential power has faced similar criticism as other participatory approaches in environmental decision-making: reinforcing asymmetrical power relations, favoring corporate interests, and misrecognizing multiple ways of knowing (Hébert, 2016; Li, 2009; Agrawal, 1995). EIAs have a pivotal role in, among other things, the license process for wind power in Norway. As a main portrayer of future-oriented impacts, risk, and mitigation measures of wind power projects, it starkly guides decision-making. It offers a broad scope of mechanisms aiming at generating knowledge acquisition through broad-based involvement of stakeholders (Inderberg et al., 2019). However, the location of licensing body within a sector

authority, The Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE), has been highlighted by Inderberg et al. (2019; 2020) as a potential pitfall due to the disproportionate concentration of power and possible biased cost-benefit appraisals. Increasing controversies over wind power development in Norway have shed light on shortcomings in EIAs' ability to recognize and capture knowledge spheres surrounding environmental- and reindeer herding aspects (Risvoll et al., 2022). A longstanding call for more decision power to the municipalities in license processes for wind power has resulted in undergoing notable changes in the license regulations. Yet, unresolved controversies over the EIAs' ability (or lack thereof) to successfully navigate and recognize other knowledge spheres persist.

I argue that gaining a deeper understanding of EIA perceptions in local realities becomes increasingly essential, given the ongoing power transfer to municipalities in combination with the anticipated rise in renewable energy development in Norway. To function as a democratic tool which facilitates knowledge acquisition, it is dependent on trustworthiness from local level. Accordingly, insight into what shapes perceptions of EIA is essential. I believe that giving attention to local stories can offer valuable insights into a set of encompassing challenges across the hegemonic mitigation policy landscape. By turning to local perceptions, unique aspects concerning EIAs perceived role as navigational instruments might arise. Given the need for different knowledges to generate a profound social transformation it is of special concern to give space to the matter (Sousa Santos, 2016).

Research questions and objectives

This thesis's overall objective is twofold. Firstly, it aims to contribute to an improved understanding of local actors' perceptions of EIA as a decision and knowledge production tool. Secondly, it seeks to investigate tensions that arise in the dynamics between knowledge spheres in EIA-processes. For that matter, I have chosen to concentrate on a specific case in Northern Norway, within the municipalities of Fauske and Sørfold. The case revolves around a pre-licensing process where conflicting views arose regarding a suggested implementation of an EIA for large-scale wind power connected to a so-called green steel factory. Using concepts from decolonial and political ecology approaches to environmental governance, this thesis will be guided by the following research questions:

- How is EIA perceived by decision-makers, local population and other actors in the region, and which features shape their perceptions?
- To what extent does the set of actors perceive the EIA as capable of representing perceptions of impacts and risk, and how can other ways of understanding the EIA be explained?

Outline of thesis

The thesis will be presented in the following order. In chapter 1, I will provide a thematic background that offers necessary background information on the overall context. In chapter 2, I will describe the applied theoretical framework that guides my discussions. Moreover, I will outline my methodological choices, paying particular attention to my positionality and the limitations of the research. In chapter 3, I will present the background information on the case by providing an introduction and insights into selected aspects, through the employment of both primary and secondary data. In chapters 4 and 5, my findings will be presented and discussed through the outlined theoretical lenses. Chapter 4 gives space to narratives that perceive EIA as objective and useful and explore their shaping features. In chapter 5, I turn to the parts of my empirical findings that in diverse ways express mistrust and skepticism toward the EIA. I will explore their influencing factors and how they shed light on divergent knowledge spheres. In the last chapter, I will present my conclusions.

Thematic background

This background chapter provides a brief overview of relevant thematic fields. In the first part, I will focus on green industrialization and renewable energy globally and nationally, with an extra focus on the region in question for the thesis. In the second part, I will turn to the field of EIA with an emphasis on Norwegian practice. The chapter aims to give the necessary context to further analyze and discuss the perceptions and controversies around EIA at the municipality level.

The green push and its emerging controversies: globally and nationally

The newest IPCC synthesis report communicated a final warning to humanity and advocated for immediate implementation of broader action on a global level to avoid a climate catastrophe (IPCC, 2023). The term green transition commonly refers to a set of global hegemonic solutions aiming at mitigating climate change through a key focus on phasing out fossil fuel. A broad spectrum of policymakers emphasizes the significance of accelerating renewable energy development and transforming the industry sector. Recently the IPCC stressed that further development of wind power is essential due to its potential for reducing greenhouse-gas emissions (IPCC, 2023, p.70-71). The steel industry, known for its carbon- and energy-intensive nature, is a significant source of emissions with substantial mitigation potential, accounting for approximately 7% of global CO_2 emissions in 2020 (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2022, p.2). Green growth, asserting simultaneous economic growth and low-carbon transitions, is a broadly applied strategy in the green transition. However, critics voice that it has enabled new forms of appropriating nature and resources, reproducing socio-ecological inequalities and neoliberal discourses (Cavanagh & Benjaminsen, 2017). Moreover, tackling the climate crisis as a problem of fossil fuel is deemed misguided, as our current multifaceted crisis is the result of capitalism (Klein, 2020). The widespread controversies surrounding the green transition reveals many shortcomings and misalignments. The term “green grabbing” is coined to describe the dispossession of land and resources, particularly from vulnerable groups, in the pursuit of environmental objectives (Fairhead et al., 2012). The controversies surrounding large-scale wind power serve as examples that highlight how mitigation through technological fixes is a contested space (Avila, 2018). The insights arising from local scales reveal that such developments facilitate socio-ecological harm, oppression of local livelihoods, and violation of human rights (Avila, 2018; Siamanta & Dunlap, 2019). Counterwork towards green development projects, such as

wind power and mineral extraction, is often framed as obstacles to a low-carbon transition (Avila, 2018). The NIMBY-assumption (not-in-my-backyard) has been employed to understand the lack of public acceptance towards wind power (Devine-Wright, 2005). In brief, the phenomenon claims that despite being in favor of renewable energy production, communities oppose it when it has direct negative impacts on their livelihoods and prefer it to be located elsewhere. However, research has provided webs of explanations that go beyond such assumptions, pointing out that local perceptions are shaped by a variety of environmental, physical, and social aspects (Devine-Wright, 2015). Moreover, by redirecting the gaze towards the counterwork's political and transformative value, more inclusive and just alternative energy futures may arise (Avila, 2018).

Norway actively manifests the green transition, including green growth, through their international climate change mitigation commitments and political prioritizations. Ahead of COP27, the country enhanced its climate target by committing to reducing emission by at least 55 per cent by 2030 (Office of the Prime Minister et al., 2022). Norway has one of the highest shares of renewable power in Europe and the industry sector is based on clean renewable energy (Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries, 2022, p.8). The government has called out increased production of renewable energy and transformation of the industry sector as crucial means to reach the set climate goals. In recent years, wind power development has increased, with wind power alone accounting for 9% of annual electricity production in 2021 through 53 operational wind farms (NVE, 2023a). Yet, there is a need for (more) speed according to the Energy Commission's recently published report which stresses acculturation and increase in renewable energy development (NOU 2023: 3). The government has further initiated a "green industrial boost" in a new strategy, aiming to reduce emissions while facilitating workplaces and investments (Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries, 2022). Moreover, for the adopted mitigation strategies to succeed it will require effective implementation on regional and local levels, and the municipality to have a "large responsibility for the development of the future energy system" (NOU 2023: 3, p.22). Nordland, a county in Northern Norway, is designated as a key geographical area for the development of green industry due to its access to renewable energy (Office of the Prime Minister, 2021). Additionally, green prioritization is outlined as a facilitator for profit and new development in the Arctic region (Office of the Prime Minister, 2021; Meld.St.9 (2020-2021), p.42). The situation in Nordland is characterized by an interplay of divergent interests and concerns, as noticeable climate change poses a threat to natural diversity and the area's

many reindeer herding districts are in crisis. Further elaboration on the specific context will be given in chapter 3.

Norway's green industry strategy stresses that there is "ample space for new green industry" in the landscape. Moreover, the green industrial policy's aim is to contribute positively to address both the climate - and the ecological crisis. For example, it is emphasized that any negative effects on nature should be counterbalanced by restoration or protection of nature elsewhere (Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries, 2022, p.31). A similar portrayal of co-existence between expansion, growth and nature conversation can be witnessed across the policy landscape. For example, the Energy Commission report stresses that boosting renewable energy development is to occur in a responsible manner where socio-environmental considerations are well-considered and human and nature rights are maintained (NOU 2023: 3). Furthermore, alongside the prioritization of green expansion, Norway is obliged to implement the new global nature agreement from COP15 (The UN Biodiversity Conference) which declared 30% of the earth´s lands, coastal areas and inland waters are to be protected by 2030. The government is currently developing a new national framework for nature. Several legislative proposals resulting from the new global nature agreement include the reversal of national wind power projects (Nyhus, 2023; Hansson et al., 2022). How, and if, the government will manage to navigate in the increasing pressure for nature conversation and the push for green energy and industry, is yet to be seen.

Growing disputes in the national wind power development

The green path designated by the government is not exempt ambivalences. There has been a disparity between national authorities' prioritization of wind power development and the rising opposition witnessed on both local and national levels. Broad collective mobilization, among other through established national movements against wind power, has taken place across the country (Vasstrøm & Lysgård, 2021). These characteristics are not isolated; rather, they reflect global tendencies as discussed above. Research from Vasstrøm & Lysgård (2021) identifies multiple factors contributing to opposition. The destruction and damage inflicted upon nature, ecosystems, environments, landscapes, and cultural sites are recurring factors that contribute to negative perceptions of wind power. Additionally, the unequal distribution of social and economic advantages and disadvantages has been cited as a reason for the lack of local acceptance, along with limited influence in the licensing processes for wind power

projects (Vasstrøm & Lysgård, 2021). Particular controversies have arisen concerning wind power development within reindeer herding lands on the indigenous territory of the Saami-population. Despite that reindeer herding is granted certain special legal protections, disputed wind power projects in locations such as Fosen, Øyfjellet and Davvi, have proven their ineffectiveness in practice. The socio-ecological impacts resulting from large-scale construction, such as wind power development, poses a significant threat to reindeer herding practices and livelihoods (Normann, 2021). Furthermore, disputes over wind power have been shown to reproduce and legitimate colonial patterns of dispossession of territory and resources across Scandinavia (Normann, 2021; Lawrence, 2014). The debated Fosen-case is a clear example illustrating the scale of controversies and resistance that have unfolded. In 2021, the Supreme Court ruled that Europe´s biggest wind farm was built on an illegal license supported by OED and NVE, violating the indigenous Saami-people right to cultural practice by threatening the existence of reindeer pasturelands. Over one and a half years after the historical ruling, the wind farm was still active, leading the Norwegian Sámi Assiciation (NRS) and Young Friends of the Earth Norway (NU) to occupy parts of the Government Building Complex for eight days in February-March 2023 as an act of resistance. Through civil disobedience they demanded the immediate removal of the wind park, shedding light upon the on-going human rights violations against the Sami population. The protests reveal dissonances towards the climate change mitigation policies being pushed forward by the government (Ellingsen et al., 2023; Bjørn, 2023). The conflict remains unsolved as the government has yet to decide on the future of the wind park. The leader of the Norwegian Sámi Reindeer Herders´ association (NRL), Inge Even Danielsen, call out that there is a crisis of confidence towards the Norwegian State in the aftermath of Fosen (Danielsen, 2022). It can be expected that the already fractured trust will intensify if the wind parks continue to occupy the reindeer pasturelands. The uprising received global attention, among others at, the 22nd United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, where it was warned that the hegemonic climate mitigation policies jeopardize Indigenous territories and livelihoods across the world (Monet, 2023).

The multifaceted crisis requires decision-making processes and decision-tools that in qualified and inclusive manners take a broad spectrum of considerations into account. This involves including, empowering, and acknowledging local- and indigenous knowledges. The matter has received increased attention in international climate change agendas and debates (Wheeler et al., 2020; IPCC, 2019). However, as the abovementioned warning from the Forum on

Indigenous Issues and Fosen exemplifies, there are harmful gaps and mechanisms operating in decision-making processes surrounding the green transition. For now, I turn to a presentation of Environmental Impact Assessment, being a widespread tool in environmental decision-making and the key focus of this thesis.

The Environmental Impact Assessment

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a global management tool which aims to predict and evaluate anticipated impacts from projects that affect nature, environment and landscape. The modern framing of EIAs has roots its roots the United States where it was legally expressed and implemented in 1969. An important feature was that decisions were to be based on negotiation and participation between relevant stakeholders, developers, and authorities (Wood, 1995, p.1). Several countries in Europe followed and the EU adopted a separate directive on impact assessments in 1985. Despite being framed as a crucial step towards protection of nature and environment, a broad body of scholars and controversies across multiple locations has illustrated the fragility of its framework. This will be illustrated later in this subchapter, and further elaborated under the theoretical framework.

Norway implemented EU-regulations in 1989, and the current regulation on EIAs became operative in 2017 and incorporates two EU directives, namely the EIA directive (2014/52/EU) and SEA directive (2001/42/ECC) (Ministry of Climate and Environment, 2023). The EIA terminology became widespread internationally; however, in Norway the term "konsekvensutredning (KU)" which can be directly translated to "impact assessment" was established. The background originated from a desire to encompass a wider range of factors, including natural resources, social conditions, and health (Tesli & Iversen, 2014, p.58). The significance of this is evident in the present articulation of the EIA-objective presented by The Ministry of Climate and Environment: "clarify what kind of consequences land use, land encroachment and development can have on the environment, nature, society and people" (Ministry of Climate and Environment, 2023). Holth & Winge emphasize two main functions of EIA. Firstly, that "knowledge of the impacts on affected environmental and societal interests is integrated at all stages" through formalized requirements for assessment programs, consultations, and investigations of the actual location (Holth & Winge, 2014, p.23). The tool is supposed to generate sufficient information on relevant concerns so that authorities can make a solid assessment. This implies that it plays a crucial role in determining whether a

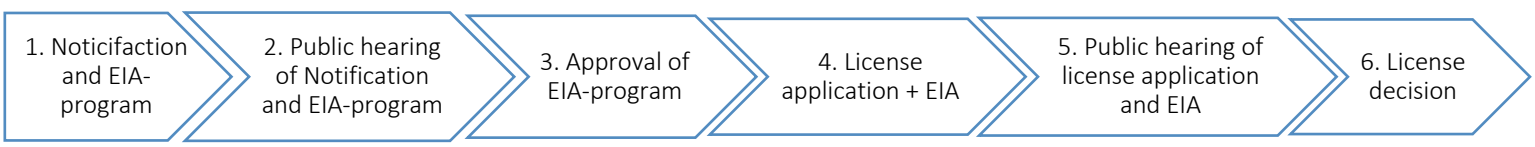
project can be carried out, and under which conditions. Hence, it may involve proposing information concerning how a proposed project can minimize negative impacts through adjustments (Holth & Winge, 2014, p.23; Ministry of Climate and the Environment, 2023). The second function of an EIA according to Holth & Winge (2014, p.23) is to guarantee participation from all affected stakeholders through the abovementioned formalized requirements. The participatory aspect of the EIA establishes its function as "an important democratic tool" as underlined by Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (2023a).

EIAs serve a key role across multiple areas in environmental decision-making, including in the license process for wind power. The EIA address a broad spectrum of aspects when assessing the overall consequences of wind power. It presents different "scores" on matters such as natural environment, natural diversity, landscape, cultural heritage, outdoor life, pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and others. The EIA generates various reports on selected matters, and the scope is decided in accordance with the specific case in the license process. The "Natural Environment" report for example, presents scores that range from no or negligible impact, little impact, medium impact, strong impact to very strong impact (NVE, 2023b; Inderberg et al., 2020, p.4). Research and viewpoints from civil society concerning the EIAs' ability to reflect impacts and risk will be elaborated under the subchapter "Nature and reindeer herding– priorities or gone with the wind?" Further, I will elaborate on the license process, the role of the EIA and key actors, and lastly outline aspects that have been the subjects of considerable debate.

The license process for wind power

Wind power projects with an output larger than 10 MW are obliged to conduct an EIA, in accordance with the Energy Act, which is part of a longer license processes. The EIA serves as the main source of information regarding anticipated impacts on the environment and local society. The energy authority Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE), a directorate under the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy (OED), possesses the main responsibility and authority for the wind power license process. Other state actors, such as the Ministry of Climate and Environment and the Norwegian Environment Agency (Miljødirektoratet), are additionally partly involved in the process, for example by counseling in the EIA-appraisal or by appeals (Inderberg et al., 2019, p.184). The licensing process

stands out in that it is steered by national and sector bodies at state level unlike other customary practices with local licensing authorities. Furthermore, formal licensing decisions involve an approval of land-use changes within the designated area for wind power. Normally, this authority rests with the local municipality, however in the case of wind power, it rests with NVE. This is a result of changes in the Plan- and Building Act from 2008. Prior, wind power developers were obligated to conduct a double-application process, both to the host municipality for land-use changes and to NVE for wind power license. After 2008, the developers only need to apply directly to NVE, and the local municipalities hold the formal right to give input. In other words, they removed energy installations from land-use planning procedures. The background for the shift of power concerning land-use decisions from local to national level can be traced back to two main causes. Firstly, according to the government, objectives of national steering of wind power deployment as energy-supply and energy transition is viewed as an important national concern. Secondly, the EIA is considered by the government to be a procedure that ensures adequate knowledge base and legitimacy (Inderberg et al., 2019. p.184). Moreover, the reason for state-controlled license process has connections to objectives of simplification and effectiveness (Inderberg et al., 2019, p.189). The location of the license process and decision-power within state bodies has been subject to ambiguities and controversies. Today there are a proposed legislative change pending implementation, which suggest modifications to the current procedures. This will be further explored in the next subchapter, but first the dynamics in the license process will be explained. As mentioned, wind power facilities with a certain size are obliged to complete the license formalities, including an EIA, to be granted permission. The wind power licensing process is extensive and consists of multiple stages before a final decision is reached (Inderberg et al., 2020, p.4). In the initial phase a developer normally takes the initiative to investigate the possibility of wind power plants in a municipality. The developer is often in close dialogue with the host municipality, but NVE or other state authorities are to a small degree involved and have no formal role (Inderberg et al., 2019, p.185; Meld.St. 28 (2019-2020), p.20). The following procedure can be separated into six steps and is illustrated in a simplified way in the figure below (NVE, 2023b):



I will further explain the above illustrated steps in the license process in more in detail.

1. Notification and EIA-program: The official licensing process formally starts by applying a notification. A notification contains project details, issues relating to environmental-societal aspects and a proposed mapping program for the EIA. It constitutes the first public announcement of a planned project with wind power to offer all stakeholders introductory information. Since 2021, obtaining confirmation from the host municipality has been a mandatory requirement for the approval of the notification. The NVE makes an appraisal of the notification and decides if it is of sufficient quality for a public hearing.

2. Public hearing of notification and EIA-program: NVE organizes a public hearing of the notification and sets an EIA-program. The aim of the public hearing is for NVE to collect relevant inputs on the aspects that should be included in the EIA-program. There is information dissemination of the proposed project, information meetings and open meetings for the local population. If the project is located in reindeer pasturelands, the affected districts and the Sami Parliament are invited to consultation meetings.

3. The approval of the EIA-program: NVE makes an assessment based on the inputs from public hearings, consultations, and relevant domain knowledge. The aim is to clarify what needs to be investigated and provide guidelines on the EIA-implementation. Further, selecting the entity that is to conduct the EIA is the company responsibility and it is typically private consultancies companies.

4. License application and EIA: The full project application is submitted to the NVE. This includes technical descriptions of the adapted size and shape of the wind power facilities, the results from the EIA and potential mitigation measures.

5. Public hearing of license application and EIA: A new hearing process follows when the application is submitted. In the license hearing process, instances such as the affected municipalities, county municipalities and state bodies that find the proposed project in conflict with national or regional considerations, can file a formal objection.

If so, the NVE is obliged to organize meditation meetings and address potential mitigation measures.

6. NVE makes its decision to grant or decline the license application based on the resulting knowledge gained throughout the process. In the event of appeals, which is common, the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy (OED), assumes responsibility for evaluation and final decision. The OED has several options: change the decision of NVE, revise it or recommend supplementary mitigation measures.

(Meld.St. 28 (2019-2020), p.20; Inderberg et al., 2019, p.184; NVE, 2023b; NVE, 2021).

Through broad-based stakeholders-influence the overall goal of this process is to "ensure that benefits of the proposed project are greater than the disadvantages that follow" according to NVE (2021). However, it is important to stress that OED and NVE possess the ultimate decision-making authority. A granted license authorizes the developer to construct and operate a wind power plant, including grid connection, normally for a period of 25 years (Inderberg et al., 2019, p.184). As discussed in the preceding subchapter, wind power development has generated significant controversies at local level across multiple locations. Parts of the controversies are connected to negative perspectives towards the license process, the license authorities (NVE and OED) and the EIA. The national wind power framework proposed by NVE in 2019, which mapped out feasible wind power sites across the country, particularly lead to controversies. The framework was withdrawn by the government the same year, and NVE temporally stopped the license processing for new wind power facilities (NVE, 2023b). In 2020, the government presented a comprehensive White Paper, "Onshore wind power - changes in the licensing process" (2019-2020), that aimed at providing a predictable framework for the long-term development of wind power. It will be referred to as White Paper 28. It offered an extensive analysis of wind power licensing and suggested a stricter licensing processes by requesting improved local anchoring and strengthened consideration of environmental aspects. The White Paper generated broad engagement among policy and civil society actors. A comprehensive exploration of the given political inputs is outside the scope of the thesis. However, in the next section, I will emphasize certain aspects that are of relevance: the call for decision-making power to the municipality and the nature- and reindeer herding aspects influence in the EIA.

The call for decision-power to the municipality

The increased non-acceptance and resistance against wind power development has been shown to have connections with the lack of confidence towards the state-controlled license-process and the removal of local self-government (Inderberg et al., 2019; Vasstrøm & Lysgård, 2021). The role of the municipality as a "hearing instance" with no formal authority in the license process has been controversial. However, research from Inderberg et al. (2019) shows that the municipality has yielded more decision-power than what is officially defined. In practice, this implied that the municipal stance has affected NVE and OED´s decision to such an extent that Inderberg et al. (2019, p.189) argue that the municipality entails "de facto veto power". It is important to note that these informal practices, as highlighted by the researchers, were known only to certain members of the municipality councils in their studies. Moreover, it does not disapprove the controversies surrounding the municipality´s role in the license process. I will further highlight parts of the process concerning the call for increased decision authority of the municipality which has led to a current legislative proposal pending implementation.

As mentioned, the White Paper 28 "Onshore wind power - changes in the licensing process" (2019-2020) suggested improving local and regional anchoring by strengthening the legislative authority of the municipality in the license process. The White Paper had several ripple effects. As mentioned, the licensing process was closed for new applications after the controversies in the aftermath of the previous framework for wind power from 2019. During 2021 and 2022, NVE (on the request of OED) opened up for license applications for onshore wind power (NVE, 2023b). Terje Aasland, current Minister of Petroleum and Energy, called it "a necessary reopening" referring to the need for renewable energy in the transformation to a low-emission society (Aasland, 2022). However, as a result of the political signals concerning increased local influence in the license process, consent of the host municipality for the initiation of a license procedure became required (NVE, 2023b). Following up on the recommendations from the White Paper, The Storting asked the government to develop a proposal that incorporated the planning and construction of wind power into the Plan- and Building Act, to give more decision-power to the municipalities (Stortinget, 2020). The government signaled in an additional White Paper in April 2022 that the requested solution would be realized (Meld.St.11 (2020-2021), p.11). In January 2023, the Ministry of Oil and Energy (OED) and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development presented the legislative proposal, entailing changes in the Energy Act and The Planning and Building

Act concerning the license process for wind power facilities. As of April 20th 2023, the proposal is still under treatment, with no accessible expected deadline. What does the proposal entail? As explained earlier, since 2008 the municipalities have mainly had a consulting role in the license process for wind power. The formal planning clarification has normally occurred by exemptions or plan amendments after a granted license. The new proposal states that clarification of land use through the Planning and Building Act is required for license granting, implying a movement of legislative power from the Energy Act to the Planning and Building Act in the license process. This will supposedly give more influential power to the municipality as they are in charge of the local area planning. The state agencies claim that this will create a more predictable framework for the development of wind power and strengthen local anchoring (Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, 2023a). Terje Aasland, in the press release of the proposal, stated: "Now we transfer power to the municipalities. This will provide a more predictable framework for the development of wind power, and it will help to reduce the level of conflict in wind power matters" (Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development & Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, 2023).

The proposal received a considerable number of responses in the public consultation round. The Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature (NNV) highlighted that the reinforcement of the municipal self-government is partial, and calls it a shortcut. Truls Gulowsen, leader in NNV, stated that it "sets up a system that entices municipalities to say yes to wind power, but without being able to change their mind afterwards"(Christensen, 2023). According to the organization, if an area has been designated for wind power in the local regulation plan, the licensing authorities can proceed with accepting a license proposal under the Plan- and Building Act, even if the municipality perceives a specific wind power project as undesirable. Gulowsen explains the matter as follows:

> In practice, the government's proposal allows the municipality to adopt a binding local regulation plan before obtaining essential information about the project's impacts through the licensing process, EIAs, and proposed detailed plans/MTA (Masterplan for Transport and Accessibility). However, they are not granted the right to reject the final proposal. This is unacceptable. (Christensen, 2023).

The Norwegian Society for the Conversation demands that municipalities have the right to modify or revoke the regulation plan until a broader knowledge base has been collected through a license process (ibid). Moreover, the proposal received feedback concerning the fact that it did not provide any changes or proposals concerning environmental, nature and reindeer herding aspects in the license processes, as the White Paper had signaled. As long as the proposal is pending implementation, NVE has stated that they "process cases according to the existing scheme until all necessary changes have come into force" (NVE, 2023b). They underline that for now "the municipality is a very central hearing party in all phases of the case, but cannot stop NVE's license processing by withdrawing consent" (NVE, 2023b). In the next section, I will highlight aspects concerning the EIAs contested ability to valorize and measure environmental, nature and reindeer herding aspects.

Nature and reindeer herding – priorities or gone with the wind?

In addition to controversies over municipality influential power, many aspects of the wind power controversies stem from conflicting viewpoints on nature, environment, reindeer pasturelands and landscape protection, as previously discussed. This is further connected to criticism that environmental, nature and reindeer herding aspects are inadequately considered in EIAs and yield insufficient influence. Moreover, the matter echoes widespread concerns raised around EIAs and environmental decision-making globally. On paper, environmental, nature and reindeer herding aspects are acknowledged as crucial and are to be extensively considered in the EIAs. The aspects are assessed by principles in the Nature Diversity Act and the Reindeer Herding Act. The White Paper 28 emphasized that consideration given of the environment, reindeer herding, and outdoor life, should be increased. However, recommended regulative changes concerning these matters have not resulted in any legislative proposals or obligations (NVE, 2023b). This has been met with criticism by policy actors and civil society actors. Before delving into the matter, I will first highlight research focusing on the influence of environmental, nature and reindeer herding aspects in the EIAs and moreover controversies over independent consultants.

The effects of the weighting – or scores – of different factors in the EIAs and how it impacts license decisions are surprisingly understudied. Inderberg et al. (2020) and Gulbrandsen et al. (2021) have attempted to cover this knowledge gap by statistically analyzing wind power project applications in Norway. Inderberg et al. (2020) show that the score "high environmental impact" in the EIA reduces the likelihood of license-granting. However,

Gulbrandsen et al. (2021) note that it is challenging to "determine the weight accorded to nature conservation" (p.10) in the license outcomes. Furthermore, Gulbrandsen et al. (2020) demonstrates how OED has given insufficient steering signals to NVE concerning nature protection. They point out that the push for renewable energy has resulted in significant attention to economic and technical considerations in the licensing process, potentially resulting in biased and asymmetrical cost-benefit considerations (Gulbrandsen et al., 2020, p.9). This has been echoed by civil society actors who have stressed that the assessments of the values of nature are inadequate (The Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature, 2022, p.32). A broad coalition of civil society organizations expressed concerns that the guidelines for wind power development in White Paper 28 were insufficient regarding the necessary nature- and environmental protection and required stronger legislative protection (The Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature et al., 2020). In regard to reindeer herding, the EIAs have proven to be incapable of assessing and measuring reindeer grazing in a way that is beneficial for reindeer herders. This has led to widespread mistrust towards the EIA-process among reindeer herders and across Sami policy bodies. A highlighted challenge is the absence of understanding of the complexity of the interaction between reindeer herding, landscape, and human activity. Moreover, this is connected to ignorance and dismissal of experience-based and practical knowledge (Risvoll et al., 2022). Controversial wind power projects have in several cases been linked to inadequate EIAs concerning impacts on reindeer herding. The case of Fosen, where OED and NVE approved an EIA which later was proven to have profound gaps concerning the impact on winter grazing lands for reindeer to a degree that violated human rights, is a clear example. The Norwegian National Human Rights Institution (2022) is one of the actors who have called attention to EIA lacking ability to consider impacts and overall consequences for reindeer herding. In connection with the abovementioned White Paper 28, The Sami Parliament expressed that it was unacceptable that the government still facilitated wind power development in reindeer pasturelands, and that the White Paper had failed to follow up political signals from civil society. Moreover, they urged human rights protection for indigenous peoples (Sametinget, 2020). The concern raised more recently regarding the proposed legislative changes in the Energy Act and the Planning and Building Act echoed similar concerns. Councilor in The Sami Parliament, Maja Kristine Jåma, emphasized that the law lacks adequacy in its measures for the protection of Sami rights and fails to strengthen predictability, which has been a long-standing demand from the reindeer herders (Sametinget, 2023).

The responsibility for selecting the entity that conducts the EIA, typically a private consultancy company, lies with the developer behind the wind power proposal. This aspect has been a subject of ongoing debate and has sparked controversies. It is argued by several civil society actors, as well as the Sami Parliament, that it generates biases and legitimacy issues, as it can be expected that such an arrangement favors the developer´s interests at the expense of nature- and environmental aspects. Moreover, lacking ability to take reindeer herding and nature-aspects into account has been connected to the external conduction of the EIA. Norwegian National Human Rights Institution (2022) has called attention to how an improvement of the EIAs independence and quality would strengthen human rights compliance in Norway.

To summarize, I have throughout this chapter endeavored to shed light on parts of the divergent and multifaceted dynamics in the green transition and renewable energy development, the EIAs' function and the license process of wind power in Norway. Many aspects point at the municipality as an arena where many of these dynamics converge: increased responsibility for engaging in realization of the speedy green transition, potential increased power in the license process, fragile trust in the license authorities, protection of nature- and environmental values among local population and preservation of reindeer herding pasturelands. These dynamics and encounters manifest in varying degrees in the studied empirical reality of the thesis, which will be presented shortly. However, before delving into the empirical findings, the next chapter will introduce the applied theoretical- and methodological framework.

Chapter 2: Theory and methods

Theoretical framework

As will be demonstrated in chapter 3, 4 and 5, the case reveals conflicting narratives concerning the EIA. I will interpret my findings and explore these divergent narratives by using interconnected critical analytical approaches. The applied body of literature has roots in decolonial and political ecology approaches to environmental governance and its participatory aspects. In the following section, I aim to present relevant parts of the theoretical background from which the current critical theory surrounding EIAs today departs from. Subsequently,

more concrete theoretical entry points that later will be applied to my material will be presented.

Political ecology and decolonial theory

An expanding interdisciplinary literature is analyzing environmental- issues and governance through critical lenses. Significant recently published works are often categorized within the broad field of political ecology which further draws on theoretical influences from poststructuralism, Marxist political economy, and others. Briefly summarized, it aims at examining environmental issues in connection to issues of power, scale, and injustice (Benjaminsen & Svartstad, p.2021, p.29-50). Further, it sees them as products of political processes (Robbins, 2020, p.19). Theoretical frameworks, such as environmental justice (Schlosberg, 2007), have underscored the value of applying conceptualizations of justice on various levels within environmental governance. An emerging analytical framework with roots in this sphere is energy justice which seeks to employ justice principles to the multifaced dimensions of energy policy, energy systems and energy activism. Key components are distributional aspects (where do energy injustices emerge? how do economic dimensions and inequalities manifest themselves?), recognition aspects (what knowledges are delegitimized, and why?) and procedural aspects (how do political conditions facilitate participation and possibilities for impact?) (Jenkins et al., 2016, p.175). A growing body of scholars applies these dimensions when seeking to understand the lack of acceptance and counterwork towards renewable energy development.

A broader academic and societal discussion has started to apply and expand decolonial approaches actively when examining environmental issues and dynamics. Drawing on decolonial critiques of development from Latin American scholars such as Anibal Quijano (2000), Arturo Escobar (2018), Walter Mignolo (2007), and Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2016), the spotlight is directed towards how colonial practices are embedded in current environmental policymaking (Normann, 2021, p.82). The concept of “coloniality of power” by Quijano (2000) conveys the essence of the underlying factors of these ongoing dynamics and warrants a brief explanation. The term sheds light on the multifaceted practices of dominance rooted in the historical colonial period, which now has transformed into other, yet recognizable, manifestations. It refers to mechanisms of power, hierarchy and dominance across scales which actively shape and influence our current social, economic, political, and

cultural systems. Likewise, there is an on-going call for a more active application of decolonial approaches in the Scandinavian context (Normann, 2021; Lassilla, 2023; Lawrence 2014). In focus is often an exploration of environmental controversies through ontological and epistemological inquiries. These theoretical approaches demonstrate, among other things, how the hegemonic understanding of one-world – in opposition to multiverses and ontological multiplicity – are conducts of injustice and coloniality (Law, 2011; Law & Joks, 2019; De La Cadena, 2010; Sousa Santos, 2016). A growing body, with roots in science and technology studies (STS), political ecology and decolonial theory, is using these insights in their critical approach to environmental governance. The emphasis is on how mitigation policies and environmental governance have a stark tendency to blindness towards onto-epistemological differences and reproduce colonial legacy through misrecognition of other ways of knowing and being.

An increasing body of literature, originating from the abovementioned theoretical spaces, has accompanied the growth of participatory approaches to environmental decision-making (Hébert, 2016, p. 111). EIA has been subject to critical analytical approaches where aspects of power, epistemology and ontology are common entry points. There has been an increased focus on power dynamics embedded in EIA-processes where recurring areas of focus, according to Cashmore and Richardson (2013, p.1-2), can be divided into three areas. Firstly, concerning EIAs as spaces where conflictual decision-making over divergent values and demands. Secondly, regarding EIAs as a public participation facilitator. Thirdly, attention has been directed towards EIAs' role as a knowledge producer, as well as utilization of this knowledge. Scholars such as Cashmore and Richardson (2013) have emphasized the need for increased research focused on the power relations at play within these arenas. Furthermore, analysis of resistance and counterwork surrounding EIAs are recurrent features. Aguilar-Støen and Hirsch (2017) for example point out EIA as a transnational “battleground” where resistance towards expert-knowledge and extractive industries manifests. Lassila (2023) draws attention to the fact that EIAs have served as a point of departure for studying ontological and epistemological tensions, particularly in the Global South. Moreover, there is a call for an increase in such analytical entry points in the Arctic (Lassila, 2023). In the next section, I will present the interconnected theoretical and analytical concepts which later will be applied throughout my analysis of my findings.

Practices of accountability, risk-management, and knowledge

My first main theoretical approach will be based on the literature concerning "practices of accountability" offered by Li (2009). This will further be accompanied by the work of Hébert (2016) where the role of scientific knowledge and risk-management are in focus. According to Li (2009) the EIA is a key process in the *making* of social and environmental accountability. Li (2009) focuses on (and challenges) what the scholar identifies as two main activities in the EIA: risk-identification and participatory mechanisms. For this to resonate as accountability mechanisms it requires an understanding of socio-environmental impacts as elements that can be solved within the logic of environmental management, as pointed out by Leifsen (2017, p.345).

Firstly, concerning risk identification, a broader academic and societal discussion has given attention to the concept of risk. Hébert (2016) and Li (2009) emphasize that the making of an EIA often implies a type of enclosure of reality, as pointed out by Leifsen (2017, p.345). From this point of view, risks identified in an EIA are limited to a specific reality-vision building on technical and scientific pillars (Leifsen, 2017, p.345). The area that an EIA is to investigate is transformed to a "site of risk" where nature and outcomes can be measured, given value, and calculated (Hébert, 2016). The use of scientific knowledge plays a crucial role in this process, as it controls both what is captured and how it is measured. Hébert (2016) further offers a feasible approach to explore the matter with her concept of "boundary-work". According to the scholar, building on Jasanoff (2005) and Gieryn (1983), it is a process aiming for "separating science from other modes of knowledge" (p.123). On one hand, there is a type of expert-led science, technoscience as Hébert (2016) calls it, which states to reflect an objective reality. This type of science is characterized by authoritative use where it often claims to hold the "dominant register of legitimate knowledge" (Hébert, 2016, p.111) while neglecting alternative claims to knowledge and authority. Another related concept of relevance is the notion of knowledge hierarchy. Sjölander-Lindqvist et al. (2020, p.2) described it as a situation where "experience-based knowledge is considered subordinate and local livelihood-based discourses are dismissed, while scientific models and experts' understanding are seen as providing superior knowledge for handling pressing issues." Accordingly, it can be argued that a result of boundary-work is construction of knowledge hierarchies.

A brief orientation of my understanding of knowledge is warranted. Throughout the paper, I will apply the term "knowledge spheres" which I understand as multiple ways of knowing that are embedded in reality (Sjölander-Lindqvist et al., 2020, p.2). Conceptualized and frequently cited knowledge spheres are scientific knowledge, indigenous knowledges and traditional ecological knowledge. I will mainly make use of the terms scientific knowledge and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). Scientific knowledge is comprehended as a dominant sphere which tends to assume that one objective truth can be located and defined. It further grasps nature and culture as separate entities. Moreover, I understand this type of knowledge as connected to coloniality, meaning that it possesses power based on its historical- and current assessment of dominance over other ways of knowing and being. Dispossession of land and resources frequently occurs through the realm of scientific superiority. I understand "traditional ecological knowledge" as a collective term that encompasses knowledges that are embedded in place, context, and landscape. In contrast to scientific knowledge, there are no boundaries between nature and culture (Law & Joks, p.439). To further elaborate on the epistemological dynamics within EIA-processes, I will draw upon the work of Law and Joks (2019). Firstly, it is valuable to draw on their notion of knowledge transfers, where they point out that traditional ecological knowledge cannot be abstracted from their contexts. This is because such ways of knowing are embedded and situated through practices and contextual movements. In contrast to scientific knowledge, these are not capable of being moved to spaces such as environmental governance or schemes, as this will remove their essence. Secondly, I will emphasize their focus on handling of these differences between the knowledges. Commonly, encounters between these knowledges are characterized by scientific knowledge dismissing traditional ecological knowledge, resulting in generating a denial of differences. Law and Joks (2019, p.438) draw attention to the potential that lies within acknowledging differences and disagreements. The relation of dominance, embedded in coloniality, can as such be altered. This resembles Haraway´s notion of partial connections (1988) which briefly explained emphasizes that symmetrical connections between us can only be enabled when acknowledging that we carry divergent objectivities rooted in situated and partial understandings of the world. Accordingly, by acknowledging differences in knowing and being and without misrecognizing other versions of realities. I argue that Haraway and Joks and Law´s insights are useful when examining local perceptions of EIAs.

Secondly, the participatory mechanisms of EIA play a crucial role in the process of creating accountability, according to Li (2009). The author notes that "in spite of (or perhaps because of) the diverse and sometimes conflicting interests among the actors involved, the language of public participation, transparency, and risk management contributes to an image of consensus" (2009, p.228-229). In other words, it facilitate accountability. Moreover, the participatory aspects likewise enable the EIA to create an image of democratically and harmonized decisions, even if the reality reveals otherwise. A main insight obtained from Li (2009) is that the participatory dynamics can evoke non-participation and refusal when local community members experience that their viewpoints concerning for example environmental impacts are not taken seriously into account. Resultingly, the participatory aspects (such as meeting activities, information dissemination and public hearings) are experienced as a facade. Consequently, a more appealing course of action becomes to "step outside the document" as noted by Li (2009, p.32). This may involve refusing to participate in hearing rounds and meetings, and overall give any inputs to the EIA as such (Li, 2009). Hébert (2016) explains that well-intentioned participatory aspects facilitate belief in the EIAs' ability to present nuanced image of impacts. However, there is a paradoxical blind zone. Measuring tools such as EIAs often lack the ability to conceptualize other realities and definition of impact which deviates from scientific set standards. This points at a two-folded paradoxical process of inclusion and exclusion (Hébert, 2016, p.111).

To sum up, I will apply the abovementioned theoretical inputs to guide my analysis of the empirical reality. This will involve being attentive to the dynamics of if and how accountability practices resonate among actors, and how this results in certain perceptions of the EIA. Moreover, I will endeavor to show how participants perceive risk, impact, and knowledge. Following this, use Hébert´s (2016) lenses on risk-dynamics and boundary-work, accompanied by Laws and Joks´s (2019) way of thinking around knowledge transfer, to explore how this can contribute to explaining the shaping features in perceptions. Lastly, I will investigate if and how inclusion-exclusion dynamics are present and if non-participation can potentially be explained by the abovementioned dynamics, as stated by Li (2009) and Hébert (2016).

Discourses and narratives

My second main theoretical approach will be based on analytical inputs concerning the role of discourses and narratives in environmental processes. Research across fields, particularly in political ecology, has given rising attention to the role narratives and discourses hold in environmental governance and climate adaptation. The use and definition of these conceptions vary and are mainly determined by the scientific field from where they depart. Accordingly, they are often terms that can hold different meanings depending on the field and analytical position. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to elaborate on these differences. In the following section, I will therefore mainly elaborate on conceptualization which will be applied when discussing my findings.

Firstly, I will elaborate on my conceptualization of narratives, where I draw upon social science scholars researching the role and implication of narrative in climate change and adaptation. I choose to highlight the work of Paschen and Ison (2014) and Veland et al. (2018) which adopt insights from cognitive sciences and other practical fields in their work. The epistemological and ontological approach to narratives they offer point at to that "conflicts cannot be reduced to deficient scientific understanding, a lack of dialogue, or disagreement as to means," rather it points to ontological encounters, according to Veland et al. (2018, p.42). I find it valuable to apply these theoretical inputs to conflicting claims about EIAs as it can highlight more divergent understandings of how the world works. I understand narratives, in line with Veland et al. (2018, p.42), as in one level being *about* something. They are "stories" entailing "storylines" about a particular phenomenon. In this thesis, for instance, I will simply refer to narratives or stories about EIA. In this regard, narratives reflect collective or individual reality-making of a specific theme. However, narratives are not isolated, but rather co-exist in a web of narratives as we are dependent on them as a grounding to make sense of the world around us. According to Paschen and Ison (2014) our human cognition is "organized around specific narrative structures" (p.1083). Veland et al. (2018, p.42) refer to it as a type of "infrastructure" of narratives. Within these infrastructures we find what Veland et al (2018) describe as "world-describing" and "world-making narratives" which shape the sense of our being-in-the-world. They function as types of "reference points" (Veland et al., 2018, p.42) that guide us through reality. Paschen and Ison (2014, p.1083) highlight that regarding climate change adaption, "how we 'story' the environment determines how we understand and practice adaptation, how risks are defined, who is

authorized as actors in the change debate, and the range of policy options considered." Veland et al. (2018) elaborate on that this weaving-process of world-making narratives – or reference points – indicate that "the climate change story will be more acceptable if it 'makes sense' with already narrated experience" (p.42). Inspired by this, I will exceed this approach to explore how certain world-making narratives concerning climate change, the environment and landscape, determine how mitigation policies are understood and how this further shape perceptions of EIAs.

Secondly, I will elaborate on my conceptualization of discourses, drawing upon a political ecology approach. I choose to apply the concept of discourse because it is useful when exploring how participants create legitimacy for their own narratives. I understand discourses as lenses through which a topic is understood. Each discourse can both influence and legitimize certain understandings over others (Benjaminsen & Svartstad, 2021, p.64; Leichenko & O`Brien, 2019, p. 42). I will mainly pay attention to discourses which are *dominating* environmental policies and decision-making. They are often labelled as either *leading* or *hegemonic* discourses. It is often described as hegemonic if it independently "dominates thinking and is translated into institutional arrangements" according to Agder et al. (2001, p.685), meanwhile there may be several leading discourses which "influence policies, laws, and practices" (Benjaminsen & Svartstad, 2021, p.64). Actors who either create, communicate, or use such discourses practice *discursive power* according to Benjaminsen & Svartstad (2021, p.64). In my examination of my findings, I will take note of which types of narratives that can be placed under such discourses.

To sum up, I will use the abovementioned literature concerning discourse and narrative to take "a step back". I will employ an understanding of world-describing narratives (reference points) as parts of broader narrative infrastructures influence how we understand tools such as EIA. When referring to concepts, I will use the term "narrative" and "story" interchangeably, as I understand both as constructed accounts of phenomena. Moreover, I will use storylines as features within stories and narratives. When speaking of world-describing or world-making narratives, this will be clarified.

Methodological framework

The purpose of this subchapter is two-fold. Firstly, it gives insight in the research design by showing which methods that are employed in data collection and data analysis. Secondly, I intend to unmask my positionality by providing insights into my stance and selected pathways in the research process. The chapter is organized as follows: Firstly, a brief overview will be provided on the research design and case selection, as well an introduction to the contextual background of the study area. Secondly, a detailed account will be given on various aspects of my data collection, including fieldwork, selection of participants, interviews, and the use of secondary data, along with a presentation of data analysis methods. Finally, I will reflect on my positionality, and the ethical concerns and limitations of the thesis will be presented.

Research design: case study

This thesis aims to empirically explore how EIA is perceived by a set of actors, and which features shape their perceptions. Secondly, it seeks to investigate tensions that arise in the dynamics between knowledge spheres in EIA-processes. For this purpose, I found a qualitative case methodology design the most feasible approach. This thesis builds on qualitative research methods and follows a case study design. A case study can be defined as in-depth and intense study of a single unit or phenomenon. Furthermore, an object of interest in itself (Gerring, 2004, p.341; Bryman, 2012, p.66). Such a design allowed me to explore detailed accounts of my selected phenomena in a specific context. The main strength of this approach in this context is that it facilitates a profound understanding of how a selection of actors perceive EIA as a decision-tool, and the underlying reasons for their perceptions. A limitation of using this qualitative approach is that the findings will have limited generalizability (Bryman, 2012, p.70). However, as underlined by Gerring (2004) part of the purpose of a case study is "to elucidate features of a larger class of similar phenomena" (p.341). Accordingly, I argue that my findings generate fruitful takeaways for understanding perceptions and challenges of environmental impact assessment, both in the corresponding geographic area and beyond.

Choice of case

My choice of study area Fauske and Sørfold in Northern Norway where a proposed implementation of an EIA concerning suggested wind power facilities generated widespread controversies between March and June 2022. The purpose of wind power facilities was to

generate a large amount of renewable power for a proposed steel factory. The municipality councils declined the implementation of a license process, including an EIA, in June 2022. The case reveals divergent understandings of the EIA. Detailed accounts of the case will be given in chapter 3.

My choice of case is shaped by diverse influential elements. My point of departure was an interest concerning the tensions occurring between the green shift and the desire for protection of nature. Furthermore, I was interested in the ongoing encounters between these, and the ways in which they involve underlying ontological and epistemological aspects. My engagement in the field derives from earlier work and grassroots activism in Latin America. Furthermore, from gained academic insights from decolonial- and political ecology literature. I consider my choice of topic and work as a co-product arising from shared learning platforms that I have been lucky to have been involved in throughout the years. The growing call for decolonial lenses on environmental issues and the green transition in the Arctic was a field I wanted to explore further. Doing research in my own country additionally appealed to me since it meant having a profound base for contextual understanding. However, this does not equal a fulfilled base or being an expert, as it regardless is space for learning and new perspectives. I'm drawn to exploring challenges within my borders because I see them as interconnected with similar concerns elsewhere. Initially, my focus concerned with the inclusion and exclusion of indigenous knowledges in the green transformation in Northern Norway. I was especially attentive to the geographical area as it is an indigenous territory and a state prioritized area for green industrialization. During the early summer of 2022, a friend and researcher tipped me of an on-going case in Sørfold and Fauske, where there was a company-led initiative to develop a steel factory with wind power facilities. I started paying attention to the case and from my observations, it became clear that one issue dominated the local debate: the decision of whether to carry out an environmental impact assessment. The question, as well as the project itself, seemed to shed light on divergent views on knowledge. Initially, I was especially interested in the viewpoints of reindeer herders. However, I decided on a wider entry angle, due to feasibility and ethical concerns. Critical literature, especially from Latin America, on EIAs further sparked my engagement. Moreover, it was a way to concretize my initial interests concerning inclusion and exclusion of knowledges. Dialogue with Camilla Risvoll at Nordland Research Institute in Bodø further played an important role in the different phases of the project by providing me with contextual feedback on the relevance of my scope and relevant inputs.

Data collection

Fieldwork

Given my methodological direction and aim of in-depth understanding, conducting fieldwork was a natural choice. To gain access to other´s lived realities and storytelling, it became crucial to interact with a selected group of participants. I spent three weeks in Fauske and Sørfold, with a base in the city of Bodø, in February 2023. The weakness of the limited time used in the field will be elucidated under limitations. Nevertheless, I experienced it as adequate to explore the outlined aim of the thesis. During fieldwork, I strived to engage in journaling to generate reflexivity around internalized stereotypes and biases. To address these, I conducted brief writing sessions ahead and after interviews where I reflected on my perspectives, expectations, and the quality of the interview. Moreover, it helped me reflect over the empirical reality from an early stage. This was useful later when interpreting my findings. Further, I will elaborate on the essential features of the conducted data collection.

Selection of participants

I made use of the purposive selection of participants. This involved aiming for participants that could contribute with information and insights that were particularly relevant to my study. In other words, it was directly connected to my consideration of who and what could best enable me to answer my research questions (Maxwell, 2012, p.97-99). I further aimed at involving actors that could be expected to keep divergent perceptions of the studied phenomenon. However, a part of the research process is to delimitate, which made me endeavor to cover three groups of representatives: decision-makers, commercial actors and the local population. The grouping of participants functioned as a useful starting point for addressing participants likely to hold insight about the phenomenon. In addition to diversity, the selection was guided by considerations of accessibility feasibility and ethical considerations, in line with the purposive selection of participants (Maxwell, 2012, p. 99). The first was a priority as my fieldwork was conducted over a short period of time. This made me dependent on being able to quickly establish a relationship with my participants and getting positive feedback on participation requests. Ethical concerns affected my selection of participants in mainly two ways. Firstly, in connection to my short stay and the lack of opportunity to establish longtime research-relationship, it was preferable to conduct interviews with participants who did not perceive any personal cost associated with interacting with me, and who were motivated to share their views. Secondly, in connection

with my way of thinking about reindeer herders as potential participants. Initially, I thought of this group as the main group of participants. However, as the research angle and my contextual insight grew, I figured it would be more feasible to enter with a broader scope and await decisions around if and how. There are few reindeer herders in the area, and through secondary data and conversation with Nordland Research Institute, I became more aware of their challenging situation (see chapter 3). The practical selection of participants was conducted mainly through a two-fold process. Firstly, through the collection of secondary data, which mainly consisted of online newspapers. I noted different individuals that participated in the debate in multiple forms. Moreover, I searched through the Facebook-Group "Motvind Salten" as it was a central group in the counterwork against wind power. Additionally, I got familiar with the different municipality councils through the municipality´s webpages and by reading official meeting documents through the first half of 2022. I sent a request to the company Blastr Green Steel, but did not receive an answer. Secondly, through my key-informant at Nordland Research Institute, which recommended different stakeholders of interests. Throughout these two overlapping processes, I located different actors within all three groups of participants established beforehand. They were contacted ahead of fieldwork through either e-mail, telephone or Facebook. During my fieldwork, I continued to look for and be open to participants of relevance. On some occasions, interviewees gave me advice on other relevant subjects. Moreover, I received recommendations from Nordland Research Center. It is important to note that the participant selection described above excludes individuals who may potentially hold valuable insights relevant to the research goals (Maxwell, 2012.p.99). Being an in-depth case study, it was necessary to leave individuals out in an attempt to contribute with detailed accounts.

Interviews

The primary source of data is 11 semi-structured interviews. The interviews lasted between 45-90 minutes. One interview was conducted digitally and another over the telephone, as it was the interviewees' wish. The format and implementation were guided by being semi-structured and narrative focused as it served the research objective. This involved encouraging storytelling on specific themes and correspondingly being open to the "potentially messy flow of the telling, unfolding according to the narrator´s interpretation or emotional investments" as pointed out by Paschen and Ison (2014, p. 1086). This allowed me to be attentive to how the participants organized and constructed the world from their specific location (ibid). Prior

to the interviews, I had designed a two-part interview guide, as recommended by Brinkmann and Kvale (2014, p.158). Accordingly, one part focused on theoretical aspects and the other part entailed suggestions for interview questions that revolved around these aspects. However, being semi-structured, the interviews are characterized by flexibility. This meant that the interview guide was not followed strictly, and that new questions were generated throughout the interviews, depending on whether I picked up something said by the interviewees (Bryman, 2012, p.471). Further, this harmonized with not being too focused on the specific research questions, so that "alternatives avenues of enquiry that might arise during the collection of fieldwork" were kept open (Bryman, 2012, p.473). In general, it helped to avoid steering the interviews subjects to produce the needed data (Maxwell, 2012, p.101).

Secondary data

Secondary data has been applied in order to supply the contextual background of the case. Firstly, I have gone through state documents such as white papers, reports and other official documents, concerning national energy- and green industry development and licensing-processes. This has been useful to be able to grasp part of the backdrop of the case and its emerging narratives. Secondly, regional and local online newspapers have provided necessary background-information on the emergence and development of the case. Moreover, it gave me valuable insights on how the case and its actors were storied publically. The online news articles, mainly from Avisa Nordland and Saltenposten, were found through a search in Atekst/ Retriever by using relevant search terms. For example: "Blastr Green Steel" (name of the company), "wind power" and "impact assessment". Initially, my plan was to actively refer to newspapers as data sources when presenting and discussing the data. However, I decided to omit this. Firstly, it seemed feasible to leave the secondary data out because the collected data seemed sufficient and due to limited time resources. Secondly, many of the participants made public statements throughout the case. This could lead to types of double references and make the participants too recognizable. The combination of both primary and secondary data contributes to the triangulation of the research. However, I would like to emphasize that the purpose of secondary sources is not to confront divergent stories. Rather, inspired by a poststructural feminist approach, I seek to explore different subjugated knowledges by letting them be "in conversation with one another by interrogating the dissonant findings" (Hesse-Biber, 2012, p.144; Nightingale, 2003). As such, the approach aims for uncovering new knowledge and different truths (ibid). Guided by this, I give space to the divergent narratives

discovered in the empirical reality without attempting to disqualify them with other data.

Data analysis

I have used a combination of thematic analysis and narrative analysis to guide my analysis of data. The strategy was chosen in order to locate patterns of meaning and key themes in the data (thematic), and simultaneously approach sense- and world-making (narrative). Accordingly, I have strived to emphasize stories employed to account for events (Bryman, 2016, p.590). I agree with Paschen and Ison (2014) seeing stories as "important data in themselves, rather than as merely a mode of accessing data" as it "provides insights into the outcome of a particular framing as well as the social processes of how meaning is constructed and negotiated through narrative between social actors" (p.1087). Further, I found the flexible characteristics of these analytical strategies suitable for my research. The applied secondary data did not undergo a similar process of analysis as the undermentioned. However, I endeavored to apply a narrative approach to the secondary material, which involved being attentive to reality- and world-making. Several steps were carried out in the process of moving from raw data to interpretation. Firstly, I processed the data transcripts through careful reading and note-taking, which included being attentive to "tentative ideas about categories and relationship" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 105). Hence, writing memos and notes concerning my analytical ideas was a useful strategy, as pointed out by Maxwell (ibid). Furthermore, I strived to mediate my own biases at the same time, for example by making lists of assumptions beforehand. The purpose was not to be biased-free or to reach a state of objectivity, as this is unrealistic. Rather, I aimed for increasing my awareness of expectations and encouragement of potential surprises (O´Leary, 2017, p. 325; Maxwell, 2012, p.124). I experienced the use of memos and listing assumptions as useful ways to mediate the validity threat of researcher bias, alongside other measures (see for example abovementioned reflexive journaling and own section for positionality). Secondly, I undertook an initial coding-process of the data set (mainly in the software program NVivo) to gain a better systematic overview of recurring themes and common features. I had focused on segments that I found important and meaningful based on a combination of already established ideas, the nature of my research questions and memos from fieldwork. Simultaneously, I strived to be open to capturing new insights and the unexpected (Maxwell, 2012, p.107). Examples of categorizes – or themes – were "green transition", "viewpoints on counterwork" and "viewpoints concerning the need for knowledge". Thirdly, I divided the data into two main narratives, as a

result of the initial mapping. Further, I employed what Maxwell (2012) describes as "connecting strategies", where I attempted to identify relationships among features in the main narratives (p.112). This included being attentive to differences within them, and not simplifying complex realities. Following this, I started to interpret the mapped meanings and apply theoretical lenses on them, in other words moving from coding to analysis. However, this was not a fixed movement; rather it implied going back-and-forth for double-checking transcriptions. Furthermore, it was a way to stay reflexive of my role and my interpretations. Describing my analytical strategy in a detailed and clear manner through this subchapter can further be said to have increased the validity of the analysis.

Positionality, ethics and limitations

My positionality determines how I access and perceive the reality around me. My experience, knowledge and values have affected the different phases of the research. This includes the choice of case, methodological design, practical implementation, and interpretations of the empirical reality (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). I have strived for openness by giving accounts of my background of choices above. Further, my role and being can have affected what the participants of this study have shared with me. Features that can have affected the matter are my gender and being non-local. For example, the actors may have withheld information from me, as they might have anticipated that I had difficulties understand the local context. Likewise, this may have made it easier for some actors to share openly, as they did not need to interact with me in the future in other settings. Moreover, I believe gender influences power dynamics between individuals and our perceptions of each other, no matter the situation. In the interview situation, participants who identify as the same gender as me (female) may have experienced it easier to share personal perceptions. Moreover, because of internalized gender stereotypes embedded in our society, participants identifying as male may have experienced it uncomfortable to share personal perceptions with me. Operating in a context with academic purposes can further generate a type of unwished-for expert position for the researcher. I aspired to be open about my knowledge gaps concerning the studied phenomena and the contextual aspects of the case. Moreover, I attempted to underline my desire for gaining new insights. Likewise, it is inevitable to completely avoid the asymmetrical power relation, given that the interview-situation entails it (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014, p.37-38). Following this, I strived to be attentive to my role as a researcher and the power it entails.

Several ethical considerations have accompanied my research. Firstly, as abovementioned, ethical considerations influenced the selection of participants by being aware of the potential harm of short-time fieldwork, especially relevant in indigenous contexts where the harm of research has been extensive (see Tuhiwai Smith, 2022). Likewise, I did not reject the possibility of interaction with reindeer herders, as that seemed unintentional. For me, decolonial awareness does not imply avoiding interaction with indigenous communities, as dialogue can play an important role in drawing attention to socio-ecological dynamics, generate solidarity and collaboration. It rather imply for example to be mindful of context, power relations and the history of the research paradigm we work within. The potential harm of short-time fieldwork is applicable for all contexts. Hence, I searched for participants who had a clear desire to talk to me. I experienced that none of the participants in the study considered it neither harmful nor demanding to participate. Secondly, several factors stressed the importance of anonymity and confidentiality. The investigated case created tensions between scales in the two small communities. This was especially clear in the heated media debate surrounding the suggested industrial project. My assumption is further that there are clear power imbalances between scales and actors. The combination of such features can generate vulnerability for several of the involved participants. Anonymity was upheld both for reducing potential harm and for generating a safe environment for sharing stories. Thirdly, the research is conducted in accordance with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data´s (NSD) guidelines for ethical research. All participants signed an informed consent form prior to the interviews, were free to withdraw consent and the data has been protected in line with NSD´s regulations.

The study poses various limitations and weaknesses. Firstly, the study had benefitted from longer fieldwork with a combination of several data sources, for example follow-up interviews and observation. Moreover, as mentioned there is an on-going call for more decolonial research in the context where my study takes place. The research makes use of decolonial theory to some extent; hence it attempts to respond to this call. However, I believe the study would have benefitted from expanding this to methodological pathways, guided by decolonial- and action research (see Kindon, 2016; Tuhiwai Smith, 2022). The two abovementioned, thus overlapping, measures could have generated a more in-depth understanding of knowledge spheres and knowledge-practices. Due to the limited period and available resources of a thesis project this was beyond my scope. The limitation has been measured by transparency of methodological choices and by attempting to not draw

conclusions concerning epistemological and ontological aspects outside of the scope of the empirical material. Lastly, a limitation is that the interviews were conducted in Norwegian, and all presented citations are translated to English. Accordingly, nuances of meaning can have been lost in translation.

Chapter 3: The entry of a "green steel adventure" into two small municipalities

The purpose of this chapter is to provide contextual background information on the case. Firstly, I will present an overview of the key elements and brief chronological progressions of events. Secondly, I will elaborate on selected aspects of the background through employment of both primary and secondary data.

Fauske and Sørfold, situated in the Salten District of Nordland County in Northern Norway, are neighboring municipalities. In the indigenous Lule Sami language, they are referred to as Fuossko and FuolldáIt. The area is referred to as Indre Salten. In March 2022, the newly established steel company Blastr Green Steel presented a proposal for an industrial project in a joint municipality meeting for Fauske and Sørfold. The project had been presented to parts of the municipalities authorities during the autumn of 2021. Immediately following the official launch in March 2022, the on-going plans were made public. The industrial project's main feature was a construction of a steel factory. It was early established that the steel factory would have significant power demands, which could be most effectively supplied by wind power facilities. Later, it became clear that it was not desired without wind power facilities. Throughout this paper, the case period will refer to the time frame between March 2022 and July 2022, during which the case was publicly debated and proceeded in the municipality councils. The project was framed as "a green industrial adventure" with potential investments of 50 billion NOK and between 200-1200 jobs. Four distinct options with varying ranges were presented. Regardless of the alternative, the need for renewable energy sources to meet the high demand remained constant. The scope of both employment and financial possibilities hinged on the option that would ultimately be selected (Oldertøen et al., 2022).

Blastr Green Steel, which is a subsidiary of the Nordic investment company Vanir Green Industries, was established in 2021. Vanir Green Industries work with development of

renewable energy, constructing new green initiatives and decarbonizing the industrial value chain. They have a clear vision of speeding up the pace of the green transition. Blastr Green Steel was founded with the objective of being "an integrated green steel producer leveraging Nordic advantages" according to Vanir. Blastr Green Steel stress the importance of decarbonizing the steel value chain as steel production generates large amounts of greenhouse gases. According to the company´s webpage, they will contribute to meeting European increased demand for "priced low CO_2 flat steel products" through "developing integrated, decarbonized and scalable value chains for ultra-low CO_2 steel production." (Blastr Green Steel, n.d.). It was stated that the proposed steel factory in Fauske and Sørfold could produce 2.5 million tons per year of green steel. One of the other three companies under Vanir, Njordr, work with development of onshore and offshore wind power in the Nordics (Vanir Green Industries, n.d; Blastr Green Steel, n.d). Blastr Green Steel was the main driver of the industrial project in Fauske and Sørfold, and Njordr´s main role was being a facilitator for the potential wind power. However, they were defined as "the developers" of the project. The independent private development company BRUS (Bodøregionens Utviklinggselskap), owned by 46 larger companies in the region, played a significant role in the process of the project establishment by, among other things, facilitating dialogue with relevant stakeholders and contribute to locating suitable areas. They were involved as a type of enabler that provided support and resources throughout the process.

Several areas were assessed across the country before the Blastr Green Steel landed on Fauske and Sørfold. The area was selected due to its proximity to ports and the availability of power resources, among other factors. The location for the planned facility was reportedly situated between Seljeåsnes area in Sørfold municipality and Kvitblikk in Fauske municipality. The scope of the facility remained unestablished. According to the developers, the most feasible option for meeting the anticipated total power demands of up to 6 TWh was wind power, which further aligned with their commitment to using renewable energy sources. The development of wind power was designated to the mountains in the east in Fauske and Sørfold municipalities. Blastr Green Steel shared that they were "aware" of the good wind resources in the designated area (Fauske kommune, 2022). The anticipated output of the wind energy installation (6 TWh) imposed a legal obligation to undergo a license process which includes an EIA. The developers, as well as policy stakeholders, established early on that an EIA was deemed necessary to investigate the potential of impacts and possibilities related to the exact location and scale. Determining the necessary scope of the wind power facilitates to

meet the assumed power demands received significant focus, and thee matter created a heated debate. The director of Blastr Green Steel stated to the local newspaper Avisa Nordland on the 10th of March that it was too early to give any precise information concerning the matter (Finstad, 2022). However, it was soon reported by multiple newspapers that the project's power demands would require approximately 100 wind turbines spread across a total area of 80 to 100 square kilometers. The scope of the wind power appeared to be a primary concern among those who opposed the project. The developers emphasized the need for further assessment (through an EIA) before drawing any conclusions, and stated that confirming the scale was impossible. Figures first reported in the media were to a large extent confirmed in the information Blastr Green Steel presented in the case meetings paper for Fauske municipality on June 17th (Fauske kommune, 2022). Below is the figure by Blastr Green Steel and Njordr presented in the case meeting papers, highlighting the designated area for further investigation:

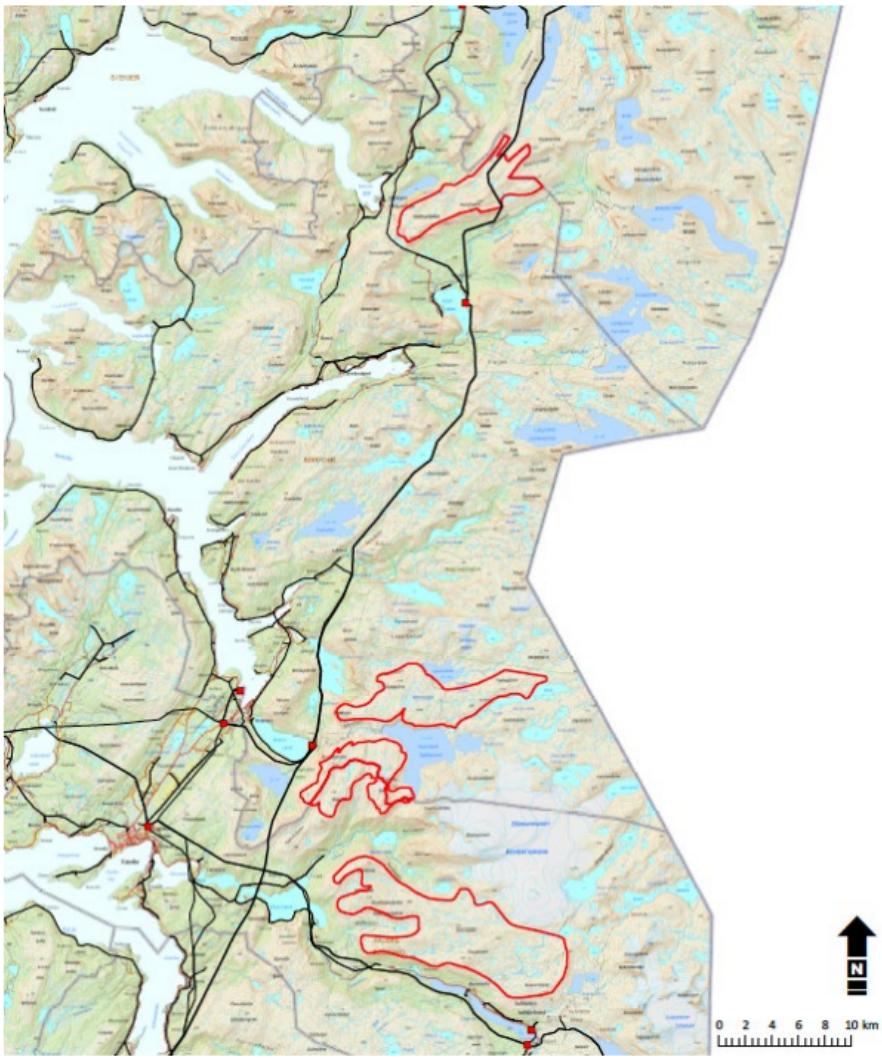
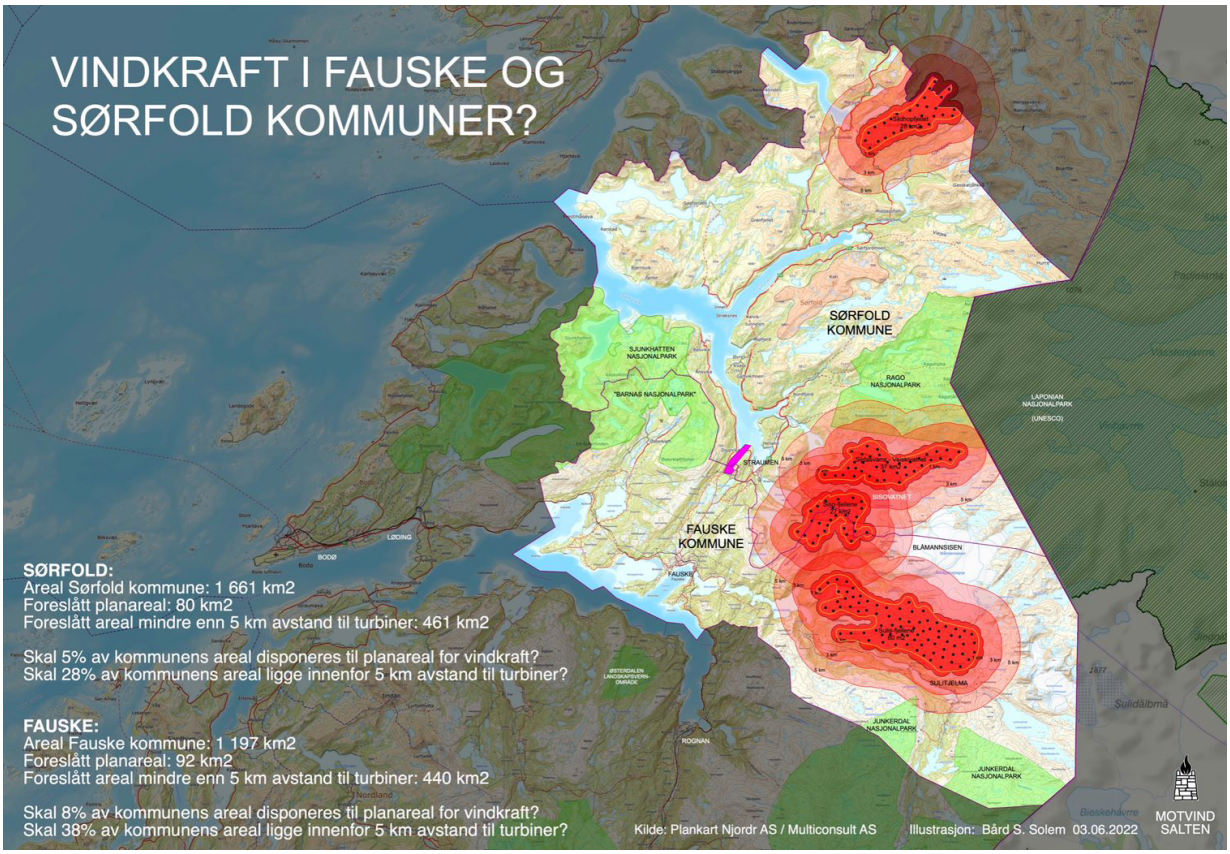


Fig 1. Fauske kommune (2022). The red encircled areas (in total 4) on the map show the areas that the company intended to notify NVE about as potential site for wind power production. The map shows both Fauske and Sørfold municipalities.

Parts of these areas are regulated as LNFR (agricultural-, nature-, outdoor- and reindeer husbandry- areas). This implies that they are not to be utilized for construction, but only for development directly related to agriculture, nature, outdoor life and reindeer husbandry. The reindeer districts Balvatn and Duokta have grazing-areas in the same areas as the proposed designated location for assessment. The wind power component of the case generated opposition and resistance. The counterwork became mainly organized through the establishment of the local chapter of the national anti-wind power organization Motvind. Below is a figure based on the developers' assessment illustrated by Motvind Salten illustrating the designated areas:



Figur 2. Illustration by Bård S. Solem (2022) for Motvind Salten. The red encircled areas (in total 4) on the map are the areas that potentially were to be investigated for wind power. This

map shows more or less the same areas as Figur 1, but in Motvind's illustration the areas seem larger. It also highlights the national parks in the area in light green.

As mentioned above, multiple stakeholders highlight the need for an implementation of an EIA, early in the process. Moreover, as the intended output of the wind power facilities exceeds 10 MW, it is required by law. To initiate the licensing process through the submission of a notification to NVE, which initiates the EIA-process, approval from the municipal councils was mandatory in accordance with the current licensing regulations (see subchapter "The license process for wind power"). Accordingly, the municipalities' decision became a critical event. There was a significant amount of public debate surrounding the municipal councils decision on whether to approve or reject. A source of much confusion was the municipality legislative decision-power throughout the licensing process. There were particularly divergent views on whether the municipalities had the authority to reject the implementation of the wind power, regardless of the findings from an EIA and NVE position on the matter. This aspect will be given special attention in chapter 4 and 5. Primarily, the municipalities were to make a formal principal decision at council meetings at the beginning of April 2022. However, immediately ahead of the planned meetings, both councils postponed the decision. The background was a desire for additional time to consider the matter (Larsen, 2022). In May, which was set as the new deadline for the decision, the municipalities received what was described as new information concerning the license process from OED. Moreover, some participants in Fauske municipality raised concerns about whether the case had been adequately examined. To secure a democratic process the decision was further postponed to June in both municipalities (Olafsen, 2022a). During that period, the debate concerning the wind power and municipalities´ legislative rights in the license process remained subjects of heated contention. The case was finally addressed in the municipal councils in the middle of June. In advance, a majority of the political parties stated their opposition to approving an EIA and initiation of a license process. To mediate the widespread uncertainty concerning the municipalities' decision-role and power to influence, Blastr Green Steel and Njordr presented a unilateral declaration to Fauske and Sørfold, in which they committed to follow the municipalities´ stance throughout the process (Fauske kommune, 2022). Both Sørfold and Fauske declined the initiation of license process of wind power. Without the consent from the host municipalities a submission of a notification to NVE is not possible. Resultingly, the license process and EIA implementation did not proceed, as consent is required for the process to be implemented. The municipal directors of Fauske and Sørfold both recommended

to proceed with a positive resolution concerning notification and implementation of an EIA. A mentioned reason by the director in Fauske is that the positive consequences concerning the project outweigh the negative ones. Moreover, it was stressed that it did not equal that the municipalities lose their right to influence later in the process (Fauske kommune, 2022). Despite the fact that a municipal director´s proposals are decisive in local politics, both Fauske and Sørfold declined the initiation of license process of wind power. In Fauske, the proposal received a total of 25 votes against and only two in favor. In Sørfold, the entirety of the votes favored to decline the proposal. Both final resolutions highlighted that wind power and an EIA is undesired, but that they are positive to the industrial establishment of steel production (Dverset, 2022; Oldertøen, 2022; Olafsen 2022b). Without the consent from the host municipalities a submission of a notification to NVE is not possible. Resultingly, the license process and EIA implementation did not proceed, as consent is required for the process to be implemented. Three months later, the company confirmed that the project could not be further developed without wind power facilities. However, the director stated that "this is definitely not a good-bye to Northern Norway" to Avisa Nordland (Oldertrøen, 2022). The steel project is currently in the development phase in the south coast of Finland. The country´s supportive and predictable framework conditions for green industry and access to wind power are among the reasons for the choice of place, according to the company (Parr, 2023).

In conclusion, this section has provided an overview of the key elements and brief chronological progressions of events in the case. By exploring the perceptions of the EIA in chapter 4 and 5 it will not only shed light on experiences related to the aforementioned elements, but also introduce new ones. However, before that, I believe some baseline aspects concerning the study area and the entry of the proposed steel factory warrant more attention. Moreover, the following extension of the contextual background information is beneficial to have as a base when further unpacking the divergent narratives on EIA. In the next section, I therefore endeavor to widen the contextual background by delving deeper into selected aspects. Firstly, I will elaborate on the industrial history of the area, on the economic situation of the municipalities and the industrial project as a "rescue" and lastly the promotion of green- and climate friendly characteristics of the project. Secondly, I have chosen to bring attention to the reindeer pasturelands, a significant part of the local reality. Lastly, I will elaborate shortly on how the spotlight of the case mainly evolved around EIA.

Industry, economic rescue and green growth

The industry history, especially for Fauske, is significant both for choice of location of the steel factory and the local population´s framing of the project. The industry history centers on the community of Sultjielma where Norway´s second biggest mining industry focused on copper and zinc took place between 1886 to 1991. The mining industry had great historical- and economic significance for Fauske and around. It is further connected to the breakthrough of the trade union movement in Northern Norway. (Bjørlykke, 2020; Nordlands fylkeskommune, n.d). The company Blastr Green Steel emphasized the industrial history as a key factor in choosing the location of Fauske and Sørfold for the steel factory. The director of the company at that time highlighted to Avisa Nordland that "there is an industry gene in the politicians and the population" (Dverset & Larsen, 2022). Interlocutor 2 (commercial actor) which was positive to the establishment shared similar thoughts: "I experience that we are a region where people are fond of industry. We are an industry region." This may contribute to explaining the following: despite the controversies around the EIA and wind power, there were consistently positive attitudes towards the establishment of industries. An example of this is the abovementioned resolutions by the municipalities, where they both opposed wind power in the region but encouraged the development of the steel factory.

Fauske is registered as a ROBEK[1]- municipality, meaning that it is officially a municipality in financial imbalance, making it subject to state control (Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, 2023b). In 2020, Fauske was among the ten municipalities in Norway with the most debt (Bergersen & Budalen, 2020). Furthermore, there has been a decrease in population in both municipalities due to high displacement that is expected to continue (SSB, n.d). The project was framed by the developers as a possibility for a local economic boost and empowerment of the labor marked for the municipalities which had experienced deep financial challenges over a long period. Arguments about the economic benefits of value creation, tax revenues and so on were actively communicated by the developers and its supportive actors. Not surprisingly, this resonated strongly with parts of the population, which viewed it as a way out of the financial disaster. One of the decision-makers (Interlocutor 1) viewed it as "historical opportunity for establishment of industrial workplaces", and others underlined "the significant ripple-effects" (Interlocutor 2, commercial actor). In this way, the project generated hope and engagement for several. Here summarized by regional directors in

[1] Register for Governmental Approval of Financial Obligations

NHO (The Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise) and LO (Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions) in a local newspaper´s opinion:

> Blastr´s green steel project can become one of the magnets that reverses 10 years of evictions and endless discussions about which schools and kindergartens we should close, rather than which new ones we should build; which cultural offerings we can afford and which road stump will get a new asphalt surface this year. Our welfare depends on us creating new jobs – which can pay for it. Blastr can be one of the answers in Salten (Bjarmann-Simonsen & Lekang, 2022).

Accordingly, the disappointment was, among parts of the population, profound when the municipalities declined the implementation of a license process. It also received national attention. Former Prime Minister, Erna Solberg, commented to the national media outlet NRK: "To say no to this is not forward-looking for either the municipal economy or to development" (Guttormsen et al., 2022). Likewise, according to my findings, the promise of empowerment of the labor market did not resonate equally across the population. One decision-maker (Interlocutor 7) noted: "At least 200 jobs and perhaps up to 1,000 jobs... It means something. Although, I wonder who will work there. After all, we cannot get people to work on the facilities." Another (Interlocutor 10, local population) shared similar thoughts: "The problem is that we shout and scream that we should have more jobs, but we are unable to fill the jobs we have." In other words, it is labor shortage that is the main issue, not lack of employment opportunities.

Thirdly, a main argument presented by the company was that the steel factory would be a contribution to the green shift. The company stated that the factory could contribute with emissions reduction up to 4.6 million tons of CO_2 per year (Dverset & Larsen, 2022; Blastr Green Steel, n.d). An element echoed, by among others, the county council leader in Nordland: "We simply must see the green shift as a growth strategy for Northern Norway. Then the project to produce green steel in Indre Salten fits well" (Nordlands fylkeskommune, 2022). My findings partly reflect this view. However, it varies in how the green aspects of the project are experienced. A member from Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature called the project "grey industry-nightmare in a green disguise" in the newspaper and one interviewee called it "a big hoax" (Langvik-Hansen, 2022; Interlocutor 8). One of the decision-makers (Interlocutor 5) described: "There was a lot of skepticism among most

people" towards green steel and explained that people saw it partly as "bullshit". I will elaborate on the divergent perceptions of the green aspects of the project in chapter 4 and 5.

Reindeer pasturelands in crisis

Not only the municipality´s economic and population status was – and still is – in crisis. In Fauske and Sørfold, the two reindeer herder districts Balvatn and Duokta, have warned about a precarious situation over a long period. The industrial project, including the wind power, would have affected their already pressured areas. In a joint statement, the two reindeer districts, along with ten other districts in Nordland, declared that they were in a deep crisis in 2020 (Alle reindriftbeitedistrikt i Nordland, 2020). Earlier this year, the County Governor in Nordland declared a crisis in six reindeer grazing districts, including Duokta and Balvat (Statsforvalteren, 2023). Multitude of activities and bit-by-bit development generate cross-pressure which makes it challenging to protect grazing areas. The areas are especially affected by various types of land encroachment (such as hydropower plants, network installations and railways), tourism and climate change. Additionally, there are high losses of reindeer to carnivore (Risvoll et al., 2022, p.80-82). Hence, the industrial project became yet another challenge and meet resistance from the reindeer districts and supportive actors. A reindeer herder and representative for the districts stated the following to the local newspaper:

> It is never going to happen. I cannot help wiping out my own industry and the many hundreds of years of history from those who have gone before us. The only thing I can guarantee is that this will not become a reality as long as we are here.
> (Simonsen, 2022)

It is further underlined that such a project, including wind power facilities, will "overturn our entire foundation of life" and "devastating to the basis of our existence" (ibid). Meanwhile, the developers focused on the importance of dialogue on several occasions throughout the case. Here exemplified by a statement by one of the main owners in the company Njord which was responsible for the wind power aspect of the project: "Our approach is to create dialogue to see if it is possible to find areas of coexistence" (Karlsen, 2022). My data findings show diverse points of views. Some participants considered the reindeer grazing areas as a clear reason to dismiss the EIA and the project, and others stated similar views as Njordr above. Summing up the abovementioned extended background-information, it can be noted that the industrial project entered into a reality with several layers where some are in a conflicting

relationship. Empowerment of the local labor market and green contributions are central in the company´s pitch. These "seeds" quickly bear fruit in the local reality holding an industrial identity now affected by financial challenges and displacement. Additionally, it "fits" into the already established strategy of green industry and growth, arising from national and regional holds as displayed in chapter 1. However, it generated divergent reactions. One of the contributing factors for the divergent reactions is the critical state of pressured reindeer pasturelands. The highlighted features in this chapter will further be returned throughout chapter 4 and 5 as they can be argued to shape how the EIA is storied.

The battle of the storytelling about the EIA

Most of the attention in the case was quickly turned to the compulsory licensing process for wind power facilities. This occurred despite that it throughout was underlined that "this is not a wind power project, but an industrial project – which requires power" by the company Blastr Green Steel (Finstad, 2022). "There is no doubt that this became a wind power discussion" according to Interlocutor 2 (commercial actor), and that it "overshadowed" debates involving the industrial project from this interlocutor´s view. Moreover, it was the question about an EIA that took center stage. This can be explained by the fact that an EIA is one of the first steps in a license process for wind power. As mentioned above, the company was dependent on confirmation by the municipalities' councils to proceed the suggested project to license authority. If NVE then had approved the project for investigation, an EIA-process would have been implemented (see subchapter "The license process for windpower"). The debate about what the municipalities was to decide was extensive. Formally, the decision pertained to accepting the initiation of a license process. By several of the participants in my data it was referred to as "saying yes or no to an EIA". Hence, I will use this wording throughout the thesis. Significant tensions and divergent understandings revolved around the municipality´s role in the license process. Here summarized by Interlocutor 1 (decision-maker): "What was a core question and what became a line of conflict was whether if we now ask for an EIA, will we then be able to stop the project later?" The political signals regarding the potential devolution of decision-making power to the municipality, which yet not was a concrete legislative proposal, was interpreted in contrasting ways in the local communities and the municipality councils. Ambiguity concerning the matter was widespread, as Interlocutor 1 (decision-maker) highlighted: "I experienced that there was a great deal of confusion about it, and there was a battle about the correct storytelling of what an EIA really

is." In the next two chapters, I will explore and unpack these divergent narratives about the EIA among a group of actors, and accentuate the many storylines shaping them. The presentation will be divided into two parts. Firstly, I will illuminate the perspectives of participants who had positive perceptions of the EIA and wanted the municipalities to go through with a confirmation. Secondly, I will focus on participants who, for various reasons, opposed saying yes to an EIA.

Chapter 4: EIA as harmless and objective

My empirical findings show that there are a group of participants (Interlocutor 1, Interlocutor 2, Interlocutor 4, and Interlocutor 11) who perceive the EIA as a neutral and democratic tool whose purpose is to collect and appraise knowledge, viewpoints, and information. They all demonstrate a stark level of trust towards the EIA. Their perceptions of the EIA are in line with what an EIA is (or is supposed to be) according to both national governmental legislation and global regulations. In this chapter, I aim to explore this narrative more in-depth. Based on my empirical findings, I will shed light on the key features that contribute to shaping these perceptions. In line with the aim and research questions of the thesis, I will pay particular attention to how risk-identification, impacts and knowledge are storied by the participants. The chapter is structured by delving into the following aspects: the EIAs' function, perceptions of the municipality's influence in the license process, the participatory aspect, environmental risk-measurement, and the view on knowledge. At the end of the chapter, I will present reflections based on my findings concerning how this narrative can be argued to be determined by stories concerning landscape and climate change mitigation, which builds on certain environmental discourses.

Firstly, it is useful to briefly shed light on what the EIA *is* for this group of participants. The group of participants that carried positive perceptions of the EIA had a clear vision of its function and purpose. The EIA is understood by several of the interlocutors as a tool that builds up a "knowledge base that should give us a decision-making basis for further assessment of what we should do" as Interlocutor 1 (decision-maker) expressed. Another decision-maker described it as "a necessity" to be able to "have a good ground for making a decision" (Interlocutor 4). It is a tool that "finds out the advantages and disadvantages that such an establishment will entail" according to Interlocutor 11 (local population). Its function as a knowledge-collector further seemed to match their motivation for going through with an

EIA. Throughout the conversations with the participants, the desire for "more knowledge" was repeated when talking about why the EIA was attractive. One decision-maker (Interlocutor 1) explains the motivation as follows:

> I was among those who wanted to go ahead with an EIA to get answers to questions, to have a dialogue with the reindeer herding industry, to find out where it might be appropriate to place wind turbines or how big the wind farm might need to be, to find out what will be the consequences for nature and the environment. I wanted to find out.

Here we can witness that the EIA dwells into a problem-solving rationale. It is a "fixer" and a "solution" that will create guidelines and facilitate necessary dialogue for further action. The EIA will address uncertainties regarding the socio-environmental impacts as well as factual concerns surrounding wind power in an effective manner. Before delving into how these participants perceived the municipality´s authority in the license process, it is worth mentioning that they all had a positive attitude towards the establishment of the industrial project (both the wind power facilities and the steel factory). This will be elaborated on at the end of the chapter.

The municipality´s right to influence

A crucial element in the participants' ways of perceiving the EIA is the interpretation of the municipality´s authority in the license process. As highlighted in the previous chapter, the matter played a major role in the debate around the industrial project. Many actors, both in the public debate and in the municipality councils, associated the EIA with the loss of influence and control. For many, the legislative frames and structure of the license process entailed that saying yes to an EIA meant relinquishing authority. However, this group of participants interpreted the matter differently. The view of the EIAs function presented above includes that the EIA does *not* indicate a realization of the wind power project, but rather is a type of legitimized exploration of the project feasibility. One interlocutor (11, local population) noted that:

> […] It is not a given, I am not saying that it is a given, that we had established this industry as presented. Perhaps the EIA would have pointed to such great consequences

> for reindeer husbandry, the environment and so on, that we thought it was not worth it. But we will never know.

The fact that it is a type of knowledge-collection-process, not a step towards realization or a final decision, is a crucial building block in this narrative. This is connected towards an understanding of the municipality´s right to say no to the implementation of the project regardless of the EIAs results. A decision-maker (Interlocutor 4) described the faced decision in the municipality council as follows: "The municipal council was not to say yes to a wind power plant, or yes to a steel factory. They were supposed to agree on that the actor could start an EIA, a knowledge acquisition." This understanding was widespread among this group. The focus was centered on how an EIA is an activity or a process that generate insight and knowledge and not on the license process as such. The participants' perceptions point to an understanding of that the municipality can disapprove or stop a continuation of a license process if desired, therefore their focus is mainly focused on the EIA. The background of why such perceptions become entrenched may be multifaceted, and will further be explored.

For several of the participants, it seemed to be connected to the political signals underlining that the municipality was to be given more power in the license process (see subchapter "The call for decision-power to the municipality). All these participants talked about the incorporation of the Plan- and Building Act (PBA) in the license process for wind power as something that would generate more decision power to the municipality. It is worth noting that the proposal was first presented in January 2023, in other words before the period of this case. However, as elaborated on in the mentioned section, multiple political signals had been given concerning the legislative change. This seemed to be experienced as sufficient reason to trust the fact that the municipality did possess authority in the license process. Moreover, some of the interlocutors recognized the confusion concerning the regulations as legitimate. By Interlocutor 2 (commercial actor) it was underlined that "the regulations were unclear about what role is that which the municipalities have in relation to the Planning and Building Act" at that time and recognized that the "municipal council had a difficult weaning to do." Another (Interlocutor 4, decision-maker) called it a "justified doubt". However, the recognition of the widespread uncertainty in the municipality council and the local community as such, varies. A decision-maker (Interlocutor 1) considered it as a "sidetrack to point out that the municipality does not have the legal authority to say no after an EIA has been carried out." For a local resident (Interlocutor 11) the municipality council "were not

tough enough to dare to trust what these investors said" regarding that an EIA was not a commitment to the implementation of the project. They all believed that if the legal dimensions had been different, meaning that PBA was entrenched in the license process, the municipality council would have said yes to the implementation.

The confidence in the legal authority of the municipality council, meaning that a license process can be stopped if that is the municipality's wish, seem to have roots in confidence towards the license authorities (NVE and OED) and the government bodies as such. One decision-maker (Interlocutor 1) expressed that there is "not a chance in the world that the Ministry of Oil and Energy (OED) would say yes to wind power plants, if the municipality says no." The given political signals from multiple policy bodies were interpreted as satisfactory:

> Even if the legal basis is not in place, one cannot somehow claim that we are without a safety net, that we are without any rights, that we are without anything we should have said in this case. No, I think that it is, in terms of realpolitik it is nonsense, in terms of realpolitik it would not happen that the municipality was not consulted in such a case.

Further, confidence in the country´s democratic body as such, is emphasized by the decision-maker: "[…] Norway is a serious country, we have a serious government, and it is not just that if a minister says one thing, we can in a way do something completely opposite about it afterwards." The faith in "good governance" has ripple-effects on the EIA as the tool itself becomes a harmless democratic practice. Regardless of the legislative change with the incorporation of the PBA, it is warranted to mentioned research from Inderberg et al. (2019) on the influence of the municipality´s stance in the wind power license process. Their research point to that even though the municipality has no formal authority in the license process, their opinion yields stark influence, meaning that it is improbable that a license is granted if the municipality is negative. However, Inderberg et al. (2019, p.189) reveal that such information is informal, implying that only selected actors may know of it. The example above illustrates that the participant seems to belong in this sphere of selected actors accessing such information.

To sum up, the trust towards the EIA is rooted in a clear perception of the license procedure as democratic, non-binding and possible to influence. This seems to be a fruitful "grounding"

for other perceptions of the EIA to flourish, such as that it is inclusive and dependable. In the next subchapter, I will explore how the participants perceive the EIAs' ability to identify and measure risk and impact through participatory mechanisms.

Confidence in the participatory aspect and risk-management

The participants not only exhibited a significant level of confidence in the overall system surrounding the EIA, but also demonstrated trust in the EIA mechanisms. This is visible, for instance, when examining the motivations for the implementation of an EIA. The significance of the possible dialogue is repeated by several of the interlocutors. Concerning if there was a danger that not everyone´s perspectives will be represented to an equal degree in an EIA, particularly those related to nature protection and reindeer herding, seemed unrealistic to several participants. One decision-maker (Interlocutor 4) noted: "I am pretty sure that everyone who should be heard is heard." For Interlocutor 2 (commercial actor) it is obvious that different voices are to have a say in decision-making concerning recourse extraction or land-intensive projects as wind power:

> On a wind power project, you have to take care of nature stakeholders, natural diversity, the environment, reindeer husbandry, Saami interests and so on. […] Licensing regulation is quite clear on how you should work with nature stakeholders, and how you should take care of all these different considerations between nature and the environment. There it is quite strict.

Trust in regulations embedded in the EIA system extends to a broader confidence in EIAs' ability to take other perspectives into account, and effectively assess and balance impact considerations. Interlocutor 2 (commercial actor) highlighted a particular point that effectively illustrates the manifestation of the trustworthiness both towards the EIA-mechanisms and the license-system as such. The mentioned Fosen-case (see subchapter "Growing disputes in the national wind power development") is raised as an example to show "that things have gone wrong" and that "you have to have a good knowledge base and you have to have full-fledged democratic processes for involvement." This can be said to be a point of view that supports the inclusion of reindeer herders' perspectives and nature conversation. However, in contrast to widespread reactions among the Saami-community and other civil society actors (where it

has worsened an already fragile trust relationship), this seems to strengthen a confidence towards the EIA-process inclusionary abilities for Interlocutor 2:

> When it comes to the content of the EIA with statutory requirements, ref the follow-up after Fosen, I feel confident that all of them – the state has learned, NVE has learned, Statnett has learned – the actors have learned that we must follow up on the statutory requirements for to safeguard the provisions of the ILO Convention and the provisions of nature stakeholders. It's completely obvious. So, I feel confident that it would have been handled in a good way.

Once again, it is evident that trust in the overarching political- and governmental framework around the EIA, guarantees participation and inclusion. The faith in the governmental system as such enables the EIA-process accountable- and democratic character. Moreover, through the conceptualization by Li (2009), it can be argued that the participatory abilities strengthen the claim of EIAs as accountable. Despite the participatory aspects not being realized in this particular case (through for example hearing rounds and meetings), the stark belief in that they *will* be implemented fairly serves as an argument for an EIA implementation.

The desire to gather information on the impacts the project would create was repeated by the interlocutors as an important reason for its implementation. Interlocutor 1 (decision-maker) underlined the desire "to find out what will be the consequences for nature and the environment", meanwhile Interlocutor 11 (local population) highlighted the need to "find out the advantages and disadvantages" of the establishment. In regard to impacts for nature and environment, Interlocutor 2 (commercial actor) shared: "The EIA will point to precisely all the negative natural values... The scope... And not least the visibility of the total cost losses which such a type of land-intense project will be able to produce." This points to a confidence in that nature- and environmental values and losses will be addressed in a justified manner in an EIA. Viewed through the lenses of Li (2009) and Hébert (2016), one can argue that this indicates a sense of confidence in the EIAs' ability to identify risks. The presented empirical findings indicate that the interlocutors see the landscape where the wind power is proposed as a "site of risk" (Hébert, 2016) where EIA can capture aspects of relevance and further produce justified documentation which will guide further action. This can be argued to point at a confidence in managerial rational and scientific knowledge, as according to Hébert (2016) and Li (2009) are crucial pillars in the EIA-logic. Through the use of scientific knowledge to

measure consequences it will create certain truths to guide further action. As we will see in the next subchapter this further implies a delegitimization of information on risks and impacts that are *not* calculated through the EIA. Scholars such as Li (2009) argue that risk-identification process tends to gain the companies and industries interests as the definition and measures of impacts and risk are highly influenced by themselves. This is not documented to the same degree in Norway, however as previously noted, Inderberg et al. (2020) have pointed out that it is challenging to find out how nature protection concerns are given weight by NVE. Further, they have expressed concerns regarding if NVE´s mandate concerning wind power development comes at the expense off nature-values (Inderberg, 2020). Similarly, these uncertainties either seem unknown to the interlocutors or are not perceived as sufficient reasons for concern. Furthermore, as discussed in the subchapter 'Nature and reindeer herding – priorities or gone with the wind?', the practice of having a private consultancy company conducting the EIA has resulted in widespread criticism, due to the companies´ lacking ability or desire to consider reindeer herding and nature-aspects. The issue does not seem to be subject to skepticism among most of the participants who shared that they would have entrusted an external consultant.

The EIAs' ability to identify risks and impacts (and solutions) seems further to build on its participatory abilities. It will identify risks *because* it builds on participatory pillars. Since EIA is viewed as a tool that facilitates dialogue and collects inputs concerning risk and impacts this will lead to a broad representation of different understandings of these. It is valuable to draw on Hébert (2016), referring to Wynne (2005), which sees this as a type of "blind zone". What is seen as impact, risks or consequences will vary greatly depending on ways of being and knowing. However, the EIA often will translate these different understandings into certain risk- and scientific terms, which can dismiss its meaning. This can be traced back to the scientific knowledge pillars the EIAs are built upon, which make it incapable of grasping other ways of seeing impacts and risk without reducing them. Participatory aspects obscure these tendencies, according to Hébert (2016). While this case lacks documentation of such occurrences, the subsequent section will highlight the continued presence of mechanisms that diminish other ways of knowing. In sum, it can further be argued that through showing confidence in the two mechanisms of accountability, namely risk-identification and participation abilities, an image of the EIA as harmless and objective emerges. However, the accountability mechanisms as such can and will only be realized through conducting the EIA. The counterarguments claiming an EIA was unnecessary due to

adequate knowledge were framed in divergent ways, however they have in common that it was not recognized as legitimate reasons. This will now be further explored in depth.

The need for more (scientific) knowledge

Based on the presented data so far, it is evident that these participants experience that there is a lack of knowledge concerning the impacts of the wind power facilities. Their call for more knowledge implicitly points out that the existing knowledge was either non-existent or not sufficient. Briefly explained, parts of the EIA-opponents argued that "they knew enough" concerning the potential impacts of wind power and the perception of such project in their local areas. My empirical findings show that these perceptions and understandings indicate different ways of knowing and being. This will further be explored in the next chapter. Anyhow; this was mainly disregarded as reasons to not go through with an EIA by this group. The findings presented here support the analysis in the former chapter concerning that attraction towards EIA as a decision-tool seems to be connected to a valorization of scientific knowledge. Further, I will present what I perceive as three different, although overlapping, ways of framing the counterwork against the EIA.

Firstly, the spectrum of negatively charged thoughts and claims on the possibility of wind power in the local area, was often framed as opinions. Interlocutor 2 (commercial actor) highlighted that they had respect for people who think that "wind power is so land-intensive in itself that you do not want to get it empirically down on paper – on what the actual consequences are. That someone forms an opinion in advance." However, they problematize what is perceived as "black and white" thinking. Regarding the wind power debate and its controversies there is additionally "no doubt that there is a lack of empirical facts in the debate" according to the Interlocutor. A decision-maker (Interlocutor 4) connects the experience of sufficient knowledge to personal point of views: "It is possible that they personally knew enough in relation to their convictions and their opinions about it. Because if you are totally against it anyway, then you know enough." In other words, the claimed knowledges are in these lenses' just opinions about wind power, and further disqualified. Others perceived it as simply not possible to know. Interlocutor 11 (local population) noted the following: "They cannot know the consequences of wind turbines until it has been investigated. They are not smarter than anyone else". Interlocutor 1 (decision-maker) noted that "it is actually quite arrogant to say that you know enough, because a project will be different from position and location to location."

Secondly, some of the interlocutors framed the counterarguments additionally as feelings. One decision-maker (Interlocutor 1) summarized the decline of the implementation of an EIA as follows: “We built on feelings and nostalgia. That everything should be as it has always been and then we said no to a historic opportunity. We did not want more knowledge, we did not even want to investigate if this could be something for us”. The person additionally highlighted what was considered an issue at national scale: “I just think that if it is emotions that will drive the development of workplaces and industry and the green shift in Norway, then we will get nowhere.” Another decision-maker (Interlocutor 4) stated that the counterwork played on fear regarding their relation and communication around wind power: “Fear was spread. It was the fear that you couldn't come back and change your decision or make a decision. And there was fear from everything from rotor blades throwing ice to the fear that it was hydraulic oil that could be spread out into nature.” From Interlocutor 11´s (local population) point of view the counterwork against the wind power was described as “propaganda”.

Further, a couple of the Interlocutors framed the counterarguments as a type of NIMBY-argumentation (not in my backyard). One Interlocutor (1, decision-maker) expressed frustration around that “everyone wants clean energy, everyone wants green energy” as long as “it does not affect me, if it doesn´t disturb my view, if it doesn´t affect me locally where I live.” This is further accompanied with a stark view on the responsibility to contribute to the green shift. Interlocutor (11, local population) noted similar aspects: “What strikes me very often is that everyone is in favor of development, as long as it doesn't happen in my garden”. The Interlocutor experienced it as strange that parts of the industrial project were unwanted (i.e., the wind power) as it could have contributed to local economic growth: “But everyone wants nursing home places for their mother and father. Everyone wants a kindergarten; everyone wants a good school. But we do not want to ensure that we get finances in the municipality, so that we have the opportunity to do so.” Following this, the interlocutor had issues accepting the declination of the EIA in the municipality.

There are various mechanisms of reductionism and misrecognition in operation when claims reflecting divergent ways of knowing are framed as above; as speculations, personal opinions, fears, feelings, or selfishness (i.e., NIMBY-assumptions). The application of the concept of “boundary-work” by Hébert (2016) is feasible to explain these mechanisms. My empirical

findings point to that there is drawn a boundary where what exists outside an EIA is dismissed as irrelevant or untrue while the knowledge that *can* or *will* be shown in the EIA becomes the objective reality. Furthermore, as demonstrated above it reduces insights and reality-making of large-scale wind power into political opinions or common sense, while holding on to a type of objectivity in the EIA. It can further be described as a knowledge hierarchy (Sjölander-Lindqvist et al.,2020, p.4). Law and Joks (2019) provide a useful insight on the treatment of differences which can further exceed these reflections. In the "boundary process" it can seem like there is a type of, if not a denial of differences, a blindness towards them. This underlines the asymmetrical power relations and hinders necessary dialogue. Through Haraway (1988) it can be understood as a blockage of partial connections between realities. Separating science from politics is further a part of boundary-logic according to Hébert (2016, p.111). The EIA is framed as an apolitical tool, while the divergent knowledge-claims are viewed as partly political opinions and therefore invalidated as reasons for no-implementation. This reveals a blind spot towards the political weight an EIA carries.

Two types of mechanisms are active. Meanwhile the "other knowledges" are reduced and dismissed, they are simultaneously offered an opportunity of joining the EIA where their knowledges can be regulated, and their value calculated. This serves as a type of bridge to the other side of "the boundary" where the different knowledges can be allowed to interact and dialogue on a set of technical premises. However, this is not necessarily appraised as a trust-builder, as will be shown later when exploring the other narratives. Likewise, this opportunity is further framed as the only correct alternative to create the necessary knowledge base for decision-making. This can be described as a type of paradoxical duality which furthermore points to "how inclusion often has exclusionary effects" as commented on by Hébert (2016, p.111). As documented in the previous subchapter the interlocutors show strong confidence in the participatory abilities of the EIA where everyone can raise their voice and be heard. The participatory aspects of the EIA are used for promotion of its implementation, however in the same promotion the interlocutors manage to create exclusionary effects by the unconscious use of boundary work and blindness towards difference (Hébert, 2016; Li, 2009; Law & Joks, 2019). At a more general level this can be argued to point at recurrent reductionist tendencies of multiple ways of knowing in environmental decision-making (Agrawal, 1995). Such epistemic fallacies, in addition to cultivating conflicting claims in specific cases, hinders necessary dialogue and closes off exploration of alternatives (Normann, 2021, p.90).

The story of sacrifice and contribution

So far, I have presented how the group of participants perceived the EIA by shedding light on certain shaping elements. Through my empirical findings, I additionally observed that the perception of the EIA was weaved together with a wider set of world-describing or world-making narratives. Veland et al. (2018) and Paschen & Ison (2014) offer feasible approaches by framing such meta-narratives as "reference points", a part of broader "narrative structures", that shape and affect other stories we entail. In the next section, I wish to extend the analysis of the EIA perceptions, by unpacking selected "reference points" which I observed in these participants´ storytelling. I will focus on storytelling which evolved around climate change, mitigation policies and landscape. These mainly deal with perceptions of the industrial project. However, I will attempt to highlight how this is intertwined with the perception of the EIA. Further, it will be accentuated on how these are associated with leading discourses in the field, which again can explain power-dynamics between narratives.
Firstly, I will give attention to how the participants storied the proposed project. There was a strong view among the interlocutors that the industrial project was a necessity to combat climate change. This further makes it the right thing to do. As one decision-maker (Interlocutor 1) summarized it:

> We will need more green products, i.e., steel, aluminum, silicon, which are produced in a sustainable way. Industry in the world today is based a lot on coal power, and there are incredibly large emissions from industry in the world today. And in order to be able to show the world that it is possible to produce steel and aluminum in a more sustainable and green way, I believe that Norway must be a country that takes the lead here.

Another decision-maker (Interlocutor 4) seemed to share similar thoughts:

> Although wind turbines require their resources from the mining industry for both transport routes and raw materials, if we are to maintain the standard of living, especially in Norway, then we have to do something.

They require action, and the industrial project becomes an opportunity to do so. As Interlocutor 11 (local population) repeated: "We can't live off clover and timothy. We must

give something to get something." Furthermore, the participants shared an enthusiasm for being a part of something bigger. In Interlocutor 1´s view, the industrial establishment was "an opportunity to contribute to the green shift – in the world – so to speak." Another decision-maker (Interlocutor 4) shared that:

> Because we must dare to see ourselves in the big picture. In the big world, we are tiny. So, looking at and building a green steel plant for example, although it will increase to a certain extent, see the CO_2 emissions on Norwegian soil, I think it is much more important for us to look at things globally today […].

It is clearly recognizable that for these interlocutors, climate change should be tackled through green growth and transition. Furthermore, the possible economic benefits it could bring are highlighted as crucial for these interlocutors. The logic of contribution works on multi-level scales. In between there are clear storylines of necessity, contribution, and possibilities. These "reference points" explain the positive attitude towards the industrial project. Moreover, the abovementioned reflections add to a logic concerning that something needs to be sacrificed so we can contribute globally. This brings to mind the conceptualization of "sacrificed zones" emerging from environmental justice frameworks. Briefly explained, the term shed light on how low-income and marginalized communities which are experiencing environmental degradation are transformed into zones that can be sacrificed for economic growth (Scott & Smith, 2017). In this case, nature and landscape must be sacrificed for the benefit of global CO_2 reduction *and* economic boost of the municipality´s economy. The framing of the area as a "sacrificed zone" is further partly present in the stories of the landscape presented by the participants. Decision-maker (Interlocutor 1) noted the following concerning protection of nature:

> […] But we are left with untouched nature, and that's not a small thing, it's nice, but I think if you're going to somehow survive in Northern Norway, you're going to have some things to establish in the future for our children here, now you have to we also utilize what we have relatively much of – and that is natural resources.

A member from the local population (Interlocutor 11) noted that "if there is something we have enough of here in Nordland, it is land. You can´t live out of beautiful nature." If the landscape is something that either can be sacrificed or is a surplus it makes it easier or

necessary to perceive mitigation through technical investments, growth, and interventions. These storylines amplify each other. Not surprisingly this has stark effects on how the industrial project, including the wind power, is imagined. Already from the beginning, before an EIA-process, it is established that there is available space. The suggested location for the wind power is experienced by Interlocutor 11 (local population) as suitable as it is "not a natural place where people travel." It is framed as an "empty space". Others, in slight contrast to the abovementioned, described the landscape as "dense" (Interlocutor 4, decision-maker) and "cramped" (Interlocutor 2, commercial actor), as the "land use is shared by other nature stakeholders" (ibid). This narrated experience was further connected to a pro-EIA argumentation, as it was then even more important to investigate the impacts. In addition to these types of landscape-narratives, they all expressed confidence in the coexistence of nature-values and green growth.

Here we can observe that the landscapes are narrated in different ways; however, they both share the perception of the EIA as necessary and the industrial project as desired. The area is viewed as a "sacrificed zone", and the EIA opens up for the possible sacrificial action to occur on accountable grounds. The narrated experience of landscape contributes to making the EIA purposeful; either because it simply is a necessary step towards the potential realization of the project, or because the landscape makes it even more responsible and important. These overlapping narratives point to how the world works (climate change is to be solved through technical interventions) and how the world looks (the landscape and nature is to be, in a responsible way, used or sacrificed for mitigation purposes). Further, these can be argued to operate as types of "reference points" for the storytelling of the industrial project making it desirable and necessary. Moreover, it shapes EIA as the rightful path. The EIA as a policy decision-tool makes *sense* through such infrastructures (Veland et al., 2018, p.42). The sense-making of the EIA can be traced back to that different narratives are in dialogue as they build on techno-scientific worldview and scientific knowledge-sphere. These word-describing narratives, in which the EIA is partly storied, can be argued to generate legitimization for the EIA narratives. This is connected to the fact that they play on or are a part of leading discourses in climate change mitigation which are instrumental in facilitating and communicating global climate change policies. The views presented here, additionally in the previous subchapter, can remind of global environmental management discourses such as the hegemonic biophysical discourse building on techno-managerial worldview where non-fossil energy sources, among others, are central (Leichenko & O`Brien, 2019, p. 43). Moreover,

views presented above show a strong conviction to the green growth nexus. As these actors communicate and partly participate in such discourse in this case, they can argue to exercise discursive power (Benjaminsen & Svartstad, 2021, p.64). For the interlocutors, the storytellers, it further can be argued to be experienced as the rightful choice because it matches the stories communicated by the leading discourses. Counter-stories opposing the EIA, hindering the realization of the project, seem to become difficult to grasp as they deviate from the leading discourses on climate change mitigation.

Concluding remarks

I have demonstrated that perceptions of the EIA as harmless, objective, and useful are shaped by a stark confidence towards various key features. My empirical results reveal that it requires trust in the overall system surrounding the EIA, namely the license process and the license authority. Moreover, it seems to include a confidence in the state as a "good governance" system. Further, I have demonstrated that the participants have a strong confidence towards accountability practices. The EIA is framed as a democratic tool that will generate participation and dialogue, which further makes it capable of navigating and recognizing divergent inputs concerning impact and risk. Moreover, these perceptions build on an understanding of nature and landscape as a "site of risk" where impacts can be measured, which further require an affirmation towards a scientific knowledge sphere. I have demonstrated that knowledge outside an EIA is disregarded, meanwhile the EIA is seen as a facilitator for knowledge and objective truths about impact and risk. Lastly, I argue that the case reveals that the narrative does not exist in a vacuum, rather it builds on certain reference points about climate change mitigation and the landscape as a "sacrifice element". Hence, the narrative seems to require certain ways of seeing.

Chapter 5: Unwelcoming the EIA: Moving Beyond Compliance

My empirical findings point out that there are perceptions of the EIA that strongly contrast the ones in the previous chapter. In this chapter, I aim to emphasize the narratives that in diverse way perceived the EIA as unnecessary, biased, and meaningless in the case. The attention will be drawn to a set of participants (Interlocutor 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12) who have in common that they opposed implementing the EIA in the municipalities, however for various reasons. Nonetheless, my empirical findings point out that many of the shaping features

overlap and are shared by multiple actors. Through my empirical findings, I will explore how and why the perceptions unfold. The chapter is structured in the following manner. Firstly, I will give attention to three distinctive features in the EIA body that generate skepticism and mistrust: the municipality´s role in the license-process, the role of external consultants and the challenge of weighting of environmental issues. Within that, I will also briefly touch upon experiences of the process concerning the industrial project and the push for an EIA-implementation. Secondly, I will present two interconnected points: namely the experience of acquiring sufficient knowledge, and how this is intertwined with certain ways of seeing landscape and climate change mitigation policies.

A snowball that can't be stopped

The possibility for an EIA on wind power connected to the suggested steel factory created stark reactions. As remarked earlier, there were competing understandings concerning the formal role of the municipality in an EIA-process. This is further connected to divergent claims about the license process. While the perceptions presented in the previous chapter stress the influential power of the municipality throughout the entire license process, portraying the EIA as a non-binding activity, an alternative set of narratives presents contrasting claims. For multiple participants, the EIA equaled the start of a license process which further implied loss of power and influence for the municipality. Once the "notification" is sent to NVE and the license process is set in motion, the process is irreversible. A decision-maker (Interlocutor 7) claimed that it equaled "zero veto right" for the municipality. Interlocutor 8 (local population) noted that "EIA is the start of something that you cannot control." The participant further expressed that it carries risk if one is not entirely certain about the desirability of wind power. Another decision-maker (Interlocutor 12) explained the matter in the following way: "It´s when like you have boiled an egg, then you´ve boiled the egg. Then you won´t get it runny again just by cooling it down." In other words, it is not possible to change your mind. Another participant emphasized that an EIA itself may not be inherently dangerous, but rather, it is the process it sets in motion that carries potential risks (Interlocutor 3, decision-maker). The participants described what they considered as a likely scenario:

> The consequences, if you believe that there is nothing dangerous about the EIA, and we had said yes… Then you had started a license application, and then NVE had said,

> the state had said – which enforces the Energy Act – that we don´t care if the municipality says no in the hearing-rounds, because now we are in a such situation that we need more power, and thus we want to get started. That could have happened.

It is observable that for these actors, the EIA system lacks legitimacy and the transfer of power from the municipality level to the state level is viewed as unfavorable. Several of the participants stressed the danger posed by the fact that the license process is not subject to the Planning and Building Act (PBA). A decision-maker (Interlocutor 3) described the PBA as the "municipalities' law". Without its legislative presence, the municipality´s role restricted to a "hearing body". A local resident (Interlocutor 8) sees the interaction between the license authorities NVE, OED and KDD (Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development) as a "kind of Bermuda triangle where the PBA just disappears." This opens for certain priorities according to the participant: "They can use argumentation about energy security and national interests. Then we are completely overruled […]" Research conducted by Inderberg et al. (2019) have raised similar viewpoints, emphasizing that the control of license regulations by national energy authorities may give rise to conflicting interests. For several of these participants being involved in a license process equaled a removal of local democracy. A decision-maker (Interlocutor 12) described it as "shameful legislation". For a local resident (Interlocutor 10), the EIA and license process signified the potential of loss: "Then it is not about our mountains anymore, it becomes a question of how much TWh to produce in Norway."

A couple of participants highlighted their positive stance towards the proposed legislative change of moving the EIA regulation under the Planning and Building Act (see subchapter "The call for decision-power to the municipalities"). As a decision-maker (Interlocutor 3) noted: "It is something that we very much welcome." Another interlocutor (8, local population) noted concerns that it will be possible to be overturned by NVE. This corresponds with the critiques the legislative proposals received in February 2023 (see above mentioned chapter). The formalization of the proposed legislative change occurred in February 2023, meaning that when this case took place it only had been requested and signaled by various political bodies. One of the participants did not perceive the timing as coincidental: "I think that it was probably not a steel factory that was the main focus here. It was getting hold of a wind power license before the Energy Act was changed and moved to the PBA" (Interlocutor 3, decision-maker). The participant refers to the anticipated increased influential power the

municipality will have with such a legislative change. From their point of view the company strategically pushed the approval of a notification in order to avoid the municipality's increased influence later in the license process. As seen in the previous chapter, several actors claimed that the municipality would have the possibility to influence and stop the license process, partly because state authorities had signaled the legislative change. This did not seem to necessarily resonate with this group of participants. Decision-maker (Interlocutor 3) stated: "At the end of the day, it is the legalities that matter, not all the speeches or all the documents attached to a case, promising gold and green forests." Others, such as Interlocutor 8 (local population), shared the notion of being fooled or tricked by this narrative. They shared:

> I think the worst thing about the whole situation is that there is so much withholding of information and there is so much cover-up of the consequences. They are trying to put make-up on the pig. You can do that as much as you want, but it is still a pig. It won´t be a ballet dancer if you put it in pointe shoes.

This statement, in addition to a general observation in the abovementioned findings, hints that the license procedure and energy authorities becomes a reason to distrust the EIA. Moreover, a couple of the participants shared the notion of being confused and uncertain about the municipality´s role in the license process and about the EIA. One decision-maker (Interlocutor 5) describes that there was confusion on various features: "What was it and what would we agreed to? And what could happen if it was positive, what could happen if it was negative? I think we had too little knowledge about it." A local resident (Interlocutor 6) shared similar concerns: "I was uncertain about what was right and what wasn´t." It was further "difficult to understand completely" they shared. This seemingly contributed to doubtfulness towards the EIA.

The framing of the loss of influence in the license process was further legitimized by pointing to previous experiences observed in other contexts. The EIA evoked negative associations among the participants. According to Interlocutor 8 (local population) the municipalities have been "overruled in very many wind power cases across the country" and they further experienced that this information was omitted consciously. Several participants regarded the case of Fosen (see subchapter "Growing disputes in the national wind power development") as a prominent warning of the potential outcome of a license-process. For them, it illustrates how the EIA often ignores or dismisses reindeer herding at the expense of renewable energy

concerns. As Interlocutor 9, local resident, and reindeer herder, expressed: “It is uncommon that an EIA is in favor of reindeer husbandry.” Several of the participants raised concerns that reindeer herding aspects would not be taken into sufficient account in a potential EIA.

In summary, I observed that for these participants, an implementation of an EIA was equivalent to losing control and influence over decision-making. It implied giving away power to untrusted actors and losing the legislative ability to control the outcome. This further generated insecurity, disapproval, and rejection towards the EIA. It seemed to additionally breed skepticism towards the developers and the industrial project. By using the conceptualization offered by Li (2009) it can be argued that the EIA as a step in generating accountability does not make an impact. Argumentation concerning its democratic, neutral, and participatory abilities does not resonate as the license process implies loss of influence. Rather, this dissonance seemed to generate desires and motivation for refusal and “stepping out of the document” as Li (2009) points out. My interpretation of Li (2009) is that the EIA is a type of formality that can be seen as the “document”, and that for parts of a community the way to keep their influence and control may be not to participate. Li´s (2009) research holds that this involves avoiding sharing information in hearing rounds and meetings that are a part of the EIA-process. In this case, the best course of action to protect the right to influence, becomes to avoid and refuse the “document”, even before its realization. I will return to several features that I argue generated such stances. In the next section, I will briefly elaborate on how some of the participants experienced the pre-EIA process in the municipality as ambiguous.

An ambiguous process

In addition to experiences of confusion and uncertainty concerning the license regulation, my findings indicate that multiple participants experienced confusion around the process as such. This may contribute to explaining the lack of trust in the EIA. A local community member (Interlocutor 10) shared reflections of how Norway has a tradition for participation and open processes. However, they experienced the EIA and wind power processes in general as “closed”. Moreover, the processes were described as “surreal” characterized by “dirty tactics” by Interlocutor 10 (local population). This seemed to shape their perception of an EIA in itself. Another local resident (Interlocutor 9) described that they felt ignored in the process in the municipality:

> […] We also felt that we were being overlooked on purpose. They knew that reindeer herding was one of the things that could stop this project. What it really was, whether it was deliberate or not that it was not included, we do not know. But, it is often the case that we are brought into the processes so late that it is difficult to stop it. That´s how it felt now too.

For the participant, the experience with the EIA-process resonated with previous encounters and validated skepticism. Others shared negative experiences of rush and urgency. For example, a decision-maker (Interlocutor 3) shared:

> There are very resourceful groups that in a way present something that looks very good and interesting. And then you apply a pressure and then it has to happen all very quickly […] No one can come here and say, "We are going to put away 20 per cent of the municipality´s areas to wind power and need an answer tomorrow." It doesn't work like that.

Rather, it was important not to rush such decisions according to the actor. "It must mature", they noted. Another community member (Interlocutor 6) shared the experience of being under pressure. They further noted questions they and others had during the process: "Why is there so much stress with this project? Why does it need to happen so quickly?" These experiences seemed to amplify feelings of uncertainty, disbelief, and mistrust towards both the project and the EIA for the participant. Moreover, the reflections presented above problematize the leading climate mitigation discourses on energy policies which are focused on urgency. It shows that the government's focus on efficiency through acceleration in the renewable energy development can clash with a municipality´s and a local community´s yearn for time to process large transformations, such as wind power development entails. From this scale there is no "need for speed" such as the government advocates.

The company and EIA-proponents often referred to the incompleteness of the EIA-process concerning arising environmental and impact uncertainties. The lack of knowledge and magnitude of impacts were to be addressed through an EIA. However, there were concerns and uncertainties regarding the EIAs' capabilities to identify, measure and capture impacts and risks. In the next section, I will explore the reasons behind the presence of these features among the participants.

You get what you pay for: a barrier to trust and transparency

A repeating issue brought up by the participants is the use of independent consultants to conduct the EIA. As previously mentioned, it is the company proposing the project that is responsible for finding a consultancy firm to carry out the EIA. For many, this was seen as a cause for concern or even a "red flag". A decision-maker (Interlocutor 12) noted: "You can buy the answer you want." Others described it as "scary" (Interlocutor 8, local population) and "subjective" (Interlocutor 7, decision-maker). The matter seemed to generate skepticism and hesitation towards the EIA. A decision-maker (Interlocutor 3) highlighted: "I am afraid that negative things may not necessarily come through because it is the developer that decides the consulting firm." Here, it becomes apparent that it undermines confidence in the EIAs' ability to assess impacts transparently and effectively. The case of Fosen was brought up as an example of how consulting firms lacked necessary insights concerning environmental- and reindeer herding aspects. Local resident and reindeer herder (Interlocutor 9) shared that:

> Some EIAs have turned out to be good, but the consequences for the reindeer herders often become trivial in the EIA. That is because it is often too little knowledge about reindeer herding among those who work with it.

The participant further emphasized that despite providing comprehensive explanations, they are rarely understood. As previously mentioned, the matter is supported by political actors such as the Sami Parliament, the Sámi Reindeer Herders´ association and The Norwegian National Human Rights Institution. Later, I will reflect on how this can be explained by issues of knowledge spheres. Moreover, a couple of participants challenged the status quo of an external actor being responsible for conducting the EIA. A decision-maker (Interlocutor 3) noted: "My immediate thought is perhaps that it would have been natural if it was the municipality that did it." Another decision-maker (Interlocutor 7) shared that they had raised the issue in the municipality council: "I tried at an early stage ask if we can take part in this EIA? Can we also make demands?" The question seemed to remain unanswered for them. It is apparent that another EIA-design, for example that the municipality contributed to decide on the EIA conductor, could have improved its trustworthiness. Meanwhile, the current practice with an external conductor seemed to both strengthen a feeling of loss of control and a lack of faith in the EIAs' abilities to identify risk and impacts.

Nonsensical and worthless risk-identification

The participants' lack of confidence and skepticism towards the EIA further appears to stem from their perception of how the tool identifies and measures potential risks and impacts associated with wind power. For a local resident, the lack of trust concerning the matter is already established in the meeting with the company. Interlocutor 6 (local population) shared: "We were left with the feeling that they didn't know the area very well. And of course, they are going to do an EIA and they are going to figure it out. But it is a bit strange that they hadn't checked up quite simple things." A highlighted example by the participant is that the country´s fifth largest glacier is located in the same area where they supposedly were to investigate wind power possibilities. According to the community member, the company "didn't quite have the answers" and "denied things if we were a little critical." It contributed to generating mistrust to the project: "You felt that it is not something you can be sure of." The lack of place-based knowledge in the developers seemed to give rise to distrust.

One of the main features in the EIA methodology is giving "score" or "weight" on the level of impacts on topics or areas such as nature environment, outdoor life, and landscape. The scores range from "no impact" to "very strong impact". Several of the participants repeatedly expressed concerns about the matter. Interlocutor 8 (local population) stated: "I know that weighting is practiced, but I don't know how it is defined. And that worries me." The uncertainty seems to make it challenging to trust the EIA as an act of neutral knowledge acquisition. For the abovementioned interlocutor the EIA methodology is "the way you can manipulate the outcome of the EIA", by prioritizing socio-economic benefits at the expense of nature and reindeer herding. Another local resident (Interlocutor 10) describes: "Often, the advantages are so big that the disadvantages are insufficiently important. It is the eye of the beholder. The money decides. Or what we call social benefit." The raised concerns are to some extent supported by research. As mentioned, research from Gulbrandsen et al. (2020) demonstrates that OED has given inadequate guidance to NVE on nature protection and that the body´s renewable energy mandate has led to some biased cost–benefit analysis.

Closely related to the issue of weighting is the question of which topics or areas are to be covered in the EIA. It is my understanding that NVE determines the topics to be decided upon in the license process based on the inputs provided in the many hearing rounds in the license process and from the company. As previously mentioned, this concern was briefly addressed

by Interlocutor 6 that raised questions about the scope of the EIA. Another local community member (Interlocutor 10) expressed several views on the matter and pointed out that: “There are a lot of things that are not mentioned in an EIA. There are very big gaps in the EIA concerning topics.” They are referring to topics that deal with nature and the environment. To understand why the participant experience gaps in the EIA methodology it is necessary to look closer at their relation to nature. The local community-member describes: “For people that live close to nature and that use nature a lot, nature is holy.” The participant used words such as tradition, spirituality, safety, identity, history, attachment, and co-existence to explain their relation to nature. Moreover, the participant described that it entails understanding who you are. The storylines reveal what can be categorized as traditional ecological knowledge characterized by being place-based, context and time specific, multi-generational and fluid (Law & Joks, 2019). The attachment to nature develops “from day to day” as the community member explained. Similar ways of seeing reveal themselves when later addressing why many experienced that they “knew enough” and dissonance to the green narratives. Likewise, such ways of knowing as described above, points to ways of being and knowing that technical assessment processes may have challenges measuring. Rather, they may be transported to foreign categories in the EIA, as “outdoor life”. The community member (Interlocutor 10) explained a feeling of dissonance concerning the matter:

> “Outdoor life” is a term that describes the urban nature-use. So, the type of recreational use of nature – when we have time off from work and when we travel out of town on the weekends. While the rural use of nature is different – it often takes place in a perspective of use, in a year wheel, in a cycle and where people live in a way together with nature. Where you hunt, fish, harvest, and experience nature through the seasons very closely. Where you get a spiritual connection to nature – which is different from what the outdoor term entails.

Meanwhile, it can be argued that the knowledge sphere in which the participant experiences reality, lacks space in the enclosed reality of a technical assessment. To elaborate further, as noted by Hébert (2016), the making of an EIA implies an enclosure of reality. Resultingly, the identified risks are limited to a particular conceptual framework based on scientific and technical terminology. The landscape of risk and impact relies on illusionary boundaries where other modes of knowing are excluded according to Hébert (2016). Accordingly, the built-in abilities to identify risks and impacts found in tools such as EIA are not constructed to

grasp knowledges beyond these set boundaries. The participant emphasized the challenges of conveying their relation to nature into the EIA terminology:

> It makes it difficult to describe, because we do not have literature on it, in the same way that city people have literature on their outdoor use […]. Our history lies in the mountains, in the paths, on the trails, on the campsites and so on.

Hence, the impacts and consequences of interventions such as wind power generate becomes "impossible to assess" and "something that bureaucrats and technocrats cannot grasp" according to the community member. They described that the proposed wind power generated a "feeling of plundering." "Luckily", they emphasized, "we have the opportunity to link it up with Sami cultural monuments. Because it has received special protection." Moreover, also emphasized by the local resident, this does not necessarily equal that protection is maintained or respected in the EIA. A reindeer herder (Interlocutor 9) noted similar challenges of communicating impacts:

> We explain and explain how important the grazing areas are. You feel that you rarely are understood […]. It is difficult to explain how it all is connected and how big significance it has for the grazing areas. No matter if it is an EIA or just a consultation, it's problematic to "get out" the knowledge and do documentation.

The reflections mentioned above bring to mind the insights of Law and Jokes (2019), who demonstrated that traditional ecological knowledge has difficulties travelling or being abstracted from its context. This is due to its time and place-specific existence. Moreover, it is important to note that this does not make it impossible. Enhancing knowledge on reindeer herding within the EIA bodies has been emphasized as a crucial factor for improving impact assessments (see Risvoll et al., 2022). Law and Joks (2019) have stressed the value of acknowledging differences between knowledge spheres, moreover the need of "hardening" traditional ecological knowledge and "softening" scientific knowledge. Likewise, it valuable to give attention to why it may be challenging to transfer the knowledge to other instances, such as the EIA. One of the participatory actions that EIA performs is interviewing affected actors of a project. Such an interview may entail how the project potentially can impact daily life. The community members seem to share the above concerns on knowledge-transfer. They asked: "How are you supposed to do those interview-rounds? No, I don't know." They further

drew lines that this is challenging because the values and knowledge are not registered: “We don't have a thematic map on it.” This addresses the challenges of interaction between knowledge spheres and highlights some of the shortcomings of technical assessment tools. Individuals who are keepers of different ways of knowing may not feel that their perspectives can be represented within the measuring tools. As mentioned above, this can be understood as a harmful consequence of boundary-work, which enclose the interaction possibilities between spheres.

In summary, my findings show that several participants lack trust in the EIAs' ability to measure, identify and recognize what they consider to be significant values and knowledges. As demonstrated, this relates to factors such as external actors conducting the EIA and the EIA methodology of weighting and categories. Moreover, this is intertwined with lacking space for other knowledge spheres beyond the scientific realm and the challenges of transferring knowledges. Furthermore, it illustrates that risk-identification through managerial rationale, aiming at generating accountability according to Li (2009) does not equally resonate for the participants. This further results in that the EIA and project´s accountable character becomes fictional or hypothetical. Rather, it generates uncertainty, mistrust, and distance. In this case, it can be argued that it has exclusionary effects that results in non-participation, as pointed out by Hébert (2016) and Li (2009). To protect the potentially affected area from wind power, the most favorable option becomes to refuse the implementation of the EIA, or “stepping out of the document” as noted by Li (2009). The mechanisms pointed out by the above authors can argue to be apparent in this case, as all of the participants mentioned above rejected and resisted implementation of an EIA through various manners. Further, I will expand the above reflections by exploring another set of emerging storylines present in the examined empirical context, namely that the participants experienced that they knew enough.

We already know enough – so what´s the point then?

A set of present stories that emerged in my findings circle around knowledge. In this section, I aim to explore the content of the adequate knowledge many experienced. Further, how this contributes to explaining the lack of confidence in EIAs' ability to identify impact and resistance towards implementation of the EIA. Several participants felt confident in their counterviews regarding the aspect of wind power in the proposed industrial project, believing

they possessed sufficient knowledge on the subject. As one local resident (Interlocutor 10) summarized it:

> We know a lot. We do not need an EIA. When we already know many of the consequences. We don´t need a consulting firm to tell us that. It will be a bit like hiring a consultant to tell you how to close or open a door. It appears completely unnecessary with an EIA.

Interlocutor 7 (decision-maker) shared a similar wonder: "You don´t need a process on something you know so much about." The participant further underlined that "it wouldn't be any new information that could change our viewpoints." A local resident (interlocutor 10) talked about wind power as an "industry-area" where "we know that there are consequences for birds, reindeer herding, outdoor life, pollution and noise." A reindeer herder expressed alike reflections (Interlocutor 9):

> In relation to the wind power, we felt that there is already so much documentation on the consequences of the wind power. So that the EIA was supposed to generate more knowledge – we didn´t quite understand that. Knowledge about wind power, both in relation to reindeer husbandry and nature, it exists. There is plenty, not just EIAs, but examples from wind power that have been built, which consequences it actually has.

The already gained knowledge shapes the critical attitude to wind power in the area. The already gained knowledge seems to make the EIA both unnecessary and meaningless. Why identify and measure risk when we already know them? Accordingly, the EIAs aim of generating knowledge through risk-identification and participatory abilities becomes useless and irrelevant. Furthermore, it is evident for several participants that international conventions aimed at protecting nature lacked a significant voice. As exemplified by Interlocutor (decision-maker 3): "There are international conventions that say that it is supposed to stop right away. So, I think there were no reasons to go ahead with it all (…). Why don´t you listen to that? Or is that it is not that important?" The participant is referring to that Norway is internationally obliged to protect the basis for the reindeer husbandry, reflected both in the constitution and the Reindeer Act. Local resident and reindeer herder (Interlocutor 9) shared similar thoughts as the decision-maker: "The grazing areas are pretty strongly protected, so we felt that we had… That it was enough that the reindeer herding said no." Moreover,

another decision-maker (Interlocutor 7) commented on the fact that the area is an LNFR (agricultural-, nature-, outdoor- and reindeer husbandry)-area, meaning that it is to be protected, “doesn't mean a thing.” The experience of regulations not being “enough” for avoiding gathering more knowledge appears to reinforce the existing distrust of the EIA´s accountability mechanisms.

It´s further worth exploring what it entails “knowing enough”. At first glance, it appears to point to possessing certain knowledge and information concerning the impacts of wind power, as seen above. Moreover, it is of interest to pay attention to why such knowledge resonates with these participants, seemingly in opposition to narratives presented in chapter three. I will therefore give more attention to what can be classified as world-describing and world-making narratives, or “reference points” in one´s “infrastructure,” as defined by Veland et al. (2018) and Paschen & Ison (2014). By examining these reference-points, we can gain a better understanding of the embodied connections between stories. Several of the participants mentioned various landscape features in relation to their resistance towards wind power in the area. Examples are that the proposed wind power area is in between three national parks, the UNESCO world heritage site Laponia, a large glacier and the largest concentration of mountains crossing the Swedish border. A decision-maker (Interlocutor 7) presented an opposing perspective regarding the characterization of the area as an “empty space”, a claim made by certain proponents of the EIA: “They say that few people travel and walk in these areas because you have Blåmannsisen (glacier). But that is not true. There are still many people walking there.” Others underlined the significance of nature independent of the presence of users or people. Local resident (Interlocutor 6) emphasized that “we live there for a reason” and that “it is very important to us.” In Interlocutor 8´s (local population) view the mountains have significant meaning: “In Oslo, we have the opera. Around in the big cities we have beautiful buildings. We have our mountains. It´s our cathedrals.” Similar descriptions were posed by Interlocutor 10 (local population):

> The feeling of plundering is exactly the same as it would be if you attacked the Nidaros Cathedral or the local church in a municipality. Then there would have been a terrible roar and protest, not only from those who are personally Christians and go to church every Sunday, but from everyone, because it is about identity. This is our church. Are you just going to tear it down?

These descriptions indicate that nature and landscape have an irreplaceable being, and that a strong place identity is presence. Moreover, the two abovementioned participants share a multigenerational view on livelihood, where they referred to the significance of showing their kids and grandkids the same reality they had known since childhood. The understanding of the environment and landscape as meaningful shapes their view on wind power being unacceptable. Interlocutor 10 (local population) notes: "It is a type of intervention on undisturbed and vulnerable nature which requires an ice age to clean up." Another local resident (Interlocutor 6) stressed that it "takes many, many years" for nature to recover. Both Interlocutor 9 (local population) and Interlocutor 3 (decision-maker) stressed that the area "would have been destroyed." A local resident (interlocutor 6) shared what they feared if the wind power became reality: "You get so unsure if it ever will be like it has been? Will you get the green back?" The possibility for wind power raises multi-layered concerns about the inevitable harm it will generate. This further contributes to explaining that risk- and impact identification is meaningless as they are so profound that they cannot be tackled or mediated. A local resident (Interlocutor 10) noted: "The arguments and the knowledge we already had were in a way ridiculed. Because it is not theirs. They don´t own it." This brings to mind Hébert (2016) notion that scientific knowledge is authoritarian and claims to hold the dominant truth. The community member´s notion further exceeds Hébert (2016) notion of boundary-work. Not only does scientific knowledge delegitimize knowledge spheres because they are divergent from the scientific spheres, but also because the keepers of scientific knowledge are not in a position of governing the knowledges which are located beyond the set boundaries. In other words, knowledges that exists outside the EIA, that yet not is calculated or measured. This may motivate actors to "transfer" the knowledge to the EIA-machinery. However, if the local community perceives the EIA as a tool that is not capable of taking their ways of being and seeing the landscape into account, the push for "neutral knowledge acquisition" can create exclusionary outcomes. These are common dynamics according to Hébert (2016). Moreover, the most fruitful course of action becomes non-participation, in this case opposing an EIA implementation. A final note is that the above ways of storing landscape and impacts further challenges the legitimated harm on nature generated through leading climate change discourses. From the above perceptions it can be noted that nature and "green" development cannot necessarily co-exist, and the landscape is not a "sacrificed zone". Moreover, there is not necessarily "ample" space for industry development, such as the national green industry strategy states.

The dissonance to the green shift

Disputing storylines challenging the proposed steel factory and wind power as a "green contribution" was clearly present in the counter-narratives. They further problematize the broader currents in the leading mitigation policies in the climate crisis. The dissonance to the green promotion of the project can further contribute to explaining a dissonance and negative perceptions of an EIA implementation. I will revisit this reflection at the end of this subchapter, but before that, I will outline some key findings regarding the matter.

The fact that the proposed steel factory and wind power were portrayed as a green contribution worked as a pro-argumentation for an EIA implementation as discussed in chapter three. However, my findings point out that the "green argumentation" did not have the same impact on everyone. Multiple participants commented on encountered difficulties in comprehending the underlying reasoning behind the project´s green profile. A local resident explained that they were showed reports regarding how the steel factory was to contribute to the green transition, however that "the numbers didn´t tell us much" (Interlocutor 6). This contributed to uncertainty in the community: "So people were like… What is this word really? What does it entail? How green will it be with all these interventions?" Another Interlocutor (3, decision-maker) shared that: "I got a bit unsure along the way whether this was actually as green as someone claimed." Several individuals challenged the rationale behind the argumentation of the company. A decision-maker (Interlocutor 7) told me about trying to investigate the origin of the raw materials that they were to use, but that "they could not answer that." This further provoked skepticism. Interlocutor 9 (local population) said that the only thing that was green or climate friendly was the wind, meanwhile the wind power impacts, and the means of the construction was not "very green". Another community-member (Interlocutor 6) shared why the storying of the green did not fully resonate: "[…]. But then there is all the green stuff they destroy on the way to getting green energy, or green steel as they called it. All the things that must be sacrificed to get it." This perspective challenges the portrayal of the landscape as a sacrificial zone, an idea that, as discussed in the preceding chapter, was evident among other interlocutors. Interlocutor 8 (local population) contested the green storylines completely by referring to their criticism of the green shift:

> I think it is a big bluff. It is growth camouflaged as something […]. When it´s the growth that destroys the climate, it doesn´t help much what color it has. Whether it´s green, blue, or white – it doesn´t matter. That´s where the problem lies. The growth.

A contestation of the leading climate change mitigation discourse reveals itself in the above citation. Similar perspectives were shared by a local resident (Interlocutor 10) who noted:

> It is not true that wind power will help reduce global warming. There is only one thing that will help reduce global warming, and that is reduced consumption. Nobody talks about that. Because it is not economically interesting to reduce consumption.

The counterviews dispute the leading demands of green growth. Another participant (Interlocutor 6) stressed that it was nature which was the green, "not what we humans build in and around it." The further encroachment upon nature that wind power entailed was perceived as disturbing, given the substantial amount of nature that already had been impacted by human activity. The participant posed the following question: "I can´t quite see why can´t what is already there be investigated or expanded a bit? Why does everything that is green have to be so big? For the participant, it made more sense to "borrow" nature and "not leaving these traces in nature which we can´t remove." The perspective can help to elucidate the dissonance they experienced regarding the proposed industrial project. The abovementioned presented viewpoints on wind power and industry challenge the leading discourses on green shift development which are operating on multiple scales (globally, nationally, and regionally), as highlighted in the subchapter "the green push and its emerging controversies."

The presented storylines portraying landscape and nature as irreplaceable and a non- scarified zone, additionally the critical views on leading conceptualization of the push for green growth, can be seen as features in broader narrative infrastructures (Paschen & Ison, 2014). As argued, it is of value turning to these "reference-points" (Veland et al., 2019), when exploring how the storying of EIA unfolded. These world-describing and world-making narratives point to certain relations with nature where a fundamental aspect is caretaking through co-existence. It indicates a type of caretaking divergent from expanded deployment of renewable energy technologies. Moreover, the undisturbed landscape plays a significant role in several of the participants' realities. It contributes to understanding why stories of green contribution through technical intervention in nature and assessment of impact through risk-

identification does not necessarily resonate with them. Accordingly, the lack of sense may create non-acceptance, as commented on by Veland et al. (2018). The above reference points can explain why many of the participants distanced themselves, individually and collectively, away from investigating the possibility for wind power. Additionally, the findings indicate that many of the participants may operate within knowledge spheres that lie outside the realm of the scientific knowledge sphere. This potentially reinforced the dissonance to the EIA and made it irrelevant or even a threat to their way of knowing and being in the world.

Concluding remarks

Throughout this chapter, I have illustrated how a group of participants held a perception of the EIA as both untrustworthy and unwanted, driven by a multitude of reasons. An influential feature present in my findings were skepticism towards the lacking influence of municipality´s voice in the license process which further makes the EIA non-accountable. Moreover, the participants expressed a lack of confidence in the EIAs' ability to identify and measure impacts and risks in a neutral manner. The empirical data points out that this can be traced back to reservations concerning the EIA methodology and the EIA-conductor. Moreover, I have illustrated a clash between traditional ecological knowledge spheres and the EIA methodology, as the latter is perceived as inadequate in accommodating other ways of knowledges by some participants. There EIA transforms into a meaningless and useless tool for participants that experience adequate knowledge about impacts and risk. The findings point out that accountability practices (risk-identification and participation) can create dissonance and non-participation among the local population. Furthermore, I have endeavored to demonstrate that negative perceptions towards the EIA can partly be better comprehended by giving attention to how the experience of hegemonic climate change mitigation is accompanied by dissonance among participants. I argue that these findings point to the fragility of the EIA-process, and how the tool may fail to sync with local realities.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to contribute with improved insights in local actors' perceptions of EIA, moreover, to investigate tensions that arise in the dynamics between knowledge spheres in EIA-processes. By examining narratives of the EIA which arose in connection with a proposed wind power development for a potential steel factory in Fauske and Sørfold in Northern Norway, I have explored distinctive conceptualizations and interpretations of the EIAs' capabilities, function and meaning.

Guided by my research questions, I have demonstrated that the perceptions of EIA are shaped by multiple features. One key set of factors are connected to the license process, where the level of trust in the license authorities and interpretation of the municipalities' influential power, are divergent. The presence of confidence in the EIA-process enhances its accountability, while mistrust results in the perception of EIA as undermining local democracy and control. The demonstrated low level of trust supports prior research on wind power controversies, highlighting how weak local self-government in the licensing process generates lack of acceptance (Vasstrøm & Lysgård, 2021). Moreover, my findings reveal significant confusion concerning the EIA-regulations. It appears that the impending regulatory change, which is to transfer power to the municipality, will increase the level of trust towards the EIA. However, my findings demonstrate that the EIA-system encounters challenges beyond regulative aspects of the license process. Likewise, additional research on perceptions and practical outcomes of the legislative changes for the municipality, is warranted.

Through exploring perceptions of EIAs' capabilities to identify risk and facilitate participation, divergent interpretations emerged. One set of actors perceive the EIA as capable of representing their perceptions of impacts and risks. I argue that this is interlinked with embracement of scientific knowledge, resulting in an understanding of nature and landscape as quantifiable entities that can be identified, measured, and potentially sacrificed. When combined with confidence in license authorities' practice as neutral and democratic assessments, the EIA emerges as a democratic facilitator of objective truths. Additionally, my findings highlight that EIA is partly perceived as a validator of knowledge, which results in a misrecognition of knowledges outside the EIA. I have argued that these dynamics shed light on wider exclusion-inclusion dynamics conceptualized by Li (2009) and Hébert (2016). My empirical results show that mistrust in the EIAs' ability to identify socio-environmental risks

and impacts in a nuanced manner underlies perceptions of the EIAs' unreliability. In addition to skepticism towards the practice of external consultancy, I argue that it can be explained by perception of nature as irreplaceable, making impact and risk impossible and nonsensical to address through an EIA. Furthermore, my findings illustrate that actors perceive the inclusion of traditional and ecological knowledge within the EIA-process as constrained, which generate fear of misdirected knowledge transfers. Moreover, I point out that counter-hegemonic stories of green development, which stressed non-sacrifice and less growth, can contribute to explain dissonance towards wind power and the EIA. I argue that refusal to implement the EIA can be attributed to these multifaceted factors, extending beyond issues of lack of influence in the license process and NIMBY-assumptions.

By giving attention to perceptions of the EIA at a municipality level, I have demonstrated that the tool faces multi-dimensional challenges across structural, political, and epistemological scales. The findings concerning the interplay between knowledge spheres and perceptions of EIAs' capacity to address impacts, support the call from research and civil society about enhancing the EIAs' ability to incorporate other ways of knowing. An important limitation of this thesis is the short timeframe of the fieldwork, which hinders an in-depth exploration of other ways of knowing. I believe further research through decolonial lenses is necessary to advance understanding of knowledge dynamics in EIA-processes. The empirical findings further show that several participants who perceived nature as irreplaceable and challenged green discourses on wind power development, simultaneously supported industrial establishment. I believe this is a noteworthy combination of perceptions that warrants increased attention. Moreover, research on the potential co-existence of traditional ecological knowledge and positive attitudes to wind power development, is a field of interest.

My empirical findings bring attention to the need for redirecting the gaze from acceleration of the green shift towards generating careful consideration and decision-making that recognizes local knowledges. The presented competing stories of the EIA point to broader challenges of leading national- and international discourses on green development and decision-making, and further shed light on alternative environmental futures that warrant better listening.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Information and consent form.

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet «Konsekvensutredning som kunnskap- og beslutningsverktøy i grønn industriutvikling»?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å diskutere og belyse synspunkter og utfordringer rundt konsekvensutredning som kunnskapsverktøy i miljø- og arealbeslutninger knyttet grønn industriutvikling. I dette skrivet gir jeg deg informasjon om målene for dette masterprosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Formålet med prosjektet er

- Å belyse og utforske ulike holdninger og utfordringer rundt konsekvensutredning som et kunnskap- og beslutningsverktøy i grønne industriutvikling prosjekter
- Å belyse ulike synspunkter og utfordringer rundt innhenting av kunnskap og inkludering av natur- og miljøverdier i konsekvensutredninger

I prosjektet ønsker jeg å snakke med ulike aktører i Fauske og Sørfold i sammenheng med den foreslåtte konsekvensutredning for å vurdere følgende av vindkraftverket tilknyttet stålproduksjon.

Forskningsspørsmålene som skal analyseres er følgende:

- Hvordan oppleves og oppfattes konsekvensutredning av ulike interessenter og beslutningstakere, og hvordan er det forskjellig?
- I hvilken grad har og kan natur- og miljøverdier ha plass i konsekvensutredninger?

Prosjektet er tilknyttet masteroppgave i «global utviklingsstudier» ved Norges Miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet (NMBU).

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Institutt for internasjonale miljø- og utviklingsstudier ved fakultet for landskap og samfunn, Ved Norges Miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet (NMBU) er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Utvalget er trukket basert på en vurdering av hvem som har vært involvert eller har synspunkter om saken rundt utviklingen av grønn stålproduksjon og den avslåtte konsekvensutredningen.

For å finne utvalget har jeg brukt hovedsakelig digitale avisartikler, fra perioden mars 2022 til oktober 2022, for å kartlegge meningsbærere eller beslutningstakere. Majoriteten av de som blir spurt om å delta har enten uttalt seg offentlig media, har spilt en rolle i relevante beslutninger eller har blitt tipset om av andre aktører. Det er et begrenset utvalg som blir spurt om å delta grunnet tid- og ressursbegrensinger.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det å gjennomføre et intervju med meg. Intervjuet vil vare ca. 40 min – 1 time. Intervjuet vil gå inn på tematikk som grønn industrialisering, konsekvensutredning, lokal medvirkning, bruk- og vern av landressurser, ressursforvaltning og naturverdier. Det vil være ønskelig å få innsikt i dine erfaringer, tanker og perspektiver rundt disse tematikkene. Vi finner sammen ut av hvor vi kan gjennomføre intervjuet i ditt nærmiljø. Det er mulig å gjennomføre intervjuet digitalt hvis det er ønskelig fra din side. Dine svar vil bli notert ned på PC/notatblokk, og senere transkribert. Det vil også bli tatt lydopptak av intervjuet. Sistnevnte vil bli droppet hvis vedkomne ikke ønsker lydopptak.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Det vil være meg og veileder for denne masteroppgaven, Esben Leifsen, som vil ha tilgang til opplysningene. Opplysningene vil lagres på en personlig digital skytjeneste tilknyttet NMBU, og vil bli slettet etter prosjektslutt.

Det vil bli iverksatt tiltak for å sikre at ingen uvedkomne får tilgang til personopplysningene. Anonymitet vil bli opprettholdt gjennom at ditt navn vil bytte ut med kode/alternativt navn som lagres på egen navneliste adskilt fra øvrige data. Kontaktopplysningene (som telefonnummer og e-post) vil ikke bli publisert.

Du kan velge å godkjenne eller ikke om det er i orden at visse personopplysninger blir publisert (dette gjelder yrke, rolle og bostedskommune). Det kan innebære at du er gjenkjennbar for andre aktører. Du kan velge å ikke godkjenne dette, men fortsatt være med forskingsprosjektet og gjennomføre intervjuet. Se nederste i dokumentet for avkrysninger av godkjenninger.

Hvis du innehar en lederstilling eller en sentral beslutningsaktør og tidligere har uttrykt lignende synspunkter i offisielle mediaplattformer, vil det være mulig at du bli gjenkjent i publikasjonen av andre aktører, selv om du er anonymisert.

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes senest i august i 2023. Etter prosjektslutt vil datamaterialet som inkluderer dine personopplysninger bli slettet.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Norges Miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet har Personverntjenester vurdert at behandling av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Marthe Jæger Tangen, masterstudent
v/ Norges Miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet.
- Esben Leifsen, veileder for masteroppgaven
v/ Norges Miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet

- Personvernombud ved Norges Miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet.

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til Personverntjenester sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- Personverntjenester på epost (personverntjenester@sikt.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen
Marthe Jæger Tangen

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet «Konsekvensutredning som kunnskap- og beslutningsverktøy i grønn industriutvikling» og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju
- at visse opplysninger om meg publiseres [yrke, rolle, bostedskommune] slik det er mulighet for at jeg gjenkjennes – hvis aktuelt

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix 2: Interview guide.

Simplified version

Introduction

- Do you want to share about your role as local decision-maker, local resident or local commercial actor in connection with the case about the steel factory and the EIA-decision?

Viewpoints and understanding of the proposed steel factory and wind power facilities

- What were your thoughts on the proposed steel factory? Did they change over time, and if so, how and why?
- How much did the wind power plant influence these thoughts? Would it have been different without the wind power facilities?
- What do you associate with green industrialization and the green shift?
- What are your thoughts on the focus on green industrialization in the area? What do you see as positive aspects, and what are the negative aspects? What are the potential challenges?
- Can you share some thoughts on the potential impact of development on the local nature/landscape? Do you believe coexistence is possible? If so, how? If not, why not?

Viewpoints and understanding of environmental impact assessment

- How do you see and understand an EIA? Did you have any prior experience with EIA, or special associations with the tool?
- How did you perceive the level of knowledge about EIA within yourself, and how did you perceive it within the group you belonged to?
- How did you experience being a decision-maker/local resident/ commercial actor in such a case?
- How did your attitude towards EIA evolve throughout the case? Did it change, and if so, why? Did it remain the same?
- How did you perceive the portrayal of EIAs by other stakeholders (local residents, the company, the municipality council, the media, others)? If it differed from your understanding, how so?
- How did you perceive the developers addressing local concerns regarding the EIA?

- Which type of information do you think an EIA can collect?

Values, practices, world-making

- What is your relationship with the landscape and nature surrounding your hometown?
- How do you utilize the landscape and nature in your hometown? If you grew up in the area, are there any similarities to how your family used the natural surroundings in the past?
- How do you envision the future of this area? How do you see it in light of potential developments?

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