The Norwegian Cabin Life in Transition – Implications for the Consumption of Energy

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in Culture, Environment and Sustainability

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Blindern, Norway

12.6.2008

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank everyone who has supported me throughout the work on this thesis. Especially, I want to thank my supervisor Harold Wilhite who has been a great mentor from the beginning of this project. He has provided valuable comments and feedback as well as inspiration and encouragement. I could not have had a better advisor. Further, I want to give a special thank to Martin Müller (my fellow student at SUM) and Astrid Abelsen (my mother-in- law) for taking their time to proofreading my work. I also want to thank my fellow students for many prosperous times at the reading room and to the staff at SUM for providing me with an inspiring environment both in terms of research and social arrangements.

My great-aunt Ingrid also deserves a big thank. She accompanied me on my excursions in the highlands in Geilo to seek my informants. She used to shout: *Look Yngvild, there seem to be people in the cabin over there! Go and approach them – I wait for you here in the meantime*! I also want to thank my family (Mum, Dad, Øyvind, Norun and Tom) for supporting and encourage me through my education. Thank you mum and dad also for acquiring our cabin, I doubt I would have chosen this context if it hadn't been for my experiences with *hytta*.

I want to thank my boyfriend Jørgen. He has provided me with positive spirit, motivation and love. His enthusiasm for the project and his patience when I have been all dedicated to my thesis has been a great support.

Finally, this study would never have seen the light of day without my informants. They have offered me valuable insights into their perceptions and practices and invited me into their cabins. I am very grateful to all of you!

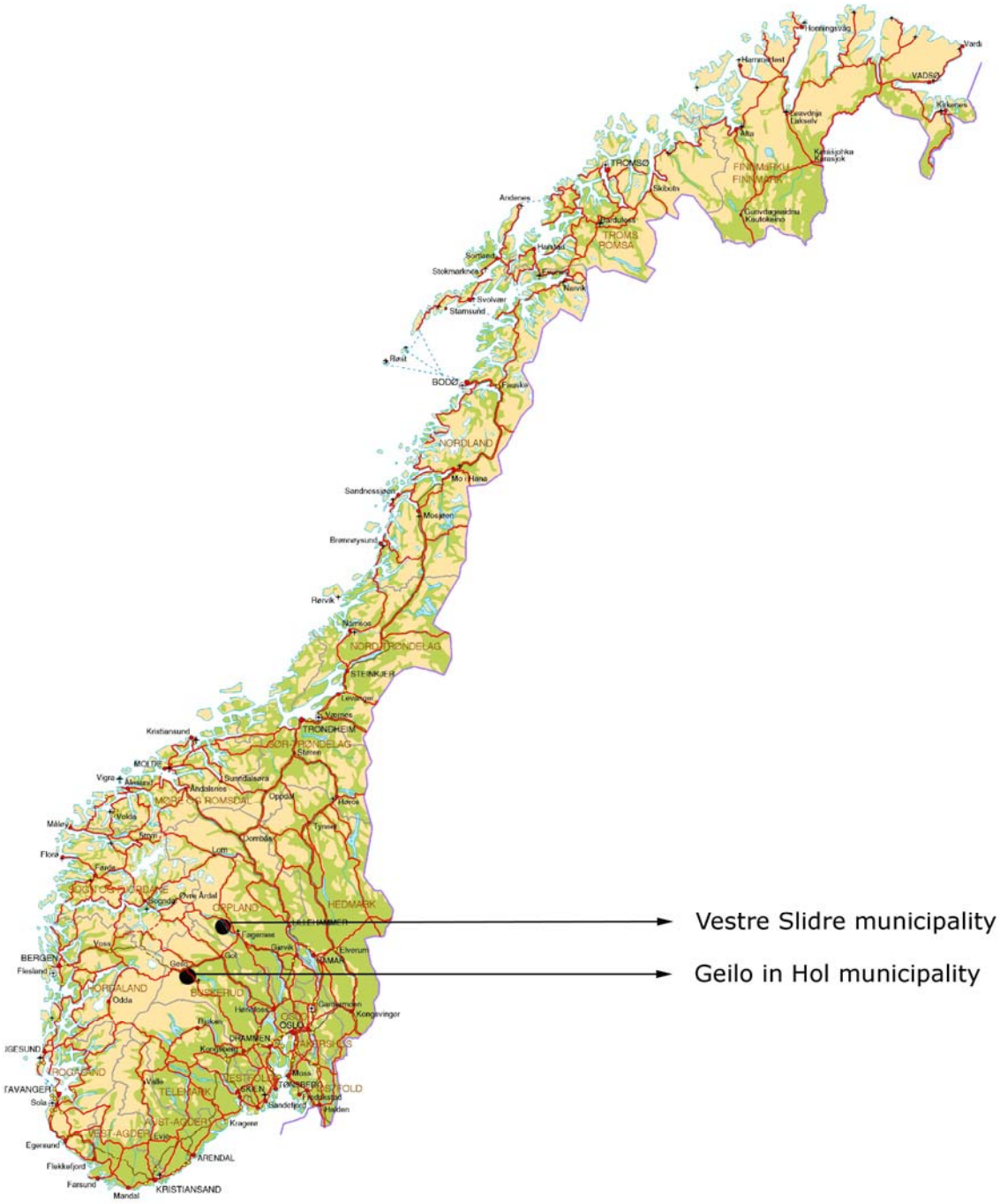


Figure 1 Map of Norway

1. Introduction

This chapter serves as an introduction to the thesis, including a historical review of Norwegian cabin life. Sociocultural perspectives, commercial aspects and the public policy initiatives for cabin building will be addressed. Moreover, my motive, objective and purpose for conducting a study of why the energy consumption has increased in mountain cabins will be presented. The chapter also deals with conceptualizations and perspectives important to the analysis. Furthermore, a portrayal of the methodology applied to obtain the data and an introduction of the locations will be outlined. Towards the end, a list of contents will indicate the direction where the thesis is heading.

1.1 Project Background and Objective

Owning a mountain property for leisure purposes is a well-known Norwegian phenomenon and goes back to the 1960s. During the last decade, the demand for mountain cabins has escalated, with its definite peak in 2007 (Prognosesenteret[1] in Bakken 2007). A property in the highlands turned out as the most popular, followed by cabins near the coastline (ibid.). In this study, it is the cabin development in the *highlands* that will be of interest. This is mainly because there are more regulations and concern for building of second homes near the coast. There are neither no particular reference to 'live a simple life outdoors' that embraces a moderate attitude to consumption, sizing and shaping. It is hence not remarkable that this consumption follows the general housing consumption. The cabins here are more comparable with leisure homes which of course differ in outfitting, but most of them have access to an infrastructure that allows the same lifestyle as in daily life.

[1] http://www.nettavisen.no/bolig/hyttemagasinet/article1424854.ece

The growing number of Norwegians seeking rural areas for recreation and outdoor life bring along other benefits than for the individuals themselves. Real estate agencies and building entrepreneurs are presently facing a dazzling growth due to the high demand, and several rural municipalities are benefiting from economic benefits. On the other hand, the comprehensive cabin building is also met with skepticism and concern by environmentalists and a few researchers who have studied the phenomenon. They have assessed present building as uncritical and are worried about the growing consumption taking place in cabins.

In this study I will argue that it is not only the magnitude of the demand and building itself in the highlands that are problematic, seen from a sustainable perspective. It is rather the increasing sizes and standards of the units and the increased energy consumption that follow in their wake. Prognosesenteret[2] writes that "for the first time in history Norwegians are building larger cabins than houses" (Øye in Skaar 2006). The energy consumption related to cabin use has far exceeded the growth in energy deriving from households. This is illustrated by Gurigard who found that during 1998 and 2005 the energy consumption from cabin owners amplified with 67 per cent, compared to 3 per cent in households (in Sæther 2008). The construction and shaping of new cabins as well as refurbishing of old ones are both fostering this development.

The luxurious mountain resort is no longer a rare sight in the highlands, and it is to a growing extent requested by people at large. At present it is increasingly common to have the same equipments, if not more, in a cabin as in the primary home. This emphasizes the increasingly blurred differences between cabins and homes. It is hence no longer suitable to call such edifices *cabins.* According to Øye, second homes are a more fitting description (in Skaar 2006). This is because the idea of a cabin being small and modestly furnished, no longer fits with reality. I will argue that an owned cabin, independent of its material attributes, is considered by many Norwegians as a home number two. Place

[2] http://e24.no/oppogfrem/article1526483.ece

attachments, nature experiences and the possibility to have quality time with family in a recreational context away from daily duties, may be the crucial determinants for the emotional attachment to the property. I will draw attention to other influential factors than merely acknowledge the cabin owners to be the exclusively driving forces for the increasing consumption in this context. This does not imply that I disregard the cabin owners' influential role, because owners clearly are key players in the development I am describing. But if we wish to elucidate the full spectrum of the changing consumption patterns now well underway, the larger sociocultural dimensions will also be an important aspect in this study. The complexity of the phenomenon forces us to investigate other actors involved in the development. This broadened approach will help us acquiring a profound and more nuanced understanding. This view is supported by Vistad and Kaltenborn who also acknowledge that various explanations and contributors are crucial to comprehend in this development (in Taugbøl et al. 2001). They argue that it is meaningless to assign only one cause to the phenomenon as a whole, because of its intricacy.

The rationale of this study is the considerable social changes of the consumption in mountain cabins where sizes, outfitting and energy are concerned. Statistics compiled by Statistics Norway (2005) confirm the comprehensive energy use deriving from second home households. In Hol municipality (where Geilo is located), the total net supply was 171 300 GWh. The local households made up 36, 3 per cent of the share and the energy from cabins constituted a surprising 40,7 per cent[3]. It is indeed remarkable that the cabins take up most of the energy in the region when the cabins are inhabited approximately on average six weeks[4] annually compared to an all year use of first homes. This is however not unique for the country as a whole. In seven municipalities, 25 per cent of the total net

[3] http://www.ssb.no/magasinet/miljo/tab-2007-06-12-02.html

[4] This number is based on a quantitative survey conducted by Kaltenborn et al. (2005:14) on cabin owners' attitudes to cabin life and development of cabin fields north in the Eastern Norway.

supply was taken up by cabins (Kittelsen[5] 2007). Of the total net supply of 49 900 GWh in Vestre Slidre municipality, 14,7 per cent was shown by the same statistics to be occupied by local households. The energy deriving from cabins constituted 7,0 per cent of the share. A scenario for the near future, based on the practices from 1994-2004, shows that the demand for electricity for these purposes actually will quadruple from 2001-2030 (Mæland 2005, Wachenfeldt 2004). This confirms to a large extent, that the way cabins are being shaped and filled now follows the general housing consumption, and probably more than that in certain regions. In the case of this study, it also requires vast interference in nature and consumption of energy with regards to establishing power grids and to placing buried cables in difficult terrain. As is commonly known, energy use contributes to increased CO_2 gas emissions in the atmosphere. In the latest assessment reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 2007[6]), it is shown that CO_2 gas emission *most likely* leads to climate change (rising sea levels, draught, extreme weather) and global warming. Taking into account the national aims of reducing CO_2 emissions and the energy situation many Norwegian regions face, the building of high standard cabins and the accordingly high energy consumption contradicts what is stated. It is overtly not in line with a sustainable development pattern. The objective is then to seek answers why the energy consumption has increased dramatically during a short period of time in the (mountain) cabin framework. I want to understand how the changing energy use is related to changing cabin life.

To be able to give a meaningful answer to this I found it important to understand the underlying causes why the peculiar cabin life, revealed in an anchored view of 'living a simple life outdoors', has changed towards being a culture where consumption constitutes an essential part of the stay. I find the increasing importance of *acquisition and use of things* (Wilhite 2006:7) interesting because

[5] http://www.ssb.no/magasinet/miljo/art-2007-06-12-01.html

[6] http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr_spm.pdf

the cabin for many is a place only inhabited a few weeks annually. These changes are even more remarkable because the cabin tradition for many has been connected to certain ideas and conventions about what a stay ought to imply. The notions have been in particular centralized around ‘escaping from everyday lifestyle’ where outdoor activities, a non-material condition, and the maintenance of traditional practices have prevailed.

I will present two cabin areas that are quite different, not in terms of physical landscape, but of the construction and shaping of the cabins per se. By investigating the traditional cabin area Vestre Slidre and the more commercially developed second-home region Geilo, I will provide a comparable groundwork in what will give a comprehension of the development.

This study acknowledges the growing energy consumption as an implication imposed on the environment, inflicted by the alteration of the cabin life. The challenges pertaining to the distribution grid and the purchasing of energy abroad will provide a comprehension of the scope of what I consider a problem important to acknowledge. I intend to illustrate the complexity of the phenomenon by exploring reasons and driving forces of different actors involved in this development in one way or another.

A crucial aspect of the thesis is therefore the exploration of the linkages between three actors, *the cabin owners*, *the building agencies* and *the local policy makers*, each of whom has a significant impact on the consumption taking place in cabins.

1.2 Cabins in a Consumption Perspective

> The division between everyday life and leisure constitutes an important part of the Norwegian society. It influences the way area, time and money are used and the understanding of consumption. Leisure is hence not only important for each one of us, but also for the society as a whole. The need for covering leisure in the environment debate is necessary in order to manage the increasing deterioration of the environment (Klepp 2006, my own translation).

In the initial phase of writing this thesis, I thought that only a few academic studies had been carried out in relation to second home settlements in Norway. But when I started to collect secondary data, I discovered that research on second homes (that in many cases can be applied to cabins) is an extensive field within social sciences. Often such research is a response to the growing focus on environmental consequences. Cabin life, building and development have been studied in an environmental perspective, but the attention has mainly involved preservation of cultural and natural heritage and the protection of wild animals. Along with the growing debate on environment and sustainability, the public media have – in particular in connection with public holidays – addressed the rapidly growing energy consumption resulting from larger sizes and higher standards of the units. There is however less research centred on the linkage between the way cabins are shaped (sizing and integrations inside) and the consequences for energy consumption. This was also recognized by a few writers (Støa 2007, Taugbøl et al. 2001), who have postulated that studies focusing on reducing energy consumption have been limited to involve mainly primary homes, leaving second homes aside. Siversen and Gurigard call for more knowledge about the present phenomenon because it has consequences for the environment and the society as a whole (in Taugbøl et al. 2001:56). They announce the lack of knowledge from a sociocultural perspective on the energy consumption taking place in cabins. Moreover, they call for studies on how the distribution net for energy is coping with the effect outlet from second home owners, and what this pressure implies for the energy situation in question.

According to Wilhite and Lutzenhiser (1999), the demand for research on the consumption of energy from a social dimension is important. The interplay of multiple forces in a society, including, among others, commercial actors and public policy makers is necessary to comprehend to be fully able to understand present consumption patterns (ibid.). They argue that the growing attention on sustainability puts new demands on research in which social dimensions of purchasing and technology are necessary to explore, rather than viewing

consumption as an isolated activity taking place at a point of ‘end use’(ibid.:315). The separation of the social from the technical aspect and the focus on the individual action has been a feature of conventional paradigms (Shove et al. 1998). This is a narrow perspective underestimating how technology may configure its users, and how it may change social conventions regarding consumption (ibid.).

Within second home studies, a number of hypotheses have been applied to the changes in the Norwegian cabin tradition, but empirical data are lacking. Motives for second home use and ownership have been examined by a number of authors who recognize a wide range of reasons (Bjerke et al. 2006). In their report *Cabin life: Restorative and Affective aspects*, Bjerke et al. have studied the motivations for spending time at the mountain cabin. They examined the role second homes can play in terms of positive experiences and emotions. Among other regions, they have examined these factors in Vestre Slidre and Geilo. Although the angle of their study was different from mine, their report has been of value for this thesis, because it helped to understand the underlying meaning behind second home ownership. In his paper *Norwegian Cabin Life in Transition*, Vittersø (2007) conducted a study among cabin owners in eastern Norway seeking to explore ways of consumption in leisure time. He found that there is a shift from primitive holiday homes to growing demands for comfortable infrastructures within cabins. He encourages further research on consumption in this context because that would help to acquire more knowledge on the relationship between social norms, social relations, and practices in leisure consumption. In the report published by the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, Taugbøl et al. (2001) have proposed a number of recommendations for further research on cabin development in Norway. Several of those are of great significance for what I intend to look at in this study. The authors call for more research that will elucidate whether the demand for bigger and luxurious cabins and the transformation of traditional cabins into second home resorts are general tendencies throughout Norway. Another field in which investigation is needed, is

studies asking which mechanisms in the Norwegian society contribute to the changes in the shaping of cabins.

Wilhite and Lutzenhiser (1999) and Shove (2003) have stressed the importance of involving the commercial building enterprises in the studies of household consumption. The researchers have inspired me to study the role of the building agencies also with regard to the consumption taking place within cabins.

In order to explore this phenomenon, I find it essential to study the social aspect (cabin owners and social orders) of the changes in the consumption patterns in mountain cabins. But I find it equally important to investigate the role of the commercial sector (building companies that are directly involved in construction and outfitting of cabins), and look at how second home development is initiated and regulated by local policy makers. Information provided by energy suppliers is also of relevance in order to understand the consequences deriving from the new characterizations in Norwegian cabin life. I will use the framework of consumption and of energy consumption in particular, to look at the arrangement of second homes in mountain regions. Where Appadurai (1986) states that "goods have social lives", and Liechty (2003:30) poses that "the act of buying is only one moment in the cultural process of consumption", the importance of considering consumption as a process rather than a single act, becomes evident. In this study I will use Wilhite's definition of consumption, which is: "Consumption is the acquisition and use of things, including goods, products and commodities" (2006:7).

1.3 Cabin Life in Perspective

This section deals with the cultural and historical backdrop for the peculiar cabin tradition. It presents a historical dimension for the purposes of acquiring a property in the highlands, and it describes the accessibility during the last century and until present time. Moreover, it provides an outline of my reasons for using

the terms *second home* and *cabin*. It also addresses traditional building techniques in the 1960s until this juncture. This section furthermore describes cabin building and the users' significance for many municipalities and national and local guidelines for these activities. This chapter serves to provide a foundation for the different actors and perspectives that are to be dealt with in the analysis

1.3.1 The Norwegian Cabin Tradition

> The cabin dream – and stay represent the typical Norwegian vacation and leisure ideal. Key words for this culture are quietness and peacefulness, material simplicity, communing with nature and place attachment (Vistad and Kaltenborn in Taugbøl et al. 2001:24, my own translation)

Cabin life has long traditions and roots in the Norwegian culture. The national identity is to a large extent built on the relationship with nature which is by some means unique for the Norwegian culture (Witoszek 1998). Engaging in *Friluftsliv*[7] (outdoor life) has for many Norwegians been an important and appreciated leisure activity strongly connected to cabin life, in particular in the mountains. This kind of leisure ideal is, according to Vittersø (2007), influenced by the philosophy of living a simple life outdoors. This view has also consequences for how the edifice is furnished and equipped (Grimstad 1990). The cabin may hence function as a mean to be attached to other surroundings than between the walls of the edifice itself, i.e. being close to nature. Witoszek (1997) describes the Norwegian nature tradition as focusing around man's conquering of nature, and as a way to keep the Norwegian identification with nature alive. The cabin may thus symbolize national identity for many Norwegians. Another essential factor for the public interest in cabins may have its origin in the national culture where to be settled somewhere geographically has been a central notion, often connected to building a home with one's own

[7] I could not find a proper English term that describes *friluftsliv*. I will say that this term covers activities that are spent outside, in particular hiking, cross country skiing, fishing and hunting. Such activities are also associated with national (typical Norwegian) activities. *Friluftsliv* has for many Norwegians been a central leisure and family pursuit during weekends and holidays. For many is a cabin stay connected to precisely, *friluftsliv.*

hands (Støa 2007:5). The importance of owning a property has its origin in the culture of the pre-modern agrarian society where one generation passed the farm over to the next (ibid.).

A *Koselig* Time

Although the interaction with nature perhaps is the main motivation for an acquirement, there are also other important aspects with a cabin stay in the mountains. According to Gullestad (1989), the condition of having a *koselig*[8] time (cozy time) is considered central for Norwegians' leisure. This is of particular significance for a cabin stay. Spending time at the cabin is regulated by social norms on what implies having a *koselig* time that is characterized by several routines and habits (ibid.). These sort of incorporated practices cover, among others, the social aspects with the stay. This life can be associated with an open fire place, board games, traditional cooking (and often with a fixed and repetitious cabin menu), outdoor activities, and typical Norwegian traditions: bringing hot beverages, oranges and the Norwegian tour chocolate, Kvikk lunsj, on the day trip. The *koselighets* term in the mountains is also applied to activities that are to be done in a low-standard property. This can for instance be to collect water from a well, wash the dishes by hand, use an open fire place for heating, prepare *kokekaffe*, and generally do things that are not necessary, or at least not appreciated, in the primary household. These practices belong to a cabin stay and are regarded as enjoyable and recreational dabbling-activities which, in addition to outdoor life and family gatherings, constitute the ultimate cabin stay for many Norwegians. Furthermore, the historic-cultural dimension is also of value for a stay as mountain cabins have been an arena for identification with the local history and culture (Kaltenborn 1997). It may therefore suggest that owners of a cabin feel profoundly attached to the particular location, and that this lets them regard the cabin as a *second home*.

[8] The word 'koselig' is considered as a Norwegian term for social interaction and is associated with the private sphere and leisure (Gullestad 1989)

Second Home

How to define a second home may vary between individuals, as a number of dwellings and accordingly usage of them may be applied to this term. Duval postulates that a home is a very fluid and dynamic concept (2004:87). One way to use the term second home is as an umbrella consisting of recreational homes, vacation homes, summer homes, cabins and weekend homes (Hall and Müller 2004:4) All these places can be regarded as second homes, but Coppock (1977:4) recognizes that a second home supposes the existence of a *first home*[9]. Thus, the second home represents a travel from what we usually term as home. I assume that it must be the *feeling* attached to the particular place which may be the critical factor for looking upon a certain dwelling in this way. I think it has to do with whether one feels convenient and at home in a familiar framework, and whether one is emotionally attached to its natural and/or cultural surroundings. In this thesis, second homes are applied to cabins that are mainly used for recreational purposes. Norwegians call such cabins *hytte*; it is this term that most overtly addresses the function of a second home for many Norwegians. This study will treat both the traditional and the high standard cabins as a second home, because I suggest that many Norwegians now regard their cabins as such, independent of the material standard in question.

In accordance with Marsden's recognition (in Coppock 1977:2) of four categories of holiday homes (private holiday homes, intermittently commercial holiday homes, intermittently private holiday homes, and commercial holiday homes), the second home in this context belongs to the category of private holiday homes. Such homes are characterized by visits on holidays/weekends by family and non-paying guests, i.e. a non-commercial form of leisure. Although a continuously rented or borrowed vacation home also might be considered a

[9] According to Wilhite and Lutzenhiser a home is a place to relax and escape social demands, but also a place where visitors are entertained and where social identity is constructed, maintained and repaired (1999:319)

second home, I will confine second homes to cabin ownership in Norway. Cabins owned by private or public enterprises and organizations aimed for the employees (which are quite common) will not be classified as objects of study in this thesis. Applied to my informants, their second home is an owned property located in mountain regions for recreational purposes.

1.3.2 A Historical Review

Norwegians have a long tradition of benefiting from nature by constructing small and modestly equipped cabins in the highlands. According to Bjerke et al. the use of second homes for the purpose of recreation and the achievement of a lifestyle contrasting to everyday life is more than 150 years old (2006:87). They explain the beginning of this peculiar culture by describing how Norwegians were using shelters in the wildlands for resource harvesting purposes, towards spending time at the countryside when having time for pleasure and recreation (ibid.). The cabins were built in a simple fashion, often with traditional Norwegian building techniques, materials and decoration (Vittersø 2007:268). However, until the 1950s, second homes were largely available only to the upper class, because the working class not only lacked the necessary financial abilities to acquire such a place, but also the leisure time needed to use a second home. Things changed however in 1947 when the individual right to vacation was established by law, emphasizing its significance for the individual's personal development, as it provides opportunities to pursue various interests and to undertake journeys (Klepp 1993:8). Leisure[10] was thus set apart from obligations, and the wider public now enjoyed the possibility of taking a vacation. It became a symbol of a new age, and a term with which to embrace the modern Norway. Today, Norwegians have 5 weeks paid holiday. The society is also featured by flexibility concerning work and mobility in which also has ramifications for the leisure

[10] Leisure can be seen as the time one chooses to spend, each in his/her own way, in between work and rest (Bjerck 2007). According to Døving (2003), there is a sharp contrast between work and leisure in the Norwegian culture, which means that work, has priority during weekdays, whereas pleasurable activities belong to the weekends. During leisure time one should not worry about matters such as work, politics or everyday routines (Døving 2005).

(ibid.). People are to a lesser degree dependent on being at one particular place in order to work (flexible work structures), and as such they are able not only to spend time at the cabin during public holidays, but also during other parts of the year. Flexible and self-determinant holidays and loose work structures in terms of *place* are decisive means for making it feasible to a larger number of people to seek the cabin. Tordsson (2003) claims that cabin owners are likely to make demand for a better infrastructure so they can easily communicate with colleagues and use the computer for labor purposes. In addition, the owners may also encourage the municipality to prepare all-year roads so that they are able to come up at short notice and for short periods without any obstruction. On the other hand, the development of increasingly flexible structures may not only affect individual's available time, but also be a challenge towards people's notions of stabile meanings in the everyday life (Kaltenborn 2002). People may as such decline to upgrade their second home because a stay ought to be a response to these processes; namely in search for other values and meanings that are more predictable than the urban, every day life provide.

Accessibility to Cabins

The ownership and use of cabins for recreational purposes is as outlined a widely shared experience in Norway's popular culture. According to Kaltenborn (2002), the demand for cabins is strongly increasing; comprehensive building is a corollary of this development. A large percentage of the Norwegian population owns a cabin, and far more have access to one through family and friends. According to Prognosesenteret, 2007 has been a record year for cabin building in Norway. That year alone, there were estimated 16,500 new cabin owners (Øye in Bakken 2007). Statistics composed by Statistics Norway (2006) show that 383.112 cabins existed in the country in 2006. This indicates that approximately 30.000 new units have been constructed since 2001 when the number was 354.060. 50 per cent of them are located in the highlands. More than a third is located in the county districts Hedmark, Oppland, Buskerud and Telemark. This

shows that cabin building is an important business in the two regions I will be looking at in this study, Vestre Slidre in Oppland and Geilo in Buskerud. This growth also confirms the escalating demand and people's accessibility to second homes. It moreover gives a picture of the scope and the possible ramifications the changes in the cabin life may bring along.

1.4 The Cabin Culture in Alteration

It is not only the range of and accessibility to second homes that have gone through an alteration, but also the cabin culture itself. The tradition has represented, as noted, a lifestyle featured by material simplicity, where closeness to nature has been the ultimate notion for recreation. Eric Hobsbawm (1992) describes the cabin life as an invented tradition. This notion is applied when "practices appear […] which seek to incalculate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with suitable historical past" (Hobsbawm 1992:1). The cabin culture is undoubtedly an invented tradition, taking the historical dimensions and the conventional practises into account. However, during the last decade in particular, the tradition has faced considerable changes in what Vistad and Kaltenborn postulate is a post-modern[11] phase where traditional norms are challenged by new perceptions of what a cabin ought to represent (in Taugbøl et al. 2001). These changes that I will describe more closely may summon that the cabin life no longer is to the same extent featured by collective norms, but that it is getting more custom-made for each household.

[11] By stating that present cabin life is in a post-modern phase, Vistad and Kaltenborn (in Taugbøl et al. 2001), refer to the fact that the cabin culture no longer is homogenous, but more individualized where 'everything is legal'. In the post- modern phase there are also raised questions about the impacts of present actions, such as for example the sustainability debate.

Kaltenborn (2002) recognizes that cabin owners are searching for a thick[12] meaning when heading for their cabins as briefly outlined in the previous section. By this statement he means that many people are searching for an anchor pile in a particular place. It shall embrace stability, contentment, and another meaning which may not be fulfilled in the primary home. Seeking thick meaning represents in this context the search for other values than the socio-material society can provide. But during the last decade, the dimension, feature, size, and shaping of mountain cabins have changed dramatically, and is now close to the shaping of a house. These new features may prove this statement otherwise. People tend to appreciate another lifestyle than the one presented that contain to a higher degree a demand for a standard similar to a primary home. I would say that what Bjerke et al. (2006) portray as an ordinary cabin – a small cabin which is modestly equipped (although they also acknowledge that the technical standards and sizes are increasing) –no longer is the most characteristic feature of a second home. This is illustrated by a survey with the purpose of discovering what Norwegians consider as the dream cabin, conducted by *TNS Gallup* for *Hyttemagasinet* (Borglund 2006). According to the survey, most Norwegians want nowadays a cabin "suitably big, rural, new and comfortable with water and electricity". These findings point towards a shift from the value of having a less equipped cabin to a demand for properties of high material standard. It also seems like the ideas of what constitutes a dream cabin reflect the general purchasing trends in the cabin market. Statistics composed by Statistics Norway (2007), illustrate that the average square meters of cabins have enlarged significantly in a period of 20 years. In 1985 the average size of a cabin was 60 m^2 and in 2006 it had increased to 98.8 m^2. This constitutes an enlargement of nearly 40 m^2. Also the consumption of electricity is escalating thereafter. As such, the trend of constructing cabins similar to the size of a dwelling is apparent, as also recognized by Nordahl (2006). This trend may also have implications for

[12] By using the term *thick meaning*, Crouch means a complex meaning through a certain way of living in a particular place (in Kaltenborn 2002).

the life at the cabin itself, i.e. that those conventional practices which were associated with having a *koselig* time now are being replaced by practices similar to those in the primary home. It seems that the classical leisure dream of spending time at a mountain cabin as described initially is facing a transition. Moderate attitudes to consumption, peacefulness and quietness no longer seem to be the protruding dimension for a stay, at least not for Norwegian cabin life as a whole. The proliferation in high standards and the popularity of locating the edifices in proximity to downhill slopes are a central feature for the relatively new kind of cabin life (Vistad and Kaltenborn in Taugbøl et al. 2001). Motivations for encompass with an adventurous and speedy environment seem to be embodied in the cabin segment. These are features that imply that the culture itself is on the run to change radically, or being more differentiated, complex and encompassing (ibid.).

Flyen and Swensen recognize that when the standard of the units have escalated to what we now witness, demands for comprehensive interference in nature, such as construction of roads and parking lots, water and drainage and electricity, is brought along (in Taugbøl et al. 2001:31). Hence, the cabins are now more visible in the landscape than previously, and they have a greater impact on their surroundings than ever before (ibid).

1.4.1 Building History

The architectural design, building materials and sizes of mountain cabins have undergone vast changes from the 60's and to present time. In the 60's and 70's, cabin sizes ranged from 60 to 95 m^2, which gave room to the greatest necessities (Sivertsen and Gurigard in Taugbøl et al. 2001:53). This size was also practical for retaining the heat so that the use of energy (fire wood) could be held at a minimum (ibid.). Cabins were rarely connected to an electricity grid in the highlands, and the units were often scattered throughout extensive land areas (ibid.). Heating from a fire place was thus the most common practice. The

isolations were good with approximately 10 centimeters insulation on the walls and ceiling (ibid.). The average consumption of wood corresponded to about 1500-2000 kWh/annually (ibid.).

In the 80's electricity was introduced to several cabins, which implied a considerable enhancement of standards (Sivertsen and Gurigard in Taugbøl et al. 2001:53). Cabins in the highland, however, were still commonly heated with wood. But a larger number of cabin owners supplied paraffin in order to maintain the temperature during the night and solar cell panel for lighting. Only very few municipalities had compiled regulation plans for cabin sizes and shaping, but the average size for cabins in the mountains was more or less similar to the previous decade (ibid.). The introduction of the new 'leisure houses' with an equivalent standard as a home had started, but they were still only exceptions. Small and modestly equipped cabins were the most customary, and the energy consumption, remaining at a low level, amounted to approximately 2500-3000 kWh/annually (ibid.).

A so-called revolutionary feature in the cabin development took place after the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer 1994. A comprehensive building of second homes took place in the highlands, and a large number of high standard cabins were constructed, in particular close to downhill ski slopes. Many were built with a good technical standard to accommodate the international press. This was for example common in Geilo, in particular at a place called Vestlia. The way the cabins were constructed and the material used also differed from the traditional methods. An increasing number was built in bonded timber (log house), and the sizes had amplified severely (Sivertsen and Gurigard in Taugbøl et al. 2001). According to Siversen and Gurigard, timber has normally a lower isolation capability than the typical half-timbering with weatherizing, implying that more energy is needed to achieve a comfortable temperature (ibid.). There were also set regulations for sizes, and the common maximum was set to 120-140 m^2. The regulations were however not of a strict character as first and foremost all of

those who applied to exceed this size got approval (ibid.). The cabins built in the 90's were constructed in a generally higher standard than in the 80's. Integrated water and connection to an electricity grid were quite common and contributed to a considerably higher energy outlet for many cabin owners. Those cabins which had water were often kept lukewarm during the winter in order to prevent the water tubes from freezing (ibid.). It was also a great variation in the standards and the look of the cabins from area to area. Those located in proximity to ski slopes (such as Geilo) often had a higher standard than those located in less commercially developed places (such as Vestre Slidre). Thus, the cabin owners' energy consumption also differed a lot: from 16.400 kWh/annually in Hafjell (which is regarded as one of the most commercially developed cabin areas in the country), to 5.100 kWh/annually in the more traditional area Eidefoss (Sivertsen and Gurigard in Taugbøl et al. 2001).

Also a growing number of units were connected as mountain apartments, and the phase of construction was finished at short notice after the purchase (ibid.). These features were the beginning of the construction methods many entrepreneurs at present are running. Beyond a further amplification of sizes and standards it is a growing tendency to construct the building, and sometimes also to have it outfitted, before letting it out for sale. It is no longer rare that a cabin has the same standard, or even a better one, than a first home. This is something many entrepreneurs are using as a starting point before constructing. This is in order to keep pace with the (apprehended) development, and because it is more money to gain by constructing many standardized cabins at the same time rather than customize each inquiry. The building agencies are however responsible to apply for sites that can be constructed before arranging a sale, and to follow the regulations set by the local policy makers. In the end, it is the municipalities that have the overall responsibility for how many cabins are built annually, and how these are to be constructed.

1.5 Environmental Competence and Concern on a Local Level

The deterioration of Norwegian nature is caused by several factors. Uncritical building in vulnerable areas is one of the most important contributors to a non-sustainable development (Teien 2007). According to Teien this is happening due to insufficient environmental competence on local level in addition to attitudes that ignore consideration of nature. Bjerke et al. (2006) consider the long-range effects of uncritical land use as worrying. He claims that large part of the country now are under construction of second home resorts, which do not seem to be taken into account either by local or national level. Concerning this matter, Johnson (2006) calls for politicians and environmental managers in the municipalities who can regulate the comprehensive building, and who can implement reasonable restrictions for the amount of units as well as their maximum sizes. What he recognizes as lack of proper action by the government is explained by the prioritizing of short-term economic benefits over securing nature and its scarce resources (ibid.). Hence, the ruling parties may not consider the implementation of these strategies – strategies that most likely will weaken the local economic maximization – as beneficial, as cabin building constitutes a core business in many Norwegian municipalities. Teien (2007) recognizes that the municipalities have a considerable influence on the environment due to their responsibility for a number of tasks, hereunder land use, pollution and cabin building. This composition of lack of knowledge *and* responsibility is clearly not in the best interest of the environment. In order to reverse this trend, Teien calls for efforts that increase the level of environmental competence and concern.

1.5.1 The Link Between Theory and Practice

In a speech delivered at the launching of the book *Cabins and construction: 39 ways of constructing second homes*[13], former minister of the environment, Helen

[13] Butters et al (2006), (my own translation)

Bjørnøy (2006), argued that the government has a clear policy towards cabin building, but the municipalities play a key role in the local area planning. The local knowledge in the respective districts was acknowledged as so valuable that the municipalities often are having approval for conducting a dependent legislation on single cabin building incidents. She highlighted however that the national government can put in a veto if the municipalities not follows the legal jurisdiction; if, for instance, they allow building in preserved areas, or if they do not pay sufficient heed to reindeer. Nevertheless, Bjørnøy emphasized that the legislation must be organized so that adjustments can be arranged for when the municipalities have strong arguments for doing so (ibid.).

The Ministry only encourages the implementation of a maximum size, energy use, and a reasonable number of units in the areas (ibid.). So far, energy planning has not been defined as a local responsibility, which implies that the municipalities lack sovereignty concerning energy policy (Sivertsen and Gurigard in Taugbøl et al. 2001:55). There are also few guidelines regarding the field of energy consumption, isolation standards of cabins, and choices of alternative energy sources in the Plan and Building Legislation. This again may imply that the municipalities have few tools for accomplishing such a policy (ibid). According to Bjørnøy, the Ministry of the Environment has composed a guidance manual which is distributed to the municipalities with the purpose of arranging for sustainable cabin development (2006). But whether this manual is actually functioning as a supervisor, was rather doubtful.

These flexible mechanisms imply that the municipalities are very important actors in national environment managing, as they determine the development on their own to a large extent. The comprehensive building, in addition to an enlargement of the units and considerable improvements of standards, apparently may bring along consequences on the environment. Greater emissions deriving from excessive energy use is one of these. As a result, national aims have apparently failed from being achieved, as increasingly large and energy-

demanding cabins have only proliferated in vulnerable, large, and cohesive nature areas such as the highlands. This may again indicate that the valuable local competence addressed by Bjørnøy (2006) *does not* cover the field of the environment and sustainable development.

Riksrevisjonen (2006-2007) discovered a lack of nature management plans and regulations on the local level, in addition to that current building dispensations in many cases contradict to national guidelines. According to Teien (2007), there are a number of municipalities that do not compose regulation plans for land use as they are prescribed by the government. Moreover, several of those who have such plans have not compiled them sufficiently enough to secure a holistic and long-term progress that coincides with national aims for a sustainable development (ibid.). These current practices may imply that illegal building frequently occurs in many of the Norwegian municipalities. On the other hand, one can not only hold the municipalities responsible for present actions alone. It is after all the government which has the overall responsibility for making the municipalities able to carry through practices that secure a sustainable development. Present management may indicate that the information exchange between national and local government is not adequate, and that the municipalities need clearer regulations and better guidance from the national level. The uncritical building in the highlands may also point to the fact that national control measures are not sufficient to discover such practices. Such failure to follow up on procedures was also acknowledged by the report by Riksrevisjonen (ibid.). It recognized a gap in competence on consequences deriving from present nature management that accordingly is hampering the responses.

1.6 Methodology: Qualitative Research

This study seeks to understand why (energy) consumption in the mountain cabin context has undergone an alteration, and what mechanisms impel the present

development. A qualitative method will serve best to understand the underlying dimensions and connections between various actors. This is because it uses an interpretive analysis strategy and allows the researcher to attain insights into social patterns and to develop concepts from the empirical data. Qualitative research has the ultimate purpose to understand the deep meaning behind a particular phenomenon. It searches thick meaning through a holistic approach rather than investigate one component out of its context. This form of research is, according to Geertz, "not about seeking an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (1993:5). In this study, I could not acquire an understanding of the mechanisms behind the cabin development if I only looked at the physical arrangements (construction, shaping, and energy use). It was crucial to include the actors involved in this development as well; in other words, also pay heed to the sociocultural dimension of the development.

Personal assumptions may frame the research to various degrees in cases even where the researcher strives towards entering the field with an 'open mind'. Taylor and Bogdan characterize qualitative method by its *inductive* form, but they also recognize the *deductive* aspect in this research (1998:7). The researcher's background and prejudices may be influential for the way he or she attacks the subject as well as for the interpretation of the data (Mehmetoglu 2004:103). I had certain perceptions of what I might find before I started to collect data. This was mainly with regards to the cabin owners, because of my knowledge about Norwegian cabin life and about the social dimensions on consumption. I was however not looking for answers that would merely confirm my own presumptions. I rather wished to let the informants fill me with knowledge as if I was unfamiliar with the context and culture. Even so, it was good to have some background data on the motivations for having a mountain property and practices related to a stay. It was also helpful to have some insight into the new features in mountain cabins, building methods, and the importance of cabin development on a municipal level, before I went to seek the truth. These prerequisites made it easier to arrange for an intelligent, in-depth conversation

with concrete subjects of investigation at hand as well as to pose relevant follow-up, or clarifying, questions when misunderstandings arose.

1.6.1 Case Study

There are many different research designs within qualitative methodology. All of them have their own techniques to collect and analyze data, just like all of them have their own strengths and weaknesses. The interest in this study lies in a particular *phenomenon* that is bounded by a particular time and place. A *case study* is therefore the suitable design to be used here. Even more specifically, this thesis is a *comparable case study*. By looking at two geographical areas, Geilo and Vestre Slidre, I will be able to explore the changes in richer detail, and open the view towards a more balanced and nuanced analysis of the phenomenon.

The aim for case studies is to ground new relations, concepts and understandings (Mehmetoglu 2004:43). "The distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena" and "when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 2003:2,13). Cabin life is a sociocultural phenomenon, but not exclusively so. Commercial actors and public policy makers foster a development in a certain direction and are hence important actors for this development as well. This implies that a holistic approach – by means of a so-called method triangulation – is necessary to get insight in the various mechanisms and dimensions. This case study is an *explanatory* one because I want to discover why energy consumption increases in mountain cabins. According to Mehmetoglu, causal analyses that require complex inquiries invite for an explanatory case study (2004:43). In this thesis, there are causal links between the *cabin owners, the building entrepreneurs, and the public policy makers*. All combined, they constitute a multivariate case that give meaningful information about the driving forces behind changes in cabin sizes, shapes, and energy consumption. The case itself will therefore function as an instrument that permits us to better understand the effects brought along. I

would not been able to explore the phenomenon in its full intricacy – i.e. provide answers for why cabins consume more and more energy – if I only studied the perspectives and actions of one of these actors. Clearly, the picture is much more complex than that.

1.6.2 Collecting Data: In-Depth Interviews and Observation

The qualitative method is characterized by a small and purposed sample because it is more important to acquire an understanding than to generalize the findings. This means that the informants have to meet certain criteria so they can provide knowledge which is of value for the study. This study is largely based on data collection through communicative means, combined with observation where possible. Before the empirical data could be sought, a theoretical groundwork was needed. This has chiefly been done by studying theories on the social dimension of consumption, and by investigating Norwegian sociocultural traditions for leisure and local and national legislations and initiatives for cabin building. A theoretical framework lets the reader attain sufficient background knowledge to evaluate the study's *transferability* to other cabin contexts. The thesis is as such based on several sources of evidence. These are complementary and constitute valuable information for understanding the phenomena at hand. They also, finally, strengthen the study's *credibility*.

The Interview

The interview is the most common data collection technique within qualitative research (cf. Mehmetoglu 2004:67). It gives the researcher insight into people's perceptions and the way people construct their reality (cf. Punch 1998). Depending on the research design and aim of the study, the interview can have various forms. The interviews in this study have been semi-structured with

predefined questions which were more or less standardized[14]. The informants were, however, allowed – and also encouraged – to discuss various perspectives and topics within the predefined categories. I did include some quantitative questions as well in the beginning of each interview with the cabin owners with regards to the physical characteristics of their cabins. Thereafter, I went on asking open-ended questions for why things were acquired, for motivations and perceptions of various subjects. This constituted the major part of the interview. During the conversations, the informants constantly provided new knowledge, or surprising ideas or views. These unsuspected turns often led to new questions. This was a welcome development, of course, because all had different experiences, meanings, and perceptions tied to life at the cabin, and to the acquisition and use of things in this context. All these contributions were highly significant for a well-founded and thorough understanding of the phenomenon.

The 26 interviews with the cabin owners varied in length from 30 minutes to one hour, dependent largely on the informants' willingness and interest to talk. In Geilo my base was located approximately an hour away by foot from the fields of interests, except from the cabin field in Vestlia which was located near by. I sought the informants directly – and mainly without having made any appointment – by simply knocking on people's doors. When people were just about to head for daytrips, I ensured to arrange a meeting at a later point of time, often after dinner. I actually found none who declined to talk to me. Most of them seemed enthusiastic about being able to contribute to the study. I ensured them their anonymity and have hence given them fictitious names although anonymity was not necessary for most of them.

I often approached the first informants of the day when they were in middle of having breakfast at their cabin. This turned out to be the perfect setting for an interview. Many welcomed me in, and we could have an informal conversation around the table. I was actually impressed over the Norwegian hospitality, which

[14] The interview guides are attached in the appendix.

I think differs from when Norwegians are in their daily life. When it was sunny outside, I visited a few while sunbathing on the terrace, or while doing construction or maintenance work. When people were occupied with the latter, it was natural to start the conversation by asking questions about the physical characteristics of the property as well as about the motivations behind the work. This setting made me attain a very detailed and illustrative description of the cabin owners' shaping methods and perceptions of these. This was very meaningful for the study and created an informal and loose atmosphere between us. That I was a Norwegian like them and shared some experiences of spending time at a cabin may have contributed to break the division that comes with unfamiliarity.

Observation

The interviews with the cabin owners occurred mainly within or outside their cabins. This location allowed me to do a *direct observation* of the cabins in question. While an interview enables the researcher to ground knowledge from individuals' explanations and statements, observation collects data by systematically witnessing people's actions and behaviour (Mehmetoglu 2004:76). In Geilo and Vestre Slidre I observed the cabins and the interior concepts, rather than studying the informants' behaviours. Seeking the informants in the framework I am investigating was crucial for their openness and engagement in the ways they perceived life at the cabin and their perception of the various acquisitions and uses. In the middle of a discussion, they sometimes followed up their answers by showing me around the cabin, and they pointed to acquisitions that emphasized the objective of the conversation. Hence, I observed the edifices on the informants' premises. The observations provided a complementary understanding for the various construction solutions, and for commodities that had been acquired. What was similarly important, the observation illustrated the dissimilarities and parallels of the cabins in the two

districts. These would have been more blurred if I had interviewed the informants in another context than the case itself.

1.6.3 Informants

This study is based on 33 interviews with four different actors that all have a direct role in cabin planning and building. The 26 cabin owners made up the largest sample, with 13 informants from Geilo and 13 from Vestre Slidre. They fulfilled two main criteria: (1) They had to be the owner of the cabin, or live in the same household as the cabin owner. (2) They had to be familiar with the cabin as well as with the acquirements and technical solutions within. The sample was represented by both new cabin owners (cabins less than five years old) and owners of a cabin which had passed through a generation. The sample is represented in ages from 25 to 75. Both genders are represented more or less equally, with a few more men than women. Several of the interviews were constituted of conversations with a couple; this often turned out to be very fruitful. It enabled me to participate in the discussion when different points of view arose among them. Within the two areas, I collected data from several cabin fields: from *Midtre to Vestre Syndin* in Vestre Slidre municipality, and from *Geilo mountain village*, *Vestlia* and *Kikut* in Geilo district. This gave me a more diverse selection than if I had only centred around one cabin field in each area.

Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews were conducted with two building entrepreneurs, three representatives from the municipalities and two energy suppliers. These interviews occurred a few months after the field work (October/November) and were conducted by telephone. I got in contact with the entrepreneur from Geilo during the field work because I saw his contact information on several of the construction projects. His main objective lay in building cabins, and he had several years of experience. The entrepreneur in Vestre Slidre, on the other hand,

I reached through the help of some of my informants, who told me that he had been in charge of the building process.

The informants from the municipalities were the chairman and the environmental manager from Hol (where Geilo is located), and of the plan and industry consultant from Vestre Slidre. They were all directly involved in the planning of second homes in the regions.

The energy suppliers were one from each regional distribution company: Valdres Energy Supply, and Hallingdal Energy Supply. I contacted them because they were responsible for the energy distribution to cabins in Hol and Vestre Slidre. They could provide me with the 'hard facts', such as statistics and trends about cabin-related energy use, as well as challenges pertaining to the transformer grid and about the energy situation.

Mehmetoglu sees telephone interview as a challenging data collection technique (2004). What makes it challenging is the impossibility to recognize non-verbal reactions, that the informants can be more impatient and give quicker answers than they would in a face-to-face situation. It is also more difficult to build thrust and create a comfortable setting (ibid:74). Telephone interviews would hence be unsuitable with the cabin owners, but as the informants here were professionals and in a daily work situation, this was the easiest way to get in touch. The interview guide was also more structured because I sought concrete issues about the building practices, the energy situation and about policy initiatives – and regulations. I did leave, however, room for a more loose discussion regarding the professionals' perception of the actions in question. The interviews lasted for about 20-30 minutes, and all my informants were generous with regard to providing information as well as personal views. I do not think a face-to-face interview would have given me more insight into their practices.

1.6.4 Processing and Analyzing Data

During the field work I kept a journal where I collected the interviews with direct quotes[15] and personal notes from the observations. The empirical evidence pervades the analytical chapters, and direct quotes are used throughout the thesis. According to Mehmetoglu, the *confirmability* of the study is attained when the researcher provides repetitious proclamations and confirmations of the empirical data. I had between 2 and 4 interviews every day and made sure to transcribe them all immediately the same evening.

There are many analyzing strategies for case studies. Merriam has pointed out three main phases: intensive analysis, development of categories, and the generation of theory recognized (1988). This is the techniques I have used to analyze the interviews in this study. The process of analyzing started with identifying the data material in accordance to the research question. This was done by reading through the transcription a number of times to see the relations and diversifications among them. The material relevant for the study was marked out. The remaining information was kept in an additional document in case they could be of use anyway. Thereafter the material was organized into categories. A category was created when I found repeating patterns and relations in the data. This was a particularly complex and time-consuming process, considering the large amount of information from the cabin owners. Some of my informants had a very valuable insight and experience of a particular aspect of the larger case. These experiences were sometimes exceptional and stood out; at times they even contradicted those of the other informants. Such unique perceptions were framed into categories even though they lacked the confirmation through other interviews. All the categories were saying something essential and meaningful about the case of inquiry. They also set the groundwork for structuring the thesis, acquiring a deep understanding, as well as for drawing the conclusions.

[15] The original quotes in Norwegian are attached in the appendix.

1.6.5 Locations: Vestre Slidre and Geilo

Vestre Slidre and Geilo are two contexts that are more or less similar in terms of landscape: they are located in mountainous regions, situated some 800-1000 meters above the sea line, between the main cities in Norway; Oslo and Bergen (cf. the attached map of Norway p vii). But they are quite diverse where architectural design and the infrastructure are concerned (in terms of, for example, energy supply to the fields). Investigating cabins in two separate places will contribute to an exploration of the differences and similarities of the sizing, shaping and energy consumption, as well as provide an understanding of driving forces and actors decisive for the contemporary development.

Vestre Slidre municipality and Geilo in Hol municipality belong to Oppland and Buskerud county districts, respectively. These are the two regions with the highest number of second homes within Norway. Statistics Norway[16] (2006) estimated that there were 42.231 cabins in Oppland and 40.958 cabins in Buskerud. These units constitute 22 per cent of the second homes in Norway (Nybakken and Horgen in Taugbøl 2001:19).

Vestre Slidre

Vestre Slidre has long traditions for second home building. In January 2007, 2343 cabins were registered in the area, and 600 units were planned for the near future.[17] There are 2250 local citizens in the municipality.[18] This shows that second home tourism constitutes a large part of the human activity in the district, in particular so during high seasons. It is not remarkable that the second-largest industry after agriculture (mainly meat and milk production) is the tourism industry, which has boosted both the service and the building sector. There is,

[16] www.ssb.no/aarbok/2006/tab/tab-401.html

[17] These numbers are based on information given by Brestad, consultant in Vestre Slidre municipality, on 17 April 2008.

[18] http://www.vestre-slidre.kommune.no/artikkel.aspx?AId=257&back=1&MId1=153

however, no particular sign of urbanization in the area, even though the activity from seasonal city people is escalating. Several tourist services, restaurants and museums can be found in the closest city centre, Fagernes, which is 40 km from the highlands in Vestre Slidre. Commercial businesses in the cabin regions are absent except for traditional cafés that serve local food, and domestic utensils run by locals which are scattered along the most popular hiking paths. Compared to other cabin-developed places – such as Beito, which is located in the same county district – the area is less commercially developed. Vestre Slidre has, for example, ongoing seasonal farming that has existed for centuries, which shows that (parts of) the local culture have remained intact. The area has the largest number of operative mountain pastures in Norway (Flyen and Swensen in Taugbøl et al. 2001). The cabin fields located in the highlands are less accessible during the winter because the roads are not ploughed. Still, wintertime – in particular Easter – is regarded as a high season, in addition to summer time. To reach the cabins during that time of the year, people park their cars in one of the parking lots and reach the cabin on cross-country skis.

Popular outdoor activities both for seasonal people and locals are hiking, cross-country skiing, hunting, and fishing (Bjerke et al. 2006). Vestre Slidre is not a resort area; the cabins are scattered over a considerable landscape. There is no particular culture for downhill skiing or snowboarding, as there is just one old ski slope at the outskirts of the area (ibid.). Hence, the area is not a destination for après-ski parties, but rather a typical Norwegian second-home place dominated by families who are attending traditional *friluftsliv* (ibid.). The cabins in the district are close to the traditional cabin presented in the beginning of this chapter, mainly because there are many cabins which have passed through generations. But the construction and shaping of the cabins is now facing an alteration. The construction of high-standard units is increasing, as is the upgrading of the technical standards of the existing ones. This may serve as an indicator that the cabin area really is facing serious change. This is also what makes the location interesting to study.

Geilo

In Geilo and its outskirts there are 5380 private cabins and leisure houses and 4700 local citizens[19]. Here, too, these numbers signalize that the tourism industry constitutes an important part of the local economy. Geilo is a site much more developed than Vestre Slidre – not necessarily regarding the number of cabins, but as a tourist destination in general. Many of the cabins located here are large, easily accessible, and have a high technological standard that is similar to modern homes (Bjerke et al. 2006). Second home ownership has also long roots here, and the area has been characterized as the typical Norwegian cabin life as presented in the historical context. During the last decade, the region has experienced a considerable expansion. There is a developed infrastructure with an advanced energy transformer and highways. This entails that high-standard units – although located in remote and topographically difficult places – are easy to arrange for. The supply of services and activities varies, but generally cabin owners have easy access from the cabin fields through their cars. Such services and activities include, among others, downhill slopes and resort facilities such as spa, swimming pools, and restaurants.

Vestre Slidre and Geilo are hence quite similar topographically, but differ pertaining to infrastructure and standards of cabins. These factors are what make them interesting. They allow me to study the mechanisms behind each development, and to look for common denominators which may lead in a common direction.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis *Norwegian Cabin Life in Transition – Implications for the Consumption of Energy* is divided into six chapters. It presents an understanding

[19] This number was given by an engineer at the Department of Technique in Hol municipality.

of the changes in the consumption patterns in Norwegian cabin life in the highlands. This has chiefly been done by including three different actors who by their own means contribute to diverse domains within cabin building and – shaping. In order to understand the complexity of the phenomenon, and to not fail to see the whole picture, I found it essential to include them all. The analytic focus in the structure proposes why a cabin stay demands vast quanta of energy and how this new trend relates to changing cabin life. It moves from the cabin owners' sociocultural perceptions and motivations for consuming within the context of cabins, through the specific act of construction and shaping, and towards local regulations and concern for the building – and energy use.

Chapter 2 draws attention to the cabin owners and their perceptions and experiences of cabin life, expectations of comfort and convenience, and on the way the act of cabin creation is conceived. The interaction among the cabin owners, its influence on the individuals' consumption and the importance of social displaying through the shaping and outfitting of the cabins are also revealed. Building upon notions of the changes in the cabin life due to lifestyle and consumption, the thesis is further organized to meet this framework, but includes other perspective and actors beyond the users per se.

Chapter 3 deals with the building entrepreneurs who by their own means, one way or another, manufacture the demand for energy by their methods of construction and outfitting the cabins (prefabricated cabins).

Chapter 4 reveals the correlation between regulation plans and guidelines on the one hand, and real life on the other. It explores the local policy makers and their initiatives for arranging for a certain type of cabins. In this respect an exploration of environmental concern among those who are planning for cabin building will be provided.

Chapter 5 explains the environmental impacts. In this respect, energy consumption is acknowledged as a major contemporary impact. It assembles key

points from the previous analytical chapters and discusses each of them from an environmental perspective. The challenges deriving from the energy demand is also explained. This contributes to grasp the scope of the spill-over effects from present practices taking place in cabins in the highlands. The structure of the thesis serves to provide a better understanding of the complexity and the impacts of the development. Finally, chapter 6 is what concludes it all.

2. Cabins Become Second Homes

One of the motivations for writing this thesis was the curiosity to know why the consumption (of energy) increase, when before cabin life was synonym with living a simple way in nature, leaving everyday lifestyle behind. This chapter will deal with this phenomenon by emphasizing the cabin owners' perspectives and experiences so as to understand the changing consumption in this framework. I will describe the new characteristics of mountain cabins by giving a presentation of those visited. The differences and the similarities between the two locations with respect to the shaping and sizes of the units will be highlighted. Due to these matters, I will look at the anomaly of heading back to nature and at the same time displacing oneself from it by constructing big and fully equipped edifices. A particular focus will be put on how notions of comfort and convenience, to varying degrees, are transferred to cabin life. Moreover, it will investigate the importance of migrating from everyday life and what such a different lifestyle shall include. It will also deal with how individuals, as part of a specific network, in one or another way, are active in mediating experiences which are influential for the consumption. The pursuit of social displaying will also be explored. The term *nestbuilding* will be applied to the construction and creation act of cabins followed by an explanation what this implies for the consumption.

2.1 From Mountain Cabin to Resort Mountain

> […] as soon as they start talking about their cabins, the talk becomes much livelier. One has a place in nature that is a home, a locus of identity and belonging. One resides in the city, but lives in nature (Witoszek and Saglie 1998:238, my own translation)

According to Kalternborn (2002), the cabin has always been regarded by the Norwegians as a second home. This notion was also shared by the majority of the cabin owners in this sample, but its *meaning* had different connotations. As

described in the initial chapter, the importance of place attachment, the ability to spend time on *friluftsliv* and maintaining conventional practices in 'back to nature' circumstances, constituted the traditional notion of a second home. I will argue that present cabin life has brought along other factors that are adding to, and even replacing, traditional ways of viewing the cabin. The anticipation of a second home is increasingly dependent on other aspects, in particular regarding material things. It implies that an appreciated stay makes demands for devices that evidently, taking the historical dimension into consideration, more or less were absent from earlier notions of the typical cabin stay. Tordsson, referring to a white paper, says:

> While the cabins in the 50's and 60's were small, generally without electricity and quite far from motor roads, a relatively high share of newly built cabins in the 90's have all-year standards and easy access during winter. Still, the majority of cabins in Norway are relatively small and simply equipped, but there is a clear trend of change in this framework […] The cabin has for many gone from being regarded as a simple leisure dwelling towards a second home, fully equipped as a primary home, accessible, with electricity and modern devices such as washing machines and dishwashers […] The ideal of a traditional cabin has been abandoned by many. (Tordsson 2003:328, my own translation)

Such a picture fits with the visited cabins, a description of which I am going to present. It will show that the sizing, furnishing, age, and usage of the cabins differ a lot between the two regions. There is also a disparity as pertaining to the presence of *things* that were regarded as decisive for having a comfortable stay. Several of the informants from Geilo argued that in order to consider the property as a second home, it was essential that the cabin was equipped and furnished according to everyday standards. This confirms Vittersø's recognition that the development of cabins now seems to follow the general housing consumption (2007:267). This was however not yet an actuality in Vestre Slidre. As will be demonstrated later on, such features were increasingly of importance also here, but when referring to the cabin as a second home, the focus was put on the emotional attachment to the particular place, independent of its standard.

A Presentation of the Visited Cabins

There was a remarkable difference in size and shape of the cabins in the two regions, although they are located in a comparable highland terrain. In Geilo, there was more noise, activity, and construction going on than in Vestre Slidre. The cabins were more similar to each other, in particular in the constructed mountain villages where nearly half of the informants from Geilo belonged to. The cabin field in Vestre Slidre had a more diverse look; the units had quite different appearances as to colors and size. Many of them were big (exceeded 100 m^2), but there were also quite a few small units (less than 60 m^2), and practically all of them had an outside toilet close to the main building. In general, the cabins in Geilo were far more equipped and larger in size than those in Vestre Slidre. However, features which have been noticeable in Geilo for a long period of time (at least 10 years), now seem to become increasingly popular in the more traditional mountain area of Vestre Slidre.

The cabins investigated in Vestre Slidre amounted to 98 m^2 on average, which coincides with the statistics composed by Statistics Norway that presented the average cabin being 98, 8 m^2 (2007). In Geilo, the average size in this sample surprisingly constituted 157 m^2. Several of the randomly picked cabins actually exceeded 200 m^2, and those were often the newly built units. The cabins were also in general older in Vestre Slidre, which apparently reflected the sizes – if I maintain the idea that new cabins are built larger than those built 10 years ago (cf. the section of building history in the introduction chapter). On the other hand, the older cabins – originally relatively small in size – have been enlarged throughout time, either by own hands or outsourced. This practice, named nestbuilding, will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

In Vestre Slidre, the average age of the selected cabins was 22 years, whilst it was 9.5 years in Geilo. Annual time spent at the cabins differed with 3.5 weeks, as they were used 8.5 weeks annually in Vestre Slidre, whilst only 5 weeks in Geilo. This finding complies with estimations made by Nybakken and Horgen (in

Taugbøl et al. 2001). They estimated the average time spent in Norwegian cabins to be 30-60 days annually. However, they postulate that cabins of low standard are used less than those of high standard. As just described, the cabins in Vestre Slidre were in general poorer equipped than those in Geilo, but still the latter were used approximately 25 days less. But with the introduction of electricity in Vestre Slidre, people found it easier to go up on a short basis, in particular during the winter; a little growth in number of days spent at the cabin was the outcome. There might be several explanations applied to the differences in use, among others the lack of accessibility to other holiday places, variations in available time, and so on. What is important for this study is that high standards do not necessarily lead to longer stays, proving Nybakken and Horgen's statement otherwise. It could be presumed that building of high standard leisure houses in the highlands signify that people will spend an increasing amount of time in their second home, for example to settle there on a seasonal basis such as in spring and summertime. However, the data in this sample suggested that to acquire this kind of a cabin, or to transform an existing one into a house, was first and foremost determined by the desire to fulfill something at present, not necessarily because of intentions to settle there partly or fully in the future. The findings also point towards that those who have a cabin of traditional standards might perhaps be more engaged in outdoor life, and apply other values to a stay.

Each of the informants, except for one in Vestre Slidre, had electricity integrated in their mountain cabin. In most of the cases in Geilo, electricity had been installed while the cabins were under construction. In Vestre Slidre, electricity was first available in 2003. Water was distributed to all the cabins located at Geilo, while the informants from Vestre Slidre collected water from a well approximately 100-200 meters off the cabins. A tube outside the property provided water during summer time. Solar paneling – the traditional energy source in cabins, in particular for the use of lighting – was more or less absent, except for 3 properties in Vestre Slidre. Only one of those who benefited from solar energy had no electricity. When it came to sanitary conditions, the majority

of the cabin owners from Vestre Slidre were satisfied having an outside toilet, whilst this was totally absent in Geilo, as all of them had one or more indoor water closets. Concerning heating methods, heating cables, oil stoves, and radiators were popular in both places. In Geilo, it was prevalent to have heating cables throughout large parts of the cabin. In Vestre Slidre, many of the informants considered having it installed in the bathroom and in the entrance, but only one actually had this in place. However, this indicates that things are about to change also in Vestre Slidre. Heating methods that have had their 'reign supreme' in primary homes seem now to gain a firm foothold in second homes, as such channels of thoughts indicate.

Another prominent feature was a remote-control device that manages the cabin temperature by turning on the electricity from a cell phone or a computer. More than half of the informants from both regions told me that they took advantage of this technology by activating the electricity system the day before arrival, or even a few days in advance. Even owners of the small and less equipped cabins belonged to the group of those who submitted to this technology. According to Shove (2003), regulating the indoor climate provides the benefits associated with the ability to manage, control and customize your own environment. The use of such a technology may imply that the fire place has lost its main purpose. Several informants accentuated that they still had an open fire place just for coziness, even though it had become superfluous. For example, Henrik and Tone told me the temperature tended to exceed 30 degrees Celsius when an open fire was lit. This was regarded as uncomfortably hot, so the fire place was only used for special occasions. Those in Geilo still lacking a temperature manager did not arrive to a cold cabin, but they kept the cabin lukewarm throughout the year. This was also confirmed by the engineer at Hallingdal energy supply, who explained that enhanced standards of cabins require a constant temperature to safeguard the appliances from frost damage. This again entails that as high-standard cabins are increasingly common. The demand for constant electricity for heating purposes is escalating accordingly. In chapter 5, I will take a closer look at the energy

consumption deriving from cabins, as well as the benefits and challenges the electricity companies are facing.

When I mapped the presence of kitchen appliances (refrigerators, freezers, ovens, coffee makers, waffle irons, mix masters etc.), I found that such electric utensils were more or less in place in all the visited cabins. There were also cabin owners in Vestre Slidre who stored food in a cold basement beneath the kitchen floor. But when electricity became available, many of them replaced or supplemented this cooling method with a refrigerator. The outcome differed when it came to dishwashers, washing machines, dryer drums, micro wave ovens, and electrical household gadgets such as pop corn machines, bread-making machines and rice cookers. They were all popular at Geilo, but rare in Vestre Slidre. These findings confirm the assumption that the modernization of cabins in Geilo has gone a step further. If those who had acquired such appliances were spending long and continuous periods at their cabins, it might be regarded reasonable. Nevertheless, the presence of material goods was not directly linked with longer stays, as those who did not own such appliances (the cabin owners from Vestre Slidre) generally spent more weeks in their cabins than those in Geilo.

Utilities that were not related to labour-saving devices (kitchen and cleaning appliances) such as television and stereo, were installed in basically all cabins, but differed where available channels and design were concerned. In Geilo, several of the informants had one or more flat screen televisions showing multiple channels, whereas an old-fashioned black-and-white television showing NRK was the most common in Vestre Slidre. DVD-players were unexpectedly regular in both regions; in Geilo, it was quite rare not to have one. Furthermore, internet connections were absent in Vestre Slidre whilst prominent in Geilo. This did not imply that cabin owners from Geilo tended to work while spending time at the mountain. It was rather used for entertainment purposes, such as internet games and movies, and to check and write private e-mails. In the latter region, jacuzzis, electric garages and monitor screens (for monitoring break-ins and/or

for viewing the weather cast) were commonly installed. Only Tor and Halbjørg, a married couple in Vestre Slidre, could refer to a monitor screen.

This presentation illustrates that the originally simple-fashioned cabins are now declining in scope, and are to a growing extent being replaced by large and energy-demanding edifices. An explanation for this change will be presented in the forthcoming. It will claim that notions of comfort are increasingly important for a mountain stay, perceptions that have implications for the consumption.

2.1.1 The Transferral of Convenient Attributes

Wilhite and Lutzenhiser have stressed the importance of studying the sociocultural nature of consumption. They argue that it is not enough merely to examine consumption from an economic approach to acquire a deep and meaningful understanding (1999). Shove claims that the use of technological devices has to be examined and understood with reference to the achievement of more encompassing services like those of comfort, cleanliness and convenience (2003:166). In this section, I will use her recognition as a backdrop for studying the social aspect of consumption.

Although the average timeframe spent in the mountain cabins only amounted to a few weeks annually, those weeks were regarded as exceedingly valuable, and the stay was thus required to be comfortable by many. The notion of comfort[20] and convenience[21] was in this context not only applied to recreation, but was also dependent on the material standard of the edifice. In other words, to have a well-equipped cabin implied to have a comfortable time by many. Shove argues that the achievement of comfort legitimizes new consumption (2003:24). Taking her definition into account, and the suggestions provided by the cabin owners, it is

[20] Heijis (1994 in Shove 2003:24) defines comfort as this: Comfort enhances the mental and physical well-being. Comfort has to do with things, conditions and circumstances. Achievement of comfort legitimizes new forms of consumption.

[21] Shove defines the achievement of convenience as follows: 'Convenience can be applied to things that make something easy as use or timesaving, having the capacity to shift, juggle and reorder obligations' (2003:166).

apparent that many fill their cabins with various technological devices in order to fulfill their expectations of comfort. It seems that conventional practices that once characterized a cabin stay and were regarded as *koselige* activities, such as dish washing, conventional cooking and heating practices, are at present mostly done by electronic devices. Shove proposes that people look for convenient solutions when maintaining their obligations and do what is normal and necessary (2003:180). This coincides with the information given by among others, Haakon and Grete. Having technological devices enabled them to spend their vacation in an enjoyable way without being occupied with household tasks. Wilhite and Lutzenhiser suggest that "while lives are for many becoming increasingly hectic, convenience is sometimes the most important determinant in a purchase or use pattern" (1999:319). However, this reality does not make much sense in the leisure context as during such periods, *available time* is what people normally *do* have. But as the data suggest, saving time was a determinant factor for acquiring electrical appliances, implying that Wilhite and Lutzenhiser's proposal is applicable also in this framework. In what follows, I will describe the different notions around a comfortable and *koselig* time in this context.

Integrated electricity for the purpose of lighting and heating, and water for drinking and showering, were a matter of course to most of the cabin owners in Geilo. These services were so taken for granted as to not be matured. When Rita described the things conducive to meet her expectations of comfort, she referred to the acquisition of assets beyond the basic utensils. Having a pleasant time was for her and several of my informants, in particular from Geilo, dependent on luxurious appliances that had turned out to be conducive to having a recreational time. When I say luxurious I mean those things common in primary homes, but rare in cabins. This can for example be a well equipped kitchen and bathroom with several electrical utensils, flat screen television etc. Rita's view confirms what has been proposed by Crowley that comfort can be applied to necessities in everyday life as well as to luxurious conditions (1991, in Shove 2003:24). Shove recognizes that along with the changes in people's notion of comfort, there is a

growing dependency on resource-intensive technologies (2003). This, too, seems highly applicable in this framework. Achievement of comfort also legitimizes new forms of consumption (Hejis 1994 in Shove 2003:24), a recognition that coincides with a number of the cabin owners' claim that the achievement of comfort serves as a *justification* for having high standards. On the contrary, Teigland states that "there is no tendency that those who recently have acquired a leisure dwelling make more demands for increased standards than previously" (2000:20). Assuming this is right[22], Tordsson responds to this statement by arguing that "the traditional cabin ideal is still alive, which implies that the demands for higher standards and luxurious conditions have generally not escalated" (2003). My data and observations prove this to be wrong. Transferring convenient appliances, enhancing standards and making claims for luxurious goods was quite normal in the cabin framework. The information points towards an enhancement of standards and an enlargement of sizes, even though quite a few appeared skeptical towards a *luxury-fixation* of cabins.

To heighten their comfort was a decisive factor why my informants from Vestre Slidre got electricity. But contrary to the findings from Geilo, electricity was regarded as a luxurious facility. However, electricity has only been available since 2003; this may serve as one explanation for regarding it luxurious. Another explanation that might be more significant is that the cabin cultures among these regions appeared quite dissimilar, as well as the motivations for acquiring and using a mountain property. Hence, the threshold for acquiring a standard similar to a primary home may be higher for those who have a cabin at Vestre Slidre. I will return to a description of the particular cabin cultures later on, in this chapter and in chapter 4. This will provide further justifications for what just suggested.

What is important about these increasingly blurred distinctions between primary and secondary homes is the decline in the precise *differences* in the lifestyles.

[22] It is noteworthy that Tordsson *does* acknowledge the increasing existence of 'modern' cabins, and that traditional leisure ideals are 'under attack'. In fact, his dissertation explores "what kind of ramifications such changes may bring along for the *meaning* of outdoor life".

While household routines[23] tend to be squeezed into people's everyday life schedules – and are consequently accomplished as time-saving as possible by the use of electric appliances (cf. Wilhite and Lutzenhiser 1999) –, such work has been considered as free from obligations in the cabin framework. Here household tasks have been associated with a *koselig* family occupation, and the time frame at the cabin is looser than daily life as it is, after all, vacation. Hence, I hypothesized that one is less dependent on technological fixes when spending time at the mountain cabin. But this turned out to be quite a wrong assumption. There were, however, a few cabins owners who shared my supposition. Trine, an owner of a cabin in Vestre Slidre, explained that she enjoyed to undertake household work because that made her diverge her thoughts away from daily life. Such a lifestyle was recreation for her because it was out of the ordinary of what she was usually doing. She emphasized that she enjoyed doing the dishwashing together with her daughter and son, both because it was regarded as a kind of social gathering and because she appreciated that her children got an impression of traditional ways of life. Besides, she told me that the time spent on household work was limited – amounted to less than an hour each day. Because of that, she thought it was unreasonable to acquire technological devices that would save time. After all, there was no need to 'save' time when all she was doing were recreational activities. Moreover, she thought that improving the material standard similar to the one at home would imply more things to take care of as well as more things that might distract her. Her perspective was nevertheless quite unique in the sample. The majority emphasized that senses of comfort relied on the standard of the unit. Thus, for instance, Rita justified her large and high standard cabin by claiming:

[23] Kaufman (1998:23 in Shove 2003), defines routines in two ways: "The things that simply have to be done" and a routine as a social construction (historical, family-based, and personal). Rick Wilk (1999 in Shove 2003) describes how routines are constructed by stating: "[…] it draws upon the notion that there is an unconscious realm of taken for granted common sense and habitual practise on the one hand, and a realm in which rules and norms of conduct are being explicit, contested and manipulated on the other."

> Imagine when people travel to their mountain cabin, tired after work on a Friday. Does not that justify why people want comfort from the moment they enter the cabin?[a]

Such views were widely shared and point towards a shift from what is considered as *koselig* and convenient. Furthermore, they strengthened my impression that having a rough lifestyle in primitive conditions has been abandoned by many. Convenience in this framework was indeed to live another life than at the primary home, but not in a sense by earlier associations.

Several of the cabin owners emphasized the fact that having a traditional low-standard cabin[24] would be too complicated pertaining to its use, in particular when bringing along children. Hence, what was suggested by Vittersø; that the wish for labor-saving technology legitimizes the upgrading of standards (2007), is concurrent with many of the informants' perspectives. Having an outhouse and being without electricity was considered as unfashionable and unthinkable by many of the cabin owners in Geilo. On the contrary, those features were still prominent in Vestre Slidre and were not regarded as unsuitable. For the latter, a suitable standard of a cabin involved the presence of the more basic appliances such as gas ovens and electricity for heating and lighting. However, several of the cabin owners from Vestre Slidre were inclined to enhance the standards in order to make the cabin more flexible in use. Many of those who had an ongoing renovation project told me that they prioritized acquiring electrical devices over improving, for example, the sanitary conditions. According to Henrik and Tone, this enhancement would enable them to make dinner at short notice, wash their laundry, and store a quantity of food and drinks. In addition, weekends at their mountain cabin would be easier with electricity since it enabled them to turn on the heat well before their arrival. Beforehand, it had taken 24 hours to achieve a comfortable temperature by traditional means. These new ideas pertaining to cabin life illustrate that the interest in a flexible every day life, to varying

[24] When the informants from Geilo referred to a low-standard cabin they pointed towards a cabin filled with only the basic household appliances.

degrees, has also been transferred to cabins. This implies a growing similarity in the consumption in primary and secondary homes. Such appliances that are described as tools for making routines more time-saving and impulsive (cf. Shove 2003, Wilhite and Lutzenhiser 1999) can now be found in cabins.

There were also informants like Trine, who perceived the modernization of cabins from a skeptical point of view, although they belonged to the exceptions. The only informants from Geilo who held this view were Jan and Ragnhild; a couple who considered it paradoxical that people are putting so much money into purchasing technological fixes when the cabin is barely in use. Another informant from Vestre Slidre, Kjell, who got electricity a few years back (in 2003), told me that he did not actually benefit much from its use. He explained why he and his wife enjoyed the life at their cabin as much before as when they got access to electricity: Senses of comfort, he said, do not necessarily depend on physical devices, but rather on the inherent value of spending time in a place one cares for. He explained his notion of ultimate comfort in this way:

> Comfort is when you enter a cold cabin and the family is gathered in front of the fire place, covered with blankets, while the wind is howling outside. Comfort to me is coming up here in the certainty of being far away from the urban way of life. […] which path to go for a walk and what board game to play are the only choices one has to make during a day. This condition is what constitutes recreation and comfort to me.[b]

Although there were diverse answers pertaining to the motives behind a cabin stay and what implied having a comfortable time, the most prominent trait was that people to varying degrees demanded standards similar to a primary home. The division between the home and the cabin is thus on the course to oblivion. As notions of comfort become increasingly dependent on the material standard, experiencing a rough lifestyle in back to nature circumstances no longer seems to give sufficient meaning to a cabin stay. As argued by Shove: “It is not enough to study the individual action regarding (energy) consumption because one misses the whole picture, failing to detect cultural shifts of expectations and changes in collective conventions and practices” (2003:4). As my data suggests, the changes

in social conventions, habits, and expectations of what it means to have a comfortable time, constitute important factors in the shifting cabin tradition. Another important factor that will be discussed in chapters 3 and 4 is how expectations of comfort interact with public and private sector strategies. The next section will deal with the motivations for heading for the mountain cabin, and accordingly with what a *cabin-lifestyle* ought to imply.

2.1.2 Lifestyle Migration

The term lifestyle migration has been applied to a driver for heading off from urban centre to mountain areas (Williams and Hall 2002). Their recognition of the underlying motivations for spending time in the highlands turned out to be of importance for the cabin owners, although there were different views as to what the notion implied. While the material wealth in the Norwegian society is increasing, people tend to seek a lifestyle back to nature in more primitive material conditions as a reaction to this development (Kaltenborn 2002). Kaltenborn refers to several writers who claim that a crisis of meaning is one prominent consequence of the modern society. This may entail that people create new systems of meaning in a world strongly affected by mass consumption. A cabin may be the perfect escape to achieve another lifestyle for a short or longer period of time. As was suggested by several of the cabin owners, such a presumption may be proved otherwise, or at least it cannot be applied to cabin life in general. This is not with regards to the ‘achieving a lifestyle contrasting from at home’, but concerning ‘the response from the material society’. However, as I will outline, different perspectives were put on this notion, some of them confirming Kaltenborn’s view, but the majority held another opinion.

All the cabin owners considered the change in lifestyle aspect as a main benefit of having a mountain cabin. The perspectives concerning what such a change of lifestyle implied were quite divergent. Some appreciated getting away from the urban and material way of life, whilst others longed for a luxurious lifestyle

surrounded by facilities that were not even in place in their primary residence. The change from everyday life pertaining to not only environmental circumstances, but also to the *change of dwelling*, came out as important variables for the cabin owners' well being from Vestre Slidre. I was told by Trine, Stein, Nina, Kjell, and by Tor (5 informants from different households) that even though the weather could be harsh and prevented them from heading for daytrips, they still enjoyed their sojourn. According to them, they could nevertheless attain another way of living and get away from *kjas og mas* (toil and moil) because the cabin itself offered an atmosphere more relaxing than what could be achieved at home. To several of them, spending time at the cabin was in a sense to be relieved from the urban and material way of life, a view that contradicts quite strongly with the findings from Geilo. Sharing the same perspective, Stein, the owner of a cabin at Vestre Slidre, emphasized that people might forget the beautiful landscape in their pursuit of having a modern mountain cabin. Additionally he enjoyed making fun of those who 'brought' their primary residence up to the mountain: comfortable cabins, he said, symbolized lazy and convenient characters. Whether my informants regarded lifestyle migration as an achievement of a luxurious *or* a back-to-nature way of living, it points to what Bjerke et al. recognize as the core reason for why most households are purchasing second homes; namely to achieve some dimension of lifestyle that is not available at their primary residence (2006:88).

Referring to Kaltenborn cabin ownership can be interpreted as a step back to nature (1997, 2002). Moreover, he argues that the cabin culture may represent the real life to many Norwegians. Sharing such a view, Tor and Halbjørg described their value of having a mountain cabin like this:

> We are not traveling 4 hours one way for having an identical standard as at home. The difference is what is of meaning to us, and what makes it worth having this place.[c]

Such a perspective of getting away from everyday lifestyle, also with regard to material conditions, was shared by a number of the cabin owners in Vestre

Slidre. This implies that cabin ownership can be interpreted as a step back to nature. But still, also those who held this view outlined that bringing comfortable things from home was an increasingly common practice after they got access to electricity. This reveals that they too have had a wish to improve their comfort, although not to the same extent as the cabin owners from Geilo. They emphasized that comfort in this framework was elementary, but after 'cabin-standards'.

Contrary to the foregoing findings, a vast number of the cabin owners from Geilo associated cabin life with a luxurious condition in the highlands. Lars explained:

> We deserve some luxury when having time off so we can have a really good time. […] it is for example more crucial to have a dishwasher here than at home because leisure is so valuable.[d]

As briefly mentioned, many argued that it was not only adequate to have the same standard as at home, but also to establish objects that played no role in everyday life. This was illustrated by the many visited cabins that were far better equipped than ordinary houses. To exemplify this view, Rita emphasized that it was nice having a self-cleaning cooker so that she was released from cleaning it by hand – although the cabin was only in use 3-4 weeks annually. This attribute was not in place in her primary home, but as the cabin kitchen was newer, she thought it was appropriate to buy the most updated kitchen utensils in the phase of purchasing. Microwave oven, popcorn machine and rice cooker were also regarded as nice appliances, but were devices also in place at her home.

These perspectives of what cabin life ought to involve support Kaltenborn's ways of describing such a culture otherwise (1997, 2002). A stay at the cabin might however be considered as a step back to nature as suggested and a respite from everyday life. But it involves to a higher extent a *displacement* in nature by constructing well-equipped and comfortable second homes in a generally rough environment. It also indicates that this culture is more compounded and individualized than the typical associations connected to Norwegian cabin traditions. The differences between the two locations show that the

characteristics of a mountain-cabin culture are not to be applied to cabin ownership as a whole, as there are diverse cultures across regions. In the forthcoming, the relation among the cabin owners will be revealed with the focus on its influential role on consumption.

2.2 Mediating Experiences and Ideas

In mediating experience, the social network provides recommendations, inspirations and knowledge about ideas and practices related to cabins. This can for instance be things that make the cabin easier to use, more comfortable or just better looking. Social networks are “informal and interpersonal relations put in a social system” (Scott 2000:7). The network that I am referring to here constitutes of individuals who have in common that they own a cabin in the same area. This relation can thus be characterized as more superficial than if based on an interpersonal and private connection. The established contact among most of the cabin owners was first and foremost tied to experiences regarding their property in question such as building customs, color use and interior. These discussions took often place outside one of the cabins or when encountering one another on a walk. At the same time the contact was very informal in character. For example; besides talking about their properties it was common sharing experiences on the fishing conditions in the area, trips and the weather. These conversations were considered as sources of inspiration by many as well as a nice way to get to know each other and feel a sort of commitment within the community. All of them had in one or another way been active contributors to the communication of experience.

As explored, one of the protruding wishes for heading to the cabin was to withdraw from everyday life to a condition consisting of quality time with family and interaction with nature. This notion is reflected in the absence of private contact among the cabin neighbors. Many emphasized that the most appreciated time in the region was when the field was free of people, i.e. other periods than

public holidays. Inviting neighbors over for dinner or arranging trips together occurred therefore quite seldom. The first and foremost contact among them, involved mainly projects related to their cabins. To exemplify such a particular relationship, Stein who has a cabin at Vestre Slidre, mentioned his good relation with his cabin neighbor, Henrik:

> The neighbor I am the most familiar with is Henrik, who has a cabin over there […] we happen to meet frequently as I assume we both spend far more time here than what is common. When we meet, we basically share ideas about our properties. As you can see, Henrik is very good with his hands and there is a lot to be learnt from him, at least if you are interested. Our contact beyond that, well, I know how many children he has because they are sometimes around as well. I know that he is a teacher like myself and of course I expect that he lets me know when he has had a good fishing experience![e]

His notion was quite comparable to other informants' relationships, except for those with an apartment in a united leisure complex in the Geilo mountain village. For these people, socializing in the evenings when one happened to be there at the same time was an appreciated activity. But also in this context it was common to share ideas about shaping, interior and projects related to their cabins.

Between the two regions there were distinctions in the way the communication was perceived as well as the interaction itself. As mentioned earlier, the cabins in Geilo were more similar in appearance than the cabins located at Vestre Slidre[25]. In the latter region the mediation twisted around construction and shaping techniques and color use, because the cabin owners here were often involved in the operational phase of the refurbishing in question. Interior, furnishing and technological appliances often were topics of conversation in Geilo because the cabin owners were close to marginalized in the phase of construction. Regardless of the ways their mediation of experiences took place, the interaction was found to be of importance for the ways each family shaped and outfitted their cabins.

[25] Of what will be revealed more thoroughly in chapter 3, the building agencies have a decisive role for this difference. In cooperation with architects they were taking care of the design, shaping, construction and selection of materials.

2.2.1 The Mediation's Impact on Consumption

Heavner and Lochner analyze social networks and the individual decisions that are made in relation to them as an "aggregation of those decisions when individuals gather information about the outcomes and choices of (a few) others in their social network" (2002). This use of social networks in this context can be applied to cabin owners seeking advice on a particular purchase or on the integration of a new technology. Mediating and sharing experiences in this study was about getting advice on practical issues concerning a purchase and its eventual benefits. Heavner and Lochner argue that "individuals without prior knowledge would gather information from the outcome and choices of others, thereby fusing their decisions with experience and knowledge" (2002:1). The cabin owners might not lack in knowledge about the various building possibilities or goods aimed at second homes, but by sharing experiences, new inspirations were provided. Several had recently been involved in, or were in the process of deciding whether to refurbish the cabin as described. In this phase, the social networks could have an impact on the decisions taken since the advices were based on people's own experience.

The way networks functioned in influencing and encouraging to consumption is described by several of the cabin owners. Among others, Stein told me that after a conversation with a neighbor who emphasized the benefits of having a temperature manager, he adhered to the same technology. Pushing things to extremes, Jan and Ragnhild, a couple having a cabin at Geilo, told me:

> You know people up here seem to desire to have the same things in their cabins. I am certain that if one in the community is acquiring a new magnificent commodity, within a year or so several of the others can refer to the same purchase.[f]

Organized gatherings occurred, but these meetings took only place when an important subject ought to be discussed. The host/ess was often a person who owned a spacious and well equipped cabin. He or she could thus mediate ideas

implicitly on how to furnish and shape a cabin by precisely the way the edifice was equipped. An experience from such a gathering is described by Nina:

> At the last gathering, a cabin owner nearby demonstrated his multiple channel television and served us coffee from his recent purchase, a cappuccino machine that was met with fascination by the rest of us.[g]

Jan's statement and Nina's experience suggest that those who are on the forefront of acquiring new assets may function as promoters for these goods. Wasserman and Faust recognize the relational concept as important in that the "relational ties between actors are channels of transfer or flow of resources" (either material or non material) (1994:4). With that, the kind of superficial but informal relation functioned for the cabin owners as a way to transfer (material) ideas on solutions for enhancing the comfort or the appearance of the second home. Exchange of ideas and experiences among people in the community was acknowledged as reliable information because they knew one another and had the same starting point; i.e. having a cabin at the same location. In this way, the members of the cabin community had an impact on individual's acquisitions related to second homes in one way or another. These well known interactions in the second home sphere comply with what Shove et al. recognize: "Energy use in households is encouraged, constrained and conditioned by the actions and views of those in the surrounding community – and energy practices take shape in and are shaped by social landscapes" (1998:308-310). Energy use in this context is relevant because the things pointed to here were often electrical appliances; relatively rare in second homes in the highlands a decade ago.

2.2.2 Silent Conventions and Social Display

The trend of having a fashionable and well equipped cabin is presumably another essential factor for the increasing engagement in the furnishing of second homes (Øye in Skaar 2006). Through the interior concept another meaning beyond the use value is presented. This social dimension was also confirmed by Rita, an

owner of a cabin in Geilo. She told how fashion guided her in the way she furnished her cabin:

> I am very enthusiastic about interior also here at the cabin. You know each epoch has its certain style how a cabin ought to look like […] at present it is fashionable to combine a traditional appearance with modern appliances. After we purchased this place, which was one of the demonstration[26] cabins, we replaced its content by more up to date furniture fitting more into our taste so that it represents the family.[h]

What was suggested by Rita coincides with what was addressed by Gullestad in that every person creates integration and identity by communicating through the way one is living (1989). In this way Rita could display her way of living, taste and competence on trends of interior to the surrounding cabin neighbors and friends by the objects displayed in her second home. Hence, fitting into the description proposed by Gullestad that the social dimensions have an impact on ways of living, including the way people are shaping their homes *and* cabins.

According to Bourdieu, people within the same social space are likely to make similar choices on purchases and activities (1998). This is because actors in a social space possess the same sets of economic and cultural capital. To maintain one's position within that space, one unconsciously adapts to the tastes that characterize the members of the community. Also Shove et al. argue that everyday life involves conformity to social norms, or at least taking these norms into account consciously or unconsciously (2003). By adhering to the conventions of appropriate behaviour, members ensure that they are not mistaken for members of other communities and in the process, social and cultural distinctions are cultivated.

A cabin community may not have the same background of cultural and economic capital as the presumable only similarity among them is to have a cabin in the same location. However as my data suggests, it seems that the cabin owners still

[26] The demonstration cabins in Geilo were already furnished and the customers got the cabins with its contents if no other preferences were pointed out.

are sharing a common set of habitus[27] and tastes concerning their cabins. The diverse look of the cabins in Geilo and Vestre Slidre confirmed such a notion. A silent agreement seemed to exist on what was accepted regarding the framing and coloring of the edifices. For example the cabins in Geilo (mainly the new ones) were exceedingly spacious. Most of them were colored in dark brown with grass on the roof and with traditional carving both outside and inside the edifice. The leisure apartments were stained in a fair color also with grass on the roof[28]. On the contrary, in Vestre Slidre there were barely any cabins that looked the same. As described earlier, they were shaped differently and presented in diverse colors and varied in sizes and standards. Here, there was potential for conflicts if people infringed with these unwritten guidelines by shaping or coloring the edifice inappropriately, for example if building a luxurious leisure house. By doing that, it contradicted with the modest attitudes pertaining to shaping and outfitting (if comparing to Geilo). In the opposite way, there might have been raised questions if a small low standard cabin had been built in Geilo mountain village (it is also dubious if a landowner would have sold a yard for such a building). These different shaping practices added a very contrasting look on the cabin fields, although the sceneries in question were of the same character. Hence, it seemed like certain conventions on what kind of construction that was suitable in the area, were anchored in the cabin owners' mindset; conventions created and constrained by themselves regardless of the people's involved background or preferences beyond that specific framework.

2.3 The Act of Cabin Creation

> Maintaining and changing the interior and exterior of the second home itself forms an important motive for cabin ownership (Hall and Müller 2004:12).

[27] Habitus are distinctive practices and values shared by agents within a social space and are a unitary set of choices regarding among other manners, what people prefer to consume (Bourdieu 1998:60).

[28] Another significant driving force for the similar shaping and colouring of both the cabins and the leisure apartments n Geilo is the building entrepreneurs' construction methods which I will discuss thoroughly in chapter 3.

The cabin is to many Norwegians an everlasting project of creation. According to several of the cabin owners, building and construction of existing cabins, both large and small renovation projects, were considered a long-term leisure pursuit as well as a family project. Taking the historical dimension into account, such work may have its origin in the tradition of building dwellings/farms by one's own hands (cf. Støa 2007). Wilhite and Lutzenhiser (1999) address those performances as *nestbuilding*, although they have applied this definition to permanent homes:

> Nestbuilding involves the use of materials and energy, but is essentially a social activity, influenced by changing notions of aesthetics, family demands and perceptions of the constituents understood as providing the family with a solid and secure base (Wilhite and Lutzenhiser 1999:316).

Taking this definition into consideration, nestbuilding can be regarded as an important aspect in the consumption taking place in cabins. Vittersø also recognizes that work in terms of maintenance and refurbishing of cabins has in many families been a central part of leisure consumption (2007:273). He argues that these activities are challenged by the outsourcing of such services resulting from better financial abilities. His statement compiles with the picture in Geilo as most of the cabin owners here tended to outsource these services, although many also here dabbled with less ambitious maintenance work. Services that were frequently outsourced in Geilo were the more extensive projects connected to, for instance, enlarging the cabins. In Vestre Slidre on the other hand, 'do- it-yourself' maintenance work was still a central part of the cabin stay. Based on this information, it could be suggested that given the increasingly prominent feature of facilitating cabins with luxurious equipments, these devices may be likely to be included in the self-reliant construction act.

Regarding the role of the family members in the act of nestbuilding, traditional gender roles were prevailing. Whilst the men in many cases were in charge of the decision-making regarding the exterior shape and the acquirement of technical fixes, the women had the responsibility for the interior concept. They were also those who were urging for a modern and well-equipped kitchen. The male

informants told me that they enjoyed having ongoing building or renovation projects. Actually, being occupied with carpenter work was like recreation to many of them. Henrik told me that during a period of twenty years the cabin had been enlarged with 100 m^2. Every summer there were different kinds of maintenance work to be done, next to the annually required tending to the grass roof. It was thus not surprising that he characterized himself as a continuous volunteering carpenter when spending time at the cabin. As such, doing physical work at a place they cared for (in particular form Vestre Slidre) was regarded as a respite from the everyday life situation that for many was characterized by sedentary work. This has also been addressed by Vittersø, who recognizes that such physical work contrasts to what men do in their daily occupation, and that work in the cabin context should be nothing like the work that is done in everyday life (2007). Rather, it represents a way of creating and maintaining the cabin in one's own time and by one's own means. Eggset sees such work as an establishment of a form of freedom rather than one of obligation (1991:38). He describes the type of work done in the cabin as a constructive process that makes the cabin what it is – it creates a certain bond to the place that often could appear stronger than the one to the primary residence (ibid.). Some of the informants from Vestre Slidre told me that the cabin had actually increased in size and had been modified more than necessary because they preferred *to pusle*[29] with creative construction work.

Another social element can be added for pursuing nestbuilding in the second home context, namely the importance to have a representative dwelling, whether it is a home or cabin. Wilhite and Lutzenhiser (1999:316) recognize that:

> Nestbuilding is not only pursued to satisfy the occupants themselves, but is also outwardly directed to friends, family and neighbors. The home is for many a symbol to the outside world of the well being, taste and status of the family within.

[29] 'To pusle' is a Norwegian term that can be applied to a type of work that is free from obligations and done mostly for one's own means.

Henrik and Tone, the cabin owners who probably were ruling when it came to ambitious nestbuilding in Vestre Slidre, told me that they were well under way with enhancing the toilet conditions from outside closet to water closet with an electric fan. Not because they personally cared so much, but they thought it was nice to have the sanitary conditions in a proper standard when friends were visiting. Also two new showers were on the way, also to make it convenient for friends and the extended family. Henrik and Tone wanted to meet the social conventions of having cultural-appropriate sanitary conditions in order to ensure *conventionality* – even though conventions on cabins standards have differed from the standards of a home- at least until present time.

2.3.1 Family Forums and Consumption

According to Kaltenborn (1997), the ideal of conventional cabin-standards often has to give way for the perception that the cabin is a place for gathering the family. If upgrading the cabin with electricity and television entails that the kids want to come along, then it is likely that the cabin will be upgraded (cf. Vittersø 2007:272). Several of the families acknowledged that the younger generation in many occasions influenced their older relatives to the purchase of technological devices. For example, many maintained that their children and grand children were the driving forces for upgrading the cabin. A frequent comment was that grown-up children requested services that could heighten the comfort, such as heating cables. The children on the other hand were asking for entertainment devices such as PlayStations and DVD-players. These are characteristics that reflect the generational change. If this is a widespread reality for cabin owners beyond this sample, it may indicate that the younger generations are to a lesser degree emotionally attached to the traditional cabin culture and hence are more inclined to acquire utensils not typical in the cabin sphere.

The only informant from the sample who yet did not have electricity, Nina, told me about a recently completed process within her family. A meeting had been

arranged with the agenda of refurbishing the cabin. The outcome was, although some of the family members including herself appeared skeptical, to have electricity. The motivations were to heighten the comfort by easily being able to keep the cabin light and warm without much effort involved. She described it as a revolution within the family as 5 years back it would have been unthinkable to have this proceeding accomplished. From acquisition, the cabin had been regarded as a technology free zone and a change from the lifestyle accustomed to at home. They had also agreed that having a less facilitated cabin contributed to a notion of not taking electricity for granted. Nina described the possible outcomes in the future by postulating:

> We are not planning to have it transformed into a high standard house […], but it will probably be easier to implement other modern equipments when the first step already is taken.[i]

What Nina explained, signifies that the construction and shaping of cabins is a family affair and that traditional perspectives on cabin life still play a prominent role in the planning act, but are challenged by new protruding demands. Hence, it seems that families are negotiating *if* there is a need for upgrading the cabin and secondly, *how* it ought to be refurbished. According to Vittersø (2007:272):

> Labour-saving technologies, such as tap water (spares you from carrying water from an outside well), and electricity for heating and lighting, are perhaps easier to agree on than the need for equipments related to hygiene (WC, shower) or entertaining devices such as TV, computers or other electronic appliances.

His proposal seems also to be relevant to many of the informants from Vestre Slidre, whom despite refurbishing the cabin with electricity, still seem to appear skeptical towards the acquisition of technological utensils. The discussion presented by Nina, may also confirm the differences in terms of attitudes on consumption among individuals within the same household as proposed by Kaltenborn (1997).

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has pointed towards the fact that experiencing a simple lifestyle in a small and modestly equipped cabin has, to various degrees, been replaced by dwelling in a comfortable edifice. I have argued that new notions of a second home has brought along other factors that are adding to, and replacing traditional ways of shaping and outfitting the cabin. To have the cabin equipped as accustomed from every day i.e. meeting similar expectations of comfort, was of importance for many of the cabin owners. There was however two different cultures in Geilo and Vestre Slidre. The threshold for acquiring technological appliances was higher for those having a cabin at Vestre Slidre. Migrating from every day life was an essential purpose for having a mountain cabin, whether achieving a luxurious lifestyle or back to nature life. The relation between the cabin owners has an impact on their consumption in terms of how the cabins are shaped and filled. This was so because the first and foremost contact mainly involved projects related to their cabins. Those who were on the forefront of acquiring new commodities could sometimes appear as promoters for these goods. I have also argued that the family and leisure project *nestbuilding* is a significant act of consumption both for the purposes of recreating and of social displaying.

The argument in this chapter has been the ways people conceive and use their cabins are changing from escape to displacement. Energy use is implicated in this chapter in ways that will be explored fully in chapter 5.

In the forthcoming chapter a new actor will be introduced who has shown to have an important impact on the consumption taking place within the cabins. How can the building entrepreneurs' construction and shaping methods manufacture the very choices and set standard for the future energy demand?

3. Manufacturing New Choices

> It is important to acknowledge that there is circularity and a linkage between all elements: Individuals are not entirely free thinking and acting agents, but operate within parameters of cultural and social structures and are further constrained by institutional frameworks. They do not mindlessly reproduce structures, but have the capacity to alter and transform them. Similarly built form does not appear autonomously through the actions of developers or designers, but is the outcome of a process mediated by cultural, social and institutional preconceptions, and framed by the realities of the spatial constraints and opportunities of specific locations (Franklin 2006:32).

Building second homes can be understood as a dynamic interrelationship between the purchaser, building agency, and local authorities. Franklin implicates this in the quote above, although the postulation is not directed towards this framework. The development in the cabin life is shaped by the cabin buyer's ideas, values, and collective conventions on the one hand, and by the commercial building companies' motives, perceptions, and technical solutions on the other. One has moreover the interests of the local policy makers who stimulate a certain development by creating a certain infrastructure in the highlands. The development in the cabin segment can hence fall into a category of 'the way of life' that, according to Shove, is uniquely adapted to the conditions and circumstances of a specific environment, its sociotechnical changes, and its regimes (2003:68). Everyday-consumption, and in this context the consumption taking place in second home households, is therefore shaped by the system as a whole.

This chapter will focus on the role of the *building entrepreneurs* in cabin construction and shaping. It will emphasize the construction methods' implications for people's acquisition and use of things. It will also present characteristics in the construction and sale methods in which the entrepreneurs are using. By looking at other actors beyond the consumers themselves, the chapter provides a deeper understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon. The purpose is to illustrate that building entrepreneurs do not merely serve the

customers' requests, but, the other way around, that they rather *generate* such requests in a growing number of occasions.

3.1 The Involvement of Commercial Enterprises

A feature of the Norwegian cabin culture has been to build the cabin by one's own hands (cf. Støa 2007), or at least to have a determinant impact on the decision making. Such do-it-yourself perceptions are now declining. This may be due to a number of causes. A better financial situation for a larger number of people, perceived lack of time, and a growing conventionality to outsource such jobs among cabin owners is probable explanations. But, as will be emphasized throughout this chapter, the commercial actors are just as important for this trend. In many cases, they constrain people to be passive and incapacitated in the shaping and construction process. Flognfeldt[30] postulates that "those who want a cabin to fulfill their do-it-yourself craftsman dreams must either buy an old one and refurbished it, or accept a lot in remote or unpopular locations, often with less accessibility to electricity and sewage systems". His acknowledgment seems to be highly applicable in this context, in particular what concerns Geilo. Viewed against the background of how cabins used to be built, present construction methods are contrasting on many issues.

The typical architectural design of buildings in Norway was adjusted to the region's climate and derived from traditions and local materials at hand (cf. Flyen and Swensen in Taugbøl et al. 2001:35). The context laid the groundwork for the architectural construction, thus contributing to unique building techniques in every region. Present methods, on the contrary, have no such local roots, or the remaining bits are largely modified (ibid.). Architectural shaping is no longer locally anchored, but is rather fashioned by trends that are more or less similar for the whole country (ibid.). This is applicable for most residence construction

[30] In Hall and Müller 2004:241-242

in Norway. The construction is even more noticeable in the highlands than in more built-up and urban areas. It makes it even more contradicting to traditional methods since building in the mountains has been adjusted to, and blended in with, the specific landscape. The newly built units, and many refurbished ones, are more conspicuous within their local settings than the traditional ones. This is not only in terms of architectural design, but also with regards to size, shape, and outfit. Together with the market demand, the building agencies play a key role here. It is a growing trend that entrepreneurs construct cabin models in advance before letting them out for sale. This little adjustment in the manufacture and sale method – from serving the customers' request towards manufacturing their very choices – will be shown as being a decisive factor for why the physical nature of cabins has undergone a change. By operating with such a practice, the companies not only construct the edifice per se, but they also dictate the consumption within by integrating technological solutions in advance. This again implies that building entrepreneurs are an important actor in prescribing the households' future energy consumption in the second home framework.

Wilhite and Lutzenhiser argue that sizes, shapes, and features of devices are all determined by social processes (1999:316). Some involve manufacturers in relative isolation, others benefit from market research, and some are shaped by traditional-cultural expectations that are shared by consumers and producers alike. As such, the technological development can be seen as social accomplishments to which designers, engineers, architects, and manufacturers all contribute (ibid). In the second home context I will argue that social processes are of high significance. The construction of the edifice lays in-between the *manufacturers' perceptions* and business ideas on the one hand, and the *encountering of demands* on the other. All together, this may result in the way sizes and standards of cabins take form. In the long term, the particular standard may become embedded into people's expectations of what kind of aspirations the cabin stay ought to satisfy. In what follows, I will argue that the entrepreneurs have a hand in this development from the classical cabin with basic utensils

towards a space – and energy-demanding leisure house containing equipments not even customary in a first home. The demand itself plays a key role here, of course, simply because without a demand, there is no sale. But the important issue here is that manufacturers are creating confined choices, based on the view that (some) people request bigger sizes and higher standards than before. The individual freedom to choose is curtailed when production and distribution occurs in this way, especially so where landowners and entrepreneurs have so much power that the customers have no way out but go through them when buying a cabin.

3.1.1 The Amplification of Sizing and Heating

There are now being built more cabins than ever before. The building entrepreneurs from Geilo and Vestre Slidre agreed in their judgment that this trend seeks to meet the extensive customer demand. Both of them had several orders to serve, and the amount of requests had grown drastically during the last decade. It was not only the scope of the building in question that had faced an alteration, but also the shaping and outfitting of them. The entrepreneurs emphasized that a modern style is taking over the traditional cabin, although people tend to wish for a traditional touch on the property, such as typical cabin carving and other types of furniture than in their first home. Two rather conflicting concepts can hence be represented through one consumption practise: the combination of trying to maintain a traditional look while at the same time acquiring modern arrangements.

The entrepreneurs had also faced an escalated focus on environmental issues in the building sector, as a response to the public debate and concern. Among others, they could offer more environmentally benign materials, heating pumps, and water born heat, granted that the customers accepted a higher price. The insulation had improved so that less energy was needed for maintaining a comfortable indoor temperature. The entrepreneur in Vestre Slidre also

encouraged those who should do the construction work by themselves to prioritize stripping the gaps. This contradicts to Sivertsen and Gurigard who argue that the cabins built in the 90's and at present are lacking in proper insulation (in Taugbøl et al. 2001:53). They argue that the insufficient insulations bring along electricity waste and impose pressure on the distribution grid.

Even though the trend of modern outfits in cabins was significant in both regions, there were still protruding dissimilarities in the way the edifices were constructed. The leisure apartments popular in Geilo were for example totally absent in Vestre Slidre. There were neither plans nor attitudes for building them. In Vestre Slidre, about 20 per cent of the orders involved low-standard and traditional cabins, i.e. cabins without electricity and water according to the entrepreneur. In comparison, the entrepreneur in Geilo had only one to two such inquiries annually. While the average size of the constructed cabins was 60-70 m^2 a decade ago, it is nowadays seldom that cabins are ordered at less than 100 m^2, according to the entrepreneur in Vestre Slidre. 120 m^2 was estimated to be the average size. This includes annex and outdoor toilet. This assessment is congruent with statistics composed by Statistics Norway (2007), showing that Norwegian cabins have increased in size from 65.5 m^2 in 1990 to 98.8 m^2 in 2006. This is a growth amounting to 60 per cent. Nordahl proposes that "for the first time in the Norwegian history people are building bigger cabins than houses" (2006). His recognition seems to be of relevance for this sample, in highest degree again for those visited in Geilo.

The building entrepreneur in Vestre Slidre could confirm what was said by the cabin owners in the presentation section in the previous chapter. During the last five years, after electricity had become accessible in 2003, the standards of several of the cabins had been enhanced. Electricity was now the most common supplier in the area both for heating and in larger degree also for lighting. For the latter purpose, solar cell panels had been the ordinary source of energy, but now there remained only few of them. In Geilo, electricity had been customary for all

purposes in second homes since the Olympics in 1994. The general improvement of infrastructures in Norwegian municipalities brings along motivations for people to renovate their cabins (Øye in Skaar 2006). In other words, the growing accessibility to electricity and water provides people with an opportunity to have the cabin refurbished.

3.1.2 Energy-Efficient Technologies and High Consumption

Recently, water born[31] heat was introduced to the cabin market in Geilo. The solution was to a growing extent established beneath the floors in the newest cabins and apartments. According to the entrepreneur, this was a component that resulted from the escalating environmental concern in the building sector. Water born heat, he said, is a more energy-saving, flexible, and environmentally benign solution than ordinary radiators because it can benefit from various sources of energy and does not depend solely on electricity-driven energy. On the other hand, he emphasized that water born heat is extremely non-economic and non-convenient in seasonal dwellings because of the very slow system. Achieving a comfortable temperature would normally take several hours, implying that water born heat is more suitable for places that are in use everyday. This, he said, is a determinant reason why electricity, gas, and firewood are the most common heating methods in mountain cabins also today. However, this source of energy was installed in several of the visited cabins in Geilo that were less than five years old. The cabin owners who had arranged the cabin with water born heat maintained the temperature lukewarm throughout the year, according to the entrepreneur from Geilo. This was a practice that was quite ordinary for several of the cabin owners who had a cabin here, as mentioned earlier. It helped minimize the time it took to achieve a comfortable indoor temperature. To attain

[31] Water born heat means to have either radiators or tubes beneath the floor that distribute and warm the water to approximately 25 degrees as a heating cable. It provides more flexibility with regards to choices of energy source. This can for instance be biofuel, oil/gas, heating pump, terrestrial heat, district heat, etc. (cf. The Ministry of the Environment 2005:31).

comfort has shown to be the main factor for having a high standard cabin (cf. chapter two). To keep the temperature lukewarm can therefore be presumed to be a premise for the arrangement of water born heat. This is because the possibility of entering a warm cabin turned out as a decisive attribute for many of the cabin owners.

Water born heat was normally not installed in cabins in Vestre Slidre, but electrical heating cables were a growing request. In many of the cabins in Geilo, on the contrary, these were not used throughout the entire cabin, but were confined to bathrooms and entrances. Also equipments that first and foremost have prevailed in modern homes – such as lighting spots – were frequently integrated. This happened mainly in Geilo, but also to some extent in Vestre Slidre, according to the entrepreneurs. When we take the historical dimension into consideration, these first and foremost new attributes further illustrate the velocity of the alterations in Norwegian cabin life. They also confirm that comfort-providing technologies customary in primary homes are now being transferred to cabins at a large scale, whilst traditional energy sources in this context, such as solar cell panels, are being avoided by many. According to the cabin owners, it had a very functional explanation. Many stated that solar cell panels do not allow using several electronic devices at the same time. It was thus avoided since it made it hard to proceed with habitual consumption practices accustomed to from their homes. Similar to the findings of the previous chapters, all these features combined emphasize the increasingly blurred distinction between homes and cabins.

3.1.3 Prefabricated Cabins

> The ‘package concept’ is a prevailing procedure for many building companies aimed at second homes. It is good for the consumers because they can trust that we professionals are making the right choices on materials and are making the cabin in a user-friendly way – comfortable and modern. This is also good for our business because of the predictability and efficiency, and it saves more time and expenses because we can benefit from large-scale orders. (Building entrepreneur in Geilo)[j]

The Ministry of the Environment postulated on the other hand that:

> Without intending to override any architects, we encourage each district to have a debate about the requirements of the shaping and construction. We have faced a growing number of prefabricated cabin solutions, which may not always fit into the natural landscape nor secure a manifold supply (The Ministry of the Environment 2005:33, my own translation)

There are, as illustrated, different opinions about the new package solutions offered by the architects and building sector. What the Ministry of the Environment suggests are not shared by the entrepreneur in Geilo in this case. This practice of prefabricated cabins was regarded as a successful one which was likely to be continued. The issue may either be considered as a very problematic field by the Ministry, as the word *encourage* rather than *impose* was applied in the announcement. Neither were the subjects of prefabricated cabins and energy consumption interlinked. This may again imply that the correlation among the two practices is not comprehended – or that the growing energy consumption that derives from this segment is not considered as an issue of concern. Of no less importance is the apparent avoidance of overruling local practices. The Ministry has arranged for local self-determination regarding the building and shaping of cabins. This may serve as a reason why attempts for moving towards a sustainable development only are *encouraged*.

In Geilo, the building agencies often operated with demonstration cabins that people could select from (in the promotion they tend to replace *cabin* with *leisure house* which is a term closer to the actuality of present building). The sizes of them varied, but 90 m^2 were always exceeded, and according to the entrepreneur, only very few of the *leisure houses* were this 'small'. The very most of the demonstration *leisure houses* were approximately 150 m^2, sometimes this size did not even include the garage, annex, etc. This entails that if a buyer has a more moderate size of a cabin in mind and the preferred location is in Geilo, he or she is not left with any other choices than to acquire a cabin with more space than actually needed and desired. Shove (2003) argues that by standardizing the outfit and standards of the residences, the commercial

enterprises also ignore and disregard the specter of preferences and individual choices, just like it seems in this particular case. The first and foremost building methods that were the same involved the architectural design, materials, and the *basic* hardware. The standards were always high, with a furnishing similar to that of a first home, if not better. Adjustments could be arranged for if the customer had an objection against something of minor relevance for the composition, but then an additional expenditure was often brought along. Examples of attributes besides the ordinary household utensils that were often integrated in Geilo were electrical garages, jacuzzi baths, and large electrical barbeques. Moderate models were also offered which did not include such so-called the 'little extra' facilities. However, also those were of a general high standard, comparable to a typical house. In Vestre Slidre this was not yet a practice. The buyer was fully able to determine the size, shape, and the integrations of the cabin her/himself. This is an element presumably influential for the vast differences in sizes and standards of the second homes in the two districts. The practices in Geilo clearly contradict what has been encouraged by the Ministry of the Environment; in that the municipalities, building entrepreneurs and landowners ought to stimulate a development which secures a manifold supply of cabins (2005).

In the remaining Hol municipality there were more flexible supply solutions. But since Geilo constitutes that area in the district which has the greatest number of second homes – this practice can be regarded as a pervasive one. According to the building entrepreneur, this was also a procedure that is now proliferating in scope in other places. According to him, the main driving force behind this proliferation is the assumption that the market desires high-standard cabins. It is also cheaper for the companies to compose a set of models with more or less the same materials, heating integrations, and equipments, than if they had to customize each individual inquiry anew. This may serve as a cause of similar importance. In relation to the architectural framing, Mæland argues that the result is a comprehensively uniformed, standardized, and cultivated landscape in the highlands (2005). Fields of cabins are getting more and more similar. Have you

seen one, you have probably seen them all (ibid.). The terrain's original character deteriorates through these constructed residential districts with their regularity of shaping and fine lines that only lack in fencing. The original character deteriorates, in other words, by the straight line's regime (ibid.).

3.2 Who is Demanding?

The initial chapter of this study focused on the changes in the cabin life. Several writers have emphasized that cabin owners are not one homogenous group made up of similar preferences, but that they are a multifaceted group who is interested in a mountain cabin for various purposes. A universal cabin planning that fits everyone is therefore impossible, taking the diverse likings into account. Shaping and construction of second homes could hence be suggested to vary more in character in areas where this procedure is prevailing in order not to dismiss the specter of preferences, a term put forward by Shove (2003). By constructing high-standard outfits and fixed sizes, the building companies are treating the segment as a whole. They take for granted that cabin owners have the same perceptions about what cabin life ought to be like.

When it comes to future energy consumption, the company also seems to prescribe the *appropriate* outlet for a second home. Shove et al. argues that by reconfiguring the structure of buildings, several electronic devices have become necessities only as a result of the manufacturing of demand (1998). This notion was applied, among others, to heating and cooling technologies in dwellings. It was also discovered as being highly significant in the cabin framework in Geilo. Here the demonstration cabins people could choose from had, for example, already built-in heating cables throughout the whole place or on the entire ground floor. Whether supplying from water born heat or electricity, the energy consumption will most likely be higher than if a smaller cabin were heated by a few radiators and a fire place. Also spacious and well-equipped kitchens and bathrooms popular in modern dwellings were a common assembly in the

demonstration cabins. These are arrangements that may indirectly encourage consumers to acquire, for instance, big refrigerators, dish washers, dryer drums, and kitchen gadgets. This is simply because these utensils can then occupy the available space and because the buildings are designed and purposed for various technical equipments (cf. Wilhite and Lutzenhiser 1999). To maintain the various electronic devices, and to keep water pipes in good shape, the building company recommended the temperature to be kept lukewarm throughout the year. This was, as noted, a well-known practice. Independent of the usage of the cabin, the energy consumption was often more or less constant with a few peaks when it was inhabited.

The cabin owners themselves acknowledged that heating cables were a nice integration that heightened their senses of comfort. All but one cabin owner in the sample from Geilo had this in place, which illustrates the normality of the arrangement. What is important is that of those who had not bought a cabin from the demonstration models, no one had heating cables on 'more than' 40 m^2. For comparison, those who had bought a *package* had heating cables either beneath the whole floor throughout the edifice or on the ground floor. This constituted a large part of the building, as the average size of the sample from Geilo was 157 m^2. These findings point towards that the decisions made by the building companies compel a higher consumption than if the cabin buyers themselves are in charge of the shaping of the cabin. What is recognized by Shove (1998, 2003) – that consumers live in a world where much of their consumption is already given due to the way buildings are constructed – is transferable also in the second home framework.

3.2.1 Passive Buyers

There were protruding dissimilarities between the regions pertaining to the role of the customers before and during the construction act. These dissimilarities resulted from the mutually opposing practices by the building agencies. Whereas

in Vestre Slidre the customers were active during the whole process, the sample (of those who had a cabin built after the mid 90's) from Geilo appeared passive in the construction act. They selected a model from prospects already composed by architects. The only decision-making they were included in was, according to the entrepreneur, the shaping of the garage, room apportionment, and the interior concept. The latter was undertaken by an interior architect in the most fashionable projects. By operating with available models of a certain standard with integrated heating methods, the company contributed to engender this passivity. Vidar, an owner of a cabin in Geilo, told me about his experience of inhabiting his cabin:

> I would have never thought about buying some of the devices that are now in place…there are things I hardly knew existed! […] Well, I was thinking about the fancy attribute that lets you turn on the heat from a computer at home, and that it was possible to have different temperature in every room. I can for example have 23 degrees here in the living room and 20 degrees in the hall, and I can manage all that from my computer. Of course I am happy to have all that. You know it heightens the comfort, because you always enter a warm cabin and adjust the temperature from at home in summer and winter time. But of course it is not that 'cabin-like' anymore. […] besides I was told that it was routine to integrate a monitor screen for housebreaking, so that is here also. I can actually view the cabin from my computer […] I did not know the thieves found the way all up here, and if you ask me, I don't think they do it either![k]

Vidar's experience shows that he has adjusted to, and adopted, practices configured by the building agency. When he acquired the cabin three years ago, he did not know the technology existed, so quite obviously he did not intend to have it integrated. Today, however, he has made them his own. They have become a daily routine when he spends time at the cabin, which for him amounted to 7-8 weeks a year. Wilhite and Lutzenhiser acknowledge that what is now being taken for conventional, basic hardware was once regarded as unnecessary, luxurious, or even frivolous (1999:318). What they advocate illustrates the reality for many cabin owners today. Also Shove recognizes that by redefining homes, for example through the use of air conditioning, house builders condemn homeowners to an air conditioned life (2003:194). Their

examples can quite similarly be applied to the fabricated cabins and the heating technologies Vidar is referring to.

What Vidar recognizes also shows that the energy consumption is already to a large extent given due to the devices established by commercial actors as proposed by Shove (2003). Having heating cables in the entire cabin and lukewarm temperature throughout the year may signify higher energy consumption, as compared to a situation where he would have avoided an *all-inclusive* character of a cabin. It has however shown to be rather difficult to avoid high-standard leisure houses that include energy-demanding technologies in Geilo. When the construction of such cabin models is the ruling practice here, the agency also challenges notions of what comfort in the cabin context ought to imply. Shove has proposed that "consumers' pursuit goes hand in hand with producers' requirement for innovation because commercial interests construct normality" (2003). The building agencies' methods may hence contribute to different perceptions of what constitutes 'normal' comfort and material standard, compared to traditionally and culturally conditioned cabin life. The traditional way of looking upon the cabin may slowly fade away, while new anticipations arise as the building companies are arranging for high-standard mountain houses. In this way, those who do not want to attend this mountain lifestyle may be extorted from these areas, and be compelled to acquire a cabin in more remote and unpopular locations.

Several of the cabin owners from Geilo experienced adapting to certain commercial-made routines. This can be put in light of what Shove recognizes:

> While new practices sometimes arise as a consequence of challenges of existing routines, as when innovative technologies are launched and adopted, they also emerge through adoptions and adjustments within the social framework. It is therefore impossible to understand how routines change without also understanding how component ideas, practices and sociotechnical systems are integrated (2003:163).

It is noteworthy, however, that the cabin owners who had bought a cabin from the described cabin models seemed to appreciate being placed aside in the

planning and construction process. Several of them emphasized that it was convenient to be released from the hard work of figuring out the design and shaping of the cabin. In addition, many shared a reliance on the building company's expertise concerning the chosen solutions and the quality of the job. This is a reliance that may influence to a yet better material standard in the second home context. In a way that compels to the argument put forward by Shove; "reliance on convenient solutions has the cumulative effect of redefining what people take for granted, bringing along search for new, yet more convenient arrangements inspired by the diffusion and appropriation of things" (2003:170). The important aspect here is independent of what the cabin owners ought to consider, but that the agency is taking high consumption for granted by arranging for consumption in various ways.

3.2.2 Active Buyers

The practise in Vestre Slidre was quite different. According to the building entrepreneur, the cabin buyers tended to hand a personally composed prospect to them, or the building company and the buyers were designing the cabin in mutual cooperation. In some instances, the cabin buyers were involved in the building process by functioning as co-constructers. It also occurred that people built the cabin themselves according to guidelines from the Plan and Building Legislation, but that has shown itself to be increasingly rare. Stein and Henrik were two of those who had built the cabin themselves with support from friends. They did this not because of a weak financial situation, but because they wished to fulfil a desire of creating the edifice in their particular way. Several renovation projects and acquirements had been carried out afterwards. Doing the process in this order, step by step, was much preferred over constructing a high-standard cabin at once. Stein was one of several informants from Vestre Slide who shared this view. He argued:

> In this way we are able to see what is missing and can thereafter carry out a well-considered improvement of that particular thing, rather than integrating something that we will consider superfluous afterwards.[1]

Many like-minded informants had integrated things themselves because they had considered the certain device as so useful, one way or another that it was worth the appropriation. To give but one example: all but two informants in Vestre Slidre benefited from the cell phone temperature manager that lets them turn on the heat the day before arrival. According to many of them, this technology was the most luxurious attribute they had got in place. Likewise, it was the one which had increased their notions of comfort the most. Before they acquired this technology, they had known very well what a cabin without electricity and comfort-providing tools was like. Thus they could justify the purchase from their own experience. Even though the units have altered towards higher standards also in Vestre Slide, a more moderate attitude towards consumption in this context prevailed. As implicated throughout this chapter; a contributor of particular importance may be that the cabin buyers in Vestre Slidre have a determinant role in the decision making. In these ways, the customers are manufacturing their future energy use by choosing what is to be integrated in their cabin themselves.

Concluding Remarks

Given the proliferation of large, high standards mountain cabins, building of these can not be regarded as an environmentally benign practise, even though the building sector has faced an escalating focus on environmental issues. Especially not, as the electronic appliances integrated by the agencies entail that the cabins ought to stay lukewarm constant. Sivertsen and Gurigard have also discovered that the isolation standards of cabins built in the 80's were better than those built at this juncture. The entrepreneurs claimed the opposite. Although many cabin owners appreciate the agency's *helping hand, expertise, and taste*, the company still homogenizes the users by integrating facilities in advance. They leave the users with few remaining choices on the outfitting of their own cabin. The

commercial enterprises have taken it for granted that practically everybody interested in a cabin desires pre-manufactured solutions. But this alleged customer-driven demand for large cabins filled with heating cables is not enough to explain the changes that are actually taking place. This explanation alone cannot account for the growing tendency of high standards, and accordingly, for the transformation of typical cabin life. Cabin life is not, in other words, changing only because of the users themselves. The observed differences between the shaping of cabins in Geilo and Vestre Slidre made this remarkably apparent. In Geilo, the building companies were operating with prefabricated *all-inclusive* cabins, while in Vestre Slidre the cabin buyers were active in the process of composing the prospect as well as in the phase of construction. Vidar's claim of that: I would never thought about acquire some of the devices now in place– and the difference in sizes and shapes of the units in Geilo and Vestre Slidre substantiate this notion. As implicated in this chapter, these differences are strong indicators that the commercial building sector, too, proactively affects the consumption taking place within cabins.

The forthcoming chapter will explore the role of the local policy makers. How do their policy initiatives, regulation plans, practices, and attitudes impact the cabin development?

4. Public Policy Initiatives

The responsibility for second home planning in Norway generally lies within the realm of local government. It is a perception that those tasks and challenges have to be dealt with by local and not by central administration, given the uniqueness of each location. Yet, according to Hall and Müller (2004), little has specifically been achieved on behalf of local government in terms of policy, planning, and regulations of second homes. Vistad and Kaltenborn have, however, recognized that the municipalities, facing a high demand for second homes, have acknowledged the necessity for a controlled and planned development (in Taugbøl et al. 2001). Both Geilo and Vestre Slidre are municipalities as described by Vistad and Kaltenborn. They have quite different strategies for second home planning, but the *direction* is similar. In what follows, a focus will be put on the local administration's perceptions, regulations and initiatives for cabin building, shaping and energy use. This information is provided by the chairman and the environmental manager in Hol, and the plan and industry consultant in Vestre Slidre. The last section will describe the way the policy makers' initiatives are perceived among the cabin owners.

4.1 A Local Core Industry

> Recreational leisure places have emerged and developed throughout the twentieth century, from the first mountain cabins were built straight after World War II up to present leisure cities with standard and coalescing similar to housing estates down town in rural districts. (Oppland county council district 2000 in Mæland 2005:13, my own translation)

The sale of cabins is the largest capital investment in many rural communities at the moment (cf. Bjerke et al. 2006), and the ripple effects connected to cabin building are many. This general optimism implies that cabin arrangements invoke engagement and interest among local policy makers as well as among the local citizens. Many areas are hence being purposed for cabin building, and many

locals are inclined to switch from their original profession to places of work directed towards this segment. As such, the local economy in many Norwegian municipalities is to a high extent dependent on seasonal city people.

Both the representatives from Hol and Vestre Slidre municipality considered cabin development as a core industry. This was first and foremost because it brought along social and economic benefits, according to the chairman in Hol and the plan and industry consultant in Vestre Slidre. Both of them were satisfied with the increased demand for sites and cabins, and regarded the boom in high standard cabins as positive. Comprehensive building plans have consequently been carried through to encounter this demand. The procedure for allotting building permission functioned as follows: Landowners would propose sites that could be arranged for cabins. The municipality would then approve or reject their plans. A basis for a rejection could be if cabins were initiated in preserved areas, or if units would stand too close to one another. The threshold for such rejections was rather high, though, according to the plan and industry consultant.

As highlighted in chapter three, the building entrepreneurs (who in many cases are the landowners), have many ideas for building and shaping, and they are offensive actors in the cabin development. According to Mæland (2005), these ideas and the operationalization of them – such as drawing prospects, marketing and also sale – tend to happen on the front edge of local planning. Occurring in this order, the initiatives proposed by the entrepreneurs and landowners might be assembled in the local guidelines and regulations for cabin building in the region (ibid.). This is because the building agencies justify their time spent on work behind these final proposals and emphasize their particular competence in the construction of cabins (ibid.). They may also highlight the widespread interest by the market for the initiated sites. The local authorities may also regard it as convenient and reasonable to rely on the landowners' and entrepreneurs' expertise and experience (ibid.). It is hence likely that many of these proposals

will be implemented in the strategies for future building without any particular concern and evaluation.

Many places, including Geilo, have prepared master plans for cabin building. These plans are mainly initiated by the local tourist industry and investors, and are directed towards contingencies in expansion and building. These plans include infrastructures, arenas for activities, and proposals for the building of cabin units (cf. the report *Planning Recreational Construction*[32], The Ministry of the Environment 2005). Less focus is put on environmental impacts deriving from cabin development (ibid.). These plans do not deal with standards and sizes of cabins in a direct way. They may, however, implicitly be engaged in an enhancement of standards. They may, for example, initiate upgrading of infrastructures which make it possible to achieve high standards. The master plans have no authorization in the national legislation (ibid.). But it is addressed in the report that the municipalities are free to incorporate items proposed in the plan as long as these are in accordance with the Plan and Building Legislation (The Ministry of the Environment 2005). This legislation has incidentally no clear policy on standards and energy use in the cabin framework. These ways of dealing with second home planning illustrate the local self-determinacy. They also indicate that the guidelines composed by the national authorities are only meant as *suggestions* for building and shaping, and do not function strictly as *regulations*.

The forthcoming arrangements illustrate how the municipalities are maximizing the building potential in the regions. In 2007, Vestre Slidre approved 600 new lots purposed for cabins, whilst the chairman in Hol could refer to thousands of new units (cabins and leisure apartments all together) that would be built during 2007 and 2008. According to the plan and industry consultant in Vestre Slidre, the benefits connected to cabin tourism were many. Among others, it secured workplaces and gave benefits from tax incomes, two factors that counteracted

[32] This manual is based on the reports from, among others, Buskerud county district.

that people moved away from the area. Businesses that were not directly engaged in cabin construction benefited from this segment as well. These include food and clothing stores, restaurants, and gas stations. The manager admitted that some negative environmental impacts are the prize to pay for these benefits. Nevertheless, both municipal informants made sure to point out that their regions did account for nature when dealing with applications for building in proximity of or within preserved areas. They managed this by maximizing the building potential in the purposed areas. By placing the cabins in defined fields it was also easier to arrange for an enhanced technical standard, without impairing other areas.

On the other hand, the preservation plan was not always followed in practice. In the future it was likely that the borders could be stretched to be able to encounter the demand, according to the plan and industry consultant in Vestre Slidre. Both of them acknowledged that the areas had been arranged for cabin development, which accordingly entailed that many cabins ought to be built in the near future. This coincides with what was proposed by Mæland (2005), namely that present and future building of second homes will involve newer cabin landscapes. These fields, 1000 meters above the sea, will include a complete infrastructure that allows the same standards as first homes. Mæland argues that it is not only exceedingly resource-demanding to arrange for a full infrastructure in such a terrain. The future consumption of various technological devices, energy for heating, and the increasingly large sizes are also making demands for a considerable outlet of energy. She also predicts that future cabin life in the mountain will be strongly represented by the growing number of leisure apartments (or ‘blocks of flats above the timber line’ as Mæland calls it). According to her, we are at present only seeing the conjunctures of this development; Norwegian highlands are going from desolate simplicity towards being private recreation cities.

This concern was not shared by the chairman in Hol. He argued that the municipality had long been dependent on tourism. The activities ought to escalate, although negative impacts on the environment would occur. The leisure apartments were regarded as a nice building strategy because they allowed more people to inhabit a space that was formerly – in traditional cabins – used by comparably less people. Regarding the architectural framing, sizes and standards of the cabins, he did not acknowledge the trends as problematic in terms of energy use. According to him, the municipality operated with flexible solutions and individual choices on shaping, but the sizes were restricted not to exceed 150 square meters. The units located in the area were very fashionable in what the chairman expressed:

”The latest cabin construction you find in Hol“.[m]

What he meant was that the region was on the forefront of cabin building, both with regard to architectural design, technical standards, building techniques, and interior concepts. The main challenge, he said, was not to arrange for high-standard seasonal houses, but to have an infrastructure that tolerates a vast number of people. Hence, I found quite opposing opinions on the ripple effects of present cabin construction between Mæland and the chairman.

4.1.1 Energy Consumption and Successful Planning

> It is important to compose premises for economic growth in order to achieve a sustainable development. This entails the importance of changing the production and consumption patterns by a regulated societal development. At the same time one has to secure the interests of commercial actors for an efficient building, and provide for sufficient constraints in order to generate good patterns of development in the long run. The horizon for the progression should be many decades, sometimes even centuries. One cannot take for granted that the present mobility is compatible with the claims of a sustainable development. On the municipal level it is important to have adequate capacities and competence in order to accomplish the regional planning. (The Ministry of the Environment 2005, my own translation)

This announcement to the Norwegian municipalities was aimed at cabin building. The Ministry brought up the importance of restraining the *patterns of*

consumption, an issue which have been largely put aside in existing guidelines. Consumption is, however, interpreted quite differently by the municipal informants who regarded the precise growth in standards of the units as a sign of successful planning. Grefsrud and Lein point out that what clouds several perspectives is a lack of an overall way of thinking (in Taugbøl et al. 2001). It is therefore difficult to encompass a superior and responsible role of management on a municipal level. They say it is important to account for a varied supply of diverse types of cabins because not only high-standard ones provide economic maximization and substance for commerce. This is at least not if one takes into account the environmental impacts, and if one considers the long-term development. The trend towards prefabricated cabins (as discussed earlier) and the arrangements on local level may not be in accordance with this recognition when it comes to new units that are to be constructed. Both of the areas have a wide spectre of cabins from pastures to mountain resorts and everything in between, but the planning for future cabins seems to foster a more similar shaping. The pluralistic look declines accordingly.

According to the plan and industry consultant in Vestre Slidre, planners are frequently comparing with more developed areas. This was in particular true regarding coalescing and how to encourage people to use their cabins more. If there were doubts on how close cabins could be located to one another, positive outcomes from coalescing were often considered as encouraging examples. A place relevant for comparison was Beito, which is in the same county district Oppland, and the area we have become well-known with throughout this study, Geilo. Both of them are places where the building of second homes is closer to ordinary homes with regard to sizes and standards than those in Vestre Slidre. The manager emphasized that:

> We are not adapting to other regions' way of doing things. But we are considering their practices as sources of inspiration which *might* be applicable also here. All we want is to have a successful and efficient planning, and by learning from other municipalities that have long traditions in arrangements for

> cabin building will contribute to such a development. I guess we can function as an example for other areas also.[n]

The local cabin development may plausibly be influenced in a particular direction by looking at more 'resort-developed' places, in particular so towards an increased arrangement of high-standard cabins. This was also indirectly substantiated by the manager when he linked the planning of sites with arrangements of high-standard units.

The consideration that more nights spent at the cabins was most crucial for local value creation was, according to the plan and industry consultant in Vestre Slidre, the primary reason why they arranged for high-standard cabins. More nights spent every year meant more consumption, which in turn meant greater economic benefits. The consultant referred to an example from a high-standard cabin at Vaset (in Vestre Slidre), where the family spent approximately 130 nights at the cabin annually. This example confirmed his ideas that high-standard and nights spent were strongly connected to each other. The municipality is hence encouraging and arranging for the integration of electricity as well as for high standards. The management in other places was in this sense relevant for composing further development strategies. Stricter regulations on building were not considered. What was rather on the run was a further legitimization of these activities. Instead of focusing on attempts that could moderate sizes and energy consumption, it was discussed how the infrastructure could improve so that cabin owners could have the same standard as at home. High energy consumption and increased square meters of the units were, in short, not considered a problem. They were rather considered a positive indication of a successful development.

There was, however, no connection between high standards and longer stays. Those who had more traditional cabins were actually the ones who spent most time at their cabins. By traditional cabins I am here not speaking of the standard definition (neither electricity nor water), but I am referring to places with electricity but no hardware equivalent to primary homes. This perception was confirmed by the differences in usage between Geilo and Vestre Slidre. In Vestre

Slidre, electricity accessibility from 2003 onward entailed more nights spent at the cabin annually, because cabin owners found it easier to travel up at short notice and for weekends. However, high standards in terms of various technological devices and luxurious equipments were not connected to a higher usage. This notion weakens the perception that 'more facilities equal more time spent at the cabin', although these assessments cannot be applied to cabin owners as a whole.

There can be several explanations for this non-existing correlation. Although it *may* indicate that those who are not very concerned about the material conditions within the cabin have greater engagement in outdoor life and appreciate other qualities the place can offer. The cabin owners in Vestre Slidre highlighted cross-country skiing, fishing, and walking trips as their most appreciated and most frequently performed activities. Most of the cabin owners in Geilo, on the other hand, mentioned downhill skiing and golf in addition to walking trips as their most enjoyable activities. It is not the purpose of this study to go into the various outdoor activities and their meaning for cabin life in general. But this dissimilarity of activities taking place *outside* the cabin may be an indicator for life *inside* the cabin as well – it illustrates how people's preferences and fields of interest differ, and that different people value different things. Nevertheless, the local policy makers' attitudes and the regulation plans contribute to constrain a certain development. In the end, the building of second homes must follow the local jurisdiction.

4.2 Regulation from Theory to Practice

It is a national aim that cabins shall have a location and a shaping based on the consideration of the particular landscape, environmental values, resources, and aesthetics. This is stated in the guide manual *Planning Recreational Construction* (The Ministry of the Environment 2005). Thereafter it is postulated that those who carry the main responsibility for achieving this aim are the local authorities,

and that their main tools are municipality plans[33] and regulation plans[34] (ibid.). Building of second homes is hence to a large extent based on subjective judgement and interests on local level.

The regulation plans in Norwegian municipalities for cabin building often involve various requirements. Locations and sites, maximum size and height are commonly addressed items. Also restrictions for number of small buildings on the yard, colour use and requirements for confirming to traditional architectural design are often set here (Flyen and Swensen in Taugbøl et al. 2001). According to the chairman in Hol, the municipality has composed a regulation plan for construction and building of secondary dwellings which covered several of these items. As mentioned earlier, the plan involved a maximum size of 150 square meters. A certain distance had to be held from cultural heritage and preserved areas. Moreover, it was decided that the height of the cabin could not surpass 5.5 meters, and that proper systems for water and drainage had to be organized. From what I observed, however, the maximum size could not be taken that seriously, or there must be lack of a regulatory body: Several of the visited cabins in the region had a far larger size than 150 square meters. As noted in the second chapter, the *average* size of the cabins in the sample in Geilo was 157 square meters. The chairman also mentioned the national guideline on energy use in cabins that are larger than 100 square meters, but he could not give me more detailed information about how this was put into practice.

The plan and industry consultant in Vestre Slidre could not refer to a specific regulation plan arranged for second home development, although it had turned out to be one of the region's core industries. By lacking proper management

[33] A municipality plan (*kommuneplan*) sketches out the broad lines for the development in the district. This plan also takes the neighboring municipalities into account. Regarding cabin development, the arrangement of a particular construction pattern and superior infrastructure are relevant. With other words, the composing of a 'local cabin policy' including aims and strategies on the foundation of national guidelines and superior aims, constitute an important part in rural municipalities where cabin building plays a decisive role in the local value creation (ibid.).

[34] The regulation plan is more detail-oriented, and it is based on the aims and strategies set in the superior municipality plan. Such details include, for example, maximum sizes and energy consumption.

documents, the municipality is flagrantly contradicting what the Ministry of the Environment proposed in 2005. At least as important, this might indicate that there is lack of a regulatory body *or* concern beyond what is advocated in the guide manual. This is somehow recognized by the Ministry who has acknowledged that both national and local policy makers are lacking knowledge on the total effects of existing and new cabin building. There is hence a need for a comprehensive and detailed supervision that will serve to arrange for, and to improve, the competence level pertaining to cabin building. This cause, in addition to the general optimism for the subject, might be the decisive reason why the municipalities have so few follow-up procedures.

Sivertsen and Gurigard have looked into the national guidance for energy politics proposed to Norwegian municipalities. They postulate the following:

> An efficient and environmentally benign energy provisioning shall be arranged for based on the various local solutions on what are the most right and possible attempts to do. The municipalities are playing a key role in the development of a local energy policy. They shall contribute to local resolutions on environmentally benign energy supply and reduced energy consumption. They shall cooperate with the energy suppliers and other local actors on the energy side in order to develop necessary frameworks for energy resolutions. They shall use the Plan and Building Legislation in order to accomplish their politics. Other legislations shall also be noted when necessary and practical. The government will provide policy instruments that can make the local policy more elaborate (Sivertsen and Gurigard in Taugbøl et al. 2001:55 my own translation)

This energy announcement appears quite indistinct. It seems to give the municipalities more or less a local, self-determinant energy management as long as the environment is taken into consideration, and once again, it seems to lack a regularity body. There are, for example, no incentives for sustainable energy planning (efforts for reducing the consumption or for boosting green energy), nor are there any concrete guidelines or regulations to follow besides the Plan and Building Legislation. The latter has no clear energy policy when it comes to consumption and isolation standards (in the item of technical directive) for second homes, *even though* this ‘industry’ constitutes an important role in several Norwegian municipalities. It is, however, important to acknowledge that the

energy directive in the municipalities is under revision in the Plan and Building Legislation. It is not directly aimed towards cabins, but towards energy efficiency on a local level as a whole. The integration of water driven heating in new buildings is a main point here. This consideration for the environment, too, must be reflected in the municipal and regulation plans.

The Ministry of the Environment acknowledges that the existing knowledge concerning construction of cabins and its energy consequences is not adequate (white paper 21, 2004-2005). This was also regarded as a field in which a target was to be fulfilled. It is stated in the white paper that certain attempts to reduce the electricity outlet will be evaluated based on the growth of energy consumption on 60 per cent from 1994 to 2001. Given the lack of concrete attempts and guidelines, cabins are far behind residents where energy efficiency and the use of alternative sources are concerned. In addition, the units are located in windy and often cold areas over large parts of the year. They thus require more energy for heating than lower lying dwellings. Due to the weak guidelines, it is therefore not surprising that neither Hol nor Vestre Slidre have a specific item regarding energy planning for second homes in the steering document, in particular when neither of them thinks it problematic to build high-standard cabins with high energy consumption. Since there are no specific directives on the maximum outlet for energy in cabins – except for 'taking the environment into account in the planning' – regulations on energy consumption must occur through private and optional agreements. The existing energy plans are directed towards the capacity grid and future estimations, so as to ensure a correct dimensioning of the supply (The Ministry of the Environment 2005:31). Or, to put it differently: so as to not confine or restrain the consumption itself.

4.2.1 An Environmental Mascot?

In the 1990's, a reform was launched in order to strengthen the environmental protection in Norwegian municipalities. According to this report, there was an

earmarking of financial grants for environmental purposes, in particular purposed for the employment of an environmental manager in each region. The outcome was very successful: 90 per cent of the municipalities could refer to such a position in 1997 (Teien 2007). However, when the grants ceased that same year, the amount of the positions declined drastically. In 2004, Program for Research and Documentation for a Sustainable Society (*Prosus* 2004) found that only 10 per cent of the municipalities had maintained their environmental manager. Furthermore, they discovered that among those municipalities that had such an employment, many had reduced it to being a mere part-time job.

According to Teien, the decline in environmental competence has occurred at the same time as the municipalities have got a growing responsibility for nature conservation (2007). She also refers to a cooperation project established in 2005 called *The Municipality's Network for Environmental and Societal Development* (my own translation), a network with a particular focus on sustainable land use. According to Teien, this project to increase the consciousness of a sustainable development concerning land use and strengthen the environmental competence on local level has failed. This was acknowledged by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The organization conducted a survey that was to cover the number of municipalities who actually participated in this network. The result was discouraging: Only 10.7 per cent of the municipalities did. Of those, only half could refer to an environmental manager (Teien 2007). This indicates that in the year 2007, only 5.3 per cent of the country's municipalities participated in the sustainable land use network *and* had an environmental manager position. Some of the municipalities that are not included in the network are big in size and capable of implementing efforts since they are likely to have the financial abilities and human competence for doing so. Generally, however, it was the smaller municipalities that lacked environmental competence (cf. Teien 2007).[35] Flyen and Swensen recognize that a significant reason for the uncritical building

[35] Smaller here does not necessarily mean in terms of land, but a smaller population and administration.

in small and rural municipalities is precisely the lack of human resources and competence in the administrative procedure. They have explored vast differences in levels of environmental competence throughout the country. These differences again result in variations in building practices and land management. This shows that there is reason to worry. Several of these smaller municipalities are managing extensive areas of land, and cabin building is an important industry for them.

Vestre Slidre is an example of a region where the environmental manager had to step down after the allocation ceased. Environmental issues, building and shaping of cabins were divided across different departments in the municipality, and different executive officers would make subjective judgements from time to time. As the plan and industry consultant has pointed out, energy consumption deriving from cabins was rather encouraged than restrained. He could not refer to a specific steering document where guidelines for energy and second homes were stated.

In Hol, on the other hand, the chairman could refer to an operational environmental manager. He emphasized that although the municipality encourage cabin development, the environment is not given low priority. He emphasized that their manager functioned as an advisor in building plans for, among others, second homes. As Teien has described, it was the state that financed the position in the 90s. After the allocation disappeared, the municipality decided to maintain the position, which actually has shown to be quite exceptional for Norwegian municipalities. We might then presume that regulations for second homes regarding shaping and sizing were in place, and that they were being taken seriously. But this was not actually so.

The environmental manager in Hol explained that his position of dealing with environmental issues only amounted to 50 per cent of his working hours. This was, incidentally, a minor detail that the chairman had failed to address during our conversation. Given that the municipality only has a part-time job purposed

for environmental issues, and given that cabin building is a core industry there, we may reasonable deduce a certain lack of attempts to carry out a truly sustainable planning. In addition, these observations indicate that such issues may be considered not to be all that serious, and that they have to stand behind economic vistas and short-term gains. The environmental manager did announce, however, that nature preservation was high on the local agenda, mainly regarding national parks and vulnerable areas. According to his own description, his job involved diverse domains within the development of the society department, including for example cultural activities for school pupils. Tasks related to environmental issues involved basically nature preservation in relation to business interests. Seen from an environmental perspective, he postulated the following:

> Personally I regard it as advantageous to slow down the cabin building. I do recognize that nature is suffering from the extensive building. Nevertheless I have to prioritize the economic and social benefits and adjust my views in a negotiation process. Well, as far as I can remember there has only been one incident where I have espoused that an area had reached its carrying capacity.[o]

This statement relates to what Mæland has pointed out: That local environmental committee, hereunder the remaining environmental managers, often have a spread and vague mandate (2005). This again implies that non-economic values are merely made *visible*. But they are not, in the final analysis, being *prioritized*.

During the elaboration of a regulation plan, the environmental manager's role was to address various perspectives on practical proposals before a final decision was made. According to him, the regulation plan which was under elaboration at the time of my telephone interviews (autumn 2007) was less liberal than the 2002 document, but it was still a go-on plan regarding future building. There was, for example, no mandate to set regulations where shaping of the cabins was concerned, except for the size (which is not put into practice), or the amount of energy consumed. In the guideline for municipal management of second home building, it says that "the Ministry of the Environment encourages local plans that emphasize a varied construction and meet a set of environmental criteria,

including sizes, shapes and standards" (2005:8-9, my own translation). This implies that the municipalities have a mandate for setting more ambitious criteria for construction. The manager did in fact acknowledge that the municipality had not defined energy planning as their responsibility, but that they still carry through attempts to achieve a more sustainable energy supply and consumption. This coincides with what was recognized by Sivertsen and Gurigard (2001), namely that the national energy postulation is not clear or ambitious enough to secure a sustainable and guiding energy policy on a local level.

There was a however an item stated in the regulation plan that was being practiced to a large extent; Hol municipality did encourage new cabin owners to pursue alternative energy sources through a standard information letter. Due to the increasingly popular leisure apartments, the regulation plan stated that ground heating must be taken into consideration before making a final decision. Hol's environmental manager assumed that it sufficed simply to make people aware of the various energy possibilities. Interfering with people's business what concerned their cabins was out of the question. Neither did he acknowledge the growing energy consumption deriving from the cabins as problematic.

One can raise questions to which extent his position has an impact on the planning of the energy consumption in second homes, after all. As we know by now, cabins in Geilo are larger and of a higher standard than the cabins in Vestre Slidre, a place that does not have an environmental manager. But as electricity was first available to cabin owners in 2003, the shaping and standards have not yet had the time to expand in unrestrained proportions as they have in Geilo, where the infrastructure for high-standard cabins has existed a longer time.

4.3 Conflicts Among Cabin Owners and Local Policy Makers

Chapter two explored the different motives and perceptions for a cabin stay among the cabin owners in Vestre Slidre and in Geilo. It showed that the cabin owners in the latter region were generally more concerned about luxurious outfits in order to meet expectations of comfort and correctness. These different perceptions on life within the cabin walls were also reflected in the way my informants perceived the cabin development in their region and the practices initiated by the local policy makers. According to Hall and Müller (2004), cabin owners are excluded from certain citizenship rights by virtue of their incapacity to vote. Accordingly, no matter how frequent the cabins are used, cabin owners will not be able to influence the local society to the same extent as permanent residents. The Ministry of the Environment has, however, stated that active participation in the planning procedure of second home construction by the locals, landowners, commerce, municipalities and the cabin owners are important, and are to be encouraged (2005).

Conflicts arose frequently between the municipality and second home owners in both regions regarding, among other things, a lack of participation pertaining to the cabin development and land use. Driving forces for a re-evaluation in building procedures were often proposed by existing cabin owners in both of the municipalities. Several complaints were received annually, but very few of them were accepted. According to the chairman in Hol, complaints are basically never approved, as many of the issues people complain about – such as lack of view, traffic, excessive standards, and coalescing – are not stated in the regulation plan.

In Vestre Slidre, many of the cabin owners were engaged in an ongoing process concerning a discontent over the centralized municipal control of cabin development in the region. They were angry about the conditions the area had faced during the last decade. The new constructions were for example regarded as disfigured compared to the existing cabins. Several of the cabin owners felt

that both the sizes, choices of materials, and shaping severed the new cabins from the remaining community. Their discontent grew particularly after they got to know that 200 high-standard cabins were being planned to be located close by. The news resulted in a collective complaint against the building plans. Kjell, a cabin owner in Vestre Slidre, argued that the planned units imposed a residentialization in a small-scale region. He was also conducive for the complaining process and described his anger as follows:

> We are tired of being negatively affected by the decision making enforced by the municipality and the landowners. We fear that the environment will face a further deterioration. The establishment of these 200 cabins will mean increased traffic and noise. The infrastructure has to be improved by the construction of several roads that would additionally harm the ecology and the life up here.[p]

Kjell argued further that if the cabin owners had a vote in the planning process, nature would have been preserved better. He said:

> The construction of the 200 high-standard cabins will not only fracture with the environment, but will also contribute to weakening the peculiar cabin culture up here. Most of us are reasonable regarding shaping and sizing of our cabins. We cooperate with nature rather than performing exploitive activities […] it is petrifying if the municipality intends to adapt practices from other places where nature has been intimidated.[q]

The practice Kjell referred to is the one confirmed by the plan and industry consultant in the municipality, as noted earlier in this chapter. Kjell argued that the local authorities must not brush aside the people who have inhabited the area for decades just because of short-term economic maximization. He asked:

> Should we not preserve areas for those who seek nature and not commercialized residences in the highlands?[r]

He said that notions of wellbeing are overshadowed by profit-driven ways of thinking. Two other informants, Tor and Haldbjørg, emphasized the particular economic contribution to the municipality that existing cabin owners make. Haldbjørg argued:

> We are providing 1 billion annually by purchasing goods and services in the region. Does not that justify why we should have a vote on matters concerning the local development?[s]

According to Fountain and Hall, second home owners tend to appreciate the same aspects of the local community as the local population, but they are usually less positive towards changes in the region (2002). The locals are often more taken up with growth and commercialization. The cabin owners on the other hand, tend to be more concerned by environmental questions and preservation of nature, and they tend to be less positive about development in the regions (cf. Grefsrud and Lein, in Taugbøl et al. 2001). As a result, two rather conflicting interests are clashing. The wish to achieve another lifestyle than what people are accustomed to from back home may be the overriding source of resistance against urbanization and large-scale tourism. We have explored these issues in detail in chapter two. On the other hand, cabin owners are important contributors and 'resources' for a local development and economic growth in many rural municipalities.

It was also recognized, although merely by a few of the informants from Geilo, that nature was suffering from the comprehensive and uncritical cabin building. Some cabin owners pointed to a lack of political interference and called for more regulation. Tor Even, for example, said:

> The people here are free to construct and shape their cabins as they please without interference. I do think it is quite odd that the municipalities do not respond to some of these practices.[t]

The recently built leisure apartments were in particular regarded as too high, so that they destroyed the view for many. They were also described as improper in the landscape because of the urban look. The informants who regarded the development as problematic were most often the ones with the less equipped cabins, but also those who had high-standard cabins could complain about other people's way of doing things. They would complain that a neighbor had taken a step beyond him or herself by integrating equipments that were even more visible than that of their own cabin. Kari, for instance, highlighted that cabin owners in the area were too tied up with high-tech cabins. She said that what the region needed to turn this trend were political restrictions. She exemplified the general

lack of environmental concern by referring to several cabins that were equipped with heating cables on the terrace – *one thousand meters above the sea*.

Pollution and noise deriving from traffic were also common source for frustration. One informant described the conditions like this:

> Driving up here in public holidays is similar to driving in Oslo centre because of the traffic jams and lack of parking lots.[u]

Despite such views, environmental concern belonged to the exceptions (except for the traffic aspect). The majority of the informants from Geilo did not consider the high-scale cabin construction as negative. Hege put it like this:

> The cattle have plenty of space, just look at the dirt they have put in front of the entrance.[v]

Irrelevant whether views as the above were expressed by owners of high-standard cabins or more traditional ones, such descriptions serve to illustrate that cabin owners are not the only key players in this development: In many cases it may clearly be those who initiate technological fixes and large sizes. Nevertheless, when the municipalities arrange for a certain type of cabins, and accordingly for a certain lifestyle in the mountains, it seems that people are responding to the local attitudes by unrestrained consumption patterns. The diverse local practices and attitudes among the cabin owners substantiate this notion. When Vestre Slidre now seems to move towards large and well-equipped cabins, this might bring along similar attitudes among the existing and new cabin owners as an implicit response to the habitual ways of doing things (cf. Bourdieu 1984). It may also have an opposite effect: It could foster dissatisfaction and frustration. This may again inflict conflicts among the cabin owners and contribute to a strained cabin culture.

Concluding Remarks

Cabin building is one of the most important activities for the local economy in Hol and Vestre Slidre. Therefore, an optimism and engagement prevailed to

intensify this development. The Ministry of the Environment is encouraging the municipalities to draw municipal plans and more detailed regulation plans that include environmental considerations into second home development. Hol had a regulation plan for cabin building, but the plan did not consider energy consumption. The stated maximum size was neither in many cases carried into effect as there was shown to be a lack of a regulatory body *or* concern. It seemed that the master plan drawn by the tourist industry may be as influential as the municipal documents. These plans tend to initiate improvements to infrastructures that allow the same consumption as in first homes. Hol had retained the environmental manager even after the allocation ceased. Vestre Slidre had neither regulation plans for second home building and shaping, nor an environmental manager. Nevertheless, despite the lack of such a position, the shaping and outfitting of the cabins here were more moderate than the units in Geilo. The municipality was however in the perception that high standards entailed more nights spent. To accomplish an efficient development in these terms, the municipality looked at other more developed places' way of doing things. Increased energy consumption in the cabin framework was actually regarded as a symbol of successful planning. This indicates that the traditional cabin area may face a new style in the coming years. The cabin owners from Vestre Slidre were first and foremost concerned about the local authority's inclination towards a *residentialization* of the area and called for more participation in the planning. Some of the cabin owners from Geilo also shared this view, but they were among the exceptions.

This chapter has revealed that environmental consideration was mainly directed towards the preservation of areas, which seemed to be taken seriously. Standards, sizing and energy use, on the other hand, were given less attention and concern.

5. Energy and Environmental Consequences

The aim with this last chapter is to place the present cabin development in a broader and environmental perspective – with a particular focus on energy consumption as one of the major contemporary impacts. From the cabin owners' consumption and perceptions of cabin life, through the building entrepreneurs' construction methods, to the local policy initiatives for cabin development, it is possible to reveal the consequences of this development. Energy use in this context has indeed evoked less attention than for example the influence imposed on the biotic community, wild animals and the curtailed public accessibility to recreational areas. This lack of concern has, however, a logical explanation, given that spacious, high-standard and energy-demanding cabins have not been a particular actuality before the mid-nineties (Sivertsen and Gurigard in Taugbøl et al. 2001). Energy will here mainly be centered on consumption connected to the use of the cabins, but a review of other energy-demanding activities that follow in the wake of cabin construction will also be given.

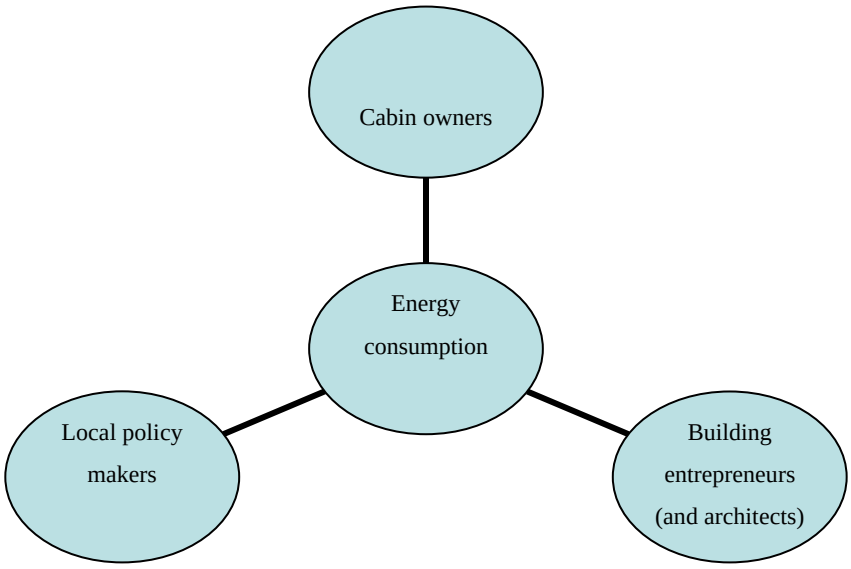
5.1 Energy from Cabin Activities: A Complex Issue

Energy consumption deriving from cabins is the environmental consequence I have been implicating in this study, and it is not without reason. Between 1999 and 2005, the energy consumption in Norwegian cabins increased by as much as 67 per cent. By comparison, household energy consumption increased by only three per cent (Gurigard in Sæther 2008). This reveals the velocity and scope of the changes Norwegian cabin life has gone through, as well as the outcome of this transition. The energy outlet taking place in this context constitutes a growing part of the total demand in many rural municipalities such as Hol (where Geilo is located) and Vestre Slidre. Gurigard argues that the focus has been centered on energy consumption in households and places of work, ignoring the growth of energy use from seasonal houses (ibid.). The shaping, sizing, and the

escalated energy use from cabins have hence developed without particular notice – or concern, as Gurigard claims.

The previous chapters have addressed three different actors who by their own means influence the energy consumption. As we have seen, the consumers themselves only represent one part in the present development – albeit a crucial one. The social base load, i.e. those demands for energy produced by ordinary routine, goes hand in hand with the manufacturer's method of constructing and equipping the edifice (Wilhite and Lutzenhiser 1999:315-316). The difference between the units located in Geilo and Vestre Slidre illustrates the influence the entrepreneurs have on the cabin owners' consumption. These practices comply with what Wilhite and Lutzenhiser recognize, namely that "all energy loads can be seen as social accomplishments to which designers, engineers, architects, and manufacturers all contribute, each with their own socially constructed traditions" (1999:316). Of similar importance is the infrastructure arranged by the local policy makers and their vague regulations and guidelines for cabin building. Chapter four explored the municipality representatives in Hol and Vestre Slidre and their satisfaction over the growing number of high-standard units as well as the upgrading of existing ones. These representatives even considered high energy use as a sign of successful planning. Attempts at arranging for an infrastructure that allows people to make use of comfort-providing and technical devices are therefore anticipated, even though the environmental costs are high and the terrain makes it difficult and costly to do so. This has moreover occurred unconcerned because the municipalities are strongly self-determinate concerning cabin building, combined with few, or no, control measures from the national authorities.

These actors all together – the *cabin owners*, the *building entrepreneurs* (and architects) and the *local policy makers*, contribute to what can be regarded as an unrestrained development in terms of consumption. F*igure 2* demonstrates this:



The Energy-Demanding Process of Construction

Requests for energy in cabins depend on a number of crucial factors. The sizing and shaping of the edifice, including isolation standards, are physical attributes which determine future energy use. Climatic factors and site locations, hereunder wind and hours of sunlight, are also decisive. Moreover, days of occupation and sociocultural perceptions on consumption in this context are equally significant (Sivertsen and Gurigard in Taugbøl et al. 2001). The demand is further dependent on additional factors such as the household's consumption patterns, number of technological utensils and perceptions of how these ought to be treated.

The total energy demand for cabin purposes does not, however, only involve the consumption connected to the use per se, but also the planning and building of cabins in the highlands. According to Selvig (2007), there are three main

activities that require energy in the stage of building and management. These are *first*, the production and distribution of materials. *Second*, there is the *construction phase* that includes energy for machines and transport. These activities are clearly more resource-demanding in mountain areas than in urban ones. The remote and topographic location quite obviously makes cabin building a very resource-intensive affair. The infrastructure is also less developed than in urban areas. Constructing high-standard cabins thus requires installing energy tubes and cables for television and telephone lines in a difficult terrain (Mæland 2005). *Third*, there is the *transport* connected to the usage of the place. As public transport is unavailable in the highlands (or the stations are a few miles from the fields), automobiles are more or less the sole means of transport. All of the informants stated their dependency on an automobile for the use of their cabins. Besides this, each and all of the cabin owners from Vestre Slidre [36] were familiar with snowmobiles during the winter because the roads were not ploughed. This service was offered by the landowners. The so-called "Fjellservice", or mountain service, gives its operators a considerable income, especially during the Easter holidays. Taking all these activities into account, from the construction phase, transport to the cabin and the usage of it, energy use in this framework shows to be a very demanding process, and complex in character that deserves more attention and concern.

5.2 Implications for Energy Suppliers

The situation at this juncture is that many energy suppliers face situations of shortage with their transmission of electricity, even though Norway is a prolific energy producer (Sivertsen and Gurigard in Taugbøl et al. 2001). The problem arises in high seasons, i.e. public holidays and particular weekends, because of the considerably high energy demand from second home owners (ibid.). This

[36] Skiing with pulk for bringing children and luggage was also practiced by many in Vestre Slidre.

occurs even though the transformation grid is managed on a peak modulation, simply because the consumption of energy steadily reaches new heights (Mæland 2005). The growing *number* of cabins directly explains parts of the energy situation in certain districts. But of similar significance are the growing *sizes* and *standards*, both of which serve as triggering factors for why second homes assemble a large share of the total net capacity in many places. Several of the cabin owners in Geilo postulated that the amount of energy consumed in the cabin was higher compared to a similar period of time in their primary residence. The reason for this was, as described in chapter two, that they wished to heighten the senses of comfort through their various technological appliances. This was not the case in Vestre Slidre, even though the cabin owners there also highlighted notions of comfort as the determining factor for increased consumption.

Energy shortages were also acknowledged by the engineer at Hallingdal energy supply. He accentuated that during high seasons of cabin use, problems sometimes arose with the distribution network due to the many users at the same time. Pressure occurred when many of the 5380 cabin owners turned on their heat, light, and electrical appliances to a maximum on a Friday night, combined with the more or less regular distribution to the households. Many companies actually have to buy energy from foreign markets in order to meet the demand for energy from cabin and leisure apartment owners. It is not unusual, according to Sivertsen and Gurigard, for Norwegian energy companies to be compelled to supply expensive energy bought from Sweden, and sometimes even coal from Denmark (in Taugbøl et al. 2001:53). They recognize the excessive use of energy from second home households as the main reason for the lack of self-supporting energy transfer in many rural municipalities. Anyway, cabin owners were a customer segment considered as a vast target area and an important foundation for the business, according the two engineers from Hallingdal and Valdres energy supply. The companies regarded the comprehensive cabin building and the modernization of existing ones as entirely positive, although challenges

pertaining to the distribution were brought along. This was given the positive implications for their growth.

The engineer noted:

> There are no doubts that the energy demand deriving from the cabin owner segment is the demand which increases the most – actually way beyond the residential household consumption. We have faced several challenges, particularly during the last years, but we are constantly working on enhancing the grid. It is of course costly to adjust the transformer on a peak modulation, but that is necessary in order to prevent a failure in the system. It is after all our responsibility to meet the demand and we will provide the best service for our customers.[w]

What he emphasizes here is the capacity for the energy supply, rather than the consumption in question. The transformers have to keep up with the increase in the energy peaks. The cabin owners are hence granted the freedom to further increase their use of energy, because the supply company will meet their demand either way. This entails that people can continue to benefit from heating cables on 150 square meters, use washing machines, PlayStations, multi channel televisions, large refrigerators, and jacuzzis – all at the same time a thousand meters above the sea. They can continue simply because there are no set limitations for energy use.

Wilhite and Lutzenhiser maintain that the planning and building for social peaks[37] into the social hardware not only entails constant energy drains resulting from over-dimensioning. It will also contribute to an expanding base load at the levels of the household, the energy system, and the society (1999:318). Their observation is highly applicable in this context. This study has shown that the commercial actors and the public administration are arranging for a growth in the base load, namely by arranging for a certain type of cabin and accordingly setting the groundwork for a certain cabin lifestyle. This indicates what I have stressed throughout this study; that the cabin owners only constitute one of the crucial

[37] Wilhite and Lutzenhiser describe social peaks as the increases in consumption of space, water, food, lighting, cooling, heating, travel, refrigeration, and so on which are due to certain social events and activities (1999:316).

actors for the present development. Overtly they serve as the initiative makers for different and/or increased consumption, but they may also adjust to the physical and social arrangements and make manufactured choices into their own.

Since there is a lack of response on excessive sizes, standards, and energy use, many cabin owners may incorporate a high level of energy consumption into their routine. A high energy bill is, after all, the (only) outcome of their practices. Wilhite and Lutzenhiser argue that when the peaks are embedded in the ordinary social loads – the taken for granted habits – they are harder to recognize and even less likely to change in a different direction (ibid:320). Their recognition seems also to be relevant here. In Geilo, nine of the cabin owners announced plans of integrating more technological fixes. In Vestre Slidre, four announced the same plans. These equipments could be everything from a rice cooker to a jacuzzi or electric garage. What is important here is that the consumption among the cabin owners seemed to be leading in a direction of increases. It may hence seem to be a paradox that eight of the cabin owners in Geilo and twelve in Vestre Slidre expressed environmental concern when it came to their cabin area. Sizing and shaping of their *own* cabin, however, seemed to fail to be included in this concern. Their apprehension was more towards the building of more cabins in the area and protection of preserved areas. As outlined in chapter four, many of the cabin owners in Vestre Slidre were stressed over the unrestrained consumption and the planning for leisure resorts in the area. But as we have seen, also here consumption and energy use seems to increase. This is underlined by the ruling inclination to establish technological devices and nest building activities involving enlargements and upgrading of the edifice. Concerning the latter, six in Geilo and ten in Vestre Slidre postulated that they discussed future building (enlargement), an observation that implicates that also the average size of respectively 157 and 98 square meters will increase.

These first and foremost novel attitudes towards the physical nature of a cabin seem to arise in the wake of the initiatives put forward by the commercial and

public level. As stated by Shove, “when redefining senses of convenience, obligation, and normal practice, there is no way back” (2003:194). Her argument seems to be a reality in this framework. It seems hard to imagine a change towards a more sustainable course, in particular because there seems to be a lack of initiative makers for doing so.

5.2.1 A Sustainable Energy Consumption?

The annual energy consumption was 11,975 kWh in the cabins in Hol municipality according to engineer at Hallingdal energy supply. This was, he informed me, twice as much as it had been a decade ago. He emphasized that cabins are taking at least as much effect as dwellings, although the quantity is lower due to the seasonal-dependent demand. As delineated in the method section, there are 5380 cabins and 4700 residences in Geilo. Or to say it differently: There are 680 more cabins than first homes. For comparison, the annual outlet in local households was 20.811 kWh. It would seem as if these numbers imply that the cabins are inhabited half of the year. But as we saw earlier, this is not the case: The average cabin owner in Geilo spent no more than five weeks annually at their cabins. Earlier studies have also estimated annual time spent at a cabin as being approximately 6 weeks (cf. Kaltenborn et al. 2005). This confirms some of the cabin owners’ acknowledgements that the energy use in this framework is higher compared to similar periods of time at home.

Many characteristics of the cabins located in Geilo explain the high outlet. The climatic differences between the highlands and places of lower altitudes imply that more energy is needed for maintaining a comfortable indoor temperature in an edifice located in the mountains. This high consumption is also explained by the replacement of fire wood and gas with electricity, combined with the increasingly large sizes where cabins now often have two floors[38]. Similarly

[38] Each and all of the *newest* cabins I visited in Geilo had two floors. All of those visited in Vestre Slidre had only one floor.

determinant is, as stressed throughout this study, the inclination to establish electrical appliances such as various household utensils, entertainment items, heating cables, and so on. Moreover, the fact that many cabins are kept lukewarm (5-7 C) throughout the year serves as a core explanation for the small surplus between households and cabins. A survey of cabin owners' energy patterns in the municipalities Rollag, Sigdal and Hol (all in Buskerud county district) revealed that cabins exceeding 120 square meters kept 65 square meters of the total area frost-free (Velvin 2004:20). This implies that a large part of the edifice is kept lukewarm throughout the year. This coincides with the information I gathered on heating practices in Geilo: It was a familiar pattern for my informants to keep the electricity on, in particular on the ground floor, even in periods where the cabins were not inhabited. Cabins of less than 120 square meters were kept lukewarm on 25 square meters, according to Velvin (ibid.). Contradicting the views above, the engineer at Hallingdal energy supply considered this trend as positive. It entailed a more stable and predictable outlet – and accordingly high incomes for his business.

The engineer at Valdres energy supply estimated the average annual energy consumption in cabins in Vestre Slidre as being 7450 kWh. This number has also escalated during a short period of time, from when electricity was available in 2003 until today. The smaller sizes, the (more) moderate attitudes towards luxurious devices, and the fact that none of the cabin owners here kept the cabin lukewarm constantly, are conducive to this difference in the energy use between the regions. In return, the cabins were in use three more weeks in this sample than those in Geilo, making the difference of 4525 kWh even more remarkable. However, many cabins in Vestre Slidre are facing an upgrading of standards as well as enlargements in sizes. In addition, spacious and high-standard cabins in the region are being planned, something that was confirmed to me both by the building entrepreneurs and the municipal representatives. This implies that the area is potentially moving towards losing its traditional characteristics of being a place consisting of many classical cabins that demand a low or medium amount

of energy. Hence, it may imply that the average energy consumption will increase within a short period of time. In Geilo, these changes in cabin characteristics occurred rapidly after the Winter Olympics in 1994. There is still a steady growth in standards and sizes, but those built at present are more or less recognizable as those built straight after the games. This implies that the so-called *cabin revolution* at its highest peak occurred in the mid-nineties. Since this development seems to take root in Vestre Slidre these days, during a few years, the cabin fields here can risk being largely modified. This may not be in the accurate terms as in Geilo, but it is likely that the cabins will move towards a direction of increases in the consumption of energy. This also indicates that the differences between the two cabin regions regarding consumption may evaporate in the long term.

In the county districts Buskerud and Oppland, where Geilo and Vestre Slidre are located, one finds the largest number of cabins in Norway. There are still quite a few cabins of so-called traditional standards, even though large and 'all-inclusive' leisure houses and apartments are increasingly infiltrating the area. A challenge will arise pertaining to the transmission system if these traditional cabins are also to be transformed into high-standard houses, and when the building of new units comes on top of it. Sivertsen and Gurigard estimate that if the augmentation in the energy demand and effect outlet continues, it is most plausible to presume that many energy suppliers will face considerable challenges in their energy transfer (in Taugbøl et al. 2001). This will, moreover, further increase the total energy consumption and the accordingly emissions in the municipalities. This is precisely because energy use in this scope deriving from second home households is a relatively new phenomenon.

5.2.2 The Energy Situation and Policy Initiatives

This development is plainly not in accordance with national aims for reducing the consumption of electricity and increasing the flexibility of energy, i.e. by the

use of cleaner sources. Neither is it in correlation with future energy prognoses for several municipalities, cf. the many public debates on energy shortage in many places. In recent years, electricity deriving from hydroelectric power has been the dominant energy supplier for stationary purposes in Norway. Compared to many other nations, Norway has plenty of cheap energy, but this situation has changed during the last decade. The combination of a lack of building possibilities for more hydroelectric power plants, few efforts for promoting and subsidizing alternative energy solutions, and higher energy consumption, might bring along a strained electricity supply in many municipalities in Norway in the coming years (Mæland 2005). The construction of second homes is consuming a significant as well as augmented share in what was outlined earlier. According to Mæland, many resources, including a vast amount of energy, are consumed by second home owners. As initiated in the introduction chapter, a scenario for the near future, based on the practices from 1994-2004, shows that the demand for electricity for these purposes actually will quadruple from 2001-2030 (Mæland 2005, Wachenfeldt 2004). Taking into account the national aims of reducing CO_2 emissions and the energy situation many regions face, the building of high standard cabins and the consumption within them contradicts what is stated, and it is not in line with a sustainable development pattern.

The Ministry of the Environment has developed instruments in order to restrain the energy use from cabins (cf. report *Planning Recreational Construction* 2005). The report addresses the main attempts to improve isolation standards, effect confinement, and a two-price system – one for local households and another for second home owners. The isolation standards are another element which may be an item stated in a plan and not put into action, since cabins of logged timber are a predominant characteristic of present construction. All of the newly built cabins visited in Geilo were of logged timber except for the leisure apartments. Only two of those investigated in Vestre Slidre were not timber-framed, and these were also the relatively new ones (younger than 7 years). The reason why this is emphasized is that logged timber normally has lower isolation capability than

timber-framed cabins (Mæland 2005). Effect confinement and a two-price system also contradict what was postulated by the energy suppliers. Both of the companies operated with a single tariff for cabin owners and local citizens, although the latter do have a lower and fixed price, due to their regular outlet. Gurigard calls for a higher tariff for cabins because of the rapidly growing consumption in this segment (in Sæther 2008). This, he says, would also be an effective attempt to avert electricity waste. He recognizes that the distribution grid in certain regions is facing problems due to the fact that the demand is higher than the capacity. His acknowledgment complies with the challenges addressed by the engineer from Hallingdal energy supply in peak seasons. Gurigard states that the problem should be revitalized. This means that the distribution challenge must not necessarily imply that the capacity ought to be increased – but rather operationalize efforts for reducing what he terms consumption of a luxury character (ibid.). This may hence be more suitable than constantly trying to overcome the peak situations. However, this does not necessarily imply attempts for reducing the consumption connected to the use of the cabin per se. A more immediate response might be to focus on electricity waste such as the consumption coming from non-inhabited cabins, and consumption related to superfluous purposes. Improved isolation standards and a focus on energy efficiency in the construction phase will entail a decline in the amount of energy used. A vast amount of energy could also be saved in dealing with 'extreme' situations, for example where people use heating cables on the terrace.

In this study, there has been shown to be a relatively high inclination to integrate alternative energy sources, or at least that many actors are familiar with the practical issues connected to integrating them. The guidance manual *Planning Recreational Construction* (cf. Ministry of the Environment 2005), illustrates the lack of attempts to advocate the incorporation of alternative energy sources into second home households. Neither does the Ministry announce any considerations for these issues. The guideline does, however, point towards the fact that the

energy consumption taking place in cabins is to be characterized as being for *luxurious purposes*. Although this is acknowledged, the policy has not yet been composed with a view towards restraining this excessive energy use. This provides an indistinct signal that encourages households and places of work to reduce consumption and incorporate cleaner energy sources, while the consumption taking place in cabins has free latitude for growth (Mæland 2005).

The demand for alternative energy sources was mainly prominent in the newest cabins in Geilo, although the majority from both regions heated the cabin by the use of electricity. Very few of those in Vestre Slidre had alternative energy sources. Many here emphasized that they consumed so little energy that the installation cost would be higher than the economical benefits, even in the long term. The environmental impacts of replacing or adding other energy sources were also regarded as being so insignificant that it was not worth implementing. According to the engineer, it is more costly to choose alternative energy if one does not receive any subsidies. But he also said that in the long run, it may very well be beneficial. He emphasized, however, that the increased demand for comfort and higher standards places new demands for energy for various purposes. It might thus not be that environmentally benign, nor might it be cheaper for the customers – even in the long term.

As we have seen, the popularity of cleaner energy sources is growing at the same time as the consumption is rising. In the sample of this study, it was also the owners of the largest and most well-equipped units who referred to additional energy sources other than electricity. Hence, despite technological advancements, there is still a considerable increase in second homes household's energy consumption. What the engineer in Geilo summoned is an interesting notion in this respect – people might acquire alternative energy to justify their luxurious standards and high energy consumption.

As this consumption is regarded as luxurious (cf. Ministry of the Environment 2005, Gurigard 2008), it may neither be ethically right to build more power plant

stations, nor might it be right to purchase energy abroad to encounter the increasingly demand from second home households. The most efficient way may be to make people aware of the consequences, and to encourage them to seek other choices. Yet as we learned from the practices in Geilo, even this might not be enough. It is in this region (compared to Vestre Slidre) where the energy consumption is highest, and where frequent challenges arise with the net supply. Stronger regulation must thus be implemented and put into being, both concerning sizes, shapes, and energy solutions. There is, for example, no need to keep the cabin lukewarm throughout the year, or to heat the entire cabin while it is inhabited. Or, for that matter, to have energy-demanding appliances transferred from home life when the cabins are being used only a few weeks per year.

5.2.3 Food for Thought

This phenomenon is a quite new one, and traditional cabin conventions may still be familiar to many cabin owners, and even considered with nostalgia by many. The transition in the cabin life has shown to be an emotional issue for many because a stay still represents a mentality of living a simple life outdoors. The response by some of the cabin owners was quite tense and agitated with regards to present construction and shaping methods, as chapter four has outlined. Present consumption may hence be reversed if sufficient attempts are carried out on the private level, the commercial level, the municipal level, and the national level. The latter should provide better guidelines for cabin building and renew the Plan and Building Legislation by adding energy use, sizing, and shaping of cabins located in the highlands. It has shown itself to be important that municipalities compose a local energy policy as well as follow up their procedures, so that contradictions in regulation plans and real life are avoided. To accomplish this in an efficient and sustainable way, attempts to heighten the competence on these subjects are indispensable. Knowledge on the regions' qualities and local actors are obviously very important for successful cabin planning, but such knowledge is not sufficient for a successful *and* sustainable

development. Here, one sees the need for replacing the subsidies for environmental managers who have good knowledge about area management, but also about construction and shaping of buildings and energy use. It is also important to implement follow-up routines from the national authorities. One could for example demand results from the municipalities on these issues (cf. Sivertsen and Gurigard in Taugbøl et al. 2001). Incentives in terms of resources or appreciation for being a sustainable municipality may also be good tools for making people, commercial enterprises and policy makers more environmentally aware. The construction of energy-sufficient buildings – both for workplaces and households – has got a well-deserved place in the public debate, and they are being practiced to a growing extent. Such guidelines and concern should also be brought forward for the building and construction of cabins. What was stated by Siversten and Gurigard has shown to be of the essence in the two districts of this study:

> The local and regional challenges pertaining to consumption in the second home sector should be considered as equally importance as household consumption, because it is the cabins which seem to be the overriding consumption sector in many regions. (in Taugbøl et al. 2001:56, my own translation)

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has revealed energy consumption which is here regarded as one of the major contemporary impacts that follow in the wake of the present cabin development. Energy use in this context has evoked less emphasize because large, high standard cabins were not an actuality before the mid-nineties. This lack of concern has entailed that the shaping, sizing, and energy consumption from second home owners have had free latitude for growth. From what we have seen, the *cabin owners*, *building entrepreneurs,* and the *local policy makers* all together contribute to what can be regarded as an unrestrained development in terms of consumption. The difference between the consumption in Geilo and Vestre Slidre is attributed to the smaller sizes, more moderate attitudes towards

luxurious devices (in this context), and more restrictive energy practices. However, many cabins in Vestre Slidre are facing upgrading as well as enlargements in size. There are also plans to build high-standard cabins in the area. This implicates that over the next few years, the cabin field here may risk being largely modified.

Situations of shortage with the transfusion of energy are a consequence faced by the energy suppliers due to these practices. This occurs even though the transformation grid is managed on a peak modulation, simply because the consumption of energy steadily reaches new heights. Many companies are compelled to buy energy on the transnational marked in order to meet the demand. Nevertheless, the cabins owners can benefit from various technological devices – all at the same time 1000 meters above the sea because there are no set limitations on energy use. The cabin owner's many plans of integrating more technological fixes as well as enlarging their cabins implies that the consumption is moving towards ever new heights. A turnaround in the present consumption seems hard to imagine, as there has shown to be a lack of initiative makers. As Shove stated when she redefined senses of convenience, obligation, and normal practice – *there is no way back* (2003:194). This is also bound to be applicable in our context if no attempts are being carried through to slow down the present development.

6. Conclusion

This study has sought to understand the underlying causes why the energy consumption increases in Norwegian cabins in the highlands. It has explored how changing energy use is related to changing cabin life. The focus has not been on the magnitude of the demand and building itself, but an analysis of the energy consumption that follows in the wake of present characteristics of sizing and shaping.

A crucial aspect for understanding the changing consumption has been to explore the connections between three actors: *the cabin owners, the building agencies, and the local policy makers*. This has enabled me to elucidate the full spectrum of the changing consumption patterns now well underway, and to see the larger sociocultural dimensions. I have presented two cabin areas, Geilo and Vestre Slidre, to provide a comparable groundwork and a well-balanced comprehension of the development.

I have argued that new notions of a second home have brought along other factors that are adding to, and often even replacing, traditional ways of constructing and furnishing a cabin. It has been of importance to many of the cabin owners to have the cabin equipped in ways they are accustomed to from their everyday lives to meet expectations of comfort. These findings highly coincide with what has been stressed by Shove that "the use of technological devices has to be examined and understood with reference to the achievement of the more encompassing services like those of comfort, cleanliness and convenience"(2003:166). The typical motivation for a cabin stay has been to get away from everyday life. To migrate from daily life was indeed a main motivation for a stay, but it included those who sought a luxurious mountain lifestyle *as well as* those who pursued traditional values. Here the differences in attitudes and practices between the cabin owners at Geilo and Vestre Slidre were significant. For some, the cabin functioned as a means to display taste (even

though this not was a prime reason for why they had originally acquired their cabin). This could turn both ways, from displaying a luxurious way of living to emphasizing the distinction between home and cabin. The contact between the neighboring cabin owners also influenced the individual, cabin-related consumption. This was so because the communication first and foremost involved projects pertaining to their cabins such as building customs, maintenance work, and interior concepts. I have also argued that nest building can be regarded as an important act of consumption. Being occupied with maintenance or construction work was an appreciated activity, and largely so for the male informants in Vestre Slidre. This particular section of the study argued that the ways people conceive and use their cabins are changing from *escape* to *displacement*. It has pointed towards the fact that experiencing a simple lifestyle in back-to-nature circumstances no longer gives sufficient meaning to a stay.

I have argued that the cabins owners' perspectives and actions alone are not enough to understand the changing consumption patterns. According to Wilhite and Lutzenhiser, the interplay of multiple forces in a society that includes commercial actors and public policy makers is necessary to fully comprehend present consumption patterns (1999:315). Cabin life is not, in other words, changing only because of the users themselves. The different sale and construction methods, and the subsequent dissimilarities in the sizes and outfit of the units in Geilo and Vestre Slidre, have substantiated this claim. In Geilo, the building companies operated with prefabricated cabin concepts, all of which were spacious and of an all-inclusive character. Despite the fact that many of the cabin owners appreciated the agency's 'helping hand', I have argued that the companies are homogenizing people by manufacturing their very choices. More importantly, the predefined solutions have implications for future energy consumption. Not only that, but they also set standards for what is 'normal' consumption in this context. In Vestre Slidre, on the other hand, the cabin buyers were active in the process of decision making, sometime also in the construction. These two different practices in the two different locations became visible in the

outfitting of the cabins: The cabins in Vestre Slidre were on average 98 m^2, while in Geilo they were as large as 157 m^2. In the latter region, heating cables, electric garages, jacuzzi baths, flat screen televisions and well-equipped bathrooms and kitchens were prominent. These belonged to the exceptions in Vestre Slidre. It would seem as if these significant differences imply that the cabins in Geilo were being used more frequently. But that was not the case. The standards were not connected to longer stays (5 weeks in Geilo and 8 weeks in Vestre Slidre, on average). The dissimilarities serves also as strong indicators that the building sector too, proactively affects the consumption taking place within cabins. Hence, what is recognized by Shove (1998, 2003) – "that consumers live in a world where much of their consumption is already given due to the way buildings are constructed" – has shown to be transferable also in the second home framework.

These activities have grown with unchecked impetus, because the local policy makers have shown to have weak regulations for cabin building. The local administration even plays a key role for this development. The Ministry of the Environment's encouragement to include cabin building in the municipal and regulation plans where environmental considerations are concerned, shows that present trends are being acknowledged as non-sustainable. Still there are at present no specific set-up regulations from the national authorities on shaping of cabins and energy use. The existence of regulation plans that deal with these issues did not, however, give any insurance for accomplishing a sustainable cabin policy. What is stated in the steering documents is as I have implicated, not necessarily implemented – or there may be a lack of a regulatory body or concern for these issues. Rather, it seemed that the master plans, drawn mainly by the tourist business, are as much a ruling instrument as the municipal plans. These plans generally initiate improvements of infrastructures that allow free growth for luxurious cabins. Hol municipality had indeed an environmental manager, which is rare on a national basis. The manager, however, emphasized the major economic benefits from second home owners, which of course implies that many

rural municipalities are arranging for cabin building. The outfitting of the cabins and the high energy consumption was either way not seen as problematic. The increasing popularity for alternative energy sources in the cabins, and the information of these, would according to him minimize the eventual effects. I have argued that despite technological advancements, there is still a considerable increase in second homes household's energy consumption.

The second municipality that this study looked at, Vestre Slidre, had neither regulation plans dealing with cabin building nor an environmental manager – even though second home building had turned out to be a core business. The cabin field in Vestre Slidre consisted largely of classical cabins with electricity but without water. But the local administration held the opinion that high standard and longer stays were closely interlinked and they looked to other regions for evidence that would support this view. Increased consumption of energy was in fact regarded as a sign of successful planning. This again may imply that a new style may emerge: a style with more large and high standard cabins and high energy consumption. Such prospects were met with resistance by present cabin owners, who called for their participation in the decision- making. Such environmental concern existed in Geilo as well. But there, it belonged to the exceptions.

A significant turn in the unrestrained consumption seems hard to imagine at this time as there has shown to be a lack of initiative makers for doing so. The current trend is bound to become an even more non-sustainable development taking the planning of new high standard unit and the existing cabin owners' many plans of upgrading and enlarging their cabins into account. Following in their wake, the Norwegian highlands may be overshadowed by increasingly large, all-inclusive, and energy consuming edifices. Seen in this light, national aims of reducing energy use may seem like a paradox. But we must also remember that this phenomenon is quite new. The traditional mountain cabin is still the ideal to many. What is more, the public focus has been directed towards this

phenomenon. These two thoughts combined *can* imply that stricter regulations may be under way. But such a turn in the present development needs most of all, a *broad base*. This is perhaps the most important finding of this study. It is imperative that national and local regulation must be revised. But they alone cannot create the necessary momentum. The knowledge and concern for these issues must *also* be heightened. I argue that the present trend may be reversed. But the only way here is to combine efforts on a private, commercial and public policy level.

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Appendix

Picture 1: A traditional cabin in Vestre Slidre.

Picture 2: A prefabricated cabin in Geilo.

Picture 3: A leisure apartment complex in Geilo.

Questionnaire 1: Cabin owners in Geilo and Vestre Slidre (translated from Norwegian to English)

1. When was the cabin built?

2. What is the size of the cabin? Does it still have its original size?

3. Are there integrated electricity and water? When and why were they integrated?

4. What kind of heating do you use (solar cell panel, stove (paraffin, oil, gas), fan heater, fire place, heating cables (how many square meters and which rooms), water driven heat, district heat, central heat)?

5. Why did you integrate alternative energy sources/ Do you consider to integrate alternative energy sources- why/why not?

6. What kind of electric household appliances and devices have you installed (refrigerator, freezer, washing machine, dryer drum, oven, cooking plates, microwave oven, toaster, mix master, rice bowler, bread machine, hot water heating system, vacuum cleaner, PC, Television (what type), stereo/radio, DVD-player, PlayStation, jacuzzi, swimming pool, electric garage)?

7. How do you perceive this standard? What have been the main purposes for acquiring this standard? Are there any additional factors which played a role in the purchase of the before mentioned utensils?

8. What has been done in the cabin these last five years (installations, acquisitions, building)? What were your motivations?

9. Do you have any plans for future building, installations or acquirements? Why?

10. What are your motivations for spending time at your cabin?

11. What kind of lifestyle do you have when you are here? Can you tell me something about your life within the cabin and eventually about the outdoor activities you perform?

12. What do you associate with cabin life?

13. Why – in your opinion- are homes and cabins getting more similar to each other in terms of standard and size?

14. How is the relation and communication among the people in the cabin community?

15. Do your neighbours have any influence on your own building, shaping of – and consumption related to the cabin – why? Do you regard other people's way of doing things inspiring? Can you mention situations where this was significant for your own purchase?

16. Can you think of other influential actors (friends/family, colleagues, magazines, cabin exhibitions)? How do they affect your choices, why?

17. Have you experienced any conflicts among the cabin owners as a result of the way cabins have been constructed and shaped, how?

18. Do you apply a symbolic value to a certain type of cabins, why?

19. Do you think that status is a decisive factor why people acquire a luxurious cabin, why?

20. Did you buy a site or a site with a cabin?

21. Was the cabin built by the building agency beforehand or did you decide the size, shape, standard and interior?

22. Can you tell me about the circumstances around the purchase of your cabin? How actively involved were you in this process? (Drawing the prospect, building, installing and so on).

23. Did you have any impact on the decision making on the physical construction and its interior concept or was the building company in charge of the process?

24. What does the Norwegian cabin tradition mean to you?

25. Do you experience any changes in this tradition? How do you feel about present cabin life in the mountain?

26. What is your attitude towards the changes in the constriction and shaping of the cabins here?

27. What do you think about the local policy, initiatives and regulations for cabin building?

28. What kind of infrastructure do you think is most appropriate here?

29. How do you imagine this place will look like in ten years?

30. Do you agree with the cabin development in this region?

31. What kind of means of transport do you use to reach your cabin?

32. Can you compare your consumption (commodities and energy) here with what you use at home? What kind of lifestyle do you thereby try to achieve?

33. Are you concerned about the impact present cabin construction imposes on the environment?

Questionnaire 2: Building entrepreneurs in Geilo and Vestre Slidre

1. How many cabins do you build annually? Cabins versus leisure apartments.

2. Do you have many ongoing and planned projects? Can you tell me about these?

3. What do you sell most: sites or sites with cabins? What do you prefer? Do you influence the customer here?

4. Can you tell me about your experiences with the market demand throughout the last years?

5. Do you operate with prefabricated cabins from which the customers can choose or are the customers active in the process (posing their own preferences, claims etc.). What do you prefer? What do the customers request?

6. Do you have predefined materials from which the customers can choose or can the customers select from a wide range of materials, is there a difference in the charge?

7. What kind of materials can the customers choose from? Do you think of environmental benign materials when you make orders?

8. Do you consider integrated electricity and water as a matter of course?

9. What kind of heating do you integrate?

10. How do you isolate the cabins- compared to those built in the 80`s?

11.Are there other installations/products in the package or that you advice the customers to choose?

12. Do you often construct a modern, well equipped bathroom and kitchen with refrigerator/freezer/oven/household articles/shower/heating cables/washing machine/water closet etc?

13. How do you envisage cabins built in ten years?

14. Do you get requests for low standard cabins?

<u>Questionnaire 3a: Hol and Vestre Slidre municipalities</u>

1. How many cabins are there in the municipality? How many in Geilo?

2. Do you have a number on the cabins planned to be built in the future?

3. How do you recognize present cabin development?

4. How important is the cabin segment for the local economy?

5. Are there any local guidelines and regulations for construction, size and shaping of the cabins?

6. Is this noted in the regulation or municipal plan?

7. What about the master plans; are they concerned about cabin construction and infrastructure? Can you tell me more about these in relation to the local cabin development.

8. How do you perceive the increasing amount of energy consumed by the cabin segment?

9. Is there something which is prohibited or recommended not to build/install in the cabins?

10. What does a sustainable cabin development, including building and shaping, imply?

11. How does the municipality take into account the environment when dealing with cabin building? Are sizes and shaping involved here?

12. Are there national guidelines/regulations you have to follow with regards to the cabin building and its shaping?

13. What do you think of the quality of the national regulations/guidelines regarding cabin building, shaping and energy consumption?

14. Do the landowners and/or entrepreneurs pose suggestions for sites and cabin prospects which afterwards come to you for approval? How is this process working? When are construction plans or shaping alterations subject to rejection?

15. Is there skepticism towards the increasing large, high standard and energy demanding cabins within the local administration or does optimism prevail?

16. Do you have an environmental manager in the municipality? What is his role? Is he giving advices in cases were cabin building and shaping are concerned? How influential is his opinions?

Questionnaire 3b: The environmental manager in Hol municipality:

In addition to a few of the questions above, these two were raised:

a. Can you describe your function and its responsibilities?

b. How do you look upon the present cabin development? When do you think the region (Geilo) has reached its carrying capacity for spacious and luxurious cabins?

Additional questions to the plan and industry consultant in Vestre Slidre municpiality:

17. How do you envisage Vestre Slidre as a cabin region in the coming years? Do you intend the same development as in Beito or do you want more restrictions pertaining to sizes, high standards, energy use etc.?

18. I understand that the ongoing conflict between the municipality and some of the cabin owners at Midtre Syndin is due to the planned 200 high standard leisure houses. What is your view in this case? Will these building proposals be approved? How have the complaints been handled?

Questionnaire 4: Energy supply companies Hallingdal Kraft and Valdres Energi

1. How many cabins do you distribute energy to in Hol- Geilo/Vestre Slidre?

2. How many KWh do the cabin owners use annually?

3. What is their share in percentages of the total supply to Hol/Vestre Slidre municipality?

4. Do you consider the cabin development regarding size and shaping a positive or a negative trend? Why?

5. Are you operating with the same electricity tariff for cabin owners as for local households? Is this under evaluation?

6. Do you think the cabin segment should have a higher rate and how do you justify this?

7. Will the cabin development with its increasing sizes and accordingly higher energy consumption necessitate an enhancement of the distribution grid? Who will take the charges?

8. Do you encourage people to the use of solar cell panel, bio fuel, heating pump etc?

9. Can you say something about water driven heat in cabins?

10. What do you know about the import of energy from abroad as a result of the increasing energy demanding cabins?

11. Do you think it is problematic to build out the distribution grid in the highlands, why?

12. How to you envisage the future demand of energy from the second home market?

Original quotes in Norwegian from the interviews

[a] Forestill deg når folk kommer opp på hytta si sliten etter jobb en fredag kveld. Er ikke det en god grunn til at folk ønsker komfort med det samme de ankommer hytta? Rita

[b] Komfort er når en kommer til en kald hytta og familien samles med tepper foran peisen mens vinden blåser utenfor. Komfort for meg er når jeg vet for sikkert at jeg er langt fra by og hjemme. […] Hvilken tursti en skal gå og hvilket brettspill en skal spille er de eneste valgene som må tas. Denne tilstanden er hva som utgjør rekreasjon og komfort for meg. Kjell

[c] Vi reiser ikke 4 timer hver vei for å ha den samme standarden som hjemme! Forskjellen mellom hjemme og her er hva som gjør det verdt å ha dette stedet. Tor og Halbjørg

[d] Vi fortjener å ha litt luksus når vi først har ferie sånn at vi kan ha en skikkelig god tid.[…] For å si det sånn, det er viktigere å ha oppvaskmaskin her enn hjemme nettopp fordi fritiden er så verdifull. Lars

[e] Naboen jeg kjenner best her er Henrik som har en hytte der borte […]. vi pleier og møtes ganske ofte siden vi begge er her oppe mer enn hva som er vanlig tror jeg. Når vi møtes pleier vi vanligvis å dele erfaringer om prosjekter knytta til eiendommene. Som du sikkert ser er Henrik veldig flink med hendene så det er mye som kan læres av han hvis man er interessert. Kontakten oss imellom utover det, vel jeg vet hvor mange barn han har siden de også er her av og til og at han er lærer som meg. Og selvfølgelig forventer jeg at han forteller meg hvis han har hatt en bra fiskeopplevelse! Stein

[f] Du skjønner, det virker som om folk her oppe ønsker å ha de samme tingene på hytta si. Jeg er sikker på at hvis en hytteeier skaffer noe skikkelig bra noe så kan jeg vedde på at innen ett år eller noe at noen har det samme.

[g] På den siste sammenkomsten demonstrerte verten hans nye TV som viste alle mulige kanaler og serverte oss kaffe fra han siste innkjøp – en cappuccinomaskin. Det var møtt med stor begeistring fra oss andre! Nina

[h] Jeg er veldig begeistret for interiør – også her på hytta. Du vet, hver tid har sin egen stil på hvordan hytta skal se ut […]. For tiden er det inn å blande tradisjonelle uttrykk med moderne utstyr. Denne hytta var en demonstrasjonshytte så etter vi kjøpte den erstattet vi det møblementet som fulgte med til andre mer 'up-to-date' ting som passet mer til vår smak sånn at det representerer familien. Rita

[i] Vi planlegger ikke å forandre dette stedet til et høystandard hus altså, men det vil nok være lettere å oppgradere hytta med nye moderne ting når det første steget er tatt så klart. Nina

[j] Pakkekonseptene er en veldig vanlig prosedyre for byggesektoren nå for tiden. Det er bra for kundene for de kan stole på at vi har den ekspertisen som skal til for å velge riktige materialer og konstruere hytta på en brukervennlig, komfortabel og moderne måte. Det er også bra for oss fordi vi får mer forutsigbarhet i tillegg til at det er mer lønnsomt fordi vi kan dra fordeler av stordriftskjøp. Byggentreprenør i Geilo

[k] Jeg ville neppe tenkt på å skaffe alle disse tingene som er her nå. Det er ting jeg knapt visste fantes! […] vell, jeg tenkte på den fancy greia som gjør at du kan styre temperaturen fra dataen hjemmefra, og som gjør det mulig å styre ulik temperatur i forskjellige rom. Jeg kan for eksempel ha 23 grader her i stua og 20 grader i gangen, og det kan jeg styre fra PC-en.[…] Selvfølgelig er jeg glad for å ha alt det der. Du vet det høyner komforten fordi man alltid ankommer en varm og god hytte og man kan ha ulik temperatur fra sommer til vinterstid. Men selvfølgelig det er ikke så 'hytteaktig' lenger […]. og en annen ting, jeg ble fortalt at det var helt vanlig å ha tilkoblet en kameraskjerm for å oppdage innbrudd. Jeg kan faktisk følge med på hytta hjemmefra på PC-en. Jeg visste ikke at tyvene fant veien opp hit, og spør du meg tror jeg ikke at de gjør det heller! Vidar

[l] […] på den måten kan vi finne ut hva vi savner her oppe og etter det anskaffe eller oppgradere noe på en velbegrunnet måte. Det er mye bedre enn å anskaffe noe en senere vil tenke var overflødig. Stein

[m] Den aller siste konstruksjonen finner du her i Hol! Ordfører i Hol kommune

[n] Vi tenker ikke å adoptere andres måter å gjøre ting på, men vi ser på andres praksiser som kilder til inspirasjon som kanskje også kan egne seg her. Alt vi ønsker er å ha en suksessfull og effektiv planlegging. Ved å se til andre kommuner som har lang erfaring med hyttebygging kan bidra til en sånn utvikling. Jeg tror at vi også kan stå som eksempel for andre. Plan og industri konsulent i Vestre Slidre kommune

[o] Personlig synes jeg at det kan være hensiktsmessig å saktne ned hyttebyggingen. Jeg ser jo at naturen tar skade av den massive utbyggingen. Men jeg må ta hensyn til de økonomiske og sosiale fordelene og tilpasse meg dette i en prosess. Så langt jeg kan huske er det vel bare en gang hvor jeg utalte meg om at en utbyggingssak ikke kan gjennomføres. Miljøvernleder i Hol kommune

[p] Vi er lei av å bli negativt berørt av avgjørelsene som taes av kommunen og grunneierne. Vi frykter at naturen vil degraderes ytterligere. Byggingen av de 200 høystandard hyttene vil medføre mer trafikk og støy. Infrastrukturen må også forbedres og det vil skade økologien og hyttelivet her oppe. Kjell

[q] Byggingen av 200 nye hytter vil ikke bare skade naturen men også svekke den spesielle hyttekulturen her oppe. De fleste av oss er måteholden med utforming og størrelser og vi samarbeider med naturen enn å drive med ødeleggende aktiviteter […]. det er forferdelig hvis kommunen akter å innlemme andre steders utbyggingsmåter hvor naturen åpenbart har tatt skade. Kjell

[r] Skal man ikke verne om miljøet for de som søker natur og ikke kommersielle resorts på fjellet? Kjell

[s] Vi bidrar faktisk med 1 milliard fra kjøp av varer og tjenester til kommunen. Er ikke det nok til at vi bør ha en stemme i lokale utbyggingsplaner? Halbjørg

[t] Folk står fritt til å bygge og forme hyttene sine som de vil uten innvendinger. Jeg synes det er rart at kommunen ikke blander seg inn i enkelte tilfeller. Tor Even

[u] Å kjøre her i ferier er det samme som å kjøre i byen med køer og mangel på parkeringsplasser. Hanne

[v] Dyrene har masse plass, bare se på den møkka de har lagt her foran inngangsdøra. Hege

[w] Det er ingen tvil om at energibruken fra hytteeiere er det som øker mest – faktisk mye mer enn etterspørselen fra de fastboende. Det har vært flere utfordringer de siste årene og vi jobber kontinuerlig med å oppgradere transformatoren. Det er veldig kostnadsfullt å bygge ut transformatoren sånn at den kan møte toppene av etterspørselen, men det er helt nødvendig for å unngå at den ikke sprenges. Det er tross alt vårt ansvar å møte etterspørselen og vi vil gjøre det beste for kundene våre. Ingeniør ved Hallingdal Kraft