Landscapes in Peril?

Sense of Place, Hydropower Development, and Natural Resource Politics in Feios, Sogn og Fjordane

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Aerial View of Feios

Figure 1. Source: Feios Kraftverk AS, 2006b.

1. Introduction to the Project

> A deep relationship with places is necessary, and perhaps as unavoidable, as close relationships with people; without such relationships human existence, while possible, is bereft of much of its significance.
>
> - Edward Relph

Introduction and Background

In the early 2000s, plans were set afoot to develop a watercourse running through the small village of Feios, in the county of Sogn og Fjordane, Norway. However, backed by the public Norges Vassdrags- og Energidirektorat (NVE), the plan did not gain significant traction until 2005-2007, at which point advanced formal measures were taken in order to see the project through to implementation. The proposed project was met with a split reaction in Feios, with citizens both strongly for and against seeing the town's rivers and surrounding areas be developed for hydropower purposes.

The thesis is firstly concerned with examining the reactions and feelings amongst selected Feios inhabitants towards the hydropower project, as well as the natural environment of the village. This will be done from a perspective anchored in the theory of "sense of place"[1]. When one senses a place, one senses the

[1] Sense of place, as well as its many hypothesized links to aspects of self and communal identity, intersect and intertwine in the literature. The result is a rather cobweb-like field of research that demands close and

environmental *character* of one's surroundings. This character is highly qualitative in nature, and is based first and foremost in the physical attributes of a place. However this sensing of place is far from passive; on the contrary, the thesis argues that it acts as a guiding force for the creation of values, habits, actions and preferences, both social and environmental.

Whilst the sense of place theory is a strongly interdisciplinary field of study (yet clearly defined in its intentions, which will be discussed in part 2), my own background in physical and human geography has placed some emphasis on how humans orient themselves in the world. This, coupled with some own personal experiences rooted in my strong attachment to specific places, served to highlight the importance of having a sense for a place – in other words how such a sense of one's surroundings can lead to experiences, bonds, affinities, feelings of rootetdness, the creation of values, all of which manifest themselves concretely by playing upon how we would like to see a certain place evolve in the future, and how we use it in the present. Of course, sense of place does not necessarily entail the creation of affective bonds – one may very well for example harbour a strong dislike for a particular place one has experienced, or be simply rather indifferent to it. This is also a sense of a place. Far from a foregone conclusion is the fact that those in favour of an action which would likely lead to some sort of environmental degradation are not in possession of a sense of place similar to those against such an action. My thesis is concerned with how such views of one's surroundings and one's sentiment towards place can affect and even determine stances in the resource controversy in Feios, in both directions.

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developed attention if one is to adequately outline and describe even the main tenets. This will be done in the following chapter so as to best preserve the structural clarity of the thesis.

What is most important to note, however, is that our senses of place permeate our everyday lives in ways that provide psychological well being, meaning, and orientation. They provide us with the opportunity to not be simple wanderers but discoverers; not just of defined physical space – places – but also of spaces with symbols, spaces imbued with *us*, elements that help forge our very own perceptions of who we in fact are. These senses are so engrained in our self identities and how we live our lives that they are more often than not taken entirely for granted, not in the least throughout political discourses.

Given this, why not accord feelings of sense of place, and the myriad of opinions, points of views, desires and values that stem from it, a more prominent role in political processes involving the management of natural resources? After all, what is more human that our own self-identities, i.e. that which helps determine how we orient ourselves throughout our lives? The thesis advocates that something of such importance could and should be incorporated into the political process. To not do so would be to deny *ourselves* by disregarding the nature of our existence in place. The incorporation of place-related meanings, opinions and feelings can serve only to democratize political processes concerned with the management of natural resources.

What, then, is “place?” It is the very framework of our lives, that which gives our existence a context in which we are able to live it. We are, as Edward Casey would have it, "the geographical self," orienting ourselves in space and place. For Casey, space is:

> the encompassing volumetric void in which things (including human beings) are positioned and "place" [is] the immediate environment of [the] lived body - an arena of action that is at once physical and historical, social and cultural. 2001: 683)

“Physical and historical, social and cultural.” Place is much more than a geographic space. Space can become place by being given a name, by being put

into borders or drawn up on a map. Yet place can also be something much deeper than and complex than this. It is how we define ourselves, as geographic beings, in the physical, social, and cultural realms. Place, in essence, is human, it is *people*.

Introducing Feios

Taking the taxi from Vik to Feios along the shore of Sognefjorden sets the scene for anyone going to the small town of roughly 250 inhabitants. A 10 minute ride, to the left one observes the longest fjord in the world. The occasional soaring waterfall can be seen on the opposing side, and mountains tower to the west. On the right of the road things go more or less straight up. Thankfully Feioselvi, the main river running through Feios, has acted upon this topography creating settlement possibilities, first taken advantage of thousands of years ago.

Photo 1: Looking west from the main road through Feios, November 2007.

Now, I am let off the taxi bus in “central” Feios, down by the water next to the town’s only shop which sells the bare essentials of everyday life. A few meters from the shop one finds an information sign mainly destined for tourists, giving an overview of Vik Kommune, which Feios lies within. The roar of Feioselvi can be clearly heard now; at this location the volume of water is at its highest in the entire village. Clear, cold looking water is being discharged into Sognefjorden. Looking up the river from the bridge which spans it, one observes not open landscape but rather steep banks rising several tens of meters, with tree life nonetheless abundant on both flanks. This is the mouth of the watercourse which the hydropower project would affect.

Photo 2: "Central" Feios; with the village shop (yellow/white building), August 2007.

Whilst only a 10-15 minute car ride away from the larger (but still small) towns of Vik and Fresvik on either side of it, the village lies by itself along the fjord, roughly straight north of the town of Voss, stretching up 3 valleys into the mountains to the south. These 3 valleys are essential to the geography of the town

– they function as de facto neighbourhoods when one is out and about. In addition, there is also a stretch of town extending to the west of the town centre along the fjord. This part of town is not adjacent to any of Feios' rivers but is where the town church and school are to be found. Thus by exploring the town by foot on several occasions (I covered more or less all of Feios) my mental map began to make clear dissociations and associations. The town was comprised of 4 separate "neighbourhoods" and 3 distinct valleys. One gets around by using 3 main roads – one along the fjord and two on either side of Feioselvi. Much of the land in Feios itself is farmland, whilst those inhabitants not engaged in agriculture commute to neighbouring towns Vik and Fresvik to work (and shop for goods not provided by the aforementioned local store). Immediately to the south of Feios, but out of sight, is the Fresvik glacier, which also provides water to the rivers in the town. This glacier is in fact within the UNESCO World Heritage site of Nærøyfjord, as well as being of no small size, so it is quite well known not only locally but also nationally.

Subsequent explorations of the town lead me southward, into the deeper valleys of Feios along Storelvi. I stumble upon some German tourists and am chased by some local domestic sheep before reaching Haugasete. At this point the landscape changes fairly noticeably. Instead of being quaintly countryside-ish, with many signs of ongoing agriculture, one is surrounded by a more or less perfect U-shaped valley to the west, and the tree line can be observed to the south, a teasing reminder of the glacier which lies just out of sight upon the mountain plateau. There is a trail leading up to the glacier through this U-shaped valley, which according to the hike trail sign I read earlier on my walk, takes only 3 or 4 hours one way. I feel as if I am standing at the gateway to Feios' wilderness possibilities.

The house I am staying in has one of the best locations in the village, with a view straight over the fjord, even though it is set about 3 kilometers back from the

water near the confluence of Åfedtelvi and Storelvi. The valley means that what is visible of the fjord is made into an upside down triangle, and the opposing side of the fjord rises above this, with little sign of habitation. It is all very Norwegian indeed. Properties can be seen lining either side of Feioselvi, and to a lesser extent Storelvi and Åfedtelvi. These are spaced at a fair distance from each other, in many cases because they are associated with fields devoted to agriculture. Along the fjord to the east of the mouth of the river the houses begin to cluster, forming a more traditional neighbourhood. Here there is less agriculture and some semi-detached houses can be found on the way to the aforementioned school and church. A five minute walk along the main road, and the houses become more sporadic, eventually the road leads off on its own, eastwards along the water towards Fresvik.

Rationale and Purpose of the Thesis

The thesis aims to help fill in several gaps. The sense of place theory has been explored for several decades now, with an increase in popularity within the last 10-15 years, with particular respect to how it could be incorporated into public land management (Eisenhauer *et. al* 2000: 438). However, it still has not, by my estimation, been given its due in both the academic, or more particularly, the political sphere. Kaltenbjørn and Bjerke (2002: 384) note that “there is relatively little knowledge about what people are attached to and the effect of place attachment on landscape preferences.” Whilst examinations of people’s perceptions of and landscape preferences similarly are commonplace, they are mostly generalized and not accorded much “real world” weight. Confined to the realms of mere transitory thoughts, their marginal status accounts for their separation from the realm of politics and decision making. There are many commonplace and little examined data which are of very limited use in practical

terms in relation to land-use planning and management (Kaltenbjørn and Bjerke 2002: 382). Despite this, Cheng *et al*. (2003: 87) posit that "natural resource politics is as much a contest over place meanings as it is a competition amongst interest groups over […] resources." The thesis will attempt to address these issues, using the sense of place theory and conservation psychology, in the hope that the potential salience and practical usefulness of cognitive and emotional/affective dimensions in the arena of natural resource politics will be further demonstrated. Sense of place researchers such as Davenport and Anderson (2005) and Bott *et al*. (2003) perceive the human affective dimension as essential to understanding place politics. Similarly, Williams and Patterson (in Davenport and Anderson 2005: 630) add that "public participation, planning, and policymaking must be understood as part and parcel of the creation, negotiation and the destruction of meaning."

Richard C Stedman (2002: 577) notes that whilst much research within sense of place studies has focused on *how* symbolic meanings and identities have influenced behaviour related to the natural environment, there has been a relative neglect concerning *the origin* of the said meanings. The thesis will attempt to identify such origins, with the intention to arrive at the source of cognitive and affective elements which bear on perceptions of natural environments in the town of Feios. These perceptions affect in turn stances adopted by the informants with regards to the hydropower project.

The thesis will accord special importance to the role(s) of the *natural* environment in creating senses of place and spheres of value. Stedman posits that if the natural environment is of minor importance in attachment to a place (with the social sphere being the centre of origins of attachment), then environmental degradation can occur without a corresponding degradation in value (2003: 682). If place perception and conservation psychology are to be explicitly incorporated

into issues of land use and resource management, more research is needed to identify the roles physical environments play in people's place perceptions.

Salience is added to the thesis topic in light of specific and wider spread happenings – both the current hydropower project in Feios and hydropower development in Norway, and indeed abroad. As such the thesis is of relevance not only for resource use, but also renewable energy development. This is garnering more and more attention in light of rising oil prices and global warming. The thesis' findings will hopefully not only be applicable to Feios but to many other places around the world.

However, the thesis is concerned with documenting the senses of place. Whist the hydropower project in Feios is ongoing and thus very topical, I will not be discussing in detail any other facets of the project, such as happenings within Sognekraft. Neither will I go into detail into the environmental implications of the project. This will both allow a much more focussed discussion and better serve the purpose of the thesis.

Presentation of Central Research Questions

How strongly does the local physical environment in Feios represent a source of place-based meanings and identities for local stakeholders?

The importance of the physical environment, on various scales (for example a closely defined spot or the communal landscape as a whole), will be accorded special importance in the thesis, although other relevant issues, such as the role of the social environment on the local and national scale, will be discussed.

To what extent does sense of place (place attachment, satisfaction, identity and dependence) influence people's perceptions of the proposed hydropower project in Feios?

The views and attitudes of Feios inhabitants towards the hydropower project are not purely a result of economic or political standpoints. Rather, as I have discovered, a sense of place seems to be capital in defining many people's opinions of the proposed development.

Does the current conflict in Feios have anything to teach with respect to incorporating place-based meanings, values and identities into local natural resource politics?

The proposed project in Feios can be seen as a catalyst for clear expression of local environmental concern. The hydropower project being proposed would be largely implemented by external forces. As a result, it can be hypothesized that the underlying environmental symbolic meanings of the local people of Feios are possibly not being taken into consideration, and that they need to be taken into account by policy makers.

Outline of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into 7 sections. This part and will describe which theoretical avenues have been chosen for the thesis.

Part 2 is dedicated to exploring the sense of place theory, and functions as the backbone of the thesis, upon which all else will be built around. The section will outline and point out significant developments within the sense of place theory throughout the past few decades, with special attention accorded to the work conducted from the 1970s onwards.

Part 3 presents the fieldwork findings in relation to the natural and social environment in Feios. The former is divided into two parts – the aesthetic and the ideological. This section will also determine the roles the natural and social environment of Feios plays in creating the informants' senses of place.

Part 4 is a follow-up of the previous section, and examines facets of the hydropower project in itself. Does such a project belong in Feios? What does the project represent for the informants? Is it socially advantageous? Is it a positive development? Is it environmentally benign or destructive?

Part 5 consists of an overview of some past cases of hydropower controversies - those of Alta-Kautokeino, Ottar, Mardøla and Gaula, which took place in Norway in the 1970-90s, and how sense of place also in these cases may have played a role in forging stances towards the projects.

Part 6 presents a final discussion in which the politics of sense of place will be addressed. Here I will discuss possibilities for how the sense of place could be incorporated into the political process of resource management.

Part 7 will close the thesis with a general conclusion, and address the research questions.

Methodology

The thesis has been based on qualitative research, as this approach is best suited to my field of study. Indeed, positivistic approaches to sense of place studies are much more susceptible to circumvent the very essence of the matter as they strive for rigid, "scientific" findings of an objective nature, foregoing the deeply inherent, often self-contradicting *human* nature of the field. The qualitative approach, rather than being interested in the "objective" perception of place, is

more concerned with subjective experiences and interpretations of our surroundings. Bott *et al*. note that

> the subjective dimension is of primary importance in understanding how individuals and communities come to care about local or other places, as well as about idealizations of place. Patters of behavior spring from values people hold about places and the goals they seek to obtain in them. (2003: 104)

This approach requires interpretive, qualitative methodology (Berg and Dale 2004: 42). Findings are based mainly on interviews carried out by myself with informants in Feios, with additional information coming from documents given to/found by myself.

Methodological Approach

Cheng *et al*. (2003) posit that the ideal way to conduct sense of place research is by adopting a research angle influenced by ***place-based interpretivist research*** (PBIR). This implies that the researcher will as much as possible try to experience the places in question in approximately the same way as the people being studied. Such immersion into the subject matter is ideally suited to produce results of high quality and validity. Thus whilst sense of place has also been studied within positivistic frameworks (see, for example, Stokols 1990), I have deemed PBIR as being the best methodological avenue to pursue for the thesis.

Sense of place studies has been characterized by many parallel theoretical propositions bearing varying vocabularies but used to study more or less identical phenomena. Kaltenbjørn and Bjerke note that

> studies of place and place attachment have built on a diverse theoretical and methodological base. However, they represent and evolving field of research and tend to display a high degree of exploration and a lack of stringent theoretical approaches, typical of a pioneering phase. (2002: 384)

In the same year, Stedman (2002: 561) noted that there in addition remains "a lack of agreement on the meanings of core concepts."

I have chosen to approach the topic from the framework provided by a limited number of authors so as to ensure maximum consistency and conciseness throughout the thesis. Stedman (2002; 2003) identifies ***place attachment*** and ***place satisfaction*** as two empirically separable influences on overall sense of place. The former is defined by Stedman (2003: 672) as a "positive emotional bond that develops between people and their environment," based on cognition and affect and rooted in symbolic meanings (Stedman 2002: 563). The latter is claimed to be "a summary judgement of the perceived quality of a setting" (Stedman 2003: 672), more rooted in the instrumental values offered by environments. Having read through a great deal of the sense of place literature and seen many authors champion different concepts, I have judged the place attachment and satisfaction, as defined by Stedman, as being, along with ***place identity*** and ***dependence***, the ones that are best suited to my particular case study. These will be defined and discussed in the following section.

Interviews and Informants

Contact with Feios resident May Rita Kyrkjeøy was initiated in May of 2007 after having been informed by my advisor, Nina Witoszek, that the former had contacted SUM due to her strong engagement in the local effort to counter plans for the hydropower project. She was able to give me much information about the status of the case and feelings towards it from both sides of the issue. In addition, she also offered to house me during my fieldwork in the summer and autumn of the same year. Whilst some interviews were informally set up prior to my arrival in Feios, most had to be arranged by networking and knocking on doors throughout the village whilst I was on location. This proved to be quite fruitful as

I was able to focus on interviewing people who were typically more invested in the river controversy than others in the village. In conducting my fieldwork I had several main aims:

- Gain a representative sample of opinions from both sides of the debate – that is to speak to people both for and against the project;
- Achieve geographic heterogeneity amongst the interviewees, with particular emphasis on conducting interviews with people living along all 3 distinct watercourses in Feios (Feioselvi, Åfedtelvi, and Storelvi);
- Achieve a sample variety representative of different life histories. That is, some interviewees were ideally to be lifelong Feios inhabitants (and thusly preferably of a relatively advanced age), and others to be relatively newly established in the town.

14 people were interviewed over the course of 13 sessions. This totaled 7 individuals for the project and 7 against. The oldest interviewee was 77 years of age and a lifelong inhabitant of Feios. The youngest was 35 years old and also a lifelong inhabitant of Feios. In total 8 of the 14 interviewees were lifelong inhabitants of the community. The 6 remaining consisted of a woman who moved to Feios 13 years ago from neighbouring town Vik, a couple (originally from Bergen, moved from Flåm) which moved to Feios in late 2005, a couple from Holland which emigrated to Feios from their native country roughly 3 years ago, and an unmarried man who moved to Feios from nearby Sogndal 7 years ago. In all, 3 interviewees were women, to 11 men. Ideally I would have wished this ratio to be more even, however upon inquest many women expressed concerns of lack of knowledge or interest.

Geographically, the informants were spread over the southern half of the village. 3 informants (a father and two adult sons) had houses along Storelvi, in the south

eastern valley. 2 informants had houses along Åfedtelvi, in the southwest. 6 informants lived in the area roughly surrounding the confluence of Åfedtelvi and Storelvi (2 couples are included here), and 3 individuals, a father, son and wife were interviewed further north along one of the 2 main roads leading towards the fjord.

Nearly all the informants earn, or earned (in the case of 1 retired informant) their living from exploiting the land in one form or another. In some cases additional income was gained through tourist ventures or odd jobs such as driving the school bus. Two couples that I interviewed are in differing processes related to starting up ecological farms, for the production of commercial goods. The remaining individuals engaged in agriculture maintain more typical operations, with heavy machinery and bona fide fields for the production of goods. The 3 remaining informants not engaged in agricultural practices in any capacity work in the neighbouring town of Vik in a factory, producing road safety objects such as railings and signs, and as a carpenter.

Of the 14 individuals interviewed, only 3 did not have “fallrettigheter,” that is only 2 did not stand to receive financial compensation from an eventual building of the hydropower facility. This is because their property does not border to the banks of any of the affected watercourses, whilst the land belonging to all the other informants does. Owners of land bordering the watercourses affected by the project are entitled to financial compensation as their “rights” to the watercourse are being used by other parties. Of the 7 informants that were against the project, 5 had fallrettigheter. Of the 7 informants that were for the project, all 7 had these rights. This included the 2 largest rights owners in the village.

In addition I also attempted to interview a 15th individual living in the area of Feios closest to the fjord. This is an area that is not in immediate distance of Feioselvi (the main river running through Feios’ central stretch) and I was

accordingly interested in hearing the opinions of someone who is not necessarily exposed to the river(s) in everyday life. However, through networking and knocking on doors, little interest was shown in being interviewed for the thesis. One recurring reason given for this was a lack of knowledge on the subject, suggesting that the location of this area in relation to the watercourses may not be conducive to engagement in helping determine the future of the river system.

The fact that there was a wide variety of life histories and ages in the sample led to many diverging (and also converging) opinions and viewpoints with respect to both life in Feios and the proposed river development project. This will hopefully make the discussion in the thesis all the richer. Rather than focusing on one group of similar individuals, for example only life long inhabitants of the village, having talked to people both from Feios, Sogn og Fjordane, Bergen and even Holland will allow discussion of senses of place in the thesis to be more multifaceted. After all, rarely does one encounter a settlement where all the inhabitants are of one life history and age, so the sample acquired for the thesis also more adequately reflects conditions not only in Feios, but also in many other places.

The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for myself to retain control of the course of the interview but also giving the interviewee enough room to develop answers and thoughts as they saw fit, within a defined area of interest. Thus whilst I had a list of roughly 50 questions for each interview, occasionally tangent questions would arise, specific to the person being interviewed. Interviews lasted roughly from 30 to 60 minutes. They were conducted in Norwegian at the homes of the interviewees, typically during the evening, and subsequently translated to English for analysis and inclusion in the thesis.

Interview Schedule

The interviews consisted of 4 different question areas. The first area was concerned with sense of place in Feios. Questions revolved around the everyday activities and experiences of the interviewee in Feios. For example, I asked them what they considered “home,” or how often they went for walks in the surrounding nature. The second section was related to the first but generally operated on a larger scale. This section was titled “Nature / Culture and Identity” and consisted of questions such as “is it important to preserve Feios’ cultural artifacts?” and whether the informants were more at ease within a rural, agricultural environment as is found in Feios itself or whether they prefer wilderness. The third section was concerned with the hydropower project itself. Questions ranged from the effects informants expected it to have on the village to what they were the most concerned about (environmentally, socially, economically...) if the project were to become a reality. The fourth and final section covered hydropower development in Norway as a whole, setting the case of Feios in a larger cultural and economic context. Questions asked revolved around the informants’ views towards the hydropower project and whether they thought there should be more hydropower development in Norway. The main purpose of this section of questions was to provide a wider context for the river conflict itself. Seeing that the project is far from one which has been thought up and advocated by the locals, but rather one which stems from centralized Norwegian energy policies and outside businesses, it was deemed relevant to not ignore this whilst discussing the project and interviewing subjects. Indeed it was thought that these questions could well serve as a catalyst for thoughts on the project that otherwise may not have been touched upon by the interviewee, or even that interviewees could express a degree of sense of place extending beyond Feios.

Literature Sources

The main purpose of my literature analysis was of course to become well acquainted with the sense of place theory. I spent several months borrowing books from libraries in Norway and downloading academic articles from online databases and journals. An overview of this literature will be presented in the next section of the thesis, but the main authors that provided the backbone of my literature analysis and who provided a sort of figurative lens through which I would perceive all others were Yi-Fu Tuan (with *Topophilia*, 1974), Richard C. Stedman, Doreen Massey, and Edward Relph (with *Place and Placelessness*, 1976). The literature studied spans a period of several decades, beginning in earnest throughout the 1970s during the ascent of the humanistic geography movement, up to the present with a plethora of articles and books.

Sense of place has been researched within several related disciplines. The fields of environmental psychology, human geography, sociology and anthropology, for example, have all contributed valuably to the topic. I chose not to limit myself to any one discipline, as each and every one of them has something relevant and interesting to say. Journals which proved to be particularly bountiful article-wise were the Journal of Environmental Psychology, Society & Natural Resources, and Environment and Behavior, whilst both edited and regular books also proved helpful in my research.

My literature analysis introduced me to the multi-faceted field that is sense of place. Whilst many books and articles had new things to say, there was also much overlapping content. In some cases this overlap manifested itself in the form of identical theoretical terms, whilst in many other cases different terms were used for similar concepts, or slightly different concepts. With this abundance of terminologies and concepts as well as material, one has to reach a point at which one decides to work with what one has, rather than carry on digging through more and more available content. After roughly 7 months of literature analysis I

decided that I would pick those concepts that I deemed to be the most clear, and appropriate for the thesis. These will be outlined in the following section.

In addition to the bulk of literary research being conducted though the aforementioned avenues, I also made use of many documents pertaining specifically to the project in Feios. These consisted of a project application from FeiosKraft and the accompanying Environmental Impact Assessment, newspaper articles from Sognavis (the local regional paper), and personal pronouncements from inhabitants which were sent to public authorities (*høringsuttalelser*). The impact assessment in particular was useful in terms of allowing me to acquaint myself with the geography of Feios (it contains many maps) as well as the scope of the project's predicted environmental implications, whilst the personal pronouncements sent to public authorities were helpful in gouging what certain people were particularly concerned about with regards to the development, especially in my preliminary research stage.

Analytical Process

The interview transcripts and personal pronouncements were analyzed within the framework outlined by the 4 part question set. Each section was analyzed separately from the others. Banister *et al*. (1994) (in Twigger-Ross and Uzzel, 1996: 210) describe the analysis I have adopted as being "thematic analysis," "a coherent way of organizing or reading some interview material in relation to specific research questions." Analysis of the results of the interviews yields solid data within the theoretical framework the thesis operates within. Various salient quotations from interviews will be embedded within the thesis but as a whole the fieldwork analysis section of the thesis will simply base itself off of the transcriptions without resorting to an overabundance of quotes. Additional

sources of information such as personal pronouncements were also analyzed in this manner.

Methodological Considerations

Present in the thesis' methodology are several considerations which should be addressed. These concern principally the interviews conducted with informants. Those who accepted to talk with me are perhaps those with an inherent greater interest in influencing the fate of the project. Whilst some of my interviewees were more engaged than others, it would have been interesting to talk to people who, on the contrary, felt a lack of interest, or even indifference to the project and its effects on Feios. This, of course, does not mean that these people have no sense of place in Feios; they presumably simply experience the place in a different manner than those who have expressed definite views.

As mentioned earlier, during my fieldwork, I was housed by a family which is heavily active in efforts to stop the project from going through. If asked about my living situation by interviewees who were for or against the project, I would simply tell them this. This may have led some informants to assume that I myself am against the project. My being a student of environmental matters may also have led these informants to this same conclusion, affecting their answers. However, I did on several occasions point out that the thesis is to be impartial with respect to the project. I noted that I am writing about the thoughts of the inhabitants of Feios – not mine. In this manner my own stance towards the project was and still is irrelevant. I must say that each and every interviewee that was aware of my living situation and/or studies in any case seemed unaffected by this, as the vast majority of informants seemed more than happy to engage in a dialogue and express their thoughts on the project.

2. Theoretical Discussion

Sense of Place Theories: An Overview

The aim of this section is to provide the theoretical backbone of the thesis. It will first present a walk-through of important contributions to the field of research, and then go on to discuss specific key elements which have been forwarded by the discipline's most serious proponents. The purpose is twofold: to acquaint the reader with the relevant theory, deepening understanding of the thesis as a whole (its spring off points and intentions), and to lay out the precise framework within which fieldwork data is to be analyzed in the following section.

Space and Place

First of all, it should be noted that space is not that same as place. Space can be imagined, and it is easy to do so, as a "pre-humanized" place. It is a geographic stretch of land characterized by its contents – resources, topography, climate, etc. Maps are exceptional tools for conveying a sense of space, not in the least physical maps which place emphasis on geographical features such as mountain ranges and rivers. Place, however, is space which has been infused with human presence and all that this entails. Meanings, symbols, dependencies, uses of all kinds contribute to transforming a space into a place in which people live, interact (with each other or directly with the place) and anchor their lives. *The Penguin Dictionary of Human Geography* defines place as being "a small part of geographical space occupied by a person or thing," (Goodall 1987: 354). In the same dictionary space is separated into two sorts – absolute and relative. The former is defined as "objective – distinct, physical and real: a dimension which

focuses on the characteristics of things in terms of their concentration and dispersion," with the latter being "perceptual – (...) is socially produced, being dependent on relations between events or activities and thus bound to process and time" (ibid.: 440). The latter is of course of particular interest to this thesis in that it places far more importance on the psychological implications for the creation of place.

Historical Review: From Heidegger to Stedman

I have chosen to start this overview of place with Heidegger, who popularized the concept of dwelling in the world in the mid 20th century. Whilst Heidegger's work on the notion of dwelling was not explicitly about place, the concepts of dwelling and place are clearly closely related, and with particular relevance when it comes to the home environment. Heidegger's work drew on his own experiences in staying in a cabin in the German countryside and it is here that he "dwelled," coming to feel a strong connection to his surroundings. For Heidegger dwelling constitutes nothing less than the very fabric of human existence (Cresswell 2004: 21). For him, humans are above all "being[s]-in-the-world" (Ingold 2000: 168), and given this fact, we cannot but be in a position that encourages us to relate *to* this world, these surroundings. Thus, through this interaction of surroundings and human discovery and experience, dwelling involves the creation of place. But conversely, dwelling cannot occur without a place in which it can plant its roots. Tim Ingold (2000: 186) considers the founding statement of dwelling to be the following quote from Heidegger's *Poetry, Language, Thought*: "We do not dwell because we have built, but we build and have built because we dwell, that is because we are dwellers" (Heidegger 1971: 148). We dwell from within a position that is fundamentally at one with our surroundings. We are not separate from them in any way, but a part

of them, and this allows us to interact with these surroundings in the ways that we do, and to create deep emotional bonds with the places in which we live. Ingold contrasts the dwelling perspective with one of building, in which one rather constructs a view of the world consciously, before being able to act in it (Ingold 2000: 153, 155). This implies a certain degree of human-world disconnectivity which dwelling perspective eschews. Man and his surroundings are not separate but merely two entities of the planet, interacting and influencing each other.

As noted above, the dwelling perspective can be said to have particular relevance for the concept of home, for it is here that people seek to "dwell," in the traditional sense of the word. Here people seek a familiarity, predictability, and security which make life not only livable but a deeply comforting experience. It is in this sense that Witoszek and Sheeran (1998) distinguished the act of dwelling from that of living: for them, the core tenet of dwelling is being *at peace* in a protective place. Which is not to say that living is in any way an inferior way of experiencing the world – it can lead to euphoric experiences. What living does not do, as per their definitions, is lead to the sensation of being at peace in a secure environment.

Physical surroundings can be a source of please in and of themselves, independent of other variables, but other factors can also come into play which can enhance the dwelling feeling. Memories attached to the home can increase attachment and help to personalize a space, making it almost a physical, inanimate extension of the self. Indeed Vycinas (in Relph 1976: 39) noted that home is "an overwhelming, inexchangeable something to which we are subordinate and from which our way of life was oriented and directed, even if we had left our home many years before."

In this manner, Heidegger's work was not only relevant in and of itself with regards to laying some of the foundations of place theory, but also because he

directly influenced some of the later, great place theorists. Edward Relph in the seminal *Place and Placelessness* (1976: 43) similarly noted that "the essence of place lies in the largely unselfconscious intentionality that defines places as profound centers of human existence." Relph served as one of the main actors in the humanistic geography movement of the 70s. This movement was concerned with deepening people's understanding of place, with moving away from the up till then rigid, scientifically "correct" examination of the nature of space and place, one which focused on studying the absolute space, the objective space. Rather, this humanistic movement laid weight on the phenomenological aspects of place – how it is created and maintained by humans as inhabitants of the earth, as well as the actions we undertake in it in our everyday lives, with Relph noting both that "to be human is to live in a world filed with significant places: to be human is to have and know *your* place" (ibid.: 1) [emphasis his] and that "[we] live, act and orient ourselves in a world that is richly and profoundly differentiated into places, yet at the same time we seem to have a meager understanding of the constitution of places and the ways in which we experience them" (ibid.: 6). Relph was also adamant about the fact that places are in a state of constant evolution and change, the object of many different forces acting upon them over time (ibid.: 3). As one can imagine, these forces can manifest themselves in a variety of forms, from natural processes such as tidal movements along a coastline, to cultural (one wonders if the people of Stavanger's perceptions of their town have been altered now that the city is European capital of culture for 2008), to political as new regimes come and go, to economic as businesses also fade through time, or physical, such as the erection of a new building. The people of Dubai surely have something to say about this from the past few years...

Relph delved deeply into the variety of ways he thought place could be experienced. According to him,

> Places are fusions of human and natural order and are the significant centres of our immediate experiences of the world. They are defined less by unique location, landscape, and communities than by the focusing of experiences and intentions onto particular settings. Places are not abstractions or concepts, but are directly experienced phenomena of the lived-world and hence are full with meanings, with real objects, and with ongoing activities. They are important sources of individual and communal identity, and are often profound centres of human existence to which people have deep emotional and psychological ties (ibid.: 141)

This kind of place would best be found in what he describes as "authentic place." That is, place which is experienced in as "pure" a manner as possible, one which is not influenced by predefined norms or stereotypes about how a given place should be experienced, but rather seen and lived as being the product of "man's intentions and the meaningful settings for human activities, or from a profound and unselfconscious identity with place" (ibid.: 65).

One other pillar of the humanistic geography movement of this decade was Yi Fu Tuan. Perhaps most crucial to Tuan's work is his definition of place. For him, a place is to be interpreted as being "a center of meaning or field of care based on human experience, social relationships, emotions, and thoughts." (Stedman 2002: 562). The crux of Tuan's thoughts was that space is transformed into meaningful *place* through experience. He described experience as being "a cover-all term for the various modes through which a person knows his world" (1975: 151). Tuan coined the term *topophilia* in 1974, to denote an affective bond between people and their place/setting (Tuan 1974: 4). He also spearheaded the ascent of the phenomenological strain in human geography in the years to come. His accentuation of the importance of experience laid the groundwork for much sense of place theory to follow, and is along with Relph an almost obligatory acknowledgment in opening statements in sense of place literature. Just as Relph, Tuan was also influenced by the work of Heidegger, the concept of dwelling and being-in-the-world, and "the fourfold connectivity of Being with the earth, the

cosmos, the body and the spirit – were to have a profound impact on his thinking" (Hubbard *et al*. 2004: 307).

Tuan also held that the creation of place can occur over several levels of experience and scales:

> To most people in the modern world, places lie somewhere in the middle range of experience. In this range places are constructed out of such elements as distinctive odors, textural and visual qualities in the environment, seasonal changes of temperature and color, how they look as they are approached from the highway, their location in the school atlas or road map, and additional bits of indirect knowledge like population or number and kind of industries. Within the middle range places are thus known both directly through the senses and indirectly through the mind. A small place can be known through all the modes of experience; (1975: 152-153)

The nature of the experiences which are conducive to the creation of place does not necessarily have to be "special," or out of the ordinary. Rather, they accrue through everyday, ordinary activities, at least in the case of places in which people live. Feios is as good an example as any in terms of being this. A small, isolated town consisting in the vast majority of houses seems to be exactly the kind of place Tuan is referring to when he speaks of places which are created through experiences operating in this middle range.

No doubt one of Norway's biggest contributors to the sense of place theory is Christian Norberg-Schulz. His book *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (1979), in discussing the true nature of place, laid weight upon how places are imbued with deep human meaning which manifest themselves through a place's *spirit*, i.e. its *genius loci*. The manifestation and experience of a spirit of a place is, essentially, the purest form of the sensing of a place – sense of place.

Further, in his *Mellom Jord og Himmel* (1978) he proposed that place was directly related to the formation of identity: "When the place no longer has a clear identity, the individual's ability to develop a personal identity is weakened" [my translation] (Norberg-Schulz 1992: 16). For Norberg-Schulz, post World War II

urban development had led people to lose the ability to *live* through the loss of place, instead contenting themselves with filling their existence with "random stimuli" (ibid.: 16). This act of "living," for Norberg-Schulz, is above all the act of being acquainted with something, and being attached to it.

Finally, in *Øye og Hånd* (1997), Norberg-Schulz decried the rise of positivistic outlooks on the world in science at the cost of a phenomenological one, in which emphasis is laid upon how things *are*. He claimed that the result of this trend was an "alienation instead of belonging" in our surroundings [my translation] (Norberg-Schulz 1997: 30).

John Agnew in 1987 in *Place and Politics: the Geographical Mediation of State and Society*, defined what he perceived to be the 3 dimensions of place: location, locale, and sense of place. The latter is of most interest to the thesis but Agnew made sure to point out that the 3 dimensions are not separate, but rather complementary dimensions of place that can work together in order to construct complex places. Location is simply the geographic area to which a place belongs. Locale is "the material setting for social relations – the actual shape of place within which people conduct their lives as individuals" (Cresswell 2004: 7). Berg and Dale cite universities or shopping centers as being prime examples of a locale (2004: 44). Finally, sense of place is, more or less in line with the views of Relph and Tuan, "the subjective and emotional attachment people have to place" (ibid.: 7). However, my view is that this is a restrictive definition of the term as it places importance on the phenomenon of attachment. It is possible to experience a sense of place in areas one has only encountered over a short period of time, such as on holiday. Individuals in their home town or environment do not have to feel attachment to it to feel a sense of place. They may in effect be quite indifferent to their place or harbour negative feelings towards it. Of course not all senses of place are equal. Those that are cultivated over years and years are more complex than those established by people on holidays, but the concept should not be

understood as being something that exclusively demands time and exhaustive experience as prerequisites. As will be shown in the next chapter, some of my informants had lived in Feios far less time than others but nevertheless expressed views which pointed towards their also having a relatively strong local sense of place. Nevertheless, Agnew's multi-dimensional approach to defining place works well as a reminder that space and place are far from static entities which embody one form of identity. Building upon claims that places are in a constant state of change, Agnew points out that in addition to this, or perhaps as a result, places are perceived on multiple levels of clearly separable yet interweaving interpretations.

Key Concepts

The following concepts have all been heavily discussed in recent years (and decades) within space and place literature, as well as environmental psychology and other areas.

Place Attachment

As noted in the previous section, Richard Stedman (2003: 672) defines place attachment as a "positive emotional bond that develops between people and their environment," based on cognition and affect and rooted in symbolic meanings (Stedman 2002: 563). In effect this is similar to what one feels towards a place after experience and time have created a special relationship, as argued by Tuan and Relph. Place attachment has been used by many sense of place scholars in recent years to document people's positive relationship towards a given area (Stedman 2003; Kaltenborn 2002; Kyle 2004). According to Altman and Low (1992: 3) "place attachment subsumes or is subsumed by a variety of analogous

ideas," including that of place identity forwarded by Proshansky *et al*. (1983). Crucially, Altman and Low (1992: 5) point out that place attachment not only involves emotions, affect, beliefs and knowledge, but also carries influence over behaviours and actions in a place. So place attachment, at least in theory, does not only bear influence over the outcome of a person's state of mind, but can also determine the state of a given physical environment through one's actions (or lack thereof) in it.

Why do people gain attachment to places? Altman and Low (ibid.: 7) note that many authors have referred to places as being personally satisfying[2] because they "permit control, creativity, and mastery, and they provide opportunities for privacy, personal displays, security and serenity." Thus place attachment may not arise solely because of superficially pleasing aspects it may contain, but also because of a myriad of deeply personal psychological assurances it incurs. But *how* are these assurances incurred? What is it about certain places that give them this power? I would tend to think that the most salient aspect a place can offer in terms of creating attachment to it would be the sense of security and serenity. This ties back to Tuan's accentuation of the importance of experience and the past in creating what he calls "topophilia." The more one becomes familiar with a place, the more one knows what to expect from it. With time, the possibility of unforeseen, jarring events diminishes and a sense of security grows. In this manner attachment can be created and sustained through a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. Place can lead to positive feelings, and further to more positive feelings, and so on. Once this feeling of rootedness has been achieved then people are more comfortable in extending their sphere of actions in the place in question

[2] This is not to be confused with the notion of *place satisfaction*, which will be discussed momentarily.

– a relationship has been established in which a greater variety of possibilities and activities have opened themselves to the attached person.

Attachment accordingly encompasses, in most conceptualizations, three component areas: affect, cognition, and practice (Altman and Low 1992 in Kyle *et al*. 2004), with affect concerning emotional attachment, cognition encompassing thoughts, beliefs, and knowledge, and practice, the behaviours and activities which take place in the special context (Kyle *et al*. 2004: 439). Practice-wise, Vaske and Kobrin (2001: 16) noted that "attachment to a local natural resource can influence environmentally responsible behavior (ERB) in an individual's everyday life," with such behavior being defined as "when the actions of an individual or group advocate the sustainable or diminished use of natural resources." (Sivek and Hungerford, 1989/1990 in Vaske and Kobrin 2001). Additionally, Kaltenborn and Bjerke (2002: 395) note that "psychological constructs which people form over a long period of time can be quite decisive for the types of opinion or reaction expressed over landscape development issues." Thus place attachment must not be a notion confined to the human mind; it is also something which can have direct bearing on how physical environments are managed. Whilst it may seem self-evident that thoughts and feelings can and do influence the ways in which we act in natural settings, the fact is that political and land management processes have traditionally not laid much, if any, weight on such relationships between people and place.

Kyle *et al*. (2004) effectively summarized what place attachment has meant for several different theorists. Whilst some have stressed the importance of individual interaction with an environment over time, others have also contested that past experiences and the memories of these are also not to be ignored. Memories can also encompass those of people who are/were important to the self, and social ties in general can also be conducive to place bond creation. Social space will be discussed shortly.

Place Satisfaction

Stedman defined place satisfaction as "a summary judgement of the perceived quality of a setting" (Stedman 2003: 672). Place satisfaction is less rooted in deeper emotional connections to a setting, but still involves the ways in which people perceive the attractiveness of a place. Place satisfaction and attachment are two different dimensions of environmental perception. Stedman (ibid.: 672) noted that "one may be satisfied with the setting but not particularly attached, and [that] the reverse may also be true," implying that attachment can arise out of non-physical attributes of a place (such as the social dimension), whilst physical attributes are of little personal importance, or that conversely the physical environment can be the largest, or only, source of sense of place.

For Stedman, then, sense of place encompasses meaning, attachment, and satisfaction (ibid.: 672). Place satisfaction is important to take into account because it offers a framework in which to account for ways in which people build immediate as well as long term relationships to places. A summary judgment can be made within a small time frame, but affect perceptions of a place in the long term. Place satisfaction therefore carries its own amount of weight when it comes to determining how people create fields of meaning and relationships in place.

Stedman responds to criticisms of place satisfaction as being comparatively shallow compared to place attachment by claiming that the two can "exert independent effects on behavior." (Stedman 2002: 564). He accordingly goes on to examine the ways in which place attachment and satisfaction can factor into changes occurring in a place:

> Higher place attachment is (...) expected to be associated with greater willingness to engage in place-protective action. The relationship between satisfaction and behavior is potentially more tenuous: Are those with more favorable attitudes towards the setting (higher satisfaction) more willing to fight against change? Or

> are people more willing to do so when satisfaction is lower ("My place is in poor condition: something ought to be done about it")? Place theory suggests the latter: Concerns come to the fore when places are threatened; presumably, behaviors will follow. Therefore, I cautiously hypothesize that higher place attachment and lower place satisfaction are each associated with increased willingness to engage in place-protective behavior. (ibid.: 567)

It seems to me, however, that this would be especially true when the two are acting *together*. Indeed it is easy to see how high place attachment *added* to low place satisfaction would lead to place-protective behaviour. And whilst low place satisfaction could also lead to such behaviour, it also seems clear to me that strong place satisfaction could have the same effect: "my place is in good condition: do not build a hydropower facility here." This corresponds roughly to Vaske and Kobrin's (2001) hypothesis that place dependence adds to place identity (which, by their definition, is more or less equally what has been described here earlier as place attachment), leading to environmentally responsible behaviour.

Place Dependence

Moore and Graefe (1994) (in Bott *et al*. 2003: 105) define place dependence as the act of "valuing a particular setting for a certain activity." In this manner, according to place dependence theory, people develop bonds with settings through the carrying out of desired activities, or the meeting of specific goals that the setting in question can provide. Jorgensen and Stedman (2001: 234) elaborate somewhat on this by noting that place dependence "concerns how well a setting serves goal achievement given an existing range of alternatives ('how does this setting compare to others for what I like to do?')." In this way, place dependence may not always denote positive alternatives and possibilities, merely the best available, and it is, unlike place attachment, based on specific behavioural goals one wishes to achieve, which are not necessarily rooted in affective processes (ibid.: 234).

Vaske and Kobrin (2001: 17) note that place dependence "suggests an ongoing relationship with a setting." To illustrate this they use the example of a river which is used for practicing specific skills in kayaking. The river's proximity to the residence of the kayaker means it is easily accessible and, accordingly, can potentially increase possible dependence. Even though the river used in this example is not strong enough to actually go on kayak trips, it does satisfy the aforementioned goals. Larger, stronger rivers would be more ideally suited to the kayaker, but as this is not an option, the kayaker must remain dependent on what he has available, even if it is not ideal.

Photo 3: Place dependence in Feios: the agricultural landscape along Feiosdalen. Looking north towards Sognefjorden, November 2007.

In addition to this, Vaske and Kobrin note that local natural areas are ideal for establishing a relationship of place dependence – this is of course exactly what is found in Feios. Mentioned as examples of features around which dependencies can grow are hiking trails, and this is just one feature present in Feios which

could be conducive to dependency relationships – fishing may also be carried out in the rivers, for example, and hunting is a common practice.

Place Identity

1983 saw the publication of the highly influential *Place Identity: Physical world Socialization of the Self* by Proshansky *et al*. As the title indicates, this article (published in the Journal of Environmental Psychology) focuses specifically on self identity as a result of place, rather than sense of place per se, but is nevertheless of relevance, given the close theoretical bonds between the two. The paper is written on the fundamental assumption that "the development of self-identity is not restricted to making distinctions between oneself and significant others, *but extends with no less importance to objects and things, and the very spaces and places in which they are found"* [emphasis mine] (Proshansky *et al*. 1983: 57). In a way the article functions as a good starting point for a study of the many branches of the sense of place theory. Self-identity is but one of these. Whilst some of these branches are more explicit in citing their belonging to the field, those that do less so are no less relevant, and place identity functions as a sort of mid-level theory. It is not as all-encompassing as Tuan or Relph's phenomenological musings, and neither is it quite as fine tuned and specific as other aspects of sense of place the field has researched. These include place attachment, satisfaction, and dependence, which will be discussed shortly.

Proshansky also advocates the importance of environmental changes in the formation of self-identity. He noted what he perceived to be a

> tendency to ignore the influence of significant environmental changes on self structure, particularly self-identity. Rarely has the impact of neighborhood deterioration, geographic mobility, and technological reconstruction of the landscape been evaluated in terms of their impact on self-identity. (...) [W]e must stress the importance of an ecological approach in which the person is seen as involved in transactions with a changing world. (ibid.: 59)

For Proshansky, the development of the self is a continuous process which takes place throughout one's entire life (ibid), and which is inextricably related to one's physical environment; that is, place, as well as the social environment within which an individual evolves (ibid.: 62). The ways in which the social and physical environment can interact and influence a person's sense of place and self-identity will be explored in more depth shortly.

Summary

Place attachment, satisfaction, dependence and identity are four theoretical pillars of the sense of place theory, if not *the* four ones. Whilst there is a certain amount of overlap between each concept, and a lack of agreement within the field regarding the strict definitions of each one of them, as well as how they interact with each other (Jorgensen and Stedman 2001: 234), they nevertheless provide a sound theoretical basis on which to base studies related to sense of place. Whilst some researchers (Kaltenborn and Bjerke 2002, Vaske and Kobrin 2001) have noted that place attachment can be seen as encompassing place identity and/or dependence, and that there is "no definite consensus on how to conceptualize and measure sense of place" (Kaltenborn and Bjerke 2002: 384), my overview of the above concepts based on selected research will hopefully have achieved its goal of clearly laying out the ways in which each of them differs from the other. Place attachment, dependence, identity and satisfaction all have something of their own to contribute to the studies of sense of place, which cannot be accounted for by focusing on one or several other notions of person-place relations.

I will now present a survey of different dimensions of space and place that have been discussed in the literature: spanning from the social, natural, globalized and the contested.

Social Space

Many researchers hold the view that sense of place is something that arises from, and is continually affected by, the social sphere (Stedman 2003). In other words, the essence of place is said to reside in inter-human interactions, rather that the physical place itself. Thus, "place can be thought of as a social construction formed by specific interactions between individuals and contexts with specific properties" (Entrikin 1976 and Lagolopolus 1993 in Kaltenborn and Bjerke 2002). Creswell (2004: 30) held that two things stand out in the notion of socially constructed place: meaning and materiality; that is, the meanings of and in a place are socially constructed, as is the actual physical place itself. Concerning actual physical place, Creswell does not elaborate on what exactly he means. It seems obvious that buildings are erected by people and social processes – they are hardly natural edifices. But processes such as town planning, the erection of monuments, the choosing of a particular architecture – all these are also influenced by the social sphere; but not only are they influenced by it, they also have influence *on* it. I mentioned Dubai earlier as an example of the built environment creating and altering place. Currently the world's tallest building is under construction and seemingly serves as a visual representation of that city's growth and modernization. Chicago is also a city heavily defined by its architecture, with its unique mix of the historical and the cutting edge new (see the Chicago Spire, also currently under construction), and the new national Opera in Oslo has transformed the stretch of city it lies within. There is little denying that such places are heavily anchored in social existentialism.

However, Creswell goes on to point out that other researchers have warned against claiming that the social world has a monopoly on the creation of place:

> There is no doubt that the ordering of a particular place – and the specific way in which a society orders space and time – is not independent of social ordering (inasmuch as it encompasses the social, so place is partially elaborated by means

> of the social, just as place is also elaborated in relation to orderings deriving from individual subjects and from underlying physical structures). However, this does not legitimate the claim that place, space or time are *merely* social constructions. Indeed the social does not exist prior to place nor is it given expression except in and through place (...) It is within the structure of place that the very possibility of the social arises. (Malpas 1999: 35-36 in Cresswell 2004: 31, original emphasis)

In short, the relationship between the social sphere and place is somewhat of a classic chicken-egg situation, with researches constantly battling it out for which one came first. Researchers such as Malpas, however, claim that subjectivity is founded on place, not the contrary – that place is the foundation of human existence upon which everything we do, know and are, is built. "Place is primary to the meaning and construction of society." (ibid.: 32).

Altman and Low (1992: 7) also note that social relations may well aid in the creation of place:

> a number of scholars indicate how attachment to places may be based on or incorporate other people – family, friends, community, and even a culture. Thus the social relations that a place signifies may be equally or more important to the attachment process that the place qua place. (...) Places are, therefore, repositories and contexts within which interpersonal, community, and cultural relationships occur, and it is to those social relationships, not just to place qua place, to which people are attached.

So here place is essentially a *repository*, rather than a, for example, well, from which one extracts meaning. David M. Hummon in Altman and Low (1992: 258) wrote specifically about community attachment and echoed these propositions, noting that attachment to the community seemed to be based on social integration, the presence of friends, length of residence and life-cycle stage. With respect to length of residence, Hummon noted that it does not seem to be the accumulation of memories and experiences that promotes the creation of person-place bonds, but rather the accumulation and strengthening of social ties (ibid.: 257). Related to these feelings is the creation over time of a sense of "insideness,"

in which the local home area is defined not only by its own nature but also in relation to other, "outside" places (ibid.: 258).

"Storied Residence"

Also apparent in the social sphere of place is the existence of narratives – stories that are passed on down and within generations – which some theorists such as Wallace Stegner and Holmes Rolston III claim to be a part of the very essence of place making. Waterman (1998) noted that according to Stegner, "developing a sense of place requires residence and history, i.e., a storied residence," and that a "place [is not] a place until things that have happened in it are remembered in history, ballads, yarns, legends, or monuments. Fictions serve as well as facts" (Stegner 1992 in Waterman 1998).

Waterman (ibid.) espoused an environmental ethic based on what she termed "environmental solidarity," or the act of extending the "us" sphere to organisms and entities to realms previously kept far outside of it. In this manner, she held, individuals would become more sensitive to environmental damage amongst a larger sphere of life. This environmental solidarity, she claimed,

> is possible through developing what Rolston calls storied residence: storied, because the form of human identity is narrative, and residence, because our existence in nature takes the form of living a career in a place (Rolston, p. 351). (...) Yet any personal attempt to develop storied residence cannot begin from scratch. We are not isolated individuals meeting a geography for the first time, for in the background of any geography stories about previous occupants and encounters with the land always lurk. Indeed, this background of stories is a necessary foundation for us to value a place beyond its significance for our personal residence there.

The narrative world is thus comprised of stories from the past which are imbued with place themselves, and which also imbue space with place. However the power of narration, I believe, lies not only in "history, ballads, yarns, legends" and the like, but also simply in the way people talk about places in their everyday

discourse. The power of *these* words cannot be underestimated as it is there to which people are exposed to most often, and which frame one's social life in place. Nor do these words have to be descriptive of a given place. It suffices for a place to make an apparition in a narrative. One does not need to say, for example, "I went for a walk along the riverbank and the sounds of the water running against the rocks and the wind in the trees really gave me a calming sensation." The simple statement "I went for a walk along the riverbank" also holds power as suddenly such a place has been promoted from simply *being*, to apparently being a place in which one wishes to spend time. It becomes positive space in the minds of listeners.

Culture and Sense of Place

Altman and Chemers (1984) discussed how culture interacts with the physical environment, both man made and natural. According to them, culture, or the "beliefs and perceptions, values and norms, customs and behaviors of a group or society" (Altman and Chemers 1984: 3), lies at the centre of the ways in which we perceive and act in our surroundings. Whilst they make no explicit mention of sense of place in their discussion, it is nevertheless of direct relevance throughout.

Indeed with regards to psychological processes, they noted that physical environments and culture are linked with people through two channels: mental and behavioral activities. The former comprises the sensory experience of the environment and the ways in which it is interpreted by people, whilst the latter is simply the concrete ways in which people behave in, and use, their surroundings (ibid.: 5). Through the analysis of informant's interview answers, the thesis will show that these process are of direct relevance for the formation of a sense of place. Working of off the above definition, sense of place in effect becomes a

sub-section of culture, as it too resides in people's beliefs, perceptions, values, norms as well as customs and behaviors that they ascribe to their surroundings, both natural and man made.

The Natural Environment

How, if at all, does the natural environment affect people's sense of place? Is it possible for a person to become attached to a place purely as a result of relationships with the local natural environment? Stedman (2003) examined specifically the contribution of the physical environment to sense of place, as opposed to social space. He came to the conclusion that landscape features "matter a great deal" to the meanings people construct around them with regards to place (Stedman 2003: 671). He noted that "although social constructions are important, they hardly arise out of thin air: The local environment sets bounds and gives form to these constructions" (ibid.: 671).

Stedman then goes on to discuss the physical *landscape*, by exploring, amongst other things, the *Genius Loci* or "Direct Effects" model of environment-person interaction. He noted that several researchers have claimed that physical environmental characteristics have direct influence on how people perceive and so form attachments to areas. This accordingly includes features such as "outstanding physical features" (Shumaker and Taylor 1983 in Stedman 2003: 673). However, Stedman views another model, the 'Experiential model,' as being the most fitting for describing the importance of the physical environment in influencing sense of place. He noted:

> I hypothesize that the best model of sense of place will be that which suggests that attributes of the environment are associated with characteristic experiences. Symbolic meanings are produced from these experiences, and these meanings in turn underpin place attachment and satisfaction. (ibid.: 675)

Stedman views the impact of the physical/natural environment on a sense of place as lying in the ever lingering world of experience, rather than in direct effects which rely less on this. Whilst I agree that experiences and natural environments can interact strongly to produce a sense of place, I also believe that the direct effect model holds water, if not to a lesser degree than the experiential model. One does not necessarily need to engage in concrete activities within a given environment to develop feelings towards it. By experiences, Stedman seems to be alluding to physical experiences, such as fishing, or hiking, at the cost of purely psychological experiences, such as the pleasure felt as one gazes at an amazing view, for example. The sight of an old growth forest, with its tall, imposing trees could also be the immediate source of a sense of place, if not outright place attachment. Of course, there are varying degrees of sense of place. A superficial sense of place may be achieved by looking at pictures or passing through a given area, but this is what has been described as "generic sense of place," which develops when "an individual with a generic place attachment can be satisfied in a number of different locations as long as those places have the right characteristics" (McAndrew 1998: 409), such as lakes filled with turquoise water. This generic place attachment/sense of place is not the same as what Stokols and Shumaker (1981 in McAndrew 1998: 409) term "geographic place dependence," or "an extremely powerful attachment to a very specific town or house." Nevertheless, there are aesthetic parameters within the natural environment that people simply respond to positively. Is this not, after all, part of what makes people visit national parks they have never been to before? Brochures show off carefully chosen pictures of landscapes, and the tourists flow in.

It may well be part of the reason why national parks are visited, but it does not account for all of the reasons. According to Kaplan and Kaplan (1989 in Kyle *et al*. 2004: 440) attraction to natural environments is fueled by the desire to satisfy

specific needs, by their providing "a variety of psychological, social and physiological benefits not typically found in developed or human-influenced environments," as well as support for "human functioning. They provide a context in which people can manage information effectively; they permit people to move about and explore with comfort and confidence. And finally, such environments foster the recovery from mental fatigue."

Roger S. Ulrich (1983) wrote about peoples' response to the natural environment in terms of aesthetic and affective dimensions, and by focusing on affect (place attachment) wrote of how he viewed people's experience of the natural environment as being directly relevant towards the management of natural areas. He noted that

> [a]ffect is central to conscious experience and behavior in any environment, whether natural or built, crowded or unpopulated. Because virtually no meaningful thoughts, actions, or environmental encounters occur without affect (…), an affective state is an important indicator of the nature and significance of a person's ongoing interaction with an environment (…). Research concerning affective and aesthetic response, therefore, may have a central role in advancing our understanding of human interactions with the natural environment and could prove pivotal in the development of comprehensive theories. Further, this area of research relates to important questions in environmental planning and design, including, for instance, visual landscape assessment, the provision of vegetation and parks in cities, and *issues of wilderness management* and recreation." (Ulrich 1983: 85) [emphasis mine]

So whilst there is no question, in my opinion, that meaning is something that is entirely anthropocentric in origin – there is no meaning in the natural environment before humans assign it – there equally in my mind is little doubt that the natural environment in itself can be a source of sense of place and place attachment and identity, independent of social variables. In conjunction with the latter, person-environment relations can only be strengthened, but the natural environment nevertheless seems to be a source of value in its own right. This is a conclusion I base not only on literature on the subject, but also on my own thoughts, and, not in the least, my own experiences in which I have formed

attachments to natural environments on various scales – environments which I had no social bonding to, but which I visited out of purely physical attraction and curiosity. These are now places that I am quite strongly attached to, even though I do not live in them, or even visit them often.

The Compression of Chronotope

Chronotope, a term coined by Bachtin (1981), literally translates to "time space," and denotes the "intrinsic connectedness of temporal and special relationships" (Bachtin 1981: 84). Whilst Bachtin used the term in discussing such relationships in literature, it is also fitting in the context of what is happening to space and place, particularly as studied by Doreen Massey. In particular with her paper "A Global Sense of Place" (1991), Massey put forward the notion that the nature of the local place is being fundamentally altered in the modern age of globalization and its accompanying compression of this space-time dimension. Massey defined it as being the "movement and communication across space, to the geographical stretching-out of social relations, and to our experience of all this" (Massey 1991 in Creswell 2004: 64). She also advocated rethinking of place as a fundamentally more globalized entity:

> What gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus (...). It is, indeed, a *meeting place*. Instead then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself (...). [T]his in turn allows a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local. (ibid.: 69)

Other theorists however do not see eye to eye with this model of place in an increasingly interconnected world. David Harvey for example has been particularly interested in how place and politics intertwine. For example, he stresses the power of place to generate reactionary viewpoints, specifically an us/them-inside/outside dichotomy. In addition, he notes the use of "militant particularism," or "the political use of the particularity of place as a form of resistance against the forces of global capitalism" (Cresswell 2004: 61).

The presence and nature of such a globalized place-world is of course of relevance considering where efforts to build the hydropower project in Feios are coming from. These are centralized efforts, pushed forward by Norges Vassdrags- og Energidirektorat and various contractors. It is a project which has no origins whatsoever in the population of Feios itself. Compounding the globalized nature of the hydropower project is the fact that Feios already has all the power it needs. The three rivers would produce electricity to be exported to other parts of the country, if not other to countries.

Contested Place

Contested place is place which is fought over by different factions of people, all of which assign different meanings to it. It is both a source of conflict in uses of place and a source of richness in symbol of place. Kyle *et al*. (2004: 439) note that "in the context of stakeholder conflict, research has shown that competing claims to a resource or setting can be negotiated with an understanding of the bonds stakeholders share with the contested landscape." Bonaiuto *et al*. (2002: 635) also note that

> a frequent problem in the planning and management of natural protected areas is related to conflicts concerning the use of common resources between different

> social groups and categories, like different stakeholders, or between decision makers and citizens.

Whilst their discussion was based on natural, officially protected areas, these problems are also common in the management of other categories of natural resources, such as the unprotected, public lands found throughout the village of Feios and its surrounding areas.

In addition, Fried also claims that contested place can lead to increased place attachment: that it "becomes more intense when the identified groups are in clear juxtaposition to an out-group which functions as a threat" (2000 in Bonaiuto 2002: 636). This falls in line with Stedman's view that stronger place attachment is expected to be associated with stronger willingness to engage in actions which preserve a given place as it is. Only the equation is somewhat reversed between the two; Fried claims that the fact that a place is contested/threatened produces (stronger) place attachment, whilst Stedman claims pre-existing place attachment leads to place-protective behaviour in a context of conflict. The two are of course not mutually exclusive, but further demonstrate the plethora of situational contexts which can function to encourage the individual and group's sense of place.

Conclusion

Numerous aspects of space and place have been proposed and researched by theorists in the past half century or so. Together, they create a theoretical tapestry pointing towards a rich and potentially complex everyday understanding and relationship with not only our immediate surroundings, but also the world beyond the everyday field of action. Is Feios a contested place? A victim of the time-space compression? What roles do the physical and social environments play in the creation of the inhabitant's *genius loci*? The next chapter will attempt to

determine this and more through the analysis of my informant's interview answers.

3. Feios: A Tapestry of Place Meanings

This chapter analyses the interviews conducted with my informants. Several approaches have been adopted and given their own sections and subsections, in order to emphasize the many facets *place* can be comprised of, as well as to paint as rich and clear a picture as possible of the nature of Feios as seen through the eyes and experiences of my informants. All names have been replaced with randomly chosen ones for the purpose of providing anonymity, and stances towards the project are denoted with AP (against project) and FP (for project).

The analysis of the interviews showed that all informants appeared to possess a sense of place in Feios. However, the strength of their feelings and perceptions in shaping stances towards the hydropower project was not equal in each person. Neither can it be said that all those for the project had a weaker sense of place for their surroundings. Indeed informants from both parties expressed views indicative of rich, multi-faceted *genius loci*. In addition, length of residence in Feios seemed to be of little importance in determining the presence or strength of an individual's sense of place. Informants who had moved to Feios only a few years ago actually expressed many of the most varied sense of place based views and opinions of all. The tally can be summarized followingly:

The informants with the richest sense of place appeared to be Gry (41), Fredrik (46), Dries (48), Engeltje (55), Jostein (43), Ingar (52) and Morten (53). All these informants expressed strong attachment to the village, with particular weight accorded to the local nature. Gry, Fredrik, Dries, Engeltje and Ingar all moved to the village only a few years ago, whilst Jostein and Morten were lifelong inhabitants. All were against the hydropower project, and felt that it represented a threat to the nature of Feios, as well as its economic and social future. The seven

informants who were for the project, on the contrary, felt that the project would only be advantageous for the village; it would provide jobs, income, and better use of available resources. The strength of sense of place and place attachment and identity amongst these pro-project informants varied. Some expressed feelings of being strongly attached (Karl, 64, lifelong inhabitant), whilst others seemed to be more superficially rooted in their surroundings (Vilde, 36, moved to Feios from neighbouring Vik approximately 15 years ago).

The Natural Environment and Aesthetics

As noted in the first chapter, one of the aims of the thesis is to fill in the gap concerning the role of the natural environment in creating *genius loci*. I therefore asked questions revolving around the role Feios' natural environment plays in the everyday lives of the informants. This section of the chapter will focus specifically on the aesthetic aspect of the natural environment, how the informants respond to it, why they do so, and how it influences their sense of place in the village.

Steven C. Bourassa's *The Aesthetics of Landscape* (1991) presented a myriad of ways in which people's aesthetic appreciation of a natural environment can be influenced. He held that three separate forces act upon the aesthetic appreciation of landscape: cultural preferences, biological predispositions, and personal traits. Cultural preferences are shaped by the cultural environment and are passed on from generation to generation, affecting aesthetic preferences. English gardens, for example, are manifestations of how a natural environment is transformed, and managed, to suit culturally specified aesthetic preferences. Similarly, the Norwegian cabin tradition has apparently raised the importance of living near a water body to new heights, with 41,6% of respondents in a study in 2006

claiming that their ideal cabin would be by the sea (Borglund 2006). On the other hand, individuals are also biologically predisposed by way of sensory experience towards preferring a certain type of landscape through genetic encoding. Finally, purely personal attributes contribute to unique preferences.

Bourassa also distinguished between two modes of aesthetic experience of the environment: engaged and detached. The former takes place in a sort of phenomenological "participatory landscape," in which "the objective world is not independent of the perceiving subject, but depends on the intentionality of the subject" (Bourassa 1991: 39), whilst detached aesthetic experience takes place when the subject and its desires distance themselves from the object. The detached individual merely observes, with little further implications for itself or the object. Hence, engaged aesthetic experience, where the subject presents itself as an "existential insider," lends itself much more to the creation of place attachment and identity. Conversely, detached aesthetic experience lends itself to the identification of place dependence and satisfaction – it is a shallower experience of the environment which determines shallower relationships and uses in it. This would seem to be to an extent compatible with Bourassa's views on the purely sensory experience of the environment. He argued that

> [p]erhaps the best definition of sensory aesthetics is a negative one – it is a matter of pleasurable experience that does not rely on formal structures or any meanings or other symbolic values. Sensory aesthetics would seem to be essentially biological in nature since it involves pleasurable experience that is essentially unmediated by any learned associations. (ibid.: 24)

However, given the answers obtained from my informants, it seems to me that whilst sensory aesthetic experience is a biological experience unmediated by learned associations, it is also a tool which functions as a mediat*or* of learned associations, as it allows people not only to learn about the physical characteristics of a place, but also informs their experience of it. I will attempt to demonstrate this in this chapter.

Fredrik (46, AP) noted how he himself uses the river and how he would feel if it were to be affected by the project:

> We get drinking water from it. So we use it a little, for that. And water for the vegetable garden and such. We use it every single day. But we haven't used it to fish, or other activities, no. We go on walks and look at it. The sounds (…). If they go away it would be strange.

Place dependence, satisfaction and attachment all seemed to be at play here in shaping Fredrik's relationship towards the watercourse, forming an engaged aesthetic appreciation of his natural surroundings. In this case, dependence seemed to act largely independently of attachment and satisfaction – emotional attachment was established through its sights and sounds, whilst dependence was created separately through the mentioned concrete uses Fredrik had for the watercourse. His use of the word "strange" to characterize how life in the village would be in the village without the river and its sounds suggested that for him the watercourse was an essential aesthetic element in the landscape which in a way tied the local natural elements together, creating normalcy, and the natural order of things. A tapped watercourse would fundamentally alter the nature of his surroundings and clash with his understanding of how the natural environment in the village should be.

Other informants displayed dependencies on place that were not rooted in concrete physical activities such as fishing, but rather seemed to use the rivers and its aesthetic elements as a source of psychological well-being:

> We can hear the water down there, where Åfedtelvi and Storelvi come together, and we hear the waterfall. We can almost see it when the water reflects, we think that's nice. (Dries, 48, AP)

> I fish a little, not so much. (...) I guess I don't have so much direct use for it, it's more about the experience of it. (Morten, 53, AP)

With all three of these informants being against the project, one could hypothesize that such relationships of psychological gains with the river held

more weight than “concrete” ones based in physical interaction, in terms of creating a bond between the landscape element and the person experiencing it. Indeed none of my informants who were positive towards the project noted that the river represented a source of well being through such experiences.

However, Jostein, Fredrik, Gry and Vilde, by going on walks, also touched upon a particular way of experiencing place which by some theorists is responsible for an aesthetic appreciation of natural environments which trumps all others: what has been called the peripatetic sense of place.

Walking: A Peripatetic Sense of Place

“Peripatetic” sense of place, coined by Paul C. Adams (2001) denotes the sensing of a place through the act of walking. The author’s central claim is that this activity leads to a different and deeper experience of place than other methods of locomotion do, and that, historically, walking has been the source of a “strong and deep sense of place” (Adams.: 187). By walking, as opposed to for example driving, one enables the discovery of “terra incognitae” in both familiar and unfamiliar places (ibid.: 186). Peripatetic sense of place is accordingly for Adams nothing less than “the basis of a special kind of knowledge of the world and one’s place in it” (ibid.: 188). He points in particular to the experience of details in nature that walking provides:

> To walk through a place is to become involved in that place with sight, hearing, touch, smell, the kinetic sense of proprioception, and even taste. (...) These various sensations, as trivial as they may seem to a person habituated to mechanized transportation, are the basis of a close connection to place (ibid.: 188)

This is directly in line with what several informants had to say, especially Gry and Jostein:

> I use [the river] every day when I go on walks, use it to simply suck in the sights and sounds. (Gry, 41, AP)
>
> The sound of the river is so nice. I especially like the river, and use it a lot for fishing and walking. And for quality of life and the visual. (Jostein, 43, AP)

Gry's terminology here is strongly indicative of how she perceives the river. She does not just passively observe, but "sucks" it in ("*suger inn")*, as if she were in a way absorbing its features and identity into her own. Fredrik (46, AP), who also goes on walks, seemed to perceive the natural environment in Feios as a source of a kind of environmental adventure – "there's always something new to see." This sense of unfamiliarity adds a sense that undiscovered places and objects are rife in one's surroundings, and the best way to discover them is by foot. In this manner, the surrounding environment appears to be "unfolding" upon the walker (ibid.: 194). More specifically, Ulrich (1983) termed this unfolding as taking place within "deflected vistas," or the deflection of a view ahead hiding oncoming areas[3]. This aesthetic discovery of physical environments is accordingly related to a positive sense of discovery among people in place. However, such a sense of discovery is only positive, according to Lynch (1960: 5-6), when it takes place within a familiar overall area: "there must be no danger of losing basic form or orientation, of never coming out. The surprise must occur in an overall framework; the confusions must be small regions in a visible whole." The surroundings of Feios fall elegantly into this category: Gry and Jostein effectively live in a geographically distinct, localized area full of familiarity yet at the same time abounding in small unknowns which can be experienced through their acts of walking, and sensing of aesthetic touches.

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[3] Listed examples of such deflected vistas in the natural environment are listed as being "paths, rivers, and valleys," (Ulrich 1983: 104) which Feios has plenty of.

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All this indicates that the natural environment of Feios does not necessarily have to be experienced in the form of physically intense activities in order to provide a positive stimulus for the person experiencing it. In fact some informants noted that even going for walks in it was not necessarily a prerequisite for deriving satisfaction from it. Rather, the mere thought and presence of it seems to be of a beneficial nature to some informants. “It’s more about [being surrounded by nature],” said Fredrik, even though he did observe that it was also important for him to be able to be *in* the environment in question on a very regular basis. The informant seemingly perceives the natural environment as a source of peacefulness and well being. The medium for this satisfaction is not necessarily direct physical engagement in the environment, such as fishing or even walking; it is also sensual. The sounds, smells and sights of Feios were a direct source of pleasure to him, and this pleasure took the form of psychological well-being – and a sense of self-in-place. This is of no small importance (and not in the least in relation to resource management issues), according to Wohlwill:

> it would be erroneous to dismiss the person’s affective response to the looks (and sounds and smells) of his environment as in any sense of secondary order of importance. In a purely pragmatic sense, the fact is that many of the most heated controversies in environmental management, in community governance, and in environmental legislation at all levels, concern problems of an aesthetic nature. (1976: 77)

Such a sentiment is echoed by Bourassa (1991: 30), who noted that “aesthetic taste is a form of practical knowledge. (...) People quite often rely on aesthetic judgments as guides to action.” It is accordingly little wonder that stances towards the proposed hydropower project in Feios may have been influenced by such experiences.

Børre (40, FP), living along Feioselvi, when asked if it was important for him to have the river in immediate distance of his property, pointed out that this was not

the case because he "doesn't see it." This suggests that the establishment of a visual relationship with an environmental attribute is of importance in laying the foundation for the creation of affective bonds. Anders (36, FP) further demonstrates that place satisfaction in a landscape does not necessarily lead to wanting to preserve it in its original shape:

> The really nice stretches won't be impacted, I don't think. From Haugasete and into the valley, that won't be affected.
>
> *But if that stretch was affected would you then be against the project?*
>
> No, I wouldn't. Had it gone past Voldsæter along to Svartavatnet then I could have been more skeptical, since it's so far back.

Of all the possible environmental influences the project could represent[4], by far the most significant for most informants was that of the water level throughout the watercourse. This has also been the source of much controversy throughout the negotiation processes, and has several times been explicitly brought to the fore in various public pronouncements written by my informants. Several informants made sure to mention this during their interview. Morten (53, AP) and Ingar (52, AP) respectively said "lower water flow is the most important, the most visible," and "if the water disappears it will leave an ugly trace in the landscape." Their concerns with respect to this particular consequence seem to be based in the visual impact of such a development. They would ostensibly no longer derive visual satisfaction from the sight of many parts of the river.

[4] See http://www.sognekraft.no/files/File/Feios%20Kraftverk/ for environmental impact assessments.

Photo 4: Storelvi, looking south, August 2007.

This would seem to have held particularly true for Ingar who lived mere meters away from Åfedtelvi, and whose immediate surroundings would be altered in this way. His describing of the aftermath of a regulated watercourse as being an "ugly trace" (*stygt spor*) pointed towards the outright aesthetic *un*attractiveness such a change would bring on in the landscape in his eyes. This change would likely also operate over the mind as a tangible trace of not only the physical project in itself but also the ideologies and social processes connected to it, a physical result *and* manifestation of opposite aesthetic and ideological values. For Ingar it must have been hard to imagine a more direct affront to *his* Feios, his *place*. Conversely, informants Anders (36), Børre (40,), Vilde (37) and Karl (64), all pro-project, felt that water flow levels in the watercourse were a non-issue, with Vilde and Karl going so far as to say that the project would in fact act positively upon discharge in the rivers:

> Anders: There's so much precipitation that the river will pretty much run.

Vilde: Minimal water flow is guaranteed, so there will be water in the river. And that's fine for me, because in the summer there will actually be more water than there is now, because during usual dry summers the water just disappears.

Karl: Lower water flow levels are not so worrisome because the power company will suck in 80% of the flood water during extreme weather. That's good.

Børre: There are large portions of the river that we don't see. But the parts that are visible will be equipped with thresholds, and surface water, so the river won't be dry, that's not nice. But a lot of the time the river will run, when it has rained a lot. Then it won't be visible.

Photo 5: The mouth of Feioselvi, central Feios, August 2007.

How to account for these strong contradictions in opinions? They seemed to be rooted in the visual – informants appeared to place higher value on there being visually satisfactory amounts of water in the rivers than on there being *natural* amounts of water in them. These attitudes to the rivers amongst these specific informants seemed firmly anchored in aesthetic appreciation – that is, place

satisfaction; this place satisfaction was not necessarily dependent on environmental attributes being "natural," but can also accept certain degrees of man-made alteration in landscapes. As we also see from Børre's comments, effects perceived as negative but which occur in places that are not visible are not necessarily a source of concern. This presents an interesting twist on Stedman's (2002) theory that low place satisfaction will lead to place-protective behaviour. Here we have individuals who claim they will have no problem whatsoever in extracting environmental satisfaction out of an altered watercourse, or even that they will *prefer* an altered river system. Place-protective behaviour therefore, in these cases, actually advocates their continued (relatively) lower place satisfaction in that it calls for the watercourse to be kept in a state they are less content with. I hypothesize that this openness to an alteration of the river stems from the fact that these informants' *attachment* to the river(s) is limited, whilst they nevertheless remain, to a degree, *satisfied* with it/them.

Karl (64, FP) had the following to say:

> You can find nature everywhere so it's not that extraordinary here, but it's good to grow up in a place like this, with nature, become acquainted. But other places may well have even nicer nature than here.

He spoke of the importance of acquaintance with one's surroundings. I assume that this may operate on two levels. One, familiarity with the natural environment leads to decreased worries about one's surroundings. Stresses related to the unknown are therefore considerably weakened. Two, the natural environment is just that – natural – there is accordingly no human element in which such unknowns and potential risks to the status quo can be harboured. This falls in line with Tilley's thoughts on the role landscape and locales play in people's psyche:

> Familiarity with the land, being able to read and decode its signs allows individuals to know 'how to go on' at a practical level of consciousness or one that may be discursively formulated. People routinely draw on their stocks of knowledge of the landscape and the locales in which they act to give meaning,

> assurance and significance to their lives. (...) These qualities (...) give rise to a power to act and a power to relate that is both liberating and productive. (Tilley 1994: 26)

Karl's comments suggested that the relationships he had to the natural environment in Feios could just as well have been created in any other place with similar natural aesthetics and possibilities. Accordingly, this informant, despite being a lifelong inhabitant of Feios, seemed not to have strong place attachment to or identity rooted in the village's natural features; rather, place dependence and satisfaction seemed to be of more importance in determining his relationship to the natural environment. His lack of place attachment may well help explain his stance towards the project.

Many responses described varying degrees of engagement in the natural surroundings. Several informants stated that they continue or used to engage in outdoor activities, whilst Fredrik (46, AP) claimed it was important to be able to go out into nature everyday:

> It's more important for the mind and the psyche. It's important for me to be able to go out into this type of environment every single day (...). There's always something new to see (...). It's more of an emotional relationship, it's beautiful, and the aesthetic and sounds, smells, right? It's more about that.

Fredrik demonstrated how the aesthetic dimension of person-environment interaction is intertwined with world-view as it works upon the individual's mind and well-being. John J. Costonis argued that

> [w]hat [individuals] seek when they press aesthetic demands upon governmental policy-makers are measures that will function, in essence, as socially homeostatic devices. From their perspective, the goal of these measures is to regulate the pace and character of environmental change in a manner that precludes or mitigates damage to their identity, a constancy no less critical to social stability than biological constants are to the human body's physiological equilibrium. (Costonis 1982: 420)

Could such "homeostatic devices" have been at play when residents of Feios expressed concern about too low water levels in their watercourse, or were their

concerns purely aesthetic? It is tempting to hypothesize that long term residents of Feios may have been influenced by this perceived deeper threat, given the personal relationships to the rivers that they can have nurtured through the years. I postulate that Jostein and Ingar certainly perceived alterations to the rivers as representing such a threat to their identity. However, this obviously does not account for the long term residents who did not express concern for reduced water levels, nor does it take into account the fact that values can be found in environments and natural features to which people are newcomers. Certain environmental attributes seem to be attractive to people regardless of level of acquaintance or use history. For other anti-project informants, however acutely they expressed similar concerns, I postulate that their worries were more firmly anchored in place attachment and purely aesthetic appreciation, rather than in place identity. Now that I have touched upon how the aesthetic dimension can overlap with environmental meanings in the individual, I shall now move on to the next chapter section, focusing on the latter.

The Meaning of Nature in Feios

Perceptions which steer individual and group interaction within a given natural environment can be guided by aesthetic preferences and qualities. A specific place, for example, can be given protected status purely because of its aesthetic qualities. However, as we have seen, culture[5] and personal traits also play a role in determining environmental perceptions, and how people define how a natural

[5] By culture, I refer to the framework laid out by Altman and Chemers (1984: 3): it is defined as "beliefs and perceptions, values and norms, customs and behaviors of a group or society."

place should be perceived and used. This section analyses the informants' views of Feios' nature, which are removed from the purely aesthetic appreciation, and move towards relationships based in psychological "exchanges" between the observed (nature) and the observer (informant). That is, the nature in Feios functions as a source of entities – places, sounds, smells, events, activities, the sensations of *living* and *dwelling* - which trigger psychological responses in the observer. These responses in turn shape how the environment in question is perceived, hence the "exchange."

Costonis (1982) put forward his *cultural stability-identity* theory of environmental aesthetics, in which he maintained that aesthetic preferences are culturally determined, as opposed to biologically. In effect, his theory supports the theoretical notion of place identity, in that "environmental resources can enter into the cognitive and emotional lives and, ultimately, help shape the identities of individuals, groups, and communities" (Costonis 1982: 393). Further, the environment is a "*visual commons* impregnated with meanings and associations that fulfill individual and group needs for identity confirmation" [original emphasis] (ibid.: 419). According to Costonis, environmental resources exert such power over people primarily through nonfunctional associations. Place satisfaction and dependence therefore would, according to such a theory, play a minimal role in identity creation, and influencing attitudes towards the natural environment.

The results of the interviews seem to document varied place based feelings in Feios, specifically in relation to the village's natural features. What does the natural environment of Feios mean for the different informants? How should it be used? The results of the interviews showed that many individuals, both for and against the hydropower project, express fondness for going for walks and engaging in outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing, whilst several also seem to especially value the presence of mountains around the settlement:

> The mountains are important for me, not just the shop. Given that I grew up along [Åfedtelvi] [the nature] has a lot of meaning for me. (Jostein, 43, AP)
>
> [The local nature is] quite important because we're so free here. You can go into the mountains and go everywhere. (Lars, 77, FP)
>
> [I go on walks] a lot in the mountains, and to hunt, see sheep, etc… (Nils, 60, FP)

Lars alluded to the fact that there are no artificial boundaries to restrict movement. This freedom is inextricably tied up in the *genius loci* of Feios. It is a place which allows and offers the freedom to explore, discover and engage in a range of activities which other places may not necessarily allow. This relationship to place is, I suggest, conducive to the establishment of place satisfactions through the carrying out of many activities in the environment, as well as place attachment through the very fact that the environment allows these to happen in a familiar, predictable and thus ostensibly safe environment. Morten (58, AP), similarly to Fredrik, also noted that the close presence of nature influenced his psychological as well as physical state:

> It has effects on the physical and the psychological. It's very easy to get out into nature here. I would have a hard time living in a block, I think.

Here the natural environment seemed to affect the psyche in two ways. Firstly, it strongly appealed to the informant and served to satisfy perceived needs, both recreational such as going into the mountains (which he noted he like to do) and livelihood-related (Morten is a farmer). Secondly, the close *proximity* of nature to the informant's home had an effect on the everyday state of mind. The fact that the informant lived within or close to the nature he appreciated is something that is far from negligible. As Eisenhauer *et al*. (2000: 426) argued, "geographic proximity to a locale may affect the meanings and bonds associated with places." This ease of access is conducive to a widening of possibilities with respect to outdoor activities. One can go for a short walk for a few minutes or go on a day hike, and this whether it is something one has desired for extended periods of

time, or on a whim. In addition, the lack of distance between these valued activities and the home, I propose, leads to a breaking down of the man-nature dichotomy and the establishment of place identity, echoing the following claims by Ittelson *et al*.:

> The way man responds to his environment affects the way he acts on it; the way he acts on it affects the way he responds. Out of this continuing process emerges a picture of man as the active creator, psychologically and physically, of the environment within which he functions. (1976: 191)

This development would hold especially true and be most advanced for someone who has lived in a place such as Feios their entire lives, as Morten has. This agrees with Tuan's theory of topophilia, discussed in chapter 2 – the more time spent in one place leads to stronger topophilia. Topophilia is hence materialized in the mind and the environment as the ongoing "active creation" of one's surroundings. What Ittelson *et al*. describe is essentially a positive feedback process: our response to an environment dictates further response to it through actions, and given our innate penchant for engaging in activities which please us, rather than ones that don't, attachment and identity in place is strengthened.

However, this does not account for the views of Karl, who had a similar life history to that of Morten – lifelong inhabitant of Feios of similar age, also a farmer - but who was positive towards the hydropower project and for whom the local environment played an ostensibly different role. Karl seemed to be less attached to the natural environment of Feios than his counterpart. Explaining exactly *why* this is, however, is problematic given the similar life histories. Notably, Karl suggested that one of the reasons why he was positive towards the project was because the only consequence (he perceived) in the river would be deterioration in the quality of fishing possibilities. His relationship to the natural environment of Feios bearing on his attitude to the project seemed to be limited to the river itself, and appeared to be based on place dependence in the form of fishing possibilities.

Jostein (43, AP), a lifelong inhabitant of Feios and factory worker in neighbouring Vik, equated living in Feios with nature and what this offers:

> Nature for me means quality of life.
>
> The quietness is what is meaningful up here.
>
> Nature is the reason we live here.
>
> Whilst others think it's important to have shopping malls I see nature as being security around me.

Indeed, Jostein viewed nature as being the very essence of Feios, emphasizing that he uses the environment "very often. Hunting and fishing are passions. I am an outdoors person! But it's primitive here so one is obliged to love nature to be happy." So he sees nature as being the reason he lives in Feios: tranquility, quality of life and security as being key elements which are derived directly from the natural environment. This feeling of security (*trygghet*) in human geography circles, has been described as being comprised of "protection from physical harm and intruders, privacy and absence of overcrowding, and the protection of property" (Walmsley and Lewis 1993: 224). With respect to Witoszek and Sheeran's (1998) conception of dwelling and living, Jostein effectively does both in Feios: in Feios he is at peace, and protected from real and perceived dangers present in other places, whilst he also extracts other distinctive psychological pleasures out of the natural environment of the village, such as a strong sense of freedom. As a lifelong inhabitant of Feios and observing its distinctive features, Jostein also stated that

> when you have been here a long time then you become attached to places. The difference between here and Oslo is that you become attached to nature.

In his case this seems to have come to be through the very nature of the natural environment itself, but also through the carrying out of activities it offers, such as hunting and fishing. In this manner place dependence and satisfaction can help in

leading to and/or strengthening place attachment/identity. In other words, both the natural environment in itself, and the activities it offers its users, can be conducive to the creation of affective person-environment bonds. Jostein appears to have achieved a high level of integration within his surroundings – a strong place identity. In this particular case, this seems to have lead to the development of a *non-urban identity*, in which Jostein partly defines his place and himself as an individual who is not only detached from the larger urban centres of Norway, but directly *opposed* to them. In constructing this identity, he has built up an image of himself and the surrounding environment which is conducive to his well-being, his dwelling. As Lynch (1960: 4) pointed out, "a good environmental image gives its possessor an important sense of emotional security. He can establish a harmonious relationship between himself and the outside world." In Jostein's case, this environmental and self-image was, at least partially, non-urban.

Kaplan and Talbot (1983: 200) laid out several ways in which people relate to wilderness; one of these was the concept of *integration* and *wholeness*. They postulated that the greater one's integration with a wilderness environment, "the less internal noise and hence the greater the tranquility." This appears to be directly in line with Jostein's proclamation of the nature around him representing a sense of security. Additionally, Norberg-Schulz (1992: 33) maintained that "the need for meaning can be dealt up into the psychological functions of orientation and identification. These functions hang together with 'space' and 'character,' respectively, as ground elements of the surrounding world" [my translation]. Jostein accordingly oriented himself in surroundings with which he was intimately familiar, in which he learned to orient and identify himself, to the point where the said surroundings represent this sense of being protected in a secure environment, i.e., *living*.

Recreational activities, or more precisely, hunting, have been discussed by authors such as Aldo Leopold in his *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) and Franklin A. Kalinowski (in Vitek and Jackson 1996). Kalinowski examined the nature of the Leopold's passion for the hunt, noting that for him, this activity was not a mere hobby, but rather "an activity that deeply impressed itself onto his consciousness and became an integral part of how he viewed nature and wildlife" (Kalinowski 1996: 143). In turn, Leopold viewed natural land not as public or private property belonging to man, but as *territory*. For Kalinowski, territory "signifies a connection to the land that is emotional, personal, and extralegal. It implies a closeness and an intimacy that is the product of experience, history, and time, not the results of deeds, law, or other artifacts of a rational system" (ibid.: 144). This view of wildlife garnered through the act of hunting, in Leopold's case, may also apply to those of my informants who actively engage in outdoor activities. This pertains especially to Jostein, who as we have, seen described hunting and fishing as "passions," i.e., more than mere hobbies. This view, as well as a sense of territory, provides some of the groundwork for determining how an informant such as Jostein responded to the hydropower proposal. Indeed Parducci (1968) (in Knopf 1983: 224) noted that "use history is also important in shaping the frame of reference upon which visitors draw to evaluate how an environment is performing." For Jostein, the natural environment in Feios with a modified watercourse would be one in a poor state of performance.

One other informant, Nils (60, FP), who is also a farmer and lifelong resident in the village, expressed the view that he liked "the mountains a lot, especially in the summer," but also that "the nature is nice, but it's OK to affect it a bit; it's not that important," and that "we have a good relationship with the nature here." As with Karl, Nils also seemed to perceive the hydropower as mainly affecting the river. The fact that these two informants were farmers, and agents of environmental exploitation, may contribute to explaining how they did not

perceive the natural environment of Feios as being under threat. For them, the hydropower project was but another way to extract resources from the local nature. Nils' proclamation that the local nature is "not that important" obviously demonstrated that he did not have a close relationship to the natural environment of Feios, beyond a casual one in which he engaged in activities such as fishing and the occasional walk. That the local nature was of relatively limited importance to him stood in direct contrast to the views of other informants, particularly those against the project.

Photo 6: Fjord-side agriculture, August 2007.

One of my areas of inquiry during the interviews related to how the informants believed they experienced Feios psychologically. This questioning was not limited to the natural or social environments in the village, but a holistic understanding of the location. Anders (36, FP) answered "it's my place, the center of the world (ha ha)." When I followed up by asking if the local nature held any meaning in his everyday life, he noted that "yes of course the nature

means something, but I don't think about it because I've grown up with it and always had it around me." For Anders nature played a role in his life which was, to an extent, unreflective and detached. However, the fact that he did not, or rarely, *actively* think about the local nature does not necessarily mean that it did not affect his everyday life. Bourassa's (1991) aforementioned differentiation between engaged and detached experience of the aesthetic environment would seem to hold true for experience of the environment as a whole – not only the aesthetic but also the symbolic.

Another informant, Gry, who, unlike Anders, lived in Feios only for a couple of years, and who is against the hydropower project, had the following to say:

> Feios means… a place where I can find the qualities I have been looking for. For example untouched nature, that we can engage in agriculture, and have lots of areas where we can move around without feeling hectic, and... tranquility.

For this informant, the local nature seemed to be experienced on a more overt level of appreciation, she seemed to be more *engaged*, as opposed to Anders, who appeared to experience the natural environment from this more detached point of view. Nature represents something she had actually been "looking for" in her life, as opposed to something that has simply always been present. Gry moved to Feios in order to start an ecological farming business, but insisted that she could just as well have ended up in a number of other places offering suitable farmland in Norway. In other words, she has no *personal* connection to Feios in the sense of having a life history there and all this entails; rather she expressed pronounced appreciation for the nature and opportunities the village provides her with. The fact that Feios satisfies her agricultural needs implies a relationship of place dependence within the village, whilst the ability to move around in untouched nature, in tranquility, suggests that both place satisfaction and attachment are at play here too. So Gry's perception of Feios as a whole consists of an aggregate of specific benefits she receives out of living there – both personal and related to

livelihood, and her views of nature are perhaps more explicit than others. This presented an interesting paradox; the newly moved-in informants seemed to be *engaged* in the natural environment, whilst the lifelong inhabitant appeared detached from it. Length of residence, then, is not always correlated positively with the strength of engagement with one's natural surroundings.
Børre (40, FP) touched upon the Feios-other places dichotomy by noting the following:

> It's safe and good for the children to grown up in a relatively large space. I wouldn't let them grow up in a town; in any case, it's safer in small places like here.

Børre, like Jostein, perceived Feios as being a "safe" place to live in, albeit for seemingly different reasons. The nature of Feios (both in the figurative and literal sense) was something that was of fundamental importance for his family life, sheltering his children from the dangers and perceived disadvantages of larger settlements. This was place satisfaction – Feios provided Børre the environment he needed. However, this satisfaction may also have led to (extra) attachment, given the nurturing nature of the village for the development of his children.

Some informants expressed clear concern for the environment in Feios in relation to the hydro project and their environmental world-view, stressing the interconnectedness of life. The key vocabulary used here was "everything hangs together" (*alt henger sammen*) and the notion that "everything has to be in harmony" (*alt må være i harmoni*):

> Because [the project] attacks everything that hangs together; everything that must hang together so that things work. Everything is dependent of everything and everything hangs together and has a natural place. (Gry, 41, AP)

> Everything has to be in harmony, the landscapes, the fjord, mountains and river. (Engeltje, 55, AP)

For these informants, attacking one element of the landscape meant attacking the landscape as a whole, and compromising its purity. The fact that both of these

informants were female may point towards a gender pattern, in which females experience the natural environment from a more actively holistic point of view than males. Indeed, none of my male informants said anything which pointed towards their perception of the environment in this way.[6]

Karl (64, FP), when asked if he goes on walks often, observed, despite what we have seen, that the local nature played a large role in his life and that one should be careful when intruding upon it, but that the times were such that one must pave the way for "caring/tending to" for nature in a more effective way, alluding to the hydropower project:

> [I haven't gone on walks] so much recently, but I did a bit before [in my past]. So nature is important. My wife and I went on walks a lot (...), but I also went alone a lot. But I'm not the biggest wilderness person.

Yet at the same time he also claimed that nature "plays a big role in [my] everyday life," pointing towards the fact that, like Fredrik, he does not need to be active *in* nature in order to derive satisfaction from it, but that its mere presence around him, and/or the sight of it is something which represents a source of satisfaction and well-being. His curious use of the word "caring/tending to" (*stelle*) suggests that he fundamentally saw no environmental threat in the hydropower project. Quite the opposite, the project for him apparently represented a means to exploit it for human means in such a fashion that Feios would be given a sense of purpose. This suggested a sense of place deeply rooted

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[6] On the other hand, one other female informant, Vilde, made no reference to holism. That I only gained access to three women in my sample is obviously an indicator of the fact that the selection of women was insufficiently large to be able to extrapolate any such data. Vilde's not noting the presence of "harmony" in the local landscape points towards the fact that no pattern can be discerned here.

in the anthropocentric sphere, something which is understandable given his history as a farmer.

Finally, what role does the nature of specific activities play in forging senses of place? Eisenhauer *et al.* argued that whilst activities can contribute to the creation of attachment to a place (which was clearly backed up by my interview data), *different* activities may lead to the *same* person-place relationship:

> Clearly, the construction of reasons for emotional bonds with outdoor special places is not governed purely by the type of activity done at those locales. People have similar reasons for feeling emotional attachments to places regardless of the specific activities they do at a locale. This relationship suggests that users engaging in different types of activities may generate similar meanings of their special place experiences, despite the diversity in their actions. (2000: 433)

This supports my findings in Feios. A range of vastly different regular activities were cited as being engaged in by the informants. Gry's act of "sucking in" the sounds and sights of the river had little in common with fishing, hunting in the surrounding mountains, or leisurely stroll through them. So whilst the act of *engaging in activities* can be a key to fostering a strong sense of place, the exact nature of such activities is of less importance.

Specific Places

Specific places, such as a home, a waterfall, a stretch of river or a valley, can be important centres of meaning for people. These can either be places in which a person likes to spend time and engage in activities, or simply be pleasing to the eye and psyche. Strong feelings of place in a particular area may not only have repercussions for the said place, but also surrounding areas which interact with it, for example in land use proposals. Feios of course has a number of places which can be singled out as prominent in the landscape, such as the river mouth, a waterfall (Brekkefossen), or Haugasete (a cabin area set in a valley to the south of

the village), as well as others which may be less distinctive but which nonetheless many hold special meanings for the inhabitants, either because of personal experiences there, place history, or the opportunities they provide.

Photo 7: Brekkefossen, November 2007

Lars (77, FP), a lifelong inhabitant of Feios, noted that he was not concerned for any one place in particular:

> *Is there a particular place you are especially connected to or worried about [with respect to the project]?*
>
> No, nothing in particular.
>
> *Not Brekkefossen or something like that?*
>
> No, nothing is worth more than anything else.

This informant lived along one of the main roads going through Feios, above but out of sight of the river, and out of range of local "landmarks" such as the aforementioned Brekkefossen, the village waterfall which is not of negligible

size.[7] This waterfall was pointed out by informant Morten (53, AP), also a lifelong inhabitant. He noted that he

> Drive[s] by it everyday, that waterfall, it's a little landmark. So that's probably the place I am most attached to.

In the case of Lars, this may point to a kind of "out of mind out of sight" mentality. The fact that the informant who was attached to the waterfall has to drive past it everyday on the way to/from home most likely has a role to play in the creation of the feelings of attachment.

According to Costonis (1982), protective behaviour towards a landmark such as Brekkefossen is attributable to the desire to preserve identity and cultural stability:

> Existing resources differ from other environmental phenomena because their import is usually much richer in associations that transform them into sources of orientation – "landmarks," if you will – in the emotional and cognitive lives of individuals, groups, and entire communities. (Costonis 1982: 419)

Costonis goes on to add that such "sources of orientation" can be threatened by outside forces which seek to alter the nature of such environmental elements, leading to a loss, or "contamination" of the meanings they hold. Costonis in effect used the example of a mansion in the West Side of New York to demonstrate how a specific feature of a place can both, as he put it, be "*both* a signifier *and* the message that it signifies" (ibid.: 394) [original emphasis]. For Morten, then, Brekkefossen seemed to be just such a source of orientation in his world of meanings, as well as a centre and signifier of meaning, and he perceived it as

[7] See appendix 2 for a picture of Brekkefossen in November, as well as many other areas of Feios.

being under threat from the hydropower project. This more than likely influenced his decision to oppose the project.

Lynch (1960: 72), in discussing cities, brought forward the notion of places as nodes, “strategic foci into which the observer can enter” which can serve as thematic concentrations and expressions of held values and norms. According to Lynch, “the most successful node seemed both unique in some way and at the same time to intensify some surrounding characteristic” (ibid.: 77). It is easy to see how such a node could also be found in the natural environment, and Brekkefossen seems like a good example of one. It is noteworthy both because it is the only waterfall located within the village of Feios itself (though others are to be found at other more secluded parts of the watercourse), and because of its size. It is also easy to see how it also could intensify its surrounding characteristics – i.e., the river, or perhaps more specifically, Åfedtelvi, given the fact that there is of course no Brekkefossen without said river.

One informant living along Stordalen claimed that he was most attached to a particular part of the particular valley he lived in (a little longer south, away from the village, where settlements become rarer and the mountain environment starts to make itself particularly felt). This is where he engages in activities such as hunting and fishing. Here a relationship of place dependence has been established between this informant and his chosen place, on the basis recreational needs. However, even though this area is particularly accessible to him, there are lots of other areas where these activities could be carried out, not far from his home. This holds particularly true in the case of hunting. The informant has obviously made a choice to stick to this particular stretch of valley, implying that there not just place dependence at play here, but also place attachment and possibly place identity, which can have arisen out of the local scenery in this valley. Indeed, when one walks up along Storelvi, one is gradually exposed to the mountains bordering the southern edge of Feios, and one can see the tree line to the south

hinting at the glacier, and a U-shaped valley to the west. This is a particularly attractive tract of the village, and also one which serves as a gateway to the local wilderness. In addition, it is also within the same area of town as the informant's home (the southern end, more or less characterized by Stordalen, home to Storelvi), so the area may possibly be given extra meaning by the informants by virtue of its being associated with their living situation – an extension of home of sorts.

Photo 8: Stordalen, looking south. Fresvikbreen just out of sight, top center. August 2007.

Social Space in Feios

Ittelson *et al*. (1976: 189) note that "man's conception of the environment is related to his conception of himself and his actions, and change in the conception of one affects the conception of the other." As humans are social beings, does this also hold true on the communal level? That is, does Feios as the community of people rather than (or as well as) Feios as the physical environment have bearing

on the *genius loci* it is awarded? Several informants made sure to note the importance of the presence of the social sphere and specific social activities, both within and outside of the family, when discussing different aspects of their lives in Feios.

How do concrete social networks, codes and events influence the nature of a place? To find out one must examine the agency of the community in everyday life. Wilkinson (1991: 2) distinguished three separate defining facets of such a place: *locality*, *local society* and *community field*, all of which are of relevance for Feios. *Locality* is "the territory where people meet their daily needs together." *Local society* is "a comprehensive network of associations for meeting common needs and expressing common interests." Finally, the *community field* denotes a "process of locally-oriented collective actions." Wilkinson argues that these three facets – which converge to create the community - are essential prerequisites for social well-being and the development of the self, and that social, ecological, and individual well-being "complement and depend upon one another, in the abstract at least" (ibid.: 68). The local community contributes to social well-being because it serves as the meeting point for the individual and the outer sphere. Unlike the larger society, however, places such as Feios offer opportunities to establish concrete contact with the local society. Wilkinson argued that

> [t]he importance of this is in the immediacy of the range of contacts available to the individual. Considering both qualities – the immediacy and the range of contacts – as indicative of the potential for social well-being to occur, the community can be said to be not only an important setting for social well-being but to be in fact the most important setting. The community represents a broad range of the direct interpersonal contacts that produce social well-being. (...) As the self is a principal vehicle of social well-being, the community is important because it supplies the field of interactions in which self arises and has its meanings and effects. (ibid.: 78)

The self, according to Wilkinson, can in part be directly traceable back to the community, and the self has a similar relationship to a sense of place as the community: individualities help determine how a person interprets their

surroundings. A cause and effect chain of reactions can in this manner be constructed in which community can produce social well-being. In turn this well-being, in conjunction with individual and ecological well-being, exerts influence upon how the individual interprets, and senses, his or her place.

Such community-held agency was reflected in my informants' comments on their village. When asked what Feios meant to him, Nils (60, FP) alluded to the *community field* and *local society* in Feios, by way of mentioning that Feios had its own choir and school music activities:

> [This is a] quiet and peaceful town even though we have a local shop, school concerts and a choir. So it's good for a small place,

suggesting that Feios plays an important role in defining the nature of life in the town for him. The use of "even though" suggests Nils is also highly appreciative of the fact that such social gatherings do not take place at the expense of Feios being a "quiet and peaceful" community where people respect each other's boundaries. Here attachment to the community can grow not only out of social engagement in the *local society*, but also out of *dis*engagement, when this is desired.

Anders (36, FP), when asked how he perceived Feios with respect to other places he had been to, noted that

> There's a lot of solidarity in the village, in a lot of ways. There's a good voluntary effort with respect to a lot of things. Which is of course the case in many other villages too, but it works really well here.

Anders' judgments of the social sphere in Feios were echoed by Gry (41, AP), relatively new to Feios (moved in late 2005) and who compared the village to other small settlements she had experienced in the country, such as Flåm, roughly 40 kilometers southeast of Feios, where she previously lived:

> Some things are similar, other aren't. I feel that here in Feios people have cared more than in other small places. Otherwise it's basically many of the same codes one uses in other small places, (...) social codes. You see the village in good and bad ways. So that's how it is here, but we've been very well received, they have cared, too, it's been a different atmosphere than in Aurland.

Uzzell *et al*. noted how social arrangements can lead to the sensation of belonging in a given place. According to them, people

> appropriate places through daily use and transform the space on specific occasions (especially events such as school parties or street parties on the occasional national celebrations). This serves to enhance the residents' feelings of "owning" the neighborhood. (2002: 41)

This corresponds with what Gry had to say about her social life in the village. When I asked her if her children were of importance to how she perceived the village, she noted the following:

> Yes, because we are on the lookout for arrangements and private individuals because of the children. The children have gotten to know some of the pensioners here in town, so we go and visit them in any case on Wednesdays when they are off from school, right? And on Wednesdays there's also something called "kvardagsskolen," which they are more than willing to go to. And we participate a lot in something called "basar," social, music, eating (...).

It is, accordingly, reasonable to hypothesize that, in this case, the presence of the children led to increased exposure to the *local society* (through amongst others things special arrangements) of the village, in turn leading to increased social influence on her sense of place in the village.

Finally, Cheng *et al*. (2003: 96) proposed that social groups which emerge around the avocation of a particular use of a resource may at the same time "be engaging in more fundamental processes of defining significant social and cultural meanings to that place." This can ostensibly be said about both the proponents and opponents of the project in Feios. A more specific example of such a group is that of the anti-hydropower advocates in the *Åfedt og Hellands Næringslag*, made up of residents of Åfedtdalen and the Helland area, near the confluence of

Åfedtelvi and Storelvi. They expressed opposition to the project mentioning a myriad of economic, environmental, and social reasons (Åfedt og Hellands Næringslag 2007). The controversy surrounding the use of the river served as a catalyst for the expression of the meanings held by the river, and perhaps even served to strengthen these meanings.

The social sphere encompasses different scales and natures of interaction – activities can be carried out within the family, or within the community as a whole. In addition, *lack* of communal interference can also contribute to creating a sense of place. Social well-being can be achieved through relative social isolation, as Nils showed. In short, social processes which work towards the creation of a *genius loci* function much in the same way as activities do in the natural environment: similar attachments to places can be achieved through a spectrum of social activities.

Place: A Product of Stories and Memories?

Julie Cruikshank (2005) examined how local knowledge in the Mount St. Elias mountain range in the Yukon Territory and Alaska is deeply intertwined with stories based around the local glaciers. Here, a regional sense of place clearly emerged with the help of such narratives. Bourassa (1991: 48) claimed that "the cultural basis for behavior is transmitted socially, through the use of language and other cultural means." Can the specific use of language through the telling of narratives and memories have played a similar role in Feios? One dimension of place is that of the aforementioned "storied residence," as transmitted through the lingering presence of personal memories and stories. Tilley (1994: 18) noted that as people live out their lives in specified locales, the act of being a part of a place becomes inextricably linked with the formation of personal biographies as mediated through place. Three informants argued that memories and stories (by

this I mean both explicit stories as well as individual life-stories) can have affected the ways in which they perceive, and define Feios.

Karl (64, FP) noted that he had "lots of childhood memories which make me very attached to Feios. Strong and good memories from when I was brought up." Karl is therefore, as Tilley (ibid.: 27) also noted, living in a place which is as much defined by his/its past as it is by the present. This is the same informant who, as we shall see, having lived his whole life in Feios, seemingly appeared to let his stance towards the hydropower project be heavily dictated by its effects on the river, rather than other aspects of the village. He accordingly judged the project to be benign given that fact that he though the local fishing possibilities were, in any case, mediocre. Here place dependence seemed capital in forging his stance, to the point where it overrode that fact that he had strong childhood memories which made him feel "very attached" to Feios. His place attachment was seemingly anchored in purely personal history, which to a decisive degree appeared removed from the natural environment of the village.

Related to the notion of personal memories are stories told by friends and relatives, a more explicit facet of storied residence. This also garnered a similar reaction as memories did amongst informants, but some nevertheless immediately responded positively, by evoking family outdoor activities:

> Yes, we had a lot of stories going far back. Especially farm stories related to old agriculture and the base economy. Also stories about animals, especially the predators here and the old *støler* here have their own history. (Jostein, 43, AP)

Such stories may well play a role in forging senses of place amongst long time inhabitants of Feios. I suggest they may act as a sort of proxy to memories. They are other people's memories but they are still just that – accounts of other people's experiences in the same, familiar environment. Just because they are someone else's experiences does not deny their status as experiences. Stegner (1992 in Waterman 1998) noted that fiction serves as effectively as facts in

forging *genius loci*. Such things *took place*, or "took place" (in the fictional narrative) in Feios. They occurred because the space and place of Feios allowed them to. In this way, stories function in the same way as memories in that they imbue place with meaning.

Several informants noted that they use their own properties in the mountains in the form of *støler* (a summer pasturage area for farm animals) as a sort of focal point for outdoor wanderings. No particular attachment to these *støler* in themselves was explicitly expressed, but rather, such areas were brought up when discussing Feios' past, as well as personal and family histories. Two informants responded with the following when asked if friends or relatives ever told stories relating to the local area:

> Yes they did [tell stories]. I remember stories from the støler about how they milked the cows, they were fun. (Nils, 60, FP)
>
> Yes, we had a lot of stories going far back. Especially farm stories related to old agriculture and the base economy. Also stories about animals, especially the predators here and the old *støler* here have their own history. (Jostein, 43, AP)

Støler seem to function as centres of historical meaning and lives past, not only on a communal level[8] but also, and foremost, on a familial one. However, none of these properties are to be affected by the hydropower project – a fact that may have influenced the reflections of the informants. As I have shown, the presence of threat leads people to engage in heightened place oriented behaviour. Followingly, as there is no imminent threat to them, no particular concern has been raised in the minds of the informants.

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[8] Støler are highly characterized by their accompanying cabins, and I was shown a book which details the history of the many støler throughout Vik Kommune.

Karl, Jostein and Nils have all been lifelong inhabitants of Feios. The influence storytelling seems to have had on their sense of place in the village is not indicative of the fact that such narrative processes always play an important role. One other lifelong inhabitant, Børre (40, FP), said that he did not think stories had any particular effect on him. However, the fact that all informants who did express having being influenced by such stories were lifelong inhabitants, points towards a life history in one place as being a prerequisite for this influence. As such, stories which strongly affect one's sense of place do not seem to be transferable from one place to another.

Moving to Feios: A Cross-Border Acculturation in Place

Perhaps the most pronounced communal sentiment expressed by any of the informants came from Dries (48, AP) and Engeltje (55, AP), immigrants from Holland who moved to Feios recently to start up their own local business. As foreigners, they had their own perspective on life in the village:

> Engeltje: The people are very nice here, very helpful and kind. It's a good place to make dreams come true.
>
> Engeltje: We can only compare it to Holland (...). Socially it's very different. Social control, people know what you're doing, there's more concern for each other and it's small.
>
> Dries: In Holland you can live anonymously, without your neighbours knowing who you are. That's impossible here. Which I think is an advantage because... people take responsibility for things. That's not how it is in the Netherlands. You do everything yourself, and I think it's good you can't do that here.
>
> Dries: It's a sort of genuine society here, I guess. Not like in Holland.

For Dries and Engeltje, as newcomers from another country, Feios represents something foreign yet welcoming. It is also a place in which they abandoned their previous life to start a new one. They seem to view Feios as an almost idealized

small scale community, which as Engeltje noted, is well suited to making "dreams come true." However, they did not seek out Feios specifically as a place to start a new life in, but rather were interested in coming to Norway, and looked for properties from "Ålesund to Kristiansand." Eventually they were then invited to settle in Feios by Vik Kommune. For Dries and Engeltje the social environment in Feios made the village a seemingly ideal place to live. This apparently held especially true for Engeltje, who noted that, unlike Dries, she needed people around her in order to feel comfortable in a place.

An interesting parallel can be drawn between Dries' and Engeltje's experience of Feios. The unique manner in which they perceived and experienced their surroundings seemed to be in line with the wave of (non-)Norwegian 19th century artists who traveled in Norway in the first half of the century, to draw and paint its mountains. In doing so, artists such as Johannes Flintoe and Thomas Fearnley helped bestow upon them meaning which was previously absent (Skollerud 2008). Flintoe effectively functioned as a guide for Norwegians who were gaining interest in their nation's alpine nature, and who decided to make travel destinations out of the places he had chosen to paint (Helberg 1994: 49). Indeed, his and other artists' work had triggered the reversal of the perception of Norway's mountains. Whilst before they were "a locked landscape for most people, a worthless wilderness, heavy, dark and raw, naked summits and barren plateau's" (Skollerud 2008) [my translation], they were now in the process of becoming national treasures and playgrounds. The Norwegian mountains had been opened up, physically, and in the minds of both Norwegians and foreigners.

This appeared to be, albeit to a less radical extent, what Dries and Engeltje had done for the local environment of Feios. Whilst they did engage in concrete

activities in the landscape, particularly related to their business, their experience of it appeared to be more firmly anchored in an appreciation of *landscape,* rather than participation in a *taskscape*[9], in which life would be defined by the tasks one carries out in it. That is, Dries and Engeltje appeared to experience their surroundings as spectators rather than participators, constantly comparing and contrasting with their past experiences and knowledge gained in Holland.

Dries' and Engeltje's sense of place in Feios was influenced by the inside/outside place dichotomy in a way which is more radical that in any of the other informants. They actively experienced Feios through their past lived in a different culture, as ultimate outsiders. It seemed hard for them not to intuitively compare the social sphere in Feios to that of Holland. Their acculturation process in the village – both social acculturation within the active social sphere, and their acculturation through the creation of a sense of place – unlike other informants who had moved to Feios from other parts of Norway, was thus permeated by their sense of place in Feios being constantly compared to their experience of place in their homeland. Fundamentally, what some foreign painters did for the Norwegian mountains in the 19th century, Dries and Engeltje did for Feios. The outsider perspective resulted in a different angle of observation. They were less dwellers in the sense that one grows up in a place to become one with it, than dwellers in the sense that their immersion in it later in life allowed for its constant comparison to previous places and experiences. They now *live* in Feios, rather

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[9] *Taskscape*, as defined by Ingold (1993: 158), is "the entire ensemble of tasks [conducted within a landscape], in their mutual interlocking (...). Just as the landscape is an array of related features, so - by analogy - the taskscape is an array of related activities (...). In short, the taskscape is to labour what the landscape is to land."

than *dwell* there, as for them it represents a new, exciting setting in which to start a new life, and realize ambitions. This was conducive to unique views and values being bestowed upon the social and natural landscape in the village. In this manner their particular sense of place in Feios can be said to be unique amongst the set of informants.

The Material and Historical Cultural Landscape

Related to the notion of storied residence is the concrete presence of cultural artifacts in Feios. These date back several thousand years and to the later Stone Age and are spread out widely across the village (though the highest concentrations are found in Feiosdalen) in unusually large numbers, given the inner-fjord location of the village (Feios Kraftverk 2006a: 38). They collectively paint a tangible, historical picture of how Feios has been used by people throughout history. They occur in the form of water mills, graves, various tools such as axes, and, moving up in time, boathouses, farmhouses and *støler* (ibid.: 38, 41), and the *Åfedt og Hellands Næringslag* is actively engaged in preserving some of them.

According to Arntzen,

> [a] complex cultural landscape has a history that accounts for its unique character. It embodies a distinct narrative, a story (...) about the reciprocal influence of the participants, both human and non-human, and their relationship to land. (2001: 40)

Additionally, he also held that a material cultural landscape "is tied to social or communal or collective practices, aspirations and expectations" (ibid.: 31). Most importantly for the purpose of the thesis, he also noted that perhaps the greatest function of the cultural landscape is the provision of self-identity, both as an individual and as a member of a community (ibid.: 33). However, an

overwhelming majority of informants, both lifelong inhabitants and otherwise, did not indicate that such artifacts held much of an influence over their perception and definition of themselves, or even Feios. Overall, the assemblage of physical artifacts on the village grounds did not seem to constitute a cultural landscape which was *complex* enough to hold the importance Arntzen claims it has, despite several informants' claims that the artifacts should be preserved. Most did not take the time to become well acquainted with them, especially through first hand observation:

> It's important so that people can see what it was like in the past. I don't go out and look at them, no; I'm from here and surrounded by it so it's not that exiting for me. (Børre, 40, FP)

Morten (52, AP) noted that he believed cultural artifacts absolutely should be preserved, yet also informed me that the only physical interaction he has with them is limited to his own *støl*, and this only out of necessity:

> It's very important that the old *støler* and things like that aren't lost.
>
> *Do you often go and look at the artifacts?*
>
> We have a *støl* up in the mountain that needs to be maintained, so…

Karl (64, FP) expressed similar views with the following:

> It's important to take care of the culture but at the same time people aren't good at that. They have other priorities. I don't look at them often, no. I am well acquainted with the local history though, I've read a lot and heard sound bites about what has happened.

Ingar (52, AP), on the other hand, proposed a mirror image of the lifelong inhabitants in that he claimed to "look at them a lot," and that he was "not too acquainted with Feios' history." He agreed, however, that though preserving them was important, both knowledge of such artifacts and personal identification with them are not prerequisites for the formation of protective behaviour towards them.

The role such cultural and historical artifacts play in determining senses of place in Feios is hard to pinpoint. A superficial appreciation for cultural heritage seemed to be present in nearly all of my informants, but engagement and personal enthusiasm for the artifacts *in themselves*, as individual pieces of evidence of past practices and local history, was most often hard to detect. As such, the most viable conclusion would seem to be that they did not exert anything stronger than a superficial influence on the informants' senses of place. A deeper acquaintance with the history of the town would no doubt be the best avenue for strengthening sense of place through these artifacts, but again, most informants did not express strong interest in actively learning about them. My interpretation of the informant's views is that they tended to perceive the artifacts as being, paradoxically, detached from the history of the village itself, in the sense that they expressed concern for them despite their lack of knowledge about them.

Such concern seemed to be almost born out of "political correctness," in that expressing disinterest in the future cultural artifacts in the face of the hydropower project could convey a sense of disregard towards the village's history. This political correctness can occur in two forms: reflexive, in which a conscious effort is made to alter and mold answers to an external expectation, and unreflexive, or Pavlovian. This may have lead to answers being based in superficial platitudes, rather than true thoughts on the matter. This form of response may be culturally determined. In Norway, it is more common not to talk about one's true feelings regarding the role cultural history plays in one's modern life, than it is to actively engage in discussion and self-reflection. Because of this, discourse surrounding cultural history, and, indeed, nature, is often rooted in cliché and the national, expected norm. This occurs at the expense of true, individualistic views.

Conclusion

Feios and its various elements can be divided into several overall categories. The informants express concern for their sustenance, the local nature, and identity. Sustenance refers to the economic sphere, which will be a focus of the next chapter. Experiences of local nature can be divided into aesthetic appreciation and concerns – based largely on place satisfaction - and existential affinities, such as feelings of belongingness, security, or serenity – based on place identity and attachment. Both individual and community identity is tied to the natural and social environment of the village. However, the former seems to have been of overall more importance in forging my informants' personal sense of place, through the experience of given places they visit and experience more often than others. For Jostein and Gry, for example, the local landscapes played a significant role in forging both individual and communal identities. Communal identity seemed perhaps predictably more dependent on the social sphere in Feios.

Different people have different uses for a place, and these uses can vary wildly in nature – one person may derive satisfaction from the sound of a river whilst the other fishes in it. Still other people use their free time to take walks around large tracts of the village, whilst others have specific places which they like to visit above all others. I have shown that Feios represented a myriad of different centres of meaning for the informants. For some, instrumental usage of the local environment seemed of particular importance, whilst for others place attachment manifested itself most potently, through communion with the natural environment. Place identity was also clearly present in some individuals who were lifelong inhabitants of the town and who, accordingly, had years to tie their locale to their self-identity. And of course, it is more than likely that these dimensions of person-place relationships were simultaneously present in most if not all informants, to varying degrees.

The chapter also touches upon the issue of culture – in the guise of physical artifacts - as heritage, as opposed to local nature as heritage. How are the two related to each other? Are they opposites or are they intertwined? In the case of Feios, there seemed to be a disconnect between the two. Feelings of heritage seemed to be more firmly anchored in the natural world than in the physical remnants of past local culture, even though the informants expressed desires to conserve these cultural artifacts. At the same time, they did not seem to be actively *opposed* to each other. Cultural artifacts were perceived as being manifestations of the human past of Feios, remnants of developments which exploited the natural environment, but which did so in a more or less benign way, and which were necessary to pave the way for creating Feios' present identity.

This chapter, I believe, demonstrates how places can be complex and ever evolving, the product of a wide variety of interactions within the local environment: sensory and cultural aesthetic appreciation of the natural environment; the transmission of narratives between people; the local social identity; the local social identity as opposed to the 'outside' world (both in the sense of life history in different places and the perceived nature of the present outlying areas). All of the above act upon the individual, most often in conjunction, to create Feios as a place. The way place is played out in the everyday lives of the inhabitants of Feios is the fabric of how they live their lives, and how they choose to do this in turn bears influence over how they translate the "in place" or "out of placeness" of the hydropower project.

4. The Feios Project: Boon or Bane?

As the previous chapter showed, perceptions of the hydropower project varied a great deal from one informant to the next. Just as some informants viewed an altered watercourse as being an actively positive/negative development in terms of the physical outcome, so were they split on the nature of the project in and of itself. Differences of opinion were found regarding the necessity of the project, both on a local and national scale, and many informants had contradictory views as to why the project was being proposed, as well as its effects on their lives and the future of the village. The seven informants who were for the project viewed it as being a positive development for the town, both socially and economically. The anti-project informants, on the other hand, held more or less opposite views.

The chapter also demonstrates that a more humanized approach to the man-nature relationship, with the sense of place theory as a framework, would function as a fundamental tool for altering the way in which individuals, policy makers and governing bodies position themselves in relation to the natural world. There is a need for a fundamental shift in perceptions of not only the natural but also social world, through which place is recognized as being a dynamic construct. It is in constant evolution. Yet it is *we* who are responsible for this evolution, and the groundwork for the construction of place needs to be not only acknowledged, but operationalized.

Place as a Dynamic Construct: Attitudes to Change

This section focuses upon how the various informants perceived the development project in itself. What was the impetus behind it? What would it bring to the

village? Who would benefit from it? Their answers served two purposes: to not only shed light upon the above questions, but also to demonstrate that places are not static, but dynamic constructs. The hydropower project served as a catalyst for this dynamism; it served, and still serves, as an agent of change in the social world of Feios and the informants' senses of place there. If it goes through, it would of course also engender widespread temporary and permanent physical change.

The seven pro-project informants were universally of the opinion that the venture represented a positive economic development for the village. In addition, several noted that the hydro station represented a rare chance for Feios to achieve something:

> It has to be that we can earn a little money, that we achieve something in the village. (Anders, 36, FP)
>
> It's about putting most of the river into tunnels and getting power to produce electricity. To use the water and earn money with it, instead of just letting it sit there and wreak things. (Anders, 36, FP)

Børre (40, FP) noted that the project represented the opportunity for Feios to "contribute;" this would seemingly not only take place in the form of electricity but also for other purposes, as Vik Kommune has made known that the revenues from a hydro power station in the village would go towards road works in the surrounding mountains, easing access during winter:

> [It is important] that we produce a little value. Compensation won't be so substantial, but I think it's great that Feios can contribute a little. (...) That we can create values, energy.

Lars (77, FP) also claimed that "using the river is a huge advantage. There will be more jobs and better roads," setting the spotlight on concrete positive ramifications the project would have in the village. Similarly, Anders noted that he thought the building phase would be exciting to see.

On the other hand, not only did anti-project informants not seem to deem better roads as important (it was not mentioned), some also had perceptions and predictions for the project which stood in complete contradiction to pro-project informants, as demonstrated by the following:

> I think it will be a boon for Feios. Without it nothing will happen here, nothing has happened since I came here. And now we have the chance to do something, so I think that's good. And it will be good for future generations. They can continue to fish and all that, the nature won't be destroyed in any way. (Vilde, 37, FP)

> If the project goes through I think Feios can become a ghost town. (Fredrik, 46, AP)

These views, although concerning the future of the village, reflect present senses of place amongst the informants; pro-project individuals seemed to perceive Feios as a town in need of a helping hand and an infusion of activity. They struggled with the thought of the project not going through, as this, for them, would be a huge missed opportunity to create revenue for the village and the municipality. For them, the possibility of there being a hydropower station in Feios seemed to represent the recognition that Feios has something to offer society at large. It would no longer remain a small, relatively isolated village with no industry apart from agriculture. Neighbouring villages Fresvik and Vik both had heavy industry, yet Feios did not. In this sense it was the odd one out along this particular stretch of the Fjord. For the pro-project informants the project seemed to represent the ideal opportunity for the village to make up for lost ground.

On the other hand, anti-project individuals seemed to be of the opinion that Feios' positive identity was something which was dependent on it being able to remain more or less intact. These informants struggled with what they perceived to be a direct threat to the very nature of the village, culturally and economically. The project would not allow Feios to catch up with neighbouring towns or contribute

valuable needs to society at large. It would compromise the very essence of what made Feios the place it was.

Anders noted that using the river for industrial gain was neither something to be frowned upon, nor indeed a new development in the village. Rather, in agreement with his earlier view of the watercourse as "a resource," he saw the project as a welcome development and continuation of past practices:

> The river has always been used. The sawmill had water power, and we floated logs in the river here too. But all that is over now so it's good that we're finding something new to use the river for.

He even went on to claim that such a development would actually "make him want to remain [in the village] even more," a view which stands in stark contrast to those of Gry (41, AP). She said that she would "likely move at once if the project happens," whilst Jostein (43, AP), a lifelong inhabitant strongly attached to his property and the village, claimed that he would not have built his new house by Åfedtelvi a few years ago had he known about the project. He also would consider moving from Feios if the river were to be developed.

Jostein expanded upon his views on the project's economic nature by setting it in a local and national context. He first noted that his view of Feios has been altered by the mere possibility of there being a hydropower-developed watercourse in his town:

> I can see that [my view of the village] been affected by the project. You can say that I feel we've reach the threshold when it comes to intruding upon nature here. We shouldn't copy other places; we would lose our value base. Of course development of the job market is important, but it's going too fast.

When asked what he thought the project was about, he answered

> Money. We have of course a surplus of electricity in the county so it will only be exported to the rest of the country. We are being used because we only get the disadvantages.

These opinions stood in contrast to those of pro-project informants. Karl (64) noted that the development represented a chance for the village to "take a stand and provide Norwegian society with electricity." Jostein's comments regarding the present state, and the impact on the natural environment were countered by Lars (77, FP), who noted that environmental effects would be

> Irrelevant. They will take care of it so well; they will cover up the rock deposits with earth. Nothing drastic will happen to the nature.

This in turn was countered by Fredrik (46, AP), who expressed a deep concern for the environmental effects the project would have during both the construction and production phases:

> Suddenly it won't be so attractive to live here in construction zones, even if it won't exactly affect our farm here, but it will come a little bit longer down there, so there will be lots of noise and explosions. And not in the least the aesthetics, with all the rock that will be dumped here and there. And the river disappearing.

Fredrik, who relocated to Feios in late 2005, argued that he did "not move (...) so that [I] could earn a little money, whilst health and everything else is destroyed."

The hydropower project itself is thus seen through many different lenses. These lenses are to a great extent part of the sense of place of those looking through them. *Genius loci* can influence the ways in which a particular project is perceived. Similarly, a given project, as Jostein's comments implied, can also affect one's *genius loci* before it has even materialized. This, of course, plays to the widely held theoretical tenet that places are in continual evolution, constantly being created, modified, and perhaps even destroyed by people and processes, be they physical and/or psychological. The development of the watercourse in Feios would clearly lead to Feios' identity as a place to shift in the minds of several informants, and the nature of this can be seen as being at least partially responsible for positions taken towards the proposal.

Feios and the Big Picture: Hydropower in Norway

How did the informants perceive of the development of the watercourse in Feios in a national context? What were their perceptions of hydropower? Examining the informant's views on such matters is of relevance because it presents the research with additional information with which to judge exactly how their senses of place played upon their views of the project in their village. Perceptions of hydropower in wider – geographical and theoretical – contexts will ideally help shed further light on how the reactions to the project in Feios were forged. After all, the proposed development in Feios is one of many in a country where hydropower development has been the source of pride and controversy, and where it provides over 90% of the national electricity base.

Virtually all informants pronounced themselves as being positive to the concept of hydropower in and of itself – they declared it to be a clean way to produce electricity. However, there was less unanimity concerning how much hydropower Norway is in need of, should have, and how it should be used. The informants responded differently regarding whether Norway should proceed with further hydropower developments:

> It's important that people see what is happening, that new hydropower stations aren't just built all the time. We have to have some untouched nature left. That is important, both for those living in the towns and those living here. (Fredrik, 46, AP)

> I believe we should exploit what is available. You can say that tourists have stopped a lot of projects. (Lars, 77, FP)

Fredrik viewed Norwegian nature as being a national treasure of sorts, one that holds value for the entire population, not only those – such as himself – living in it. For him, the widespread development of hydropower facilities is a threat to an intimate relationship between people and nature in Norway.

Some informants had rather nuanced views on hydropower. Jostein (43, AP), for example, expressed a positive attitude towards being able to exploit available natural resources, but also noted that the country did not "need any more [hydropower projects]. To continue would be crazy!" He clearly saw hydropower as being more of a necessary evil, a solution to satiating energy needs which should not be abused – that is, a solution which should only be taken advantage of in cases where it can satiate concrete needs.

However, even those informants who expressed skepticism over hydropower development, suggested ways in which it could be put to action in more suitable fashions. Whilst several informants expressed concern over the ecological damages hydropower projects can induce, informants Dries and Engeltje adopted a nuanced approach, suggesting that a small scale project would perhaps be best suited for Feios, both ecologically and financially:

> It's all about harmony, and hydropower can also be built in harmony, it's possible, definitely; maybe a little less electricity, but it's possible. (Engeltje, 55, AP)

> Maybe small scale hydropower would be a solution for Feios. Then money stays in Feios, it doesn't stream out of the village and the landscape isn't negatively affected. (Dries, 48, AP)

These views were echoed by Morten and Nils, who also did not advocate a wholesale continuation of unbridled hydropower development in the country, but rather expressed openness to smaller scale projects which would take into consideration the local social and environmental conditions. Morten, for example, noted that hydropower projects should be "*skånsomme*":

> I think they should take a look at the context and do "soft" projects. (Morten, 53, AP)

> They could have more but not whole rivers. You have to be careful and take the local population into account. (Nils, 60, FP)

Børre pointed out that he believed hydropower projects should proceed following needs, and also that hydropower development does not only lead to the production of clean electricity, but also engenders peripheral infrastructural improvements such as road networks, which he in fact viewed as the opposite of environmental destruction – an environmental improvement of sorts:

> In these environmentally conscious times, it's a good way to produce electricity. Vik for example, that's a big project, but I've never heard that the nature will be destroyed. It's the opposite, lots of roads in the mountains. That's great, I think it's positive. (Børre, 40, FP)

Fredrik, echoing what Jostein has said earlier about how much of the produced electricity is not intended for local markets, expressed strong skepticism towards hydropower as a whole:

> I believe we reached the limit a long time ago. Already with Alta I was completely opposed to it. That project was completely unnecessary. And especially in the Vestlandet, we've exploited everything; and of course it all goes to towns and Østlandet. It's not something we get any good out of, we just get the disadvantages. (Fredrik, 46, AP)

This sentiment was developed upon by Engeltje (55, AP), who noted that, given that Norway has enough electricity for itself, and that it is a rich nation, the continued building of hydropower projects would be tantamount to "selling the nature to foreign countries." As an immigrant from Holland, she noted how she felt surprise at how easily she felt Norwegians were willing to "sell" their national nature – the nature they seemingly are so proud of, and fond of using.

Development in "bygde-Norge" – In or Out of Place?

One facet of Norwegian national identity is that of the small town, village Norway, or "bygde-Norge." These are the small countryside villages in which people live close to nature, where life is lived in harmony with the Norwegian

landscape, and in which ancient cultures have their roots. Feios is such a town. One of my questions was "do you think it is appropriate to keep small villages like Feios 'untouched,' or is it OK to develop them so that they become more integrated into the national economy?" This, predictably, led to differing opinions on the matter. Anders (36, FP) claimed that not only was development desirable, but also in fact what made Feios an attractive place to live in:

> development is extremely important and I think that is what makes the town so good to live in.

Dries, from Holland (48, AP), despite being against the hydropower project, interestingly noted that Feios could stand to become more integrated economically. With respect to the project itself, he had the following to say:

> Yes, maybe Feios for example could be integrated with a smaller hydropower project, only Storelvi, but not Åfedtelvi. So then we have electricity and we take care of the landscape.

Similarly, Jostein (43, AP) noted that he welcomed development in general, but on certain conditions:

> Yes of course, if it means exploiting nature in a benign way.

So whilst Dries and Jostein are both against the hydropower project - and, as I have shown, have strong senses of place in Feios connected in particular to the nature – they nevertheless are open to the idea of development from outside the village which would affect this, albeit in ways which they demand take environmental integrity into account.

Fredrik (46, AP) noted that Norway should make a concerted effort to preserve "bygde-Norge," using Feios as an example,

> because… the reason people have lived here is that they are self sufficient, with the river and good earth and hunting (…). So it's about those kinds of things, right? Not everyone can live in towns. If that's the case then [villages such as Feios] become summer towns, where they are empty for ¾ of the year, people

> are only there for Easter and the summer, maybe a little at Christmas. But otherwise no one lives there. There should be more such places.

This was echoed in Gry's (41, AP) thoughts on the nature of small villages, who claimed that isolation (geographic and economic) leads to the development of specific, local identities:

> I think small inhabited towns are more diverse when they are not connected to the big things. So I want more... there are far too many small places such as Feios that have already died out. And so the population levels go down across the board.

This suggests that the sense of uniqueness in such small places is directly influenced by the outlying, "built up" Norway, through the establishing of an us/them dichotomy. One's sense of place in Feios, therefore, could potentially be affected by the building of a hydropower project – once a village perceived as being relatively disconnected from the Norway of concentrated, large population centers is now one which has a tangible connection to this outside sphere. And this is a connection which can make an impact on the mind in a different way than, say, a road infrastructure. The latter is simply necessary in order to enable mobility in and around the town, whilst a hydropower project designed to export electricity to outlying places is an entity which potentially exists in a different sphere of perception. Its presence and the service it produces, unlike roads or telephone lines, is in itself not designed to benefit the inhabitants of Feios, but rather the "outside" which uses the produced service. This, of course, would be of particular relevance for those who are against the project.

Engeltje (55, AP) and Fredrik (46, AP) explicitly associated the watercourse with Feios' local identity, with the former noting that "the word Feios means that the river comes together; it's an old Norwegian word. So Feios doesn't mean anything when there's no river. It's the identity." Both informants seemed to make a distinct connection between the local nature and the possibilities it offers for settlement, and the very existence of *bygde-Norge*. Fredrik said the following:

> People have lived here since the time of the Vikings, and they lived here because of the river, so it's a part of… if it weren't for the river there wouldn't have been agriculture, right? So it's a resource. (...) But if it disappears it would be very strange. (...) There's no life without the river.

Fredrik connected the presence of the river to both the striving of human and animal life. For him it seemed to act as a vein running through the local landscape. He called it a "resource," but in doing so seemed to avoid bestowing it crude, purely instrumental value for humans. Rather, Fredrik looked upon the river as a landscape element which nothing less than allowed humans to settle in the area. In this manner it became a resource but also something to be respected because of the very possibilities it opened up for human settlement, for the creation of this small town, salt of the earth Norway.

Karl (64, FP), lifelong inhabitant, noted that Feios should

> Become more integrated in the national economy; one must make choices to keep up with the times. We have to go in the same direction as the rest of Norwegian society.

Karl's *genius loci* in Feios is clearly affected by the outside world in that he wants his village to follow its lead. This suggests that local sense of place, related specifically to concrete developments, is not immune to being influenced by a wider, national one, in that the overall economic and social trends in Norway seem to define the direction in which he wishes Feios to head economically.

However, this relationship also reflects the tension which can arise between a sense of place on a local, and national scale. A national sense of place, formed from the amalgamation of several regional identities, as well as centralized forces such as government and media, is not necessarily compatible with the sense of place in a specific, small scale locale. This holds particularly true for places such as Feios which have been relatively (although by no means completely) shielded from the economic and social developments which have indeed come to define the Norwegian national sense of place. The result is that whilst bygde-Norge

forms an integral part of Norway's national sense of place – the backbone of Norwegian national identity - its sense of place stands in contrast to big town, industrialized Norway, and constitutes a prime example of how a sense of place on the national scale is often incompatible with a local one. This topic will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Informants Morten (53, AP) and Nils (60, FP) occupied more of a middle ground, being open to the idea of job creation, but also wishing to see "bygde-Norge" preserved as is:

> Morten: It's fine for some villages to remain untouched. But some jobs would of course not be a bad thing.
>
> Nils: [Country villages] should be preserved, absolutely. They can develop a bit, so that there's a better economy; there are not enough jobs or income so they could be developed in order to gain a little fringe benefits.

Taking into account not only the existence but also potential influence of the "outside" dimension of a place is of importance because without doing so one simply runs the risk of not being in possession of a complete comprehension of what makes a place what it is – that is, what makes people feel the way they do about specific places and specific happenings, such as what is currently under way in Feios. This is of especial salience given the globalized nature of today's cultures and economies – the time-space compression which I have considered in the previous chapter- and the nature of Sognekraft's plans for Feios which emanate from outside sources and which are designed to satiate needs located in these "outside" places.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the hydropower project and hydropower in Norway all have different meanings for different people. For some informants the undeveloped river represented both already present and untapped economic potentials. Several informants suggested that, rather than exploiting the watercourse for hydropower, a drinking water factory could be set up, given the high quality of the glacial water which flows down from Fresvikbreen. Others perceived the arrival of hydropower in the village as a significant step forward for the town. Clearly the case of the hydropower project in Feios is a contested project taking place in a locale imbued with contested meanings. Feios is, along with any other place, not a set centre of meanings but a fully dynamic construct. The meanings and values people associated with it are in constant evolution, changing the very identity of the place as they do so. The forces which account for this dynamism come from both inside and outside a place. *In* Feios, for example, the inhabitants' views on what is socially, economically or culturally appropriate for the village can change. At the same time forces *outside* of Feios are continuously acting upon its identity in relation to not only the surrounding world but also itself. The nature of the hydropower proposal was also in and of itself a centre of contested, dynamic meanings. It represented different possibilities for different informants, as well as being the product of a national development trend which is a continuous source of controversy.

The chapter also works to advocate re-humanizing approaches to nature in environmental planning and resource use contexts. Whilst Norway often boasts that its environmental policies are sound both from a purely environmental, but also social and cultural point of view, what happens on the ground rarely reflects these claims. The sense of place theory provides an ideal framework for a fundamental re-imagining of how individuals, policy makers, governments (at all scales), and natural resource managers all position themselves in relation to the natural world, and thus how they affect it through their actions.

5. Feios in a Wider Context: Past Responses to Hydropower Development in Norway

Is the case of Feios - where different senses of place amongst different people existed and affected stances towards the hydropower development - an isolated phenomenon, or can one say that it has been observed before in similar cases? The aim of this chapter is to present a short overview of four prior cases of hydropower development in Norway. The cases of Ottar, Mardøla, Alta-Kautokeino and Gaula, which occurred throughout the period from the late 1960s up to the early 1990s, were all, to varying degrees, disputed. How did people's sense of place play a role in these disputes? Were the natures of the concerned *places* brought up in political processes, either explicitly or implicitly? Is advocating sense of place as a significant variable in political processes regarding land management issues a viable postulate? A widespread invocation of a sense of place (as opposed to an isolated one if Feios were a unique case) would mean that people's opinions and values simply cannot be ignored by governing authorities in a democratic society.

In addition, the examples of Alta-Kautokeino, Gaula and Mardøla crucially demonstrate that the local as well as national sense for a place can be manipulated and affected by politics, ideology, the use of media, and indeed *Zeitgeist*. They display how places exist in relation to a larger physical and social whole, ready to be continuously reshaped through a myriad of actors and channels. Specific communities, no matter how small or isolated, are rarely, if ever, cut off from the rest of the world. They influence and are influenced by it.

The Ottar River

Vorkinn and Riese's *Environmental Concern in a Local Context: The Significance of Place Attachment* (2001) examined how the proposed small scale hydropower development in the Ottar river was received in the mid 90s amongst the local population of the town of Skjåk in Vestlandet, a little north east of Feios. They ascertained that "certain groups of the inhabitants were attached to the areas [that would be affected] and that (...) attachment would affect their attitudes towards the proposed development" (Vorkinn and Riese 2001: 251). In other words, they hoped that place attachment could be used as a predictor for reactions to the proposed development.

Place attachment, they hypothesized, would develop through "personal experiences, use intensity (number of days used last year), use experience (number of years used), and type of recreational activity engaged in" (ibid.: 257). Indeed, they found that whilst no causal relationship could be stated, these parameters served as predictors of the *strength* of place attachment (ibid.: 257).

Interestingly, the authors note that attachment to the municipality of Skjåk as a whole fell in line with positive attitudes towards the proposed project. On the other hand, they also found that "attachment to the areas that will be affected by the HP development is the strongest predictor of the attitudes towards the HP development" (ibid.: 259).

Mardøla

The first case of civil disobedience in Norway with respect to an environmental issue arose surrounding the tapping of the Mardøla river in Møre og Romsdal (Gleditsch *et al*. 1971: 4). During the summer of 1970 a protest camp was set up,

blocking progress on a work road. Two main areas of concern were cited as being the basis for the protesting: effects on the local nature and business (worries were expressed with regards to potential lack of water for agricultural purposes) (Vinje 1995: 8). Whilst the river itself was a relatively minor one, concern in this particular case arose from the fact that a tall waterfall – Austre Mardalsfoss – was to be affected by the project. Mardalsfossen was nothing less than Norway's second highest waterfall at 655 total vertical meters (Alnæs 1976b: 26).

The Mardøla case seems to be most analyzable from the point of view of a sense of place anchored in the national sphere. Participants in the action came not only from the surrounding area but also from all over Norway, and it was noted that those who spent most time in the camp were in fact those who lived furthest from the river (Gleditsch *et al.*, 1971: 43). Finn Alnæs, who participated in the protest, described Mardalen, one of the valleys through which the watercourse ran, as being a *naturkatedral* – a nature cathedral (Alnæs 1976b), and had just as strong words for Mardalsfossen:

> I had no idea Norway's most beautiful waterfall nature existed right there. (...) Not in my wildest fantasies could I have imagined the way in which [those wanting to tap the river for hydropower] had now crossed the line. [my translation] (Alnæs 1976a: 125)

Alnæs' complete unfamiliarity with the place in question did not present an obstacle for his establishing an immediate and strong relationship to it. This relationship was, it would seem, based not only on physical appearances in and of themselves, but also upon the threat this place was exposed to at the time. Again, we see a threat towards a place being a source for increased environmentally responsible behaviour. In this case, Mardalsfossen came to represent a national natural idiosyncrasy – waterfalls; and in the mind of Alnæs, altering this waterfall for hydropower purposes represented an affront on Norwegian nature as a whole. Alnæs' book *Naturkatedral* (1976) also functions as an ode to Mardalen, and the sense of place the author felt as he experienced it over several trips in the 70s.

Thus, Alnæs describes the local valley environment as “Norway’s heart” (Alnæs 1976b: 81), a “*poetisk rusgiver”* – a source of ecstasy (ibid.: 85), - and he considered Mardalsfossen to be a “national and cultural element of the first order, something which is deserving of being protected in and of itself” [my translation] (ibid.: 11). Mardalsfossen and its corresponding watercourse and locality were, at least in Alnæs’ mind, empowered with sense of place on the local but also national level, and this sense of place seemingly strengthened his resolve in his participation in the protests against the hydropower project.

The opposition to the Mardøla plans also took place in the midst of what had been a strong national environmental movement in the 1960s and 70s, spearheaded by the environmental group *Samarbeidsgruppene for natur- og miljøvern* - (snm) - which coordinated the sit-down protest. At the centre of this initial movement was a desire to protect areas from the industrial development which had characterized Norway since the Second World War. The concerns were both biological and aesthetic in nature. Given this, more than a few individuals laid particular weight on Mardalsfossen when opposing the project (Vinje 1995: 10). As such, the opposition to the Mardøla project must be looked at within a wider context, and this context – the *Zeitgeist* of the Norwegian environmental movement of the 60s - was responsible for imbuing the Mardøla river with a particular sense of place, anchored in the national sphere, placed in a tug of war between forces dedicated to the preservation of symbolic, Norwegian nature and continued industrial development. Mardøla is a prime example of place as a dynamic and contested entity, constantly being redefined and renegotiated by individuals (such as Alnæs), groups (such as (snm)), and social climates at large (the *Zeitgeist* of the 60-70s environmental movement and pro-industrial forces).

Alta-Kautokeino

Plans for the exploitation of the Alta-Kautokeino watercourse in Finnmark were made public by Norges Vassdrags- og Energidirektorat in 1970 (Hjorthol 2006: 187), and were promptly met with much controversy both nationally and locally (Midttun and Andersen 1984). Indeed the Alta-Kautokeino case went on to become the single largest environmental controversy in Norwegian history, due to the added effects of the length of the conflict (over a decade), the strength of the engagements on both sides, media attention, and political history (the case went through Stortinget for revision 3 times before the final, executed projected was decided upon in 1980) (Haagensen 1984: 29-30). The culmination of the conflict was the removal of roughly 8-900 protestors whom had, in 1981, as in the Mardøla case, set up a camp across a work road in an effort to slow the construction phase (Haagensen 1984: 29). Construction began in earnest after 2 years of protests which had engaged roughly 10000 individuals throughout various events (Flatberg 2007: 73) as well as the signatures of 15000 opponents, of which 6000 were locals of Alta (ibid.: 67).

The Alta-Kautokeino case was divisive locally. Public opinion in Alta was split more or less down the middle – 49% against and 45% for (Midttun and Andersen 1984: 81), - and the two municipalities which the project concerned were officially against the tapping of the watercourse, whilst Finnmark county adopted the opposite position (Haagensen 1984: 30).

Motivations in the Alta-Kautokeino case, as seen in the documentation, seem to center around place dependence and identity amongst the local populations. Reasons cited for skepticism towards the tapping of the watercourse include the value it held for fishing and recreation (Dalland 1994: 49, 61, 89). Worries pertaining to local sources of income were also raised, particularly with regards to the salmon populations in the watercourse. It was held that as spawning areas in the river would be affected by the project, salmon fishing (the largest source of

income in Alta municipality) out at sea would also be threatened by a development which would alter the biological conditions of the river (ibid.: 90).

In addition, the strong Saami resistance to the project also pointed towards a regional identity – place identity played a role in forging the stances of the local opposition. On several occasions skepticism was expressed towards what was perceived as being a centralized threat coming to Finnmark and imposing its destructive will on land which belonged to the Saami culture, and which in fact belonged to them by law. This was seemingly ignored by the centralized forces behind the project who began construction before any plans for the expropriation of the Saami land rights and compensation were laid out (Hjorthol 2006: 47). This Saami concern reflected the presence of an *ideology* opposed to centralized governance of the periphery, as well as the preservation of minority rights in the face of what was perceived to be nothing less than an immoral and undemocratic manifestation of globalization forces. It demonstrated how ideology, then, can also affect sense of place on a regional and cultural scale.

The vice president in the *Norske Samers Riksforbund* (Norwegian Saami National Alliance) noted that "a continued encroachment on Saami land will result in a continued encroachment on the Saami's possibilities to exist as a people" [my translation] (Flatberg 2007: 69). Strong concerns were accordingly expressed amongst the Saami population regarding their tradition of reindeer herding, as valuable pasturage would ostensibly be negatively affected by the project (Reed and Rothenberg 1993: 27). Flatberg (1984) noted that locals perceived the project as being an affront to their everyday lives, as well as the town itself. For example, it was also noted that one of the reasons people were against a specific part of the project was because it would have negatively affected a "beautiful village" (Dalland 1994: 91), suggesting place satisfaction, as well as possibly attachment may also have swayed opinions on smaller scales.

Local forces on numerous occasions (ibid: 60, 76) pointed out that their interests should be accorded greater weight in the decision making process. In 1973 the Norwegian Saami Council demanded that “strong attention be given to Saami interests during the planning phase and that their considerations be given meaning.” [my translation] (ibid.: 73). However, 1979 saw the local opposition declare that they felt that their opinions had been “completely ignored” in the political processes that had occurred up to that point (Flatberg 2007: 70). Such feelings were not restricted to Saami circles though, as support for the Saami opposition was to be found nationally. Per Flatberg (1984: 201) for example noted that he and many others “became angry because of what appeared to be for us an attempt to manipulate Saami interests as well as public opinion” [my translation]. Also amongst the non-Saami’s who chose to engage themselves in the battle against the Alta project was Arne Næss, who perceived it to be the “modern time’s most serious assault on the native population” [my translation] (ibid.: 202). The Saami hunger strike of 1979 in front of Stortinget gained the Saami cause a lot of support in non-Saami Norway, as it gained a lot of media coverage, and as people learned about a population and situation in northern Norway which they were relatively ignorant about. Suddenly, to many a person’s concern, it was as if an unknown repressed minority had been exposed to the public domain for all to see (Hjorthol 2006: 56). With this, the national, wide spread sense of place of Alta, and the Saami territories as a whole, were changed.

Gaula

The Gaula river in the west of Sogn og Fjordane was also proposed for hydropower tapping early in the 1970s. Unlike the cases of Mardøla and Alta-Kautokeino, however, the opposition campaign in this case was successful in stopping plans for the tapping of the watercourse from going through. In 1993,

over 20 years after the beginning of the battle and after having determined the watercourse to be one of Norway's most valuable aesthetically and biologically, Stortinget motioned for full protected status (Ulvedal 2002: 11).

The stride against the tapping of the river was most strongly represented by an information committee, *Informasjonskomitéen*, which was set up in 1973 as a tool for local ground owners along the river to gain access to information regarding the case (ibid.: 36). This was the committee's primary cause; however, as the handling of the case progressed through the 70s it gradually morphed into a conservation organization dedicated to blocking the tapping of the watercourse. In 1976 the committee created a slideshow with music and commentary to show people what areas the hydropower project would affect. For 90 minutes (or 40 if viewing a shortened version) viewers were exposed to scenes from along and around the watercourse – this could be described as a tool for communicating the sense(s) of place found along the river.

Concrete reasons given by those against the project reflected place dependencies as well as attachment and identity. One member of *Informasjonskomitéen* expressed that he had "lots of good memories from the river and a warm relationship with it and the surrounding area," and that he could "not believe that the farmers [who had sold their ground owner rights to Sogn og Fjordane county] could let the beautiful river be sold for hydropower development" [my translation] (ibid.: 37). Personal memories, as with several of my informants from Feios, in this case contributed to nurturing this individual's sense of his place, and his attachment to it. Fishing was also repeatedly brought up to express concerns, both environmental and recreational.

The municipalities of Gaular, Førde and Balestrand were skeptical towards the initial proposal from Norges Vassdrags- og Energidirektorat presented in 1972. The mayor of Gaular in 1980 expressed that the initial plan was unacceptable

because of the strong regulation of water levels in the low lands as well as the river (ibid. 35). He, however, became positive, as did numerous others, to revised plans which were laid forward in 1976. At this point the 3 municipalities successfully concluded negotiations with the parties behind the project, and voted for the tapping of the watercourse.

By the time the conflict was nearing its end in the early 90s, a strong political rift between Oslo on the one side and Sogn og Fjordane and the concerned municipalities on the other became entrenched (ibid.: 96). The Gaula case is another ripe example of contrasting local and centralized politics, similar to what was observed in Alta a few years earlier. However, a final decision to preserve Gaula was taken in the context of the nation's *Samla Plan* – a national plan through which a representative portion of Norway's watercourse nature was to be preserved. This representative portion was chosen by according each watercourse a certain number of "stars," based on various worths and the nature of the effects tapping for hydropower would have. Gaular scored extremely high in most categories, and was judged to hold high value with regards to outdoor recreation, nature, fish and cultural artifacts (ibid.: 83). Whilst this final decision was made in the early 90s, the groundwork for it was laid as early as a decade earlier when the then ruling government motioned for including the Gaula watercourse in the *Samla Plan*. Additionally, by the mid 80s it was clear that a river was to be tapped; the will for this was just too strong to be ignored. It would either be Gaula or Gjengedalen, also in Sogn og Fjordane. When the Minister of Environment then asked Sogn og Fjordane's head of environmental protection which watercourse should be protected, his answer was clear – Gaula (ibid.: 89).

Kjell Opseth, politician who was one of the project's most ardent defenders, noted that the Gaula case was also influenced by the *Zeitgeist* of the environmental and social movements born in the 60s and 70s. When asked why he believed the Gaula project would not go through, he claimed that

> We had the Alta case. We had several watercourses that were considered controversial. Strong conservation groups grew around these. The Gaular watercourse and the *Informasjonskomitéen* was not the only one. It had to do with the whole of society. The atmosphere changed [my translation] (ibid.:110).

Also worthy of note in the Gaula case was the specific use of media, as seen by the *Informasjonskomitéen* and its information film focusing on still mages of the watercourse. As I noted previously, this was more than just a tool to show people what places would be affected by the project. It also served as a means to strengthen or communicate and create the sense of place of the watercourse to those who watched it, both locals, and, importantly, non-locals. In effect it functioned almost as a propaganda film. The use of photography and film in this case was shown to be of no small importance in the battle against the project, and as such goes demonstrates how sense of place can be communicated and institutionalized through media not only by way of newspaper articles or television programs which document a given event or ongoing project, as seen in the Alta case, but also through specific tools designed by stakeholders on the inside of a place controversy.

Conclusion

These four cases are useful in demonstrating that sense of place *has* affected people's stances in other hydropower projects than Feios'. They also show that sense of place has operated on vastly different scales: in Alta a regional Saami identity and cultural independence was considered as being put under the knife; in the Mardøla case the watercourse and its waterfalls came to represent the best of what Norway had to offer in its nature. It was a thing to behold in and of itself but was also a symbol of Norwegian national identity. In Gaular what was considered to be one of the country's finest rivers – and all the stars it was accorded for its

natural and cultural value - was to be reshaped. The Ottar case plainly showed how place attachment functions with respect to a localized, smaller scale project.

These examples have shown how the *genius loci* of a place can forge local, regional and national identity, and subvert political and development projects. However, as we have seen, the relationship works both ways. When a place is imbued with qualities which represent and forge wider identities, such as regional and national ones, it is not only the latter which are strengthened. The place in question is also imbued with a power of representation which works to intensify its specific identity. Local sense of place and regional/national sense of place work in tandem to strengthen each other. Such a development occurs through politics, media, and ideologies.

In addition, as I have suggested above, conflict serves only to strengthen the power of such places. Related to this, Reed and Rothenberg (1993: 24) noted that "when the majority of Norwegian rivers must either hop over, slide through, or stagnate behind hydropower installations, the *symbolic* importance of a free-running river also takes on a new dimension" [original emphasis]. The symbolic power of a specific watercourse – thusly a specific place and its *genius loci*, such as the Mardøla river – can be altered through the actions of outside/centralized forces, acting both in the past, the present, on the local geographical scale, and on the national.

On the basis of these examples, it seems obvious that political processes surrounding land use issues such as hydropower development should accord more weight to a sense of place and values and opinions related to it. The Alta case in particular is most interesting from a political point of view; could sense of place-based meanings amongst the local population have been (further) incorporated into the political processes that determined the fate of this? The next chapter of

the thesis will examine the ways in which place-based meanings, opinions and values could be given their due in natural resource management processes.

The above cases also demonstrate how group actions have arisen around hydropower projects. To bring the focus back to Feios, whilst it was not founded for the very purpose of combating the hydropower project, the *Åfedt og Hellands Næringslag* in the village is also an example of an organized coalition of people working against a hydropower project. By writing a common public pronouncement and sending letters to the Ministry of Development and the Environment, Feios was given its own organized action group against the hydropower project. As of mid June 2008, however, its efforts have not born any visible fruits, and not in the least media coverage. This is undoubtedly due to the nature of the project and Feios – the project is not as large as those discussed in this chapter, and the coalition is comprised of only a few individuals from the areas of Åfedt and Helland. As such, resources are very limited. In addition, the *Zeitgeist* from which previous opposition movements have benefited has long since subdued. I will further discuss the *Åfedt og Hellands Næringslag* campaign against the project in the following chapter.

6. Sense of Place and Politics: Compatible Forces?

Gaining a better understanding of how the world is understood through sense of place is of course a noble pursuit. As I have noted, it taps into an essential facet of human existence in the world and serves to enrich our placefulness. However, if such increased understandings are also to be put to concrete use – if they are to yield material and psychological benefits – through natural resource management, then it becomes necessary to analyze how sense of place based meanings and attitudes can be incorporated into political processes regarding such resources. This chapter outlines how previous research and examples (including Feios) of natural resource controversies have suggested (explicitly or implicitly) how sense of place based meanings are intertwined with the political sphere, and how such meanings can be afforded a greater role in management processes. The result shows that not only can senses of place and politics be compatible forces, but that they also are irrevocably entwined.

Cheng *et al*. (2003: 89)[10] noted that "a key goal of place-based inquiry is to foster more equitable, democratic participation in natural resource politics by including

[10] The authors also propose six ways in which they hypothesize actors behave in natural resource policy debates. These function as a framework for understanding how, and why actors behave the way they do under such processes. Proposition 1 claims that "[p]eople's perceptions and evaluations of the environment are expressions of place-based self-identity" (Cheng *et al*.: 2003: 96). Proposition 2 is that "[p]eople perceive and evaluate the environment as different places rather than and assemblage of individual biophysical attributes" (ibid.: 96). Proposition 3: Engagement in activities towards protecting or altering a place may also lead to the creation of new social and cultural meanings in said place (ibid.: 96). Proposition 4: People respond to natural resource management proposals in function of their belonging to certain place-meaning social groups (ibid.: 97). Proposition 5: "Groups intentionally manipulate the

a broader range of voices and values centering around places rather than policy positions." Advocating such voices and values implies the recognition that

> human connections with natural resources and the landscapes in which they occur are multifaceted, complex, and saturated with meaning. Instrumental and intangible values are inseparable; both are part and parcel of the meanings people may assign to a place. (ibid.: 89-90)

Further, Cantrill and Senecah (2001: 185) noted that natural resource management issues are permeated by actors who orient themselves from a 'sense of self-in-place' perspective. In essence, therefore, advocating the use of sense of place-based values in natural resource politics is not advocating adding black to white; the two are already intricately entwined. Davenport and Anderson (2005: 638), who also studied local's perceptions of a river from a sense of place perspective, noted that "place-based meanings underlying sense of place and place attachment frame perceptions of landscape change, and in turn, shape attitudes toward and potential behaviors in the context of river planning and management." What the thesis argues is that such values should not be relegated to the background. Rather, they should be treated as a powerful force that can shape stances in questions of environmental management, and should accordingly be explicitly addressed in processes which determine how a resource or an area is to be managed.

Drawing attention to sense of place in political processes serves to expose why people feel the way they do about the place(s) in question, and why they act the way they do when their place and identity become the subject of development

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meanings of places hoping to influence the outcome of natural resource controversies" (ibid.: 97). Proposition 6: "The geographic scale of a place can change people's perceived group identifications and therefore influence the outcomes of a natural resource controversy" (ibid.: 98).

proposals. Access to such place-based knowledge allows managers and policy makers to paint a more detailed picture of the social landscape concerned in various projects. In this manner, not only can more specific, appropriate actions be taken to satisfy a greater number of citizens, but the political process itself can also be smoothened. Sense of place based meanings and values could be incorporated into negotiation processes, such as those seen in the Gaula case, to stimulate discussion and minimize conflict. Not addressing sense of place based values runs the risk of leaving actors unclear about why others feel and act the way they do. This can lead to misunderstandings and forestalling of progress within the political process, as well as nothing less than the gradual disintegration of democracy. Sense of place based theory in effect functions as a ripe platform for the democratization of processes revolving around the relationship between people and place.

At the same time, and as previously touched upon, ignoring sense of place is to deny the re-humanization of man-place relationships. It fosters the continued bureaucratization of human relationships. This not only deepens the schism between person and place; it also widens the schism between centers and peripheries. This is where local values, cultures, and relationships to the place are lost, overcome by homogenized national forces of change.

Cantrill and Senecah also noted that

> Natural resource managers must correctly identify what constitutes a salient sense of self-in-place for target audiences. Williams (1995) implies that citizens will distort information that accompanies policy changes if those directives run counter to their senses of place and selves in the environment. On the other hand, merely prompting citizens to focus on the interaction between humans and the biosphere may trigger attitudinal backlash grounded in their preference of social factors over those of nature. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) argue that “the self can be threatened by unwanted disruptions to emotionally salient places” (p. 208). In this context, *it becomes the role of those interested in conservation psychology to advise policy-makers and ordinary citizens as to the ways in which the mind, placed as it is among competing social and environmental pressures,*

> *functions to make sense out of advocacy related to natural resource policy-making.* [emphasis mine] (2001: 198)

Here Cantrill and Senecah point out yet another level on which sense of place affects the actors in situational contexts, resource conflicts - and how a sense of place can be used to tackle such situations. Conservation psychology can be used as the very tool to help actors understand the ways in which they actively make sense of a place, its meanings, as well as how other (opponent) actors do the same. It is a tool which can be used by citizens and planners alike to increase understanding of the forces which determine how a place is experienced, perceived, and valued.

The use of the sense of place construct in this manner was something which seemed to be sorely missing from the planning process in Feios. Many of my informants – both for and against the project - expressed that they felt that the local population had, in various ways, not been accorded enough attention from Sognekraft or the local public authorities. Anders (36, FP) and Børre (40, FP), for example, noted that non-river right owners could have been given more information about the project. This sentiment was confirmed by Fredrik (46, AP), Gry (41, AP), Engeltje (55, AP), Dries (48, AP) and Karl (53, AP) who all noted that they had felt as though they had been left out of the planning process – "you almost have to dig for information yourself," noted Fredrik, who did not own rights in the watercourse. Gry further noted that

> if you look at is as though a commune should take care of all its inhabitants, then they haven't taken care of those who are against the project. They haven't taken contact with us or said a word. However we did hear from the mayor who told us we should be for the project.

In addition, several citizens in Feios (of which some were informants for the thesis) wrote *høringsuttalelser* to Norges Vassdrags- og Energidirektorat which all laid weight upon how they experienced places – their property, the watercourse, the village. Clearly for them, place experience represented an

important part of their lives, and was perceived as being under threat. An example of one such a pronouncement was written by the *Åfedt og Hellands Næringslag*, comprised of individuals living along Åfedtelvi and in the Helland area, near the confluence of Storelvi and Åfedtelvi. This was used to express their opposition to the project. The pronouncement expressed concerns with regards to nature, culture, business, place, and how they believed the village would be affected by the hydropower project. With regards to outdoor life, the group emphasized that

> the project will result in an irreversible and large loss of the experience of nature along the Åfedt watercourse, and the valley/mountain. Free running rivers with small rapids, spray from waterfalls, fish, *fossekall*, birdlife and lush plant life will disappear. **Tent trips/mountain walks/hunting trips will never be the same**. [original emphasis, my translation] (Åfedt og Hellands Næringslag, 2007)

This is not only an example of the expression of *genius loci* in a political process; it is also an example of the fifth proposition Cheng *et al*. (2003) argue holds true during natural resource disputes, in which an organized group attempts to manipulate the meaning of a specific place (see footnote 7). The goal is to influence the outcome of a natural resource management controversy. Such organized use of place-based meanings and values helps to validate the argument that such meanings should be accorded formal importance in such processes – it elevates the expression of place-based meanings from the individual, comparatively limited sphere of action to one which is planned, coordinated and played out by a concerted effort by several citizens. Such premeditated and organized social pronouncements make the local population's standpoints all the more harder to ignore in the face of achieving democratic management goals.

Cantrill and Senecah noted that

> an identification of specific places named and valued by local residents would help agencies prioritize sites for remediation, preservation, economic development, or social engineering. (...) Use of the sense of self-in-place construct might hasten the process by tapping into perceptions most amenable to where agencies initially commit limited resources. (2001: 198)

Clearly, such an approach would have been beneficial to the case in Feios – we have seen that several informants were preoccupied by how the proposed project would affect several specific places, such as Brekkefossen, or Åfedtelvi.

Photo 9: Helland, August 2007.

The authors round up their discussion of how the self-in-place constructs can be of service to management proposals. They argue that incorporation of *genius loci* into the management planning phase can help minimize delays and civic resistance, enrich the deliberation process, and encourage finding "innovative resolutions to contentious issues" (ibid.: 199). Again, Feios' hydropower proposal displayed a clear need for all of these. Doing so would likely have sped up the process of having a final version of the project be accepted or rejected amongst both residents and planners, avoiding the lengthy waiting periods and delays which have been experienced in Feios.

Williams (1995: 2-3) noted the presence of a new paradigm for ecosystem management, in which a) emotional and symbolic meanings of natural resources

are taken into account, and in which the biophysical world is connected to the social one, and b) larger, landscape or ecosystem-wide units of land are used as the basis for analysis in management studies. Effectively, this new paradigm of environmental management "gives recognition to the idea that the landscape (place) carries a broad range of meanings; meanings that vary widely across individuals and social groups and that can be mapped like any other special-ecological datum" (ibid.: 3)[11]. For Williams, then, the "heart of ecosystem management is to guide decisions affecting a place using a rich understanding of its natural and cultural history – i.e., its context" (ibid.: 6).

Williams also noted that, traditionally, if meaning in the natural environment has been taken into account in management processes, it has typically been in a limited capacity. That is, inquiry has most often been restricted to discovering how people assign and derive instrumental values and meanings in their environment, as opposed to more intangible, shared ones (ibid.: 8). He uses a handful of examples to demonstrate how planners can map environmental meanings, noting how Geographic Information Systems has been used for recording the locations of preferred places in the Tongass National Forest, in Alaska, and how such sites impact forest planning alternatives (ibid.: 22). Whilst mapping ecosystems meanings necessitates public involvement, this process also

> extends well beyond traditional forms of public input and planning. The process of mapping meanings is more than surveys and interviews and more than

[11] Williams noted the following as "being some principles to guide ecosystem management" (1995: 3-16): 1) Ecosystems are socially constructed places. 2) Ecosystems can be described as the intersection of natural forces, social and economic relations *and* socio-cultural meanings. 3) Ecosystem management must map the full range of meanings that humans assign to places. 4) Ecosystem management requires new epistemological considerations. 5) Socially constructed places are organized in a hierarchy of scales.

> providing a forum for public input and comment. (...) [i]ntangible symbolic and emotional meanings can only be captured through continuous dialog among stakeholders and ongoing public exercises in mapping the symbolic landscape (ibid.: 24).

This incorporation of the sense of place constructs into such processes would likely be best suited to the local sphere, as opposed to the centralized one. The former allows views to be expressed in situ, with the influence of the concerned surroundings fresh in the mind, and not in the least because centralized spheres will more likely be dominated by outsiders such as, in Norway, the Stortinget, the Ministry for Development and Environment or various planning agencies. Such governing bodies may have comparatively little, if any at all of significance, sense for the place being discussed.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the sense of place constructs and political sphere are not only compatible, but in fact almost two sides of the same coin. Sense of place governs our everyday lives and determines how we act in our local environment. It is an essential psychological construct in that it allows us to structure our surroundings and our place in the world, yet it remains heavily implicit on personal and, not in the least, institutional levels. In addition, the importance the sense of place has in governing the way we live in our surroundings is only intensified by the globalized nature of today's world. More than ever before, places are connected to each other, dependent on each other, and create each other. Feios is not simply a small village tucked into a valley on the south side of Sognefjorden. Its inhabitants commute to neighbouring towns to work jobs which produce products destined for international markets. The hydropower project itself would produce a service to be exported hundreds, if not thousands of kilometers away. Globalization serves to threaten the uniqueness of

a given place, and in doing so magnifies just how important it is for the average person's psyche.

Politics, on the other hand, is everyday life being steered in a highly explicit manner. Laws are written down, recorded. Governing powers are elected (at least in a free society such as Norway) and accorded power by the population. Agencies make formal requests to carry out a management project, such as the building of a hydropower facility in a small town, and this request is combed over by the appropriate government agencies. Politics and sense of place both exert considerable force over the social, natural and cultural worlds we surround ourselves with. A unification of the two is only logical, and, as we have seen, beneficial, in more ways than one, in the world of natural resource politics.

7. Concluding Remarks

In the previous chapters, I discussed whether the natural environment represented a source of place-based meanings and identities for local stakeholders. The natural environment, perhaps more so than the social, appeared to exert varying degrees of influence on the senses of place amongst my informants. For informants such as Jostein and Gry, the natural environment of Feios represented a powerful source of *genius loci* in the following ways:

- It afforded them the possibility to engage in diverse recreational activities, such as walking, fishing, and hunting. Such activities were conducive to the formation of profound bonds with place, such as attachment and identity. Fishing and hunting were examples of concrete activities which invariably led to place dependence, and variably to place identity and attachment.

- Feios represented a *direct* source of psychological well being. Jostein, for example, noted that it provided him with a sense of security, whilst Engeltje and Gry stated that the “harmony” to be found in the mountains, valleys and rivers was something worthy of protection. This is a harmony present both in the natural world in the form of ecological purity, and in the human psyche, in which the natural world existed and was managed in a manner deemed compatible with their core values. For these informants harmony in the psyche was dependent upon harmony in the natural world.

- The aesthetics of the natural environment played an important role for some informants. In a strictly natural environment sense, sensory aesthetic appreciation of the environment acted upon several

> informants (Gry, Fredrik, Jostein) in that it nurtured the formation of place attachment and identity. The act of walking provided informants such as Jostein and Gry with a deeper experience of the natural environment mediated through acute sensual interaction.

However, not all informants were as strongly influenced by the natural environment as these. Several pro-project informants, such as Børre, Anders, Vilde and Karl, both life-long inhabitants and more recent arrivals, expressed affection towards the local nature, but clearly were less influenced by it than the anti-project informants. For these informants, relationships more heavily rooted in place dependence and satisfaction seemed to be the overwhelming driving force in their perceptions of the natural environment.

My second central research question asked to what extent sense of place influenced people's perceptions of the proposed hydropower project. I have tried to demonstrate that attitudes towards the project seemed heavily influenced by the informants' senses of place. The correlation is the following: a sense of place anchored in place dependence and satisfaction resulted in positive attitudes towards the project, whilst that rooted more strongly in place attachment and identity lead to individuals being against the proposal. As we have seen, the informants who were positive towards the project did also have senses of place, and some even declared themselves very attached to the village. It is important here to note that such senses of place amongst the pro-project informants were only "weaker" in relation to those who were against it. By "weaker" I simply mean senses of place that do not result in place-protective behaviour, and not that they are inferior in any way. Some pro-project informants also had a rich sense of place. In their cases however, their attachment to place was compatible with the notion of the hydropower project, and its material, economic and social implications for the town.

The third central research question asked whether the example of Feios and its proposed hydropower development constitutes a viable example for contributing to knowledge of how to incorporate place-based meanings and identities into local natural resource politics. Shortcomings in the political process surrounding the project proposal in Feios were expressed by several informants, both pro and anti-project. A lack of information concerning the effects the project would have in the natural sphere was the most commonly expressed complaint. Authors such as Cheng *et al*. (2003), Cantrill and Senecah (2001) and Davenport and Anderson (2005) have all detailed specific ways in which the sense of place construct could be incorporated into the political sphere of natural resource management, and several of these were of direct relevance to the case of Feios. As such, the example of Feios contributes not so much to additional knowledge or insights into how the sense of place construct could be politicized. Rather, it is a strong confirmation that cases arise where its inclusion would be entirely fitting.

The fact that several pro-project informants, and lifelong inhabitants to boot, expressed feelings of place attachment goes to show how different people can perceive natural resources in diverse ways. A river can be a source of instrumental possibilities or psychological well-being; it can be a good place to fish for one person, and a poor one for the next; an important landscape and social element for children, or a negligible one; a way to launch an isolated country town into the future through industrial development, or a catalyst for the preservation of dearly held local values. The watercourse in Feios is thus a prime example of how not only the natural environment as a whole, but also specific landscape elements, can encompass varying and even contradictory meanings, ranging from the instrumental to the most purely psychological. The sense of place construct is arguably the most suited to making sense of this complex tapestry of understandings.

Conclusion

Some pro-project informants also had strong senses of place. In their cases however, they were entirely compatible with the notion of the hydropower project, and its material, economic and social implications for the town. In the same way that senses of place do not have to be centered around positive feelings towards a place, then, they likewise do not always have to correspond with feelings of environmental protection. It is important to note that the thesis does not advocate the use of sense of place in order to push through the most environmentally friendly option – ideally of course this would always be the case – but rather advocates the taking into account of all relevant senses of place, especially in the local sphere. Studying *genius loci* can serve as an essential tool for the democratization of natural resource usage, in both Norway and abroad. It offers a path to a minimization of conflict, both in the short term whilst the political process is under way, and in the long term, when different individuals with different viewpoints, needs and preferences congregate around a given area or environmental feature. The sense of place construct is arguably *best* suited to application on the local scale, within which individuals on a regular basis are exposed to and use places and resources which are up for management proposals. It can also, however, be used in the management of public lands, such as national parks, which have their own particular public, widespread meaning.

Attending to sense of place also represents the taking into account one important facet of the very nature of human existence into the political sphere. Given the position the sense of place occupies in our everyday lives, and its nature as the epistemological and ontological framework of our lives, there simply is no reason *not* to accord it weight in the world of politics. The thesis has shown that a sense of place can exert an influence over how people position themselves with relation to questions of environmental management. As such, it needs to be explicitly

acknowledged in the processes which determine the fates of the places and the management of resources in the globalizing world.

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> Fishing is a little fun, I have dabbled with that for 20 years, trout and such. (Christian, 35, FP)
>
> I don't use the river! What would I use it for? Swimming? No, no one uses the river. (Vilde, 37, FP)

As I stand by the side of the road in the middle of Feios, waiting to be picked up to be driven to the bus station, everything is quiet. At 7 o'clock in the morning, in November, it is still dark, and there is no sea of city lights to weaken this natural cloak of darkness. The only sound comes from Åfedtelvi. The surrounding mountains can be made out just enough to give the feeling that I am standing in a sort of natural bowl. In one direction is the Fresvik glacier; in the other is Sognefjorden. And, connecting the two, is the watercourse – Feioselvi, Åfedtelvi, Storelvi, and the numerous, smaller tributaries which feed them. Somehow, with the village at its darkest and quietest, my sense of its nature – physical and communal – is stronger than ever before. My inability to make out distinctive elements in the landscape strongly brings out the nature of Feios as a whole. I am made strongly aware of the fact that this – Feios – is but a collection of individual places for people to live, and their associated infrastructures and activities. They are nestled in one of thousands of valley systems along the fjord.

For some it is a new home; others have lived there for over 70 years. It is the land from which people make a living, and in which people live in communion with nature. It is a place in which, through its limited size and topography, strong communal ties are bound, and life stories are woven. Are these landscapes meant to be challenged?

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Appendix 1: Interview Questions

1) Innledningsspørsmål

Hvor lenge har du bodd i Feios? Hvorfor flyttet du hit/hvorfor har du ikke flyttet herifra?

Hva er yrket ditt? Hvor jobber du? Hva er familiesituasjonen din?

Hvorfor er du for/imot utbyggingen?

2) Sense of place / Personlige opplevelser

Er din fortid en viktig del av livet ditt her? Har du for eksempel mange (barndoms)minner knyttet til dette stedet?

Er familien en vesentlig del av livet ditt her?

Fortalte foreldrene eller familien din/vennene dine masse historier som fant sted her, eller i slike naturlige miljøer?

Pleier du/pleide du å gå tur ofte ute i naturen/bygda? Med hvem?

Tilbringer du masse tid i/med hagen din? Hvor ofte klipper du gresset, planter blomster, osv?

Er det viktig for deg å ha elva i umiddelbar nærhet av huset ditt?

Hvor ofte bruker du elva? Til hva?

Dyrker du eller plukker du frukt ofte? Hvor gjør du det? Alene eller med andre?

Hvilken rolle spiller det naturlige miljøet i hverdagen din?

Fører noen av de aktivitetene du driver med til at du føler deg knyttet til et visst sted? Hvordan er ditt syn på bygda påvirket av dine hverdaglige handlinger?

Hva er "hjemme" for deg? Er det ditt hus og hage, Feios, fjorden, Vik kommune, Vestlandet? Hva betyr det å ha et hjem?

Har du noen gang vurdert å bo et annet sted enn Feios?

Hvordan ser du på Feios i forhold til andre steder du har bodd på før? I en norsk sammenheng?

Burde Norge beholde små, temmelig urørte bygder sånn som Feios eller er det greit å utvikle dem slik at de blir mer integrert i en regional/nasjonal økonomi?

Er din stilling til prosjektet påvirket av dine handlinger i Feios? I så fall, hva består disse handlingene av?

3) Natur / kultur og identitet

Har prosjektet endret måten du tenker på bygda på?

Prosjektet setter Feios i en global sammenheng; er Feios sin identitet begrenset til selve bygda eller er Feios også definert av det som bygda *ikke* er?

Betyr det å bo i Feios å ha et nærmere forhold til naturen?

Foretrekker du et nokså ruralt liv eller er det best med villmark rundt seg?

Er selve det fysiske miljøet grunnen til at du føler deg knyttet til Feios eller har det heller noe med aktivitetene dine du driver med inni det å gjøre?

Gitt at du hadde tilgang til en del penger, ville du da endret på noe i bygda, for eksempel modernisering av huset ditt, eller nye veier?

Vil du gjerne ha mer jordbruk i Feios, eller mindre?

Er det nok turstier i bygda eller bør det lages flere?

Er du fornøyd med å måtte pendle til Vik/Fresvik for å handle/jobbe eller hadde du ønsket deg flere butikker og virksomheter i Feios?

Hvor viktig er det å ta vare på Feios sine kulturminner? Går du ofte tur og ser på dem?

Hvor kjent er du med Feios sin historie gjennom århundrene?

Er denne fortiden viktig å bevare for deg, eller anser du ikke prosjektet som en trussel mot den?

Tror du prosjektet ville rette et nasjonalt søkelys mot Feios? Hadde det vært ønskelig? Eller burde Feios forbli som det er nå?

Besøker du ofte UNESCO-området?

4) Utbyggingen

Hva er det aller viktigste for deg angående prosjektet?

Ville barn i bygda få et bedre liv med et urørt vassdrag?

Er trusselen mot *det naturlige miljøet* spesielt viktig for deg?

Finnes det en viss mulig konsekvens i det naturlige miljøet du særlig er opptatt av, for eksempel lavere vassføring, støy, synet av kraftstasjonen, inntektsdamer, færre dyr… Hvorfor det?

Finnes det et visst område du spesielt er bekymret for eller er du mer opptatt av Feios/vassdraget som en helhet?

Er prosjektet en trussel mot Feios sin framtid, for eksempel fraflytting, næringsliv?

Hvordan anser du prosjektet? Er dette et stort prosjekt?

Hvis du er bekymret for en viss plass, hvorfor det? Har du et rent følelsesforhold til området eller dreier det seg om en konkret bruk du har, eller begge deler?

Har du lagt noe vekt på *stedet* Feios i din kamp mot/for prosjektet?

Hva tror du prosjektet handler om, egentlig?

Er du fornøyd med hvordan den lokale befolkningen i Feios har blitt håndtert i denne saken hittil?

Kunne mer vekt ha blitt lagt på deres meninger gjennom de politiske prosessene som har skjedd hittil?

Hva synes du om konsekvensutgreiingen?

Kunne du tenke deg å flytte fra Feios dersom det blir utbygging?

5) Miljøets fremtid

Tror du det vil bli utbygging? Hvorfor det?

Synes du din side har bedre argumenter enn den andre?

Hvor langt er du villig til å gå for å forsvare dine interesser i Feios i forhold til utbygginga?

Hva synes du om vannkraft?

Bør det være mer vassdragsutbygging i Norge?

Har Norge et ansvar for å forsyne andre land med ren energi dersom det hjelper å redusere klimagassutslippene der?

Anser du det som skjer i Feios som en del i en større sammenheng, dvs. det som skjer i Norge eller Sogn og Fjordane, i forhold til vannkraftutbygging?

Er det noe fornuftig å ville bygge ut elva i et område som ligger så nær et UNESCO-verdensarvområde? Eller spiller det ingen rolle for deg?

Til hvem sin fordel ville utbygginga virke mest? Minst?

Appendix 2: Map of Feios

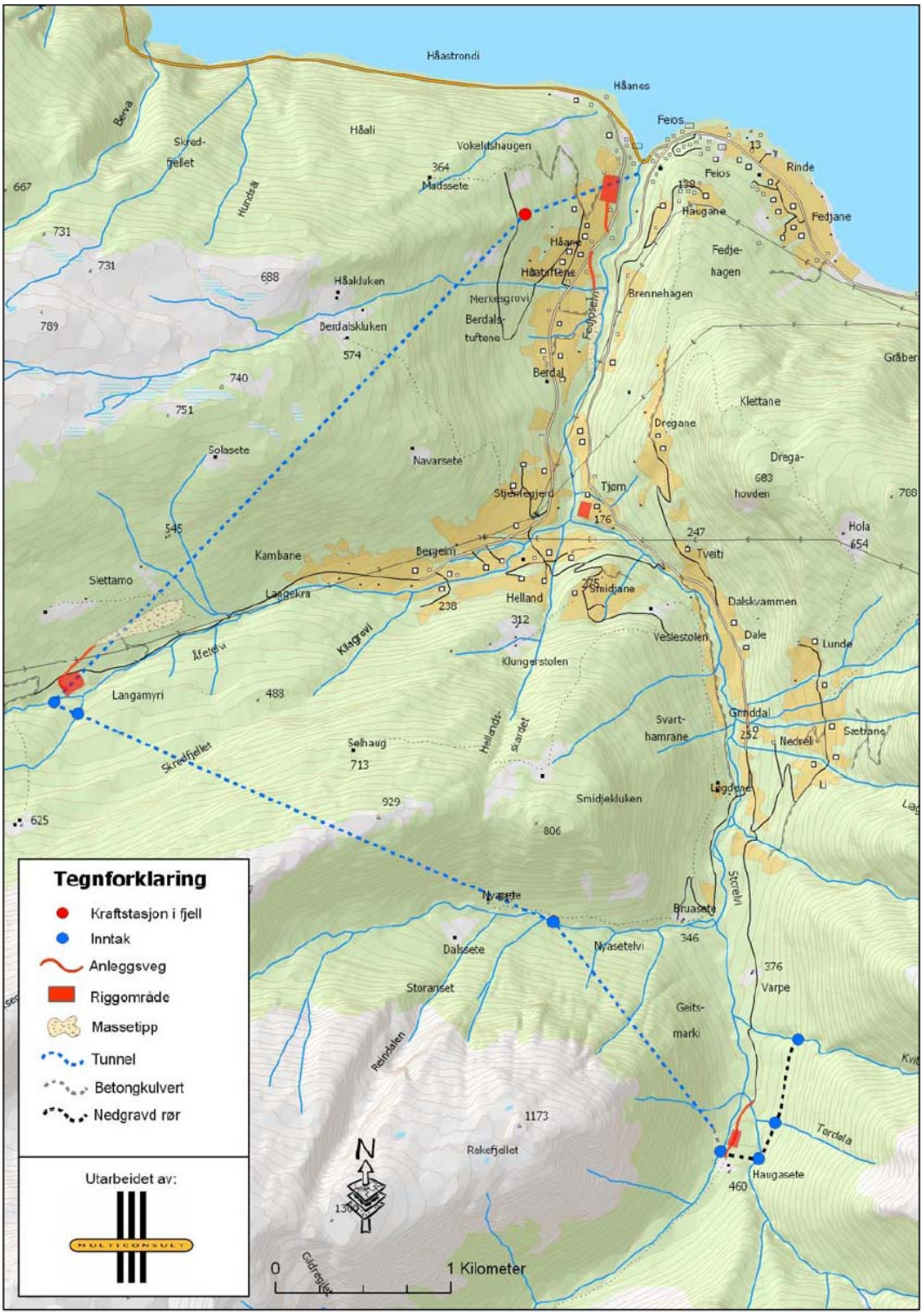

Figure 2. Source: Feios Kraftverk AS, 2006b.