

PREFACE

Ståle Knudsen

This is a book about the possibilities and limitations of corporate responsibility in the context of the neoliberal global economy.¹ We focus on how transnational Norwegian energy and extractive industries handle corporate social responsibility (CSR) when they operate abroad. With significant state ownership and embeddedness in the Nordic societal model, Norwegian capitalism is sometimes considered particularly benign. Is this reflected in the way Norwegian corporations handle operations abroad? Our search for an answer has resulted in a series of ethnographic case studies of major Norwegian corporations' activities around the world (part II). As a backdrop for the case studies, we review important dimensions of the historical and Norwegian context for the way in which corporations maneuver, such as the notion of *samfunnsansvar* (societal responsibility), the political economy of industrial development in Norway, state ownership, and the Nordic model (part I).

Most books are long in the making: this one is no exception. The idea for the project from which this book has emerged was sparked during a lunch conversation between Siri Lange and me, ten years ago. We secured funding first for a pre-study (from the University of Bergen and the Chr. Michelsen Institute) and subsequently for a full-scale research project. The project, Energethics—Norwegian Energy Companies Abroad: Expanding the Anthropological Understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility, ran from 2015 to 2019 and was funded by a FRIPRO grant from the Research Council of Norway (grant no. 240617). A set of articles from this project was published in *Focaal* in 2020, corresponding to the introduction and chapters 6, 8, and 10 in this volume. In addition to these chapters, the Energethics team has crafted several new chapters (chapters 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, and 11) for this book, and we have elicited two chapters from other scholars working on related issues (chapters 3 and 5). Of the articles published in *Focaal*, chapters 6 and 10 have by and large only seen minor changes when carried over to this book, while the introduction has been thoroughly

overhauled and updated and chapter 8 considerably restructured.

The Energethics case studies originally addressed Norwegian energy corporations' work on CSR abroad (and in the periphery of Norway; see chapter 9). With the realization that Norsk Hydro, a major Norwegian extractive industries corporation, has played a crucial role as a model in the Norwegian context, we have added two chapters focusing on this corporation, thus expanding the scope beyond energy. This is, however, not reflected in all chapters, such as in chapter 1, which addresses methods and has previously been published. In our estimation, though, the considerations we make in the methods chapter would hold for studies of Norsk Hydro as well.

In addition to the funding from the Research Council of Norway, I also want to acknowledge here support from the University of Bergen, especially for funding the costs of language editing and for making the book open access (additional funding for open access was granted by the Western Norway Research Institute and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology). Two reviewers read the whole manuscript thoroughly and provided many helpful suggestions, for which we are very grateful. I also want to express my gratitude to our always reliable language editor, Katharine Wheeler, who has been through most chapters at least once.

The majority of the case studies in the book concern the oil and gas corporation, Equinor. From its formation as a state corporation in the early 1970s and until 2018, when it changed its name, it was known as Statoil. In order not to confuse the reader, we have chosen to refer to the corporation as Equinor throughout, even when we consider its activities before 2018.

Notes

1. Earlier versions of six of the chapters have previously been published as articles:

Introduction: Knudsen, Ståle, Dinah Rajak, Siri Lange, and Isabelle Hugøy. 2020. "Bringing the State Back In: Corporate Social Responsibility and the Paradoxes of Norwegian State Capitalism in the International Energy Sector." In Theme Section, "Corporate Social Responsibility and the Paradoxes of State Capitalism," edited by Ståle Knudsen and Dinah Rajak. *Focaal—Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* 88: 1–21.

Chapter 1: Müftüoğlu, Ingrid B., Ståle Knudsen, Ragnhild F. Dale, Oda Eiken, Dinah Rajak, and Siri Lange. 2018. "Rethinking Access: Key Methodological Challenges in Studying Energy Companies." *Energy Research & Social Science* 45 (November): 250–57.

Chapter 6: Strønen, Iselin. 2020. "Between Social Footprint and Compliance, or 'What IBAMA Wants': Equinor Brazil's Social Sustainability policy." In Theme

Section, "Corporate Social Responsibility and the Paradoxes of State Capitalism," ed. Ståle Knudsen and Dinah Rajak. *Focaal—Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* 88: 40–57.

Chapter 7: Lange, Siri, and Victoria Wyndham. 2021. "Gender, Regulation, and Corporate Social Responsibility in the Extractive Sector: The Case of Equinor's Social Investments in Tanzania." *Women's Studies International Forum* (84): 102434.

Chapter 8: Lange, Siri. 2020. "Doing Global Investments the Nordic Way: the 'Business Case' for Equinor's Support to Union Work among Its Employees in Tanzania." In Theme Section, "Corporate Social Responsibility and the Paradoxes of State Capitalism," ed. Ståle Knudsen and Dinah Rajak. *Focaal: Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* 88: 22–39.

Chapter 10: Knudsen, Ståle, Ingrid B. Müftüoğlu, Isabelle Hugøy. 2020. "Standardizing Responsibility through the Stakeholder Figure: Norwegian Hydropower in Turkey." In Theme Section, "Corporate Social Responsibility and the Paradoxes of State Capitalism," ed. Ståle Knudsen and Dinah Rajak. *Focaal—Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* 88: 58–75.