MOBILE LIFESTYLES: PERSPECTIVES ON WORK MOBILITIES AND GENDER IN THE HIGH NORTH

1. RELEVANCE
This project focuses on the practices and representations of women’s and men’s work mobilities in continental Norway’s High North. According to the Government of Norway, the High North is one of the important strategic priority areas for the country with an overall objective to “secure political stability and create sustainable development in the area” by means of a more extensive international cooperation on the use of natural resources, environmental management and research” (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, St.melding 30, 2004/2005). To date, most of the political effort has been directed towards grasping relevant geopolitical issues (Nye byggesteiner i nord 2009). Less attention has been paid to work mobilities, which are key dimensions to the sustainability and development of the region, their perceptions and conceptions in household, public, academic, and political discourse, and the relationship between these representations and practices.

Work mobilities in the High North have many forms. Some people live and work in the region; others travel on a daily, weekly, monthly, rotational or seasonal basis from other parts of the country and the world. Still others are mobile as part of their work (e.g. fishers, transport-related employees). As a result of industrial restructuring, flexible work practices, new labour mobility policy both globally and in the EU, we know that some of these forms are increasing, some are changing, and new patterns are emerging (Kesselring 2006; Hanson 2010).

As work mobilities increase, change and develop, they also challenge the way we think about them, how people relate to them, and to place. Emphasis on how women and men practice work mobilities in the High North entails a focus on social change, the capabilities of actors, and infrastructures, and relations between people, particularly power relations. The central question for this project is therefore: How can we come to an understanding of women’s and men’s work mobilities in Norway’s High North that is consistent with a gendered mobilities approach attentive to lifestyles? Answers to this question will result in conceptual and theoretical development. This knowledge will inform policy development on the municipal, regional and national level.

2.1. BACKGROUND AND STATUS OF KNOWLEDGE
Our interest in work mobilities stems from the fact that they are increasing, their nature is changing and the way that we think about them is also shifting. Studies indicate that distances travelled to work, and the time spent in transit, are increasing globally (Helminen and Ristimaki 2007; Sandow 2009). In Norway between the years 2000 and 2008, many municipalities experienced an increase in both men and women’s work mobilities and, in some areas, the type of these mobility patterns changed for both genders (Statistics Norway 2008). Work mobilities are highly differentiated by gender, age, type of settlement, and distance: more men than women commute and for longer distances, a pattern which is mediated by employment sector, household responsibilities, as well as educational level (Balsvik 1989; Hanson and Pratt 1995; Moss et al. 2004; Munkejord 2011); young people travel further distances for work than their older counterparts; people living in urban centres commute more than others, but those living in rural and remote areas commute longer distances (Champion et al. 2008),
and short-distance is more common than long-distance commuting (Statistics Norway 2001; Hjorthol 2005). More complex patterns of daily, weekly and monthly commuting, seasonal migration and mobile work are also emerging with increases in temporary labourers and foreign workers (McDowell et al. 2008).

The growth of work mobilities and their shifting nature are the result of several important global trends. Industrial restructuring, rationalization and labour-shedding practices across firms have increased the necessity for workers to be mobile (Bauman 2000) and to travel further distances to find employment. On the other hand, in areas where extensive out-migration has evacuated local labour supplies, or, in cases where boom economies have created increased work demands, labour shortages have led to the recruitment of other internal and often international labourers (Aure 2008; Munkejord 2011). Labour policies in the EU support the free flow of workers within its member states (Dobson and Sennikova 2007); and, in the Global South, work mobilities are encouraged as a means through which individuals can cross national borders to secure paid employment but maintain residences in their home countries, thus lending to remittances and, in turn, the support of local economies and families in place (Varma 2009). Furthermore, commuting subsidies, communication and transportation infrastructure improvements, and greater flexibility in work arrangements have facilitated the ability for individuals to live farther from their place of work.

While work mobilities are increasing, these phenomena are not new, and have long sustained a northern way of life (Brox 1966; Gerrard 1975; Balsvik 1989; Aure 2008; Munkejord 2011). Employment in the marine sector, mining and tourism has contributed to a mobile workforce with workers often participating in rotational schedules or as seasonal migrants (Lundmark 2006). A professional mobile workforce in the public sector (embedsverket) has historically been mobile, a trend which continues today (Munkejord 2011). In more recent times, oil and gas development has created increased opportunities for national and international workers to secure employment in the High North, also on a rotational basis (Eikeland et al. 2010).

Even though work mobilities are normal in the High North, and elsewhere in the world, a sedentary worldview (Castles 2007, 2010; Cresswell 2002, 2006) has pervaded our understanding of them. This sedentary worldview is two-pronged. First, it has constructed the world as morally static. As a result, mobility has been viewed as abnormal, indicative of instability (Cresswell 2002, 2006) and in some cases, disruptive to families, communities and sense of place (MacDonald, Sinclair and Walsh, forthcoming; Baldacchino 2006; Storey 2010; Relph 1996). Second, it has constructed the world as territorially static. Sheller and Urry (2006) refer to this as territorial nationalism, which is also linked to methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick Shiller 2002). As a result of this tendency, movement is examined within the context of particular bounded territories, and studies of internal and international migration often exist in isolation (Castles 2010; King and Skeldon 2010).

The sedentary worldview is now being challenged by new and emerging work mobility trends that span geographic scales (local, national, and international), the policies that support them, and increasing evidence that mobility is also a choice for many people (van der Kliis and Mulder 2008; Levin 2004; Noack 2006) in the pursuit of a better quality of life.

Such processes will also have consequences and change the character of places both as a social context (locale), the physical and material conditions that encircle the social and economic life (locality) as well as how we experience places (sense of place); thus necessitating a processual place concept (Massey 1991, 2005).
2.2. APPROACHES AND CHOICE OF METHOD

Understanding the practices and representations of women's and men's work mobilities in continental Norway's High North requires a thorough effort in assessing, applying and developing theories and approaches. Our research moves beyond constructions of sedentarianism and territorial boundedness. We treat mobility as the rule, not the exception. Our work is therefore primarily informed by the new mobilities paradigm (Sheller and Urry 2006) – a movement driven social science (Busker and Urry 2009) which aims to reduce fragmentations and compartmentalization in mobility research, and challenge the sedentary biases associated with mobility itself. As this orientation suggests, the paradigm is concerned with the patterns of movement, or the facts of movement as much as how these different patterns are perceived and conceived (Blunt 2007; Cresswell 2006, 2010; Sheller and Urry 2006). Cresswell refers to this approach as a politics of mobility. He states that such a politics, in both representations and practice, is imbued with power as it plays out in the production and reproduction of social relations (2010: 21). It is necessary to examine the role, therefore, of power in regulating who can be (im)mobile; in negotiating the act of (im)mobility – reflecting practices – and in designating who should be (im)mobile and why – reflecting representations – on the macro-socio economic scale, as well as on the meso and micro scale of the household.

We build upon Cresswell’s (2010) contention that movement, the meanings associated with it, and experienced mobility practices are interconnected. Consistent with emerging literature in this area, we take the approach that this interconnection is also related to place (Bærenholdt and Granås 2008; Verstraete and Cresswell 2002). Places emerge as sites of particular importance to people because, in the course of practising their livelihoods, they may develop place-based social, economic, and personal relationships as well as acquire cultural values in relation to these places as reflected in Rudie’s statement that “space is not only a backdrop for social drama, but a co-determinant in the production of culture and social interaction” (2008: 80). Similar arguments can be found in the work of geographers such as Simonsen (2008), Massey (1994), and McDowell (1999).

Because the theoretical underpinnings of this project rest on practices and representations, our approach necessitates attention to the relationship between structure and agency. Although structuration has been used extensively to capture and explain migration patterns, it has also been widely criticized in favour of other approaches with more explanatory power and less ambiguity (Bakewell 2010; Archer 1995). In this research, we assume a lifestyle approach that considers individuals' life designs (Scheiner and Kasper 2003; O’Reilly and Benson 2009) but in the context of and interacting with the structural dimensions that also play a role in these designs. Rather than situate lifestyle as something only applicable to affluent individuals (O’Reilly and Benson 2009), we retain it as a means to understand why individuals are engaged in work mobilities in order to achieve a better quality of life. As such we see it as a renovated approach to how lifestyle is understood. A lifestyle approach captures practices, representations, and places because understandings of what constitutes quality of life is shaped by all three, and are temporally contingent, both in terms of biographical time (i.e. the life course) and historical time (i.e. a particular era in society). This is consistent with Olwig and Sørensen’s (2002) livelihood perspective which stipulates that livelihoods should be studied as practices carried out by specific social actors in particular ethnographic and historical contexts, and that they should be viewed as part of the local, regional and even more distant spheres of activity.

We incorporate a gendered perspective into our understanding of women’s and men’s work mobilities, as well as their values in light of equality and division of labour (Haavind 1984; Ellingsæter and Leira 2004), thus enabling us to understand gender relations including power relations, the meaning of gender and how gender is negotiated in various situations (Aure 2008; Gerrard 2008;
An intersectional perspective (Lykke 2003; Berg et al 2010), where gender is analysed in relation to age, class, ethnicity in various mobile contexts, will also be applied. The intersectional perspective is also well suited for power analyses because the perspective urges us to clarify the basis for power as well as how women and men in different contexts perceive power.

Given this approach, we ask a set of five related questions that follow directly from our main research question: How can we come to an understanding of women’s and men’s work mobilities in Norway’s High North that is consistent with a gendered mobilities approach attentive to lifestyles? These five questions are: a. What are the dominant practices of work mobilities; b. How are these practices represented? c. Do the representations and practices interconnect and if so, in what ways; d. In what ways are these practices and representations mediated by gender; e. How are these practices and representations related to places? These questions directly guide our choice of research methods.

**PROJECT METHODS**

We will use a multi-method approach to study the practices and representations of women’s and men’s work mobilities combining qualitative and quantitative data in the study of four municipalities in Finnmark, the northernmost county of Norway. Within our definition of work mobilities, we include short and long-distance commuters whose work travel rotates on daily, weekly and monthly schedules; those whose workplaces are actually mobile or mobile workers (fishers, transport-workers including truckers, sailors and airline workers) and those who are seasonal migrants (fishplant workers, reindeer herders, artisans, tourist and service workers). We will combine a statistical analysis of Norwegian administrative data on patterns of available and measured work mobilities in Finnmark with a content analysis of bureaucratic, professional, popular and lay discourses (see Jones 1995) as they relate to these mobilities, and fieldwork in each of the four research areas (Figure 1).

Our research design corresponds to the organization of research strands as per the project plan, outlined below.

**SELECTION OF LOCALITIES**

In this project, the High North is limited to the Northernmost portion of continental Norway – four municipalities in the county of Finnmark: Alta, Hammerfest, Nordkapp and Kirkenes. The choice of these four areas rests on the diversity of work mobilities which comprise their local labour force. These include: short and long distance commuting, seasonal migration, and mobile work. **Kirkenes** is a border, service, hospital and mining town with commuters of varying degrees (short and long-distance). Located on the Russian border, it is a chosen destination for migrant workers from Russia and elsewhere. **Nordkapp**’s economy has largely been based on the fishery and tourism sectors. Seasonal migrants working in the tourist industry and a high proportion of fishers (mobile workers)
comprise its local labour force. This is one of the areas with the fewest registered commuters in the region. However, professionals working in the marine service sector do travel in and out of the area as part of their work. This is a contrast to the neighbor municipality, Måsøy, that also could be interesting to study because of examples of ‘Nordsjøturnus’ in public sector. Hammerfest is one of the oldest towns in Finnmark with a history of in-migration from neighboring municipalities as well as from Finland. Today, short and long-distance commuters are now commonplace, working in the health and services sector, as well as in the newly established oil and gas sector. Hammerfest also has mobile workers employed in the fishery and in the seasonal reindeer industry. As one of the larger municipalities in the North, Alta is a main service centre for the region with commuters in consultancy, research and education, as well as mobile workers in transport and fisheries. These four municipalities have also a mixed population of Sami, Finnmarkish and Norwegian women and men, as well as immigrants from the new and old EU-countries, Russia as well as from Asia and Latin-America.

**STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

The statistical analysis of the project has two main components: 1) A descriptive analysis of work mobilities behavior, and the characteristics of commuters, seasonal migrants, including temporary foreign workers, and mobile workers over time for each of the four research sites, using publicly available free statistical tables. The time period considered will depend on available data. 2) A longitudinal work mobilities study using linked administrative data collected annually by Statistics Norway (e.g. Income Register Data, Register-based employment file sources), along with data from the National Registration Office and the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organization (NAV) will examine and compare the socio-demographic, income, industry and work mobilities trajectories of working-aged individuals (15-74) in each of the four research sites over the time period from 2000-2010. This analysis will reveal change over time in each of the sites, particularly the changes of individual work mobility practices as they correlate to socio-economic and spatial circumstances.

**CONTENT ANALYSIS**

Representations exist at various discursive levels -- at a lay and household level (i.e. how the mobile women and men themselves conceive of their situation and discuss it), as well as at bureaucratic, professional (i.e. academic) and popular (i.e. media) levels. These levels correspond to the work of Jones (1995) and Munkejord (2006). A content analysis of how the mobile practices of work mobilities are presented and discussed in the local media sources, for example some specially selected issues of Finnmarken, Sør Varanger avis, Finnmark dagblad, Finnmarksposten and Altaposten, will be conducted. To correspond with the statistical analysis, newspaper coverage related to work mobilities in some relevant white and green papers over the time period from 2000-2010 will be examined by means of content analysis. Particular attention will be paid to papers that address labour policy, regional development, and employment especially on the local and regional level. The content analysis of both data gathered from media sources and from the white and green papers will be conducted using NVivo 9. Through the analysis, an inductive approach to the development of themes and discourses surrounding work mobilities will be undertaken.

**FIELDWORK**

Face-to-Face semi-structured interviews of women and men of various ages, ethnic and national backgrounds practicing work-related mobilities will form the basis of the fieldwork. Field notes and relevant materials collected from the local newspapers will provide insights on work mobilities in these localities. In each of the research sites, we aim to conduct 40 interviews with women and men who engage in the various types of work mobilities outlined above (short and long-distance commuting, seasonal migration and mobile work). Recruitment will occur through unions and workplaces, if applicable (see Datta et al. 2009 for a similar approach), and through newspaper
advertisements. A snowball approach will also be used whereby recruited individuals will be asked to refer researchers to other potential informants. Because of the variations in work mobilities, interviews will consist of general questions and those specific to the particular type of mobility. The gendered lifestyle approach attentive to power relations will be operationalized here as we explore with informants how and if work mobilities relate to gender practices and identities, quality of life (including leisure and family), and to larger economic and social processes. Representations of work mobilities at the lay or household discursive level will also be explored here as we will ask how informants perceive and conceive of their mobility. We will connect these representations to place by asking about how these particular localities influence their work mobilities, and how their mobilities in turn influence these places.

2.3. PROJECT PLAN, PROJECT MANAGEMENT, ORGANIZATION AND COLLABORATION

This project will be led by Siri Gerrard, professor and academic coordinator at Kvinnforsk (Centre for Women and Gender Research, University of Tromso (UiT), and will be administered by Kvinnforsk. Gerrard and Kvinnforsk’s staff have a track record of several successful grant applications and project management, and a commitment to the pursuit of work mobilities research (see Gerrard’s CV). In the past two years, Kvinnforsk has hosted international meetings with work mobilities researchers, funded by the University of Tromsø. A team of three researchers from three partnering research groups (Dr. Mai Camilla Munkejord – The University College of Finnmak; Dr. Marit Aure – The Northern Research Institute (NORUT); and Dr. Haldis Valestrand-The Department of Sociology, Political Science and Planning (ISS) at UiT), a hired researcher/consultant (Paul Pedersen), one postdoctoral fellow (mentored by Gerrard) and one doctoral student (financed by UiT through the Place, power and mobility research group and supervised by Valestrand) will work with lead researcher Gerrard on the project activities. Paul Pedersen will support the project with his knowledge in statistical methods and use of register data.

The research activities are organized into four main activity strands corresponding to the research design and methods (Figure 1). Strand 1 focuses on illuminating representations via the newspapers and government document content analyses; Strand 2 focuses on the statistical analysis; Strand 3 is devoted to the facets of studying practices and representations through the fieldwork; and Strand 4 concentrates on theory construction and conceptual development. This organization will maximize research activities within each strand, and facilitate knowledge exchange across strands.

STRAND 1 CONTENT ANALYSES

All four researchers will collaborate on the collection of data from the newspapers Altaboten (Alta), Finnmark Dagblad (Alta, Hammerfest, Nordkapp), Finnmarksposten (Nordkapp), Finmarken and Sør Varanger (Kirkenes) to contribute to the content analysis of media representations. The emphasis on the content analysis of media and document representations of work mobilities will vary among the researchers. If time allows this work may also be an aspect of the work carried out by the postdoctoral fellow.

STRAND 2 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The postdoctoral fellow, based at Kvinnforsk, will be responsible for collecting and compiling publicly available statistical data on commuting behavior and mobile workers through Statistics Norway's free statistical tables (http://statbank.ssb.no/statistikkbanken/). This will be done in the fourth quarter of 2012 and the first and second quarters of 2013, and will provide researchers with relevant data on
aspects of the patterns and practices of work mobilities prior to their fieldwork activities. During this
time, the fellow will also work with Paul Pedersen, a senior researcher/consultant with extensive
experience in statistical analysis of geographical mobility using large linked datasets (Statistics
Norway, The national registration office, NAV), on the design of the longitudinal work mobilities study.
This process will take approximately four to six months. Since the data is collected as time-series data,
a longitudinal study will require the linking of individual-level data (done internally by Statistics
Norway) to create panels for observation over time. Once this linking has occurred and a
comprehensive dataset is acquired, data cleaning, manipulation and analysis will be done by Pederson,
in collaboration with the postdoctoral fellow during the first six quarters of the project.

**STRAND 3 FIELDWORK**

Fieldwork will be carried out by all team members and the preparations will start in 2012, shorter
fieldwork with interviews will take place in 2013 (second, third and fourth quarter) and 2014 (first
and second quarter). We aim to harmonize the data collection in time to the degree that is possible.
The field work will be carried out as follows:

*M. Munkejord and the doctoral student* will study practices and representations in the Alta
research site. Building upon her previous work on rural in-migration (Munkejord 2006, 2011),
Munkejord will pay particular attention to foreign female and male mobile workers in the Alta region,
including different types of commuters in the public and private sectors as well as immigrant
entrepreneurs establishing their own business in this part of the High North. The PhD student will
focus on the relation between mobility, gender and the “meanings of place”. His/her work will be
directly supervised by Valestrand.

*M. Aure and the postdoctoral research fellow* will conduct fieldwork in Hammerfest. Through her
previous work (Aure et al 2011). Aure has established relations in the region. She and the postdoc will
focus their fieldwork efforts on workers in the oil and gas sector, the health and social care sector (i.e.
hospital workers), as well workers who commute daily and weekly from Kvalsund to Hammerfest and
vice versa.

*Siri Gerrard* will focus her efforts on Nordkapp and if possible, also Måsøy. Gerrard has a long
history of conducting research on fisheries in this area and has written several contributions on
mobile work, seasonal work and daily commuting of women and men (see CV). She will interview
fishers and fishers’ wives about how they conceive changes in work mobilities.

*Halldis Valestrand* will carry out her research in Kirkenes where she has done pilot studies in the
past several years (see CV). In Kirkenes, emphasis will be put on mobile workers in the mining as well
as in the health sector.

**STRAND 4: THEORY CONSTRUCTION AND CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT**

Choosing the ‘new mobilities paradigm’ that examines mobility from a gendered perspective entails
rethinking theoretical and analytical positions. Such approaches can be described as formulating
epistemological positions, and arguing in favour of dynamics, and of combinations of social and spatial
mobilities (spatio-temporal), that is, for example, seeing them together, thus drawing on and
contesting long-standing traditions in sociology, geography, anthropology. All four researchers, the
postdoctoral fellow and the doctoral student will participate in this work, beginning in the last quarter
of the first year. Through the project period, emphasis will be placed on theory building, especially the
interconnections between work mobilities, lifestyles and gender within and across specific localities.
During the first team seminars in 2012 and 2013, researchers will focus on types of work and their
contributions to particular mobile lifestyles within the various local contexts and link these work
mobilities to gender and "sense of place". Team seminar in the first quarter of 2014 will focus on the relations between practices and representation. The third year's team seminars, early in the fourth quarter of 2014 and the second quarter of 2015, will concentrate on theoretical and methodological contributions based on the studies of the male and female actors, their workplace in relation to the localities, the representations as well as the statistical analyses. Siri Gerrard and Halldis Valestrand will be responsible for leading these seminars.

COMMON TEAM ACTIVITIES

The team seminars as stated above are important in order to discuss and compare the findings and analysis so that theories, methodologies and concepts can be further developed. To support our team seminar productivity, we will arrange virtual meetings using Skype so that practical problems related to the research process can be discussed and resolved. In 2012 Kvinnforsk will arrange one international conference combined with a PhD course (mainly financed by UiT). We will arrange one international workshop in 2013 (third quarter) and one in the second or third quarter of 2015 where our international partners and others will be invited. This will assure a strong internationalized academic context throughout the project periods. Members of the research team will further participate on international conferences on mobility as well as on more discipline oriented conferences and present written contributions, if financed. The majority of the international publishing of articles will take place during the last year.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Siri Gerrard will lead and manage the project. Gerrard has comprehensive experience both as head and partner in many national and international projects. With at least six persons actively involved (Aure, Munkejord, Valestrand, Pedersen, a doctoral student and a postdoctoral fellow), meticulous care will be given to careful planning, timing and performance of the various activities. The team seminars and international workshops will be significant arenas for developing the theoretical platform. The rationale for starting up in the fourth quarter of 2012 is to ensure that the project members have secured ample time for project work. Further, to announce (in English) and engage the postdoctoral fellow and make the contract with the researchers. This will occur in the first three quarters of 2012. In this way the project will be operative from day one. All team members will submit two 2-3-pages' reports annually which will subsequently function as basis for the team seminars. After the first fieldwork stage 2012/2013, the researchers will plan the content and layout of the written contributions. From late 2013 and onwards article drafts will be circulated and discussed to meet publishing aims (see form). As a host for the project Kvinnforsk has a professional administrative and dedicated staff who will manage the practical and financial aspects of the project.

ORGANISATION

Kvinnforsk has a long standing experience in large, international arrangements: Women’s Worlds in 1999 and active collaboration of Women’s worlds 2002 at Makerere University, Uganda. The center participated also at WW2011 in Ottawa, Canada. The Centre also collaborates with Department of Women and Gender Studies at Makerere University, Uganda (2007 -2011) through the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU) programme: Gender, Poverty and Social transformation in Uganda, coordinated by the Director Lise Nordbrønd of KVINNFORSK. A follow-up applications to the new NORHED programme will be sent. Here the main focus of the research will be on gender and mobility. The Centre for many years arranged PhD courses in related to various gender issues and perspectives. KVINNFORSK is a member of the The National Council for Gender Studies and the National PhD-school in gender studies. The center furthermore initiated research projects carried out at the various departments of UiT.
International collaboration is an integral component of this project. Professor Gerrard has already established collaborations with Canadian (Drs. B. Neis, S. Roseman, D. Walsh and others, Memorial University, Newfoundland, Canada), Icelandic (Drs. U. Skaptadottir and M. Juliusdottir; A. Karlsdottir,) and Faroe Islands (Drs. K. Knudsen and G. Hovgard) researchers with a similar interest in work mobilities. Through one international symposium in 2012, international workshops third quarter 2013 and second or third quarter 2015), we will promote knowledge exchange and connection to other ongoing and proposed comparative national research projects, particularly in Canada (Neis 2011). Our mutual interest in work mobilities comes as the result of a collaboration which began in the mid-1980s in Canada and in the 1990s in Iceland. In 2010, researchers from the Faroe Islands were also included. Other international collaborators include Professor G. Forsberg, Stockholm University and Professor Ole Bærenholdt, Roskilde University, both of whom are well known for their work on and interest in place, mobility and gender. W. Sigle-Rushton, London School of Economics, is an expert on gender and the welfare-states as well as statistical methods, and will act as a resource person. As a result of these international collaborations, Kvinnforsk has got NOS-support to finance two workshops 2011 and 2012 related to the use of quantitative methods in studying gender and mobility. The special issue of the Norwegian Geographical Journal 2012/13 on gender and work mobilities under the leadership of Kvinnforsk (with editors Walsh, Gerrard, Aure and Valestrand) will be published in 2013 as a part of this NFR project.

3. Key Perspectives and Compliance with Strategic Documents

3.1. Compliance with Strategic Documents
The proposed project is in accordance with Fripro’s objectives of proposing projects ambitious in empirical, methodological and theoretical scope. By exploring various mobile practices, we will nuance existing paradigms. This is both needed and timely as work mobilities are increasing, are of vital importance in current industrial development and are significant for the development and change taking place in the High North. Our focus on the High North corresponds to the government’s official green papers (St.meld. nr. 30 (2004-05) as well as the strategic plans of UiT, Kvinnforsk, and NCRs High North research strategy. Through ongoing international collaboration our work on mobilities will further contribute to other research in other parts of the High North and globally.

3.2. Relevance and Benefit to Society.
As noted above, this project is socially and culturally important as it focuses on work mobilities which involve a growing number of women and men. The project is of relevance for the public at large and policy makers. The collaboration with our international partners provides for a comparative analysis of the industrial and coastal cultures as it is constructed in the High North and with the more specific aspects of the Norwegian welfare state. Our aim is that the results will provide a sound basis for local, regional and national policy development. As the project addresses the lack of competence and a shortage of labor in the many sectors of the region, it is important to secure new knowledge of the more gendered aspects of work mobilities, as well as knowledge concerning demographic change in rural areas.

3.3. Environmental Perspectives.
Work mobilities involve travel, sometimes extensive, and the maintenance of two households. The carbon footprints of such activities can be extensive. We recognize that the social and environmental
sustainability of communities are closely intertwined. The project will shed light on if, and in what ways, mobile workers consider the environmental aspects of their mobile activity.

3.4. Ethical Perspectives
Research on private lives of women, men and families requires caution and discretion when designing questions and analyzing results. Names and identities of informants will be kept confidential while the names of communities and municipalities will be disclosed. The required research permits and informed consent from participants prior to conducting the empirical research will be secured. The project will be reported to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) and follow legal and ethical guidelines associated with conducting social science research.

3.5. Gender Issues
Gender perspectives are significant and mainstreamed throughout the research process. With the communities involved, the project will contribute to gender perspectives on urban, rural and regional research, and inform work, family and policy-related gender research. Our interdisciplinary team consists of women with extensive research experience and new contributions to gender research will be made.

The project involves a group of junior female researchers which will contribute to the qualification and recruitment of women to senior positions in research.

There is regretfully an imbalance in gender representation in this project. One male researcher will be involved, but only on a temporary basis.

In the different project activities, workshops and symposium, gender balance will be given high priority.
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