

FRONTIER SPACES IN THE ARCTIC AND THE ANDES

The Miner, the Smuggler and Performances
of (Post-)Extractivism

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While the current frontiers of resource extraction appear as constantly expanding into new terrains and areas of life, their movements are increasingly accompanied by policies of environmentalist preservation, heritagization and climate mitigation. A central claim in this edited volume is that the frontiers of resource extraction cannot be seen as isolated from environmentalist narratives and policies but as interrelated – and as producing highly diversified socioecological geographies of territory and labour. Indeed, the policies of extractivism as well as ‘post-extractivism’¹ are both framed within narratives of development and progress and facilitate the (re)productions of cosmopolitan centres and global frontiers, including the differentiations of spaces and identities (Franquesa 2018; Tsing 2005). This chapter explores how (post-)extractivist policies and narratives partake in staging society and territories – and hence also social identities – in particular ways; by bringing changes to public spaces, infrastructures and workplaces, and celebrating (or externalizing) particular kinds of identities through ways of mobilizing, organizing and/or dislocating labour. Being concerned with the uneven geographies of (post-)extractivism, the chapter examines the production of space and identity in two different contexts: the Arctic (the Svalbard archipelago, Norway) and the Andes (the Peruvian-Bolivian border areas). I draw on my ethnographic fieldwork² in both these contexts to discuss what

we can learn by exploring their commonalities and differences; that is, as cases of (post-)extractivist frontiers that entail complex coexistences of practices attempting to define, make claims to and re-create spatial domains: what characterizes the interconnections between the production of space, identities and temporalities at global frontiers? What are the differentiated personae and identities narrated through the – often contested – claims to frontier spaces? The chapter discusses the emergence of two different and somewhat anachronistic personae; the former miner in Svalbard and the smuggler (*contrabandista*) of fuel in Peru. In the global geographies of (post-)extractivism, these personae are ambiguously made part of the dominant narratives of progress and development. The chapter suggests that the emergence of such anachronistic personae represents an important intake for ethnographic explorations of the connections and disconnections between (post-)extractivist policies and narratives.³ The chapter discusses how both the former miner and the small-scale smuggler in the Andes are made into central personae in the (re)makings of (post-)extractivist spaces; that is, one domain that is re-created as a post-extractivist and environmentalist showcase (Svalbard), and another domain that is contested in its supposed marginality to the extractivist state⁴ (that is, the Peru-Bolivia border areas).

The making of identities through (post-)extractive narratives and performances entails temporal as well as spatial dimensions, as extraction is accompanied by particular narratives about time and the future in ways that locate people in time as well as space. This is evident not only in the narratives of early modern industrial eras celebrating the hard work and bravery of mine workers as key to national progress and development, but perhaps even more evident in imaginings of the people placed outside, excluded from or dispossessed by resource frontiers, such as (in many cases) Indigenous peoples – or laid-off workers in post-mining sites. Importantly, Ferry and Limbert (2008) argue that the acts of making (and unmaking) a resource produce certain temporal effects, as the products and values created through such ideational systems (or resource imaginations) also frame the past, present and future in particular ways. (Post-)extractivist spaces themselves are thus defined and characterized by the ebb and flow of the ‘timely assets’ that are extracted there (Ferry and Limbert 2008; see also Franquesa 2018). Meanwhile, current policies and narratives of post-extractivism, or energy transition, do appear to entail a radical shift of industrialism’s narrative framing. While the idea of industrial progress, emerging in the late 1700s and beginning of the 1800s, is a notion of linear development and growth,

the current emphasis on energy transition (though differentiated and differentiating) can be considered a prefigurative discourse, anticipating change (including loss and decay) while seeking to prefigure what such changes might look like and how they might be dealt with. Elsewhere (Ødegaard 2022), I have therefore suggested that attention to the narrative and performative dimensions of proclaimed transition can facilitate our understanding of how the prefigurative transition framework is reshaping both temporal and spatial dimensions of the industrialization narrative.

Spatialization can take place through various ways of seeing, knowing and governing – and may hence produce particular identities, subjectivities and personae, through the production of spatial boundaries and borders, the displacement or erasure of people and livelihoods (Meyer 1996), the fixation of people in particular spaces (Whitesell 1996), or by holding inhabitants to particular discursive standards (Hilgers 2010; Igoe 2005; Rose 2007), as I will return to. While the production of space takes place at the crossroads between top-down and bottom-up processes, the hegemonic dimensions of space are defined by histories of extractivism, (settler) colonialism and increasingly through policies of environmentalist preservation and/or climate mitigation (Büscher and Fletcher 2020). These hegemonic forms tend to (re)produce particular spaces as ‘frontiers’, envisioned as ‘empty places’ ready for resource exploitation or as sites of ‘pure, pristine wilderness’ – in ways that make them easier to govern, exploit (Tsing 2005; West, Igoe and Brockington 2006) or reimagine. In this regard, Tsing (2003) has importantly argued that the notion of ‘resource frontiers’, as it is generally used, can serve to legitimize processes of ‘freeing’ land for extraction and dispossession. Similarly, and recognizing that the notion of ‘frontier’ may implicate a linear movement across space, Rasmussen and Lund (2018) propose the term ‘frontier spaces’ to pinpoint a continual emphasis on the discovery or invention of new resources at global frontiers. Indeed, the notion ‘frontier spaces’ is useful in addressing frontiers as historically constituted spaces that are continually being remade, reclaimed and/or reinvented for purposes of value extraction. This may include also more intangible values, such as the extraction from the very lives, bodies, homes and environments of local populations (Ødegaard and Rivera Andía 2019). In this regard, the spatial domains addressed in this chapter are constituted rather ambiguously as the frontiers of the extractivist state; that is, one domain which is redefined as a post-mining site and the other as a territory that defies and evades the state’s accumulative structures.

In recent decades, studies of neoliberalism have been influenced by the governmentality approach, drawing on Foucault and focusing on the techniques, technologies and discourses of neoliberal governance and its production of particular kinds of (ideal) subjects (Hilgers 2010; Rose 2007) that ‘fit’ or support the dominant narrative. While one should not overestimate the extent to which such articulation of ‘ideal subjects’ results in the actual creation of these selves (Winkler-Reid 2017), the powerful effects of dominant narratives and policy measures on subjective identities, desires and affects are perhaps especially evident in their externalizing effects; that is, in the case of people who somehow ‘fall outside’ or are further externalized⁵ by such measures, as will be my emphasis in this chapter.

In what follows, I discuss the case from Svalbard, with a focus on the making of spatial identities in post-extractivist narratives about the archipelago. This case raises questions regarding the management of the *remains* of a particular form of extractivism, namely coal mining. Coal mining sites on Svalbard have been gradually closed down, although this may well be to accommodate for other forms of extractivism; for instance, the commercialization of nature and mining history through the tourist industry (Sokolickova and Eriksen 2022). Next, I somewhat briefly⁶ discuss my case from Peru, emphasizing the production of space and identities in the contested circulation of fuel at the borders with Bolivia, followed by some comparative reflections on how narratives of (post-)extractivism (re)create differentiated frontier spaces and identities.

Post-Extractivist Narratives in Svalbard

Most settlements in Svalbard were built around and defined through mining activity – in the middle of the Arctic wilderness; for example, like the Norwegian settlements Longyearbyen, Svea, Ny-Ålesund, and Russian Barentsburg and Pyramiden. Miners in Svalbard and beyond have often been represented as the hard-working heroes of industrial modernization, having provided the raw materials of energy and wealth through their mastery of moving and working below the surface of the earth (Fløgstad 2007). Now, in the current context of environmental instabilities, climate change and uncertain futures for the fossil fuel markets, coal mining sites in many parts of the world have closed down – and in some cases even been dismantled, like in Svea, Svalbard. While some authors have noted how the call for a transition to less carbon-intensive systems sometimes casts

the people – whose work brings fossil fuels into being – as somehow immoral (High and Smith 2019: 19), the mineworker in Svalbard is rather made to represent the negative temporal other of the new narrative of post-extraction; whose⁷ labour efforts are celebrated, while their place in time are being redefined.

In 2017, the Norwegian government announced that the coal mines in Svea would close and later that all the mining infrastructure should be dismantled, including the Svea settlement itself. The stated goal was to remove the traces of human activity and restore the place to its original, ‘natural’ state, with the intention that the area should appear as uninfluenced by humans as possible, except, that is, for a few older buildings and roads built before 1946, as all structures from before 1946 are protected as cultural heritage in Svalbard. When explaining the decision, the Minister of Trade and Industry at the time, Monica Mæland, stressed the economic motive behind the decision: the coal market was down lower than expected, and a continuation of the mines could therefore not be justified. Further, the activities connected to the clean-up (and ‘returning to nature’) would give the community time to adjust to the transition from coal mining to other economic activities and energy sources. As a result, the mining community in Svea, located to the south of Longyearbyen, has now been dismantled. The dismantling started in 2018, with around fifty people working at the site to remove the buildings and infrastructure. They worked 14 days on and 14 days off, as was usual in the times when the Svea mines were operating. The work of dismantling in many ways followed the temporal rhythms of mining work itself – only the purpose and nature of the labour was different. Most of the workers who undertook the dismantling were former miners, many of whom used to mine in Svea and were known as ‘the workers who stayed behind’. This phrasing has a double edge to it, as these workers were not only literally staying behind in Svea but were working to dismantle their previous workplace community. As I have argued elsewhere (Ødegaard 2022), the dismantling and ‘turning back to nature’ in Svea is part of an environmentalist narrative about Svalbard: a narrative about the archipelago as a showcase for environmentally friendly initiatives ‘after mining’.

This is the first time that an entire mining community in Svalbard (or Norway) has been dismantled and ‘returned to nature’.⁸ Other abandoned mining settlements in the archipelago have been maintained: for example, the mining settlement in Ny-Ålesund now serves as a research station, and one of the old mines outside Longyearbyen, Gruve 3, is open for guided tours. Guided tours to the Russian mining

town of Pyramiden are also available; the town was left to decay after abrupt abandonment in 1998, transforming it into what Fløgstad describes as ‘a stereotype of yesterday’s utopian thinking, now solidified into pure building mass’ (2007: 56). The Svea community, on the other hand, has been dismantled and removed – with some of the materials and structures sent for re-use in Longyearbyen or for international resale – and the community resurrected through a 3D reconstruction based on extensive photo materials in an attempt to digitally re-create as much as possible everyday life as it played out in Svea.

The dismantling and ‘returning’ in Svea is a spectacle of coal mining’s termination in the archipelago, a social drama of our Anthropogenic times (see Ødegaard 2022) and part of the remaking of Svalbard as a site of environmentalist initiatives and solutions. Indeed, the ‘return’ in Svea has taken place in a context where environmental instabilities and climate change are high on the agenda, especially after the lethal avalanche in Longyearbyen in 2015. The situation of increasingly unstable weather and sea-ice conditions simultaneously opens up geopolitical concerns and questions about sovereignty, presence and ownership in the Arctic, with new opportunities related to shipping, mineral extraction and other resource exploitation. New questions are also being raised about the foundation for settlements under challenging Arctic conditions; for example, energy supply and Svalbard’s long-standing reliance on coal. Several changes are already underway: Gruve 7, close to Longyearbyen, is the only Norwegian mine still operating in Svalbard in addition to the mining activities in Russian Barentsburg. The mining in Gruve 7 is soon to end,⁹ and the coal-power plant in Longyearbyen has been phased out, with the intention of replacing it with a more climate-friendly solution.¹⁰ The power plant has been run by diesel since autumn 2023, as a temporary solution while awaiting a greener energy source alternative. However, much is still uncertain concerning security of supply and price levels for consumers – and regarding the new energy alternative itself because the technology they need is simply not yet ‘mature’, as one of the SN administrators commented to me. Tests, reports and meetings seem to be leading primarily to more uncertainty – for now. Meanwhile, these attempts to initiate energy transition in Svalbard create new frames for narratives about civilization’s ‘frontiers’. This way of (re)making of Svalbard as a spatial frontier differs from the frontiers of the Andes discussed below, in that the latter is a contested space of upholding official master narratives of extractivism, while Svalbard is made into a test case for post-mining transition and innovation.

The project in Svea was presented as Norway's most comprehensive environmental clean-up project to date, at an estimated cost of 1.9 billion NOK. The government's goal of bringing the place back to its 'original, natural' state was accompanied by the inclusion of the area into the Nordenskjöld Land National Park, re-named in 2021 as Van Mijenfjord National Park. The Norwegian company Store Norske Spitsbergen Kullkompani (here referred to as Store Norske or SN) was responsible for the dismantling and restoration in Svea, finalized early autumn 2023. Up to 350 persons lived and worked there (most miners), so the decision removed a whole society – with its houses, furniture, tractors and the like – in addition to mining infrastructure, and included the cleaning-up of various forms of waste material surrounding the community and the mines. In this and other ways, Svea was quite literally unmade as a site of coal extraction and thus made part of the unmaking of carbon reliance – and Svalbard is hence being reinvented as a space for post-extractivist transition. Another element of the environmentalist narrative about Svalbard was the opening of the Seed Vault in 2008. The Seed Vault is presented along the lines of being Norway's and Svalbard's 'gift to the world', providing safe storage for seeds from all over the world and hence taking care of humanity's food supply in an uncertain future. The so-called 'Doomsday vault' soon got something of a superstar status, and then prime minister Jens Stoltenberg compared it to innovations like Tesla and Bitcoin and referred to it as 'a modern Noah's Ark'. Interestingly, and although only special invitees can enter the vault, it soon became nearly like a modern pilgrimage site, and local guides say that tourists sometimes come just to gaze at the exterior of the vault and even camp there for days without much around than the vault itself. Indeed, considering the narrative and performative dimensions of transition, these and other initiatives can be taken to indicate how 'transition' entails a lot more than 'just' transition to a new energy source. It indicates how post-extractivist narratives stage society, place and time in particular ways.

From Resource Frontier to Nature's Frontier

In contrast to other Arctic areas – and in contrast to the Andean region discussed below – there is no Indigenous population in Svalbard. This and the Svalbard Treaty's significance for political decision-making in the archipelago make questions of inhabitancy, presence and entitlement play out differently than in regions where Indigenous people's

historical and existential connection to place entails a particular vulnerability and at the same time specific rights (at least in theory). Since the catch expeditions in the late 1600s, human presence in Svalbard has comprised of 'Arctic scrambles' (Dodds and Nuttall 2016), a term pinpointing how the region has been constituted through the search for resources and scientific exploitation. In Svalbard, and partly due to the specificities of the Svalbard Treaty, these 'scrambles' have produced continual strategies of colonization also through the promotion of particular kinds of inhabitants: first for purposes of resource extraction, and more recently for purposes of national presence and innovation, as I return to.

The Svea field was established in 1917 by the Swedes, following the discovery of coal in the early 1900s. In 1934 it was bought by Store Norske, two years after the Soviet Union bought Barentsburg. Coal production in Svea was intensified with the initiation of a new mine, Svea Nord, in 2001. The establishment of this mine carried particular significance for long-term inhabitants in Svalbard because it represented an important Norwegian commitment to coal mining in the archipelago and further job opportunities. From then on, Svea was the major coal production site in Svalbard. In 2014 another new mine was finalized in Svea by Store Norske, the Lunckefjell mine, with significant investment (1.2 billion NOK).¹¹ This mine, like the Svea Nord mine, came with promises of work opportunities and growth in Svalbard. Soon after, however, came the fall in oil prices (affecting also coal prices), and production was put on temporary hold. In 2017, the Norwegians decided to stop production in Lunckefjell and Svea Nord for good, despite recent investment. In many ways, the dismantling in Svea was a pivotal point for Svalbard's transition from a mining community to a showcase for the future, marking the end of one era and the beginning of another. In this regard, the work of cleaning-up and 'returning' in Svea can be considered a form of 'temporal labour' in that it aimed to create a particular temporality to the place through the work to preserve the area for the future by bringing it 'back to what it once was'. The 'returning' quite spectacularly marked coal mining as a remnant of history, making the miner a historical figure and bringing into reconsideration ideas and expectations related to Svalbard as a mining society, mining as highly valued labour and the miners' central role in the archipelago. Mining work itself, as lived life, has been remade as memory, and as I have illustrated elsewhere (2022), nature in the area has been at one and the same time remade as an object of human design – and re-created as 'wild, pristine nature'.

Signed in 1920, the Svalbard Treaty established the sovereignty of Norway over the archipelago and gave the country particular rights and responsibilities in Svalbard as a territory under Norwegian jurisdiction, but with a principle of equal treatment that meant all signature countries had equal rights to live and entertain commercial interests there. In principle then, all signature countries can exploit the natural resources. Since the signing of the Treaty, human activity in Svalbard has centred around coal mining, where Norway and Russia long had a bilateral relationship (Totland 2016: 46). While at first coal mining was a goal in itself, it later became part of a strategic demarcation of national presence and visibility: first due to the archipelago's significance as an Eastern/Western outpost during the Cold War, and later related to the territory's increased geopolitical significance.

Especially since the 1990s, environmental regulation in the archipelago has become increasingly important not only for the protection of the natural environment but also as a means of governance (Saville 2019) and the demarcation of a 'Norwegian presence' (Ødegaard 2022). The Svalbard Environmental Law was introduced in 2001 as a commitment to a central principle in the Svalbard Treaty: Norway has a particular responsibility in the protection of the natural environment in the archipelago. This environmental responsibility allows Norway to mark its national presence by other means than its historically established inhabitation, settlement and extractive labour: that is, it may mark its presence by human absence (Ødegaard 2022) and keeping other Treaty-nations out of the area through expansion of the national park.

Not surprisingly, the announcement that the Svea mines would be closed and dismantled provoked strong reactions from the miners in Svalbard. Some even compared their own reactions to the heart-break after a love affair: first shock, followed by gradual habituation for many. Miners described the loss not just of a workplace and job opportunities but also of a place of memories and lived connections (see also Ødegaard 2022). For them, the dismantling turned Svea from a promise of work solidarity and income into a remnant of the past. While well aware that there is a particular 'life cycle' to all mines, most miners would have preferred the Svea mines to have been emptied before being closed. There were also uncertainties about the future. One of Store Norske's coordinators in Svea told me that the strong reactions among miners were to be expected given uncertainties regarding current and future jobs: 'their work positions have been redefined. Even if their salaries have not been

reduced, they receive less dirt surcharge than they did as miners.' Nobody was to lose their jobs, SN announced, but for some it was not clear what this would entail, especially for the older miners. Several people I spoke with (both miners and others) claimed that there was a particular sense of work unity (*samhold*) in Svea due to its challenging and often dangerous nature. Miners from Svea got to know the area and the landscape in a different way than most people, as they worked and lived in this inaccessible area during all seasons and often for years, hence knowing how the landscape and the climate changed during the year. However, it appears that miners were not consulted regarding the 'returning' project, and some people I spoke with raised questions about what would happen to this knowledge of the area once Svea was removed. One previous miner commented that it seemed to be ending up in digital archives and 'turned into something else'. After the dismantling, a contact at SN also said that even she, who used to know the Svea community and workplace very well, no longer recognized the place – so others would certainly have difficulties understanding that there used to be a whole, well-functioning community there.

The dismantling proclaimed a shift in Svalbard, a shift towards more environmentally friendly energy solutions while breaking with established arrangements and defined relations between different actors and parties. Coal mining is gradually being replaced by activities related to tourism, research and education, which have been expanding especially since the 1990s. Store Norske is redefining their role in the archipelago, from mining to the management mainly of properties and logistics. The company is also trying out new, environmentally friendly solutions, such as the trial project at Isfjord Radio and the testing of wind and solar power as well as thermal heat storage. Store Norske is central also to the management of mining history in Svalbard, maintaining abandoned mining structures and organizing guided tours of Gruve 3. In the wake of the dismantling, questions were being raised about how Norwegian authorities intend to mark 'national presence' now that the mines have closed down.

Longyearbyen is and has been characterized by a high population turnover. There is great variation in how long people remain: some for shorter periods in relation to specific work opportunities, others for several years, and some with family ties to the archipelago that go far back. Longyearbyen has also been developing into a highly international location, especially since the 1990s, and is now home to people from many regions of the world. Access to housing in Longyearbyen represents a challenge, however, especially for those

employed in the private sector, which includes many of the non-Norwegian citizens. From being a company town, Longyearbyen is now developing other forms of inequality, separation and othering. Meanwhile, there is a common term used when referring to people living in Svalbard; *Svalbardianere* (or 'Svalbardians'). Among both short- and long-term Svalbardians, there is often strong engagement with questions of community development, change and environmental management in the archipelago.

Indeed, miners are not the only inhabitants critical of the closure and dismantling in Svea. Some opposed the closure of production from the start, and others wanted at least the maintenance of community structures in Svea. Many raised questions about the consequences that the closure in Svea would have for Longyearbyen, as people feared that closely-knit social bonds would be weakened further by a potential rise in the already high population turnover. The ongoing expansion of environmental regulation in Svalbard (as well as the inclusion of the Svea area in the national park) has caused further concerns for increased limitation of people's movements within Svalbard's grandiose landscape. Some say they get the impression that the need to 'build community' in Svalbard is not being recognized and that Norwegian authorities are trying to remake the archipelago into some kind of 'climate model' at the expense of inhabitants' need for closely-knit relations and possibilities to use the landscape. In fact, a widespread impression among inhabitants is that the official narrative about the clean-up in Svea is a way to 'greenwash' or conceal other, more strategic political motives; that is, it is another way of marking the 'Norwegian presence' and keeping other nations out. Indeed, many fear the societal implications of recent government decisions, raising questions about the direction of Norwegian Svalbard politics.

The current emphasis on nature and environment in governance and regulation contributes in many ways to the remaking of Svalbard from 'resource frontier' to 'nature's frontier'. This way of managing the environment through regulation and rewilding is certainly not politically or ideologically 'neutral', as has similarly been demonstrated in literature on national parks (Tsing 2005; West, Igoe and Brockington 2006), but it can be considered a techno-administrative fix that produces particular kinds of subjects. For instance, Tsing (2005) comments on how the protection of nature in areas apparently peripheral to political centres produces particular centre versus periphery mechanisms: in the so-called global 'frontiers', the preservation of nature can contribute to maintaining an image of political

centres as cosmopolitan. Political centres, she argues, are hence often produced in contrast to the ‘local people’ – who are objectified as subjects of scientific inquiry as well as forms of governance considered appropriate to peripheral places or areas that appear to be the frontiers of civilization (2005: 141). In Svalbard, as ‘nature’ is made into a central entity both in the demarcation of national presence and in narratives about Svalbard as an environmental showcase, certain expectations are produced of the Svalbardian as a particular kind of person: not an industrial worker or miner but preferably an environmental expert, governable but innovative and preferably with ties to Norway’s mainland.

Creating Innovative Subjects – and Externalizing the Miner

The narrative of extractivism in Svalbard envisioned miners as the heroes of industrialism and valued for their hard, manual work. In an interview, one of the previous miners in Svea described how they used to wash and shower at Lompen (now a shopping centre) after returning from a shift, exclaiming: ‘Then we turned back into humans’ (my translation). Miners told me that it was especially the miners who worked ‘inside’ the mines that enjoyed particular prestige, not just because this work was considered particularly demanding but also because they used to be paid more than those who worked ‘outside’. When the miners finished their shift and returned to Longyearbyen for their free time, there used to be a good, festive atmosphere in town. There is still a sense of Longyearbyen as a ‘last frontier’, and although mines are being closed, the aesthetics of the somewhat rough company town are actively drawn upon by various, very active leisure time organizations. Concerts are sometimes arranged in Gruve 7, the still active mine outside Longyearbyen. At one concert I attended, a local choir wore miners’ clothes and helmets and in various ways made reference to Longyearbyen as a company town. In this and other ways, company town aesthetics are often drawn upon to *stage* Longyearbyen as a community. Various ethnographers have demonstrated how the intensification of uncertainty in post-Fordist as well as postsocialist societies often has a temporal character and grounding in a nostalgia for the past and ‘the standard employment relationship’ ideal (Muehlebach 2011, and see, for example, Cowie and Heathcott 2003). Pinpointing such orientation as the ‘post-Fordist affect’, Muehlebach (2011) describes how ex-factory workers in Northern Italy engage in voluntary labour as

a means of coping with the loss of jobs and the resulting lack of self-esteem and identity, hence re-enacting a form of social belonging. In Longyearbyen, there is an engagement in leisure organizations and miners' aesthetics that similarly re-enacts a form of social belonging; not necessarily or primarily with reference to 'the standard employment relationship' but by enacting belonging to Longyearbyen and Svalbard as a place.

The decision to close the Svea mines soon spurred debates about 'who belongs' there. A widespread sentiment has been that the miners *are* Svalbard, or that they are the core of the Svalbard settlements and central for maintaining the continuity of social bonds and mutual help, qualities that many see as characterizing the place. Others emphasize that the tourist guides and researchers are the new 'Svalbardians' and suggest that a high turnover is a good thing because new people with new ideas is necessary to ensure innovation. Alongside environmental regulation, Norwegian authorities have, especially since the 1990s, promoted a family-oriented community in Longyearbyen, accommodating for kindergartens and after-school activities and the like. Still, Longyearbyen is not a life course society but a 'working community'.¹² There is very much a direct governance of the archipelago through the local governor (Sysselimesteren) and Store Norske in particular. With the current emphasis on energy transition and climate change adaptation, this governance is increasingly directed towards the promotion of innovation. So-called 'Norwegian presence' then is increasingly secured through the accommodation of the creative, innovative subject. Indeed, the current emphasis on innovation, adaptation and resilience can be seen to reinforce this emphasis on a particular kind of subject. To put it somewhat crudely, with current narratives about Svalbard as an environmental showcase, there seems to be a need also to 'innovate' its inhabitants. It appears to take the form of another kind of settler colonialism, not in the form of lawlessness and the displacement of Indigenous populations but by a recolonization of the place through environmental management – and the accommodation for particular kinds of inhabitants. This version of settler colonialism is characterized by increased regulation – of nature management, commodity flow and access to democracy – and a strong state ownership and presence, tendencies that these days are being intensified vis-à-vis a Russian presence due to Russia's war on Ukraine.

While the aim of the digitalization project in Svea was to preserve the memory of the mining community by creating a virtual reconstruction of the place, it proved more difficult than originally

envisioned to decide what this should entail. It was not certain, for instance, if the project should result in a digital exhibition or a game about mining, and consequently the project was delayed. During the dismantling process, an automatic camera was placed in Svea, taking hundreds of pictures per hour, in order to document the dismantling process and make sure 'nothing was lost', as Store Norske formulated it. The reason, according to one of my contacts, was partly that SN wanted to document not only the period before 1946, as the industrial revolution in Svea actually took place in the 2000s, and they wanted to avoid an impression that mining in Svea had ended in 1946. As I was talking with one of the previous miners in Svea, he recognized this wish to secure the memory of the mining community but also pointed out that the accumulated knowledge about the mining work itself would nonetheless disappear with the individual miners. One is tempted to ask what all this documentation is for – and if more emphasis has been placed on preserving the tangible (and, in the case of Svea, the visual) traces of mining than on intangible heritage (see, for example, Gerlach and Kinossian 2016), such as the knowledge, narratives and experiences of the miners themselves. As the dismantling and digital heritage making in Svea has brought the significance of mining work and the miners' central role in the archipelago into reconsideration, mining work as lived life has been remade as memory. At the same time, mining work is made subject to representations of particular workers' aesthetics through an emphasis on the physically hard and dangerous work forms. This takes place through the preservation of tangible heritage – and the tourist industry's focus on recapturing the 'memory of mining', such as through guided tours of Gruve 3 and of other industrial heritage sites – as well as the organization of particular workout sessions in the gym that replicate the physicality of miners' work. While such arrangements may contribute to remembering the labour and everyday lives of miners, they may reduce heritage and memory to objects for commercialization. Moreover, by constituting part of a multifaceted performance of a post-mining narrative about Svalbard, these arrangements contribute to externalizing mining and miners by making coal mining a remnant of history and the miner an exotified figure of the past. The figure of the miner is thus turned into the anachronistic 'other' but at the same time made central for representations of Svalbard through heritagization and tourist ventures. In assuming or creating this alterity, the institutionalized heritagization of industrial history creates the foundation for new innovative solutions and initiatives.

While the dismantling was sorrowful for many, as noted, others saw it as an opportunity. Mari and her colleagues at SN tried to turn things around from feelings of nostalgia to feelings of possibility, as she formulated it. This was facilitated by an emphasis on the re-use and re-sale of the materials and equipment from Svea, for which Mari was in charge. The workers involved in the dismantling and returning in Svea had to take a 'green-card' and 'brown-card' course to learn how to work and mould the terrain without damaging the landscape or protected buildings. This way the workers took more ownership of the process, according to SN representatives. These and other initiatives illustrate how different actors in Longyearbyen recognized the need to try and compensate for the experience of loss and turn the dismantling into something positive – in emphasizing environmental solutions and training workers. 'You've got to start somewhere', and 'this is a way to learn', as one of my contacts said in response to the critique that the project in Svea was just 'symbolic politics' (*symbolpolitikk*). At the same time, these initiatives have contributed to externalizing the persona of the miner. Indeed, as the narratives of extractivist industrialism are being retold in the context of climate change and environmental instability, the figure of the miner is unmade as a central representative of the nation's growth and development and replaced by the researcher, tour guide and innovator of technology and ecology. In the following, I show how the contestation over territory and commodity flow in the border areas between Peru and Bolivia entail a different but yet related making of frontier space. Here, the intensification of 'border work' (Reeves 2014) both from above and below contributes to form the identities of smugglers and simultaneously their marking as 'other'.

Contested Claims on Space and Identity in the Andes

The highly contested control over commodity flows in the border areas between Peru and Bolivia illustrates how particular kinds of 'frontier spaces' are produced beyond the specific sites of resource extraction themselves. The production of space at the borders also differs from the specific resource extraction sites. For instance, while the sites of resource extraction are often characterized by environmental degradation and the displacement and dispossession of local populations (Li 2015), in the border areas *contrabandistas* (smugglers) and residing populations make claim to the flow of resources and wealth officially controlled by the corporate state. It is another

frontier of extractivism, or frontier space, characterized by coexisting and competing regimes of commodity and wealth circulation – and entailing contested claims to sovereignty and control.

The trading practices in these border areas include the smuggling of fuel from Bolivia to Peru, which became widespread when the government of Evo Morales nationalized oil and gas production in Bolivia in 2006 and initiated the subsidization of Bolivian energy prices. Indeed, subsidized energy prices in Bolivia made fuel smuggling into Peru a prosperous venture and – as I have demonstrated elsewhere (e.g. Ødegaard 2016) – also intensified the dissatisfaction with energy policies and price levels among many Peruvians. In contrast to neighbouring Bolivia, Peru has opted for deepening its neo-liberal orientation, initiated with Alberto Fujimori's policy reforms in the 1990s, through an emphasis on market liberalization and free trade agreements; it has implemented tax, royalty and policy regimes that accommodate for privatization and foreign investments, especially in the extractive industries. Recent governments in the country have framed these policies within a master narrative of development and progress facilitated by extractivism, presented as key to economic growth and poverty reduction, despite increased conflicts over extractivist projects in recent years. Indeed, the societal and environmental consequences of extractive projects have been increasingly contested through local as well as nationwide protests and demonstrations, intensifying disputes over landscapes and resources, spatial identities and not least of indigeneity in the country (Li 2015). Extractivist conflicts have simultaneously played out by building upon ethnic and regional tensions and stereotypes, reinforcing the dominant and often degrading rhetoric about the Indigenous in Peru, portrayed as backward-looking, second-grade citizens and considered as part of a past temporality, or 'incapable of modernity' (see, for example, Ødegaard and Rivera Andía 2019).

Among the contested energy policies in Peru is an international export agreement concerning natural gas, which has resulted in a reduction of export prices – and at the same time an increase in domestic energy prices (see Ødegaard 2016 for further details). Since then, issues of globalized energy price mechanisms have been a concern, especially among the unprivileged in Peru, such as among Quechua- or Aymara-speaking vendors and *contrabandistas* – with whom my case is concerned. To them, Peru's export of natural gas amounts to 'robbery' of the citizenry, as they see the authorities as illegitimately selling off the country's resources to the disadvantage of the common Peruvian. In this light, the vendors and *contrabandistas*

consider the fuel smuggling from Bolivia a legitimate undertaking, claiming that they should also have a right to earn a living by trading in fuel and other commodities. As the *contrabandistas* thus make highly contentious claims to space and the flow of commodities and wealth in the border areas, they can be seen as destabilizing and contesting not only state-corporate control but also the hegemonic envisioning of what constitutes the 'permitted Indian'¹³ (Hale and Millamán 2004), which I return to.

The people who bring fuel and other contraband goods from Bolivia to Peru most often self-identify as *contrabandistas* – and proudly so, as they are considered hard-working people providing a valuable social service. They generally travel every week to buy and distribute merchandise, and they are often women, although there are also men involved. The value of hard work is a central dimension of social identities in this context, for women as well as men, partly reflecting the ideological legacy of the colonial experience in the Andes. Among retailers in cities like Arequipa, where I conducted most of my fieldwork, the *contrabandistas* are considered important suppliers of merchandise, and some *contrabandistas* also have their own market pitches there. While some only earn cash every now and then, others run successful businesses based on long careers obtaining contraband goods, often facilitated by the payment of bribes – or the randomness of official interference. Indeed, the delineated border between Peru and Bolivia is difficult to control not only because of the demanding topography but also because of the way in which border trade is socially and spatially embedded in networks of kin, colleagues and cooperating inhabitants in the border communities (see Ødegaard 2016). One of the customs agents I interviewed described the border area between Peru and Bolivia thusly: 'It has been taken by the inhabitants ... It is difficult to carry out interferences there, since people become aggressive and defend in any way they can the continued functioning of the place' (my translation). While some communities in these border areas have acquired specific rights as inhabitants of Indigenous territory and others have not, it is worth noting that the trading routes of *contrabandistas* are actualized in areas often considered as *tierras de nadie* (no man's land), referring to places characterized by a history of marginalization, the ambiguous presence of state actors and strong claims to local autonomy. The *contrabandistas'* trading practices thus take place in historically marginalized border areas constituted as the 'last frontier' of the extractivist state.

The town of Desaguadero is a particularly important location for the transport and distribution of contraband goods, being located just

at the delineated border between Peru and Bolivia. In Desaguadero one officially crosses the border via a bridge – on foot or by bicycle trolley – or by boat, for those bringing back bigger quantities. In the area around the bridge, one can encounter people who offer the service of bringing your goods across, charging around two soles for the service. Referred to in the media as *pulgas* or *hormigas* (lice or ants), they facilitate contraband trade by bringing customers' goods across the border, sometimes passing many times a day. Desaguadero is often referred to as *tierra de nadie*, and people come here from all across Southern Peru to buy contraband goods, including fuel. In Peru, the fuel is used for ordinary consumption and informal mining.¹⁴ Cross-border trade and fuel smuggling in these areas must be seen as born out of the structural inequalities in Peruvian society and the intersections between class and a racialized hierarchy. These practices can therefore be understood as constituted by deep-seated histories of inequalities but also long-standing practices of exchange and mobility among the Quechua and Aymara (see Murra 1980). Indeed, the *contrabandistas'* trading practices rely on relations of cooperation and exchange between kin, fellow *contrabandistas*, vendors and drivers, as well as inhabitants in the border areas. These relations include ritual exchanges and practices of gift giving, co-parenthood and offerings to the powerful landscape.¹⁵ As *contrabandistas* thus distribute profit by sharing and making investments in kin, colleagues and the powerful surroundings, they can be seen as redirecting the official distribution of fossil fuels and subsuming fossil wealth to other modes of sociality. At this crossroads between fuel smuggling and intensified state interventions, another frontier space is thus produced, where contested claims over control of the commodity flow create the backdrop for a particular kind of persona: the Quechua- and Aymara-speaking *contrabandista*, who does not live up to the conventional stereotype of the Indigenous, but still being constructed as the negative temporal other of the hegemonic citizen.

During the last two decades, Bolivian authorities have intensified measures to limit illicit cross-border trade, by strengthening and modernizing border control systems, raising sentences and militarizing the border, in order to reduce the smuggling of fuel and prevent the national economy from haemorrhaging. The trafficking of fuel not only represents economic loss¹⁶ for countries like Bolivia, where energy prices are subsidized, but also a questioning of state borders, sovereignty and state-corporate interest and investment. The smuggling makes fuel into a petty commodity – and its circulation is informalized in ways that challenge state sovereign claims on

its extraction and distribution. Measures have also been introduced on the Peruvian side of the border to reduce smuggling, although not targeted specifically at fuel. Peru's strengthening of controls during the last decade was initiated largely in response to a Trade Promotion Agreement signed with the United States in 2009. Part of this agreement asserts that the United States shall assist Peru in limiting the export of narcotics, modernizing the equipment and procedures of the National Police and Customs Agency and strengthening the rule of law. This intensification of 'border work' on both sides of the border contributes to (re)producing the border areas as a frontier space through contested claims of sovereignty and control over commodity flows, including fuel. Through measures to limit smuggling, the efforts to demarcate the delineated border ('border work') have multiplied, which affects the production of space and identities in areas envisioned as marginal to the nation state. Meanwhile, the *contrabandistas* have responded to intensified state control with further tactics to evade and oppose interventions.

Müller (2021) has explored how the encounters between state actors and *contrabandistas* on the Bolivian side of the border can be understood as 'border spectacles', demonstrating state presence and sovereignty – and often facilitated by media reports emphasizing the drama and force of state intervention. By portraying the protests put up by *contrabandistas* and residing populations in often negative and intimidating ways, Müller notes how media reports further delegitimize cross-border trade as illegal and represent the *contrabandistas* as betrayers of national economic sovereignty. These portrayals correspond with media reports in Peru, which associate *contrabandistas* and vendors with chaos and illegality, crime and violence, and suggest that they are even in possession of arms. Through their involvement in cross-border trade, the *contrabandistas* can be thought of as simultaneously conveying *and* resisting the intersections between class, race and gender in Andean countries, as they are ambiguously positioned between racialized, class-based and gendered categories such as Indigenous and mestizo, rural and urban, poor and rich, private and public: maintaining their rural ways and relations while making a living through trade and entrepreneurship at the margins of the formal economy, and sometimes even running prosperous businesses. Consequently, they are portrayed in media and official discourse as 'another kind of other' – not as 'noble native' or exploited labour reservoir, but rather a symbolically and ideologically ambiguous figure, who has also been increasingly criminalized in recent years (Ødegaard 2016; see also Li 2015). In this

regard, the *contrabandista* is made into an example of the somewhat anachronistic personae that global capitalism and extractivism may produce, disturbing the developmentalist narrative and dichotomies of modern versus Indigenous and capitalist versus traditional and destabilizing dominant stereotypes and expectations of the Quechua and Aymara. Thusly, they are continuously being reimagined as 'other', through portrayals and imageries emphasizing their apparent liking for illegality, protest and violence.

The border areas between Peru and Bolivia are constituted as *tierra de nadie* in a way that has enabled and partly legitimized cross-border trade. It is a frontier space where increased state interventions can be seen as spectacles of the extractivist state's presence and force – accompanied by the externalization and 'othering' of *contrabandistas*. This externalization in fact appears as a central dimension of state demonstrations of presence and sovereignty. The Svalbard archipelago is constituted as a frontier space in a different but related way: the Svalbard Treaty affirms Norwegian sovereignty while maintaining the equal rights of countries to operate there. This makes Svalbard not a '*tierra de nadie*' but a territory for the spectacle of marking nation-state presence, and increasingly so. While mining operations and settlements have served this purpose historically, initiatives for a green transition alter the emphasis on mining to environmental management and innovation; from miners to 'innovative subjects'. The 'returning' in Svea is therefore not only a spectacle of coal mining's termination in the archipelago but also marks the presence and sovereignty of the Norwegian state by and through the proclaimed post-extractivist direction laid out for Svalbard. It marks the remaking of Svalbard as site of environmental solutions, a shift that plays on temporal visions of new subjects and externalizes miners as out-of-time survivals. This intensification of questions about presence in frontier spaces thus characterizes both Svalbard and the Andean border areas, demonstrating the production of space and identities in extractivist as well as post-extractivist endeavours. Constituted as spaces of exception – through partly spectacular demonstrations of state presence and control – they are made part of official narratives of (post-)extractivism in ways that may also remove attention from other, conflictual dimensions of (post-)extractivism (e.g. trade agreements, or continued extractivism despite the official environmental narrative). In this regard, the making of anachronistic personae can be considered part and parcel of the spatial and temporal makings of (post-)extractivist frontier spaces.

Conclusions

While extractivist policies create particular frames for the spatial and temporal constitution of frontier spaces, so do post-extractivist policies and narratives. Envisioned as the outskirts frontier of Norway, Svalbard is being made into an environmental showcase through the dismantling of coal mines and the 'return' to nature, including a range of initiatives to facilitate a green transition, making Svalbard also a test case for the future. The case of Svalbard in this regard bears significant differences but also some interesting commonalities with my material from the Andes. Here, the border areas are remade as a contested frontier space not through an official environmentalist emphasis on nature, environment and climate as in Svalbard but through the exceptional form and spectacle of interference by the extractivist state – as well as the externalization, criminalization and 'othering' of the persona of the *contrabandista*, envisioned as betraying the official project of state-corporate growth and development. In this regard, the fuel-trading practices of *contrabandistas* contest the legitimacy of state-corporate extractivism while taking place far away from the extractivist sites themselves. The cross-border trading routes of *contrabandistas* are, in many ways, spaces of exception for the extractivist hegemony of the state, as the circulation and distribution of fuel is informalized – though the state seeks to bring it under their control. Here, another 'frontier space' is thus (re)produced, one in which contested demonstrations of presence and control take place. The *contrabandista* in many ways represents the anachronistic persona of extractivism, as 'out of place and out of time' – they do not correspond to the stereotype of the Indigenous or the enslaved mineworkers as imagined by European engravers in the sixteenth century (see Introduction). In Svalbard, the portrayals of miners illustrate the production of a different anachronistic persona. In the remaking of Svalbard from resource frontier to 'nature's frontier', the miner can only be accounted for by being marked as 'out of time' – and hence made central to narratives of post-extractivism. To put it somewhat crudely, the miner is made into the non-native 'Indigenous' of Svalbard, so to speak, marked as out of time and yet essential for representations of the place. Both of these cases demonstrate the anachronistic personae and spaces that (post-)extractivism may produce, albeit in different ways. In this chapter, I have therefore argued that the analysis of these anachronistic spaces and identities can provide important understandings of

the contentions and contradictions, connections and disconnections, of the political economy of (post-)extractivism.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank research participants and friends in Arequipa, Peru and Svalbard for so generously sharing their perspectives and experiences with me. Some of the material in this chapter also features in previously published works: 'Returning to Nature: Postcarbon Utopias in Svalbard, Norway' (*Social Analysis*, 2022) and 'Border Multiplicities: At the Crossroads Between Regulation and Improvisation in the Andes' (*Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 2016).

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Notes

1. 'Post-extractivism' here is not meant to imply the end of extractivism but refers to initiatives for post-carbon transition.
2. Fieldwork periods in Peru were between 1997 and 2016; and in Svalbard since 2019.
3. To emphasize narratives in this way is not a claim about their truthfulness but a way to explore their effects.
4. To emphasize Svalbard as an environmental showcase does not mean that Norway cannot also be categorized as an 'extractivist state' – it can, and increasingly so.
5. For purposes of argument, the emphasis here is more on the narrative and discursive makings of social identities and categories, rather than the more complex makings and negotiations of individual subjectivities.
6. Briefly because I have already published widely on my work in Peru.
7. Most mineworkers in Svalbard have been men, although some women were also included from the 1980s onwards.

8. Except for the levelling to the ground of mining structures in Pyramiden and other mining communities in Svalbard by British-Canadian forces in 1938–39, to prevent their exploitation by Hitler (Fløgstad 2007: 90).
9. Although the discussions about closing Gruve 7 were reopened with increased energy prices and Russia's war on Ukraine.
10. The Longyearbyen Local Board finalized a new energy plan in 2023, as requested by the government.
11. Coal mining has been Store Norske's core activity since its establishment, in addition to the management of state land and buildings. The company is owned by the Norwegian state.
12. A term coined by Dina Brode-Roger; personal communication.
13. Coined by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, the notion 'permitted Indian' pinpoints how neoliberal capitalism, as a cultural project, contributes to the rising prominence of Indigenous voices while simultaneously limiting their transformative aspirations (Hale and Millamán 2004: 17).
14. Along Cuenca Suche, the river that goes through Desaguadero, there are a range of un-authorized mining businesses.
15. Including non-human beings of the landscape, such as *pachamama* (earth) and *apus* (mountains).
16. In 2011, it was stated that illegal export of fuel amounted to a loss of approximately \$450 million US dollars per year (Ødegaard 2016).

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