

Mistra Geopolitics: examining the dynamics of geopolitics, human security and environmental change

How can Swedish society thrive in the Anthropocene? What changes will it need in order to achieve positive development and political stability in a world of growing resource scarcities and geopolitical change?

The Mistra Geopolitics Programme is a major critical examination of the dynamic interactions between geopolitics, human security and global environmental change. It seeks to develop strategies for Sweden and Swedish actors to better navigate and face increasing geopolitical insecurity while taking advantage of opportunities created by innovation and technological development.

Sweden is uniquely placed to contribute with practical experience, expertise and burgeoning innovation to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and realize the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, while also increasing Swedish competitiveness in global markets. But to do so, Sweden needs to understand and balance the overlapping visions of societal transformation proposed by the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement and the Swedish Environmental Quality Objectives, and the complex, cross-sectoral interactions and challenges inherent in each of them.

Mistra Geopolitics combines theory testing and development with a co-creation approach, where a variety of stakeholders from public, private and civil society sectors are actively involved to improve the research design and ensure that theoretical perspectives as well as empirical research are relevant for the people who will translate them into policy and action.

Programme structure

The Programme comprises five interrelated work packages (WPs).

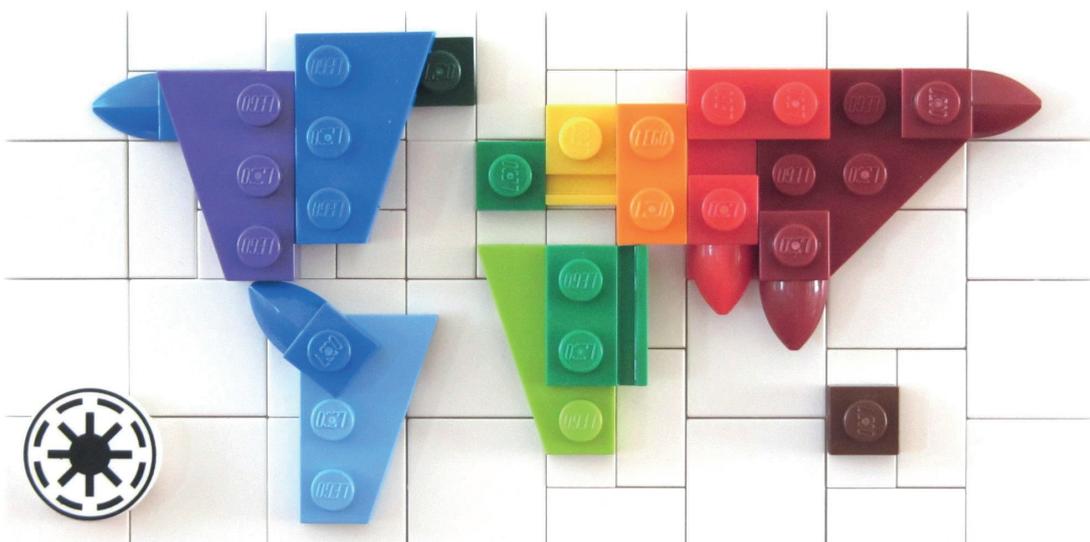
WP1 “Geopolitics and security in the Anthropocene” sets the frame for an inquiry into the relationships between geopolitics and sustainable development. It investigates how political drivers, risks and security threats of global environmental change are construed today, and what the implications are for our understanding of security and geopolitics. As this work package forms the basis for analyses throughout Mistra Geopolitics, it includes extensive stakeholder dialogue.

WPs 2, 3 and 4 focus on specific thematic aspects of the interrelationship between geopolitics and sustainability.

WP2, “Impact pathways in a changing environmental and geopolitical context”, analyses what kind of transnational impacts Sweden will likely face, and how this translates into risks and opportunities, with a focus on trade, patterns of international migration and repercussions of political violence.

WP3, “Governance responses to environmental related security risks”, examines how, why and with what consequences global governance systems respond to processes of geopolitics and environmental degradation, and the conditions under which these responses are legitimate and effective.

WP4, “The interrelationships between shifting geopolitical landscapes and the SDGs”, focuses on how resources



dynamics and geopolitical interests affect strategies for sustainable development and how these strategies in turn may impact the geopolitical arena.

WP5, “Foresight – Sweden in a changing geopolitical landscape”, brings together research from the other work packages in an iterative co-creation process involving project stakeholders. It uses interactive visualization tools for stakeholder engagement, such as the Norrköping Decision Arena platform. WP5 takes the insights from the other work packages to seek answers to the key questions of the Programme. It also provides opportunities to discuss innovation and business development as ways to strengthen Sweden’s competitiveness.

The co-creation process includes developing “explorative” scenarios of possible alternative futures, which will serve as the basis for analysing options and identifying strategies. It also employs cyclical horizon scanning for threats and opportunities, and geographical case studies.

Communications

The Mistra Geopolitics Programme deploys an ambitious platform for science-to-policy communication, including not only scientific publications but also a range of tools, workshops, seminars and other means. There is an emphasis on provoking discussion of research results, and soliciting feedback and ideas for new research.

In close collaboration with high-profile international research partners and stakeholders, the Programme participates in, and co-organize dedicated sessions at flagship conferences as well as hosting a final major international conference on Geopolitics and Sustainable Development. The Programme hosts a graduate school for doctoral and professional training.

The Mistra Geopolitics team

Mistra Geopolitics brings together a strong interdisciplinary research team consisting of six Swedish core partners: Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), and the universities of Linköping, Lund, Stockholm and Uppsala.

The expertise of the research team spans peace and conflict research, environmental and sustainability politics and governance, human geography, and advanced skills in visualization and decision support.

Two high-profile international research institutes are involved as further research and networking partners: Adelphi (Germany) and E3G (UK). The stakeholder partners, finally, are a range of mainly Swedish government agencies, business enterprises as well as industry and non-governmental organizations.

Mistra Geopolitics runs from 2017 to 2020.



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