



MISTRA GEOPOLITICS ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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Mistra Geopolitics hereby proudly presents its annual report for 2019. This research programme examines the interactions between geopolitics, human security and environmental change. The interdisciplinary research agenda is of growing importance in the Anthropocene, which offers powerful examples of how global environmental changes affect people at a grand scale. Climate change, for example, affects virtually all aspects of life, including human health and well-being, security, food production, migration, and armed conflicts.



As we face these issues, demand for political action is growing. What strategies offer promise? What are the best steps for governments and businesses to take? How can the world come up with better ways to protect people, and bring about greater peace and security? The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals form one answer to these questions. However, achieving these goals will require international agreements and national-level legislative action in countries around the world.

Against this backdrop, Sweden finds itself in a unique position, thanks to its long-standing engagement in peacekeeping, and its work on the pursuit of sustainable economic development. How should Sweden respond? What actions should its government and business leaders take to help address today's challenges and tomorrow's global development issues?

Mistra Geopolitics is helping answer such questions. With its vast range of partners and skilled scientists, Mistra Geopolitics provides a platform for research and debate, problem solving and future-oriented solutions on these complex global issues. My sincere thanks to all who have contributed to the work of the programme and to the 2019 results presented here. We live in troubled times. Such times only underscore the importance of the Mistra Geopolitics agenda and mission.

Lena Ek,
Chair of the Board, Mistra Geopolitics

FOREWORD



The geopolitical disruptions that COVID-19 seems poised to bring about may well define the coming decades. The pandemic may trigger transformations of the world's societies as we know them.

The ultimate goal of Mistra Geopolitics is to enhance foresight capacity for sustainable development efforts in a world formed by multiple transformative processes – global environmental change, new technologies, and political-economic shifts.

Participatory scenario development and horizon scanning are two examples of how we seek to develop methods to strengthen the ability of decision-makers, businesses and civil society to manoeuvre through turbulent times, and to capture opportunities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (page 13). A major participatory scenario exercise with our stakeholders developed multiple visions about how world affairs might develop over the coming decades. Epidemics of disease emerged as potential sources of disruption – though scenarios did not envision the upheaval we are experiencing today. In fact, the turbulent times we are now experiencing further strengthen our resolve to improve methods to better understand the role of disruptive events for societal transformations and geopolitical shifts.

Societal disruptions can be defined as occurrences that interrupt a system or a process from continuing as usual or as expected. In times of crisis, social structures and institutions are put to the test. Normal practices and habits are called into question. Disruption uproots and alters how we make sense of our world, how we behave, do business, learn, and go about our daily lives. Extreme weather-related disruptive events may trigger protests, social unrest, and conflicts (p. 11, 17–18), but also solidarity and concord. As shown in several of our studies, some see disruptive socio-technical events as essential to enable societal transformations toward sustainability. Others see a risk of rushed decisions and a lack of democratic deliberation that may lead to a backlash. Historically, we see how social disruptions can become defining move-

ments. Disruptions can lead to frustration, social alienation, polarization, social unrest and escalation of conflicts. But disruptions can also spur new perspectives and new practices, and lead to the emergence of new cultural expressions, power relations and resource distribution. Disruptive events may provide opportunities for production and consumption as well as new routines and priorities in our daily lives.

Our analyses show how the shifting geopolitics, trade dependences, and the globalization of environmental risks make state-centric security thinking obsolete in the Anthropocene. These analyses underscore the need to strengthen multilateral cooperation and policy responses (p. 6–12). These conclusions run contrary to the unilateral and protectionist responses to COVID-19, and the carbon-driven recovery plans that several countries have displayed, at least initially.

Still, in the longer perspective, the geopolitics emerging out of COVID-19 may well be a defining, historic moment for sustainable development policy. The pandemic could be tipping the scales of the Paris Agreement. We may see a turn toward more isolationism and pollution-intensive economic recovery efforts. However, the COVID-19 pandemic may also spur geopolitics of generosity. It may offer a timely opportunity to shift towards greener, healthier and more resilient societies.

Mistra Geopolitics and its many partners are well positioned to contribute to the task of navigating the geopolitical landscape in the aftermath of COVID-19. This is evident in the increasing interest in and demand for our research, as demonstrated by the more than 600 participants from all over the world who participated in our webinar, “The Geopolitics of COVID-19 and Climate Change”, in early April 2020. As that event and the contents of this report amply illustrate, Mistra Geopolitics’ analyses have never been more timely and important.

Björn-Ola Linnér
Programme Director, Mistra Geopolitics

WHAT IS MISTRA GEOPOLITICS?

Mistra Geopolitics is a research programme that examines 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.

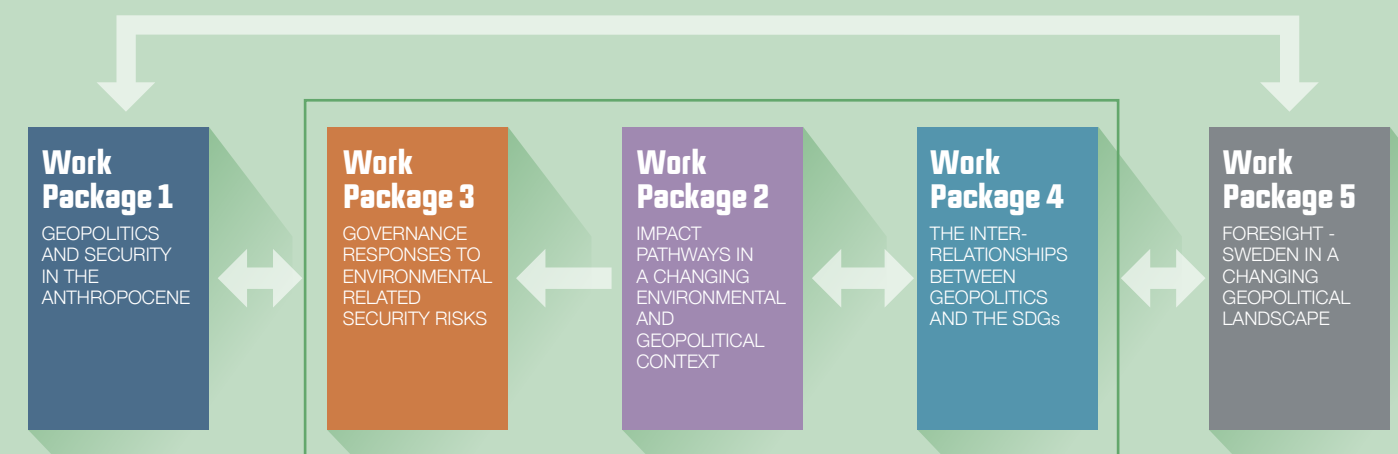
Sweden is uniquely placed to contribute with practical experience, expertise and burgeoning innovation to help reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), realize the full 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and, at the same time, increase Swedish competitiveness in global markets. To achieve these aims, Sweden needs to understand and balance the overlapping visions of societal transformation proposed by the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement, 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. A variety of stakeholders from public, private and civil society sectors are actively involved to improve research design and ensure that both theoretical perspectives and empirical research are relevant for the people who will translate them into policy and action.

HOW WE WORK

Mistra Geopolitics is an interdisciplinary research programme that brings together researchers from different fields of expertise to combine their intellectual skills. This effective, and sometimes challenging, approach is necessary to understand the complex world we live in. The programme comprises five interrelated work packages (WPs) undertaken in close collaboration with 15 stakeholders, and in partnerships with Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Linköping University, Uppsala University, Stockholm University and Lund University. The think tanks E3G (“Third-Generation Environmentalism”, UK) and adelphi (Germany) are also research partners. The programme is funded by Mistra, the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research.

Key relationships between the different Work Packages.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM ONGOING RESEARCH IN THE FIVE WORK PACKAGES



WORK PACKAGE 1: GEOPOLITICS AND SECURITY IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

Geopolitics and security in the Anthropocene aims to investigate the political drivers, risks and security implications of global environmental change, and to interrogate how our changing environment is reshaping the understanding of security and geopolitics. To this end, researchers analyse the academic debate on nexus of the Anthropocene, security and geopolitics. We find that the Anthropocene concept is increasingly used by scholars of international relations to describe a world of globalized and manufactured risks in which neither security nor environment can be interpreted or acted upon in traditional ways. The Anthropocene instead presents a global scene of complex interconnections and interdependencies that cut across conventional geographical and temporal scales and species boundaries. In this time, state-centric security thinking no longer makes political or moral sense.

While many of these ideas may never travel beyond the

academic seminar room, they invite us to rethink the world picture upon which conventional international relations theories rest, and to reimagine the earth as a political space. To enable mutual learning between scholarly debates and policy practices, we invited a mixed group of scholars and policy practitioners to contribute to an edited volume interrogating the shifting understanding of security, geopolitical configurations and global environmental change. We conducted a book workshop in November 2019, and the related edited volume is scheduled for publication in 2021 in collaboration with SIPRI and Oxford University Press.

This work package also examines how language related to the Anthropocene is making its way into policymaking circles by focusing on how state and intergovernmental actors approach the climate-security nexus and food security. This strand of work involves three domains:

Intergovernmental organizations and climate security: We reviewed the academic literature on the issue of how intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) respond to climate security challenges (Dellmuth et al., 2018; Dellmuth et al., 2017). The review revealed few comparative studies and scant debate across cases. To fill this gap, we organized a session bringing together scholars working on IGOs and climate security at the International Studies Association Annual Convention in March 2019. We also produced a paper presenting an analytical framework that enables comparative analysis of organizations' work on climate security. The paper also highlights key findings from case studies of regional IGO responses (Mobjörk et al., forthcoming; Bremberg et al., 2018; and Krampe and Mobjörk, 2018). (This work was conducted in combination with Work Package 3.)

Geopolitics of food security: This workstream analyses food security policies in China and Russia, and explores how climate change impacts future prospects for ensur-

ing food security in these countries. The analysis, which forms the basis of a PhD dissertation, contributes to the literature by providing a critical approach to securitization theory, and by emphasizing how various levels, objects, and logics of security intersect and interact. Empirically, it examines the ways in which human- and state-centred approaches to food security seek and find legitimacy in various international and national political fora, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and ongoing policy debates in Russia and China.

Climate security in national contexts: This workstream contributes two case studies that examine how climate security challenges are influencing the policies and practices of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida, and the Swedish Armed Forces. The case studies apply an analytical framework (Mobjörk et al., forthcoming) and add empirically rich information regarding how these two key Swedish government entities confront such issues.

“This work provided insights into how organizational changes may enable improved policy responses to ongoing challenges and possible tensions.”

HOW DOES YOUR WORK CONTRIBUTE TO A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE GEOPOLITICS OF SUSTAINABILITY?

Our work advances the understanding of geopolitics and sustainability by:

- critically interrogating the key concepts of Mistra Geopolitics, and
- investigating responses to challenges of the Anthropocene – particularly those related to food security and climate-related security risks.

Our conceptually oriented work provides insights on how risks and dangers of the Anthropocene incentivize a revisit of conventional interpretations of security, geopolitics and the environment. The interconnections and interdependencies that shape the current state of the earth cut across conventional geographical and temporal scales. The situation calls for new forms of thinking in research and policy.

Building bridges in research

A forthcoming edited volume, “Anthropocene Securities”, contributes to building bridges across academic and policy practices. The building of such bridges is considered to be key in advancing sustainability. We contribute to this by creating a platform for mutual learning, and by bridging domains, geographies, and entry points for analysis.

Climate change impacts on Russia and China

The comparative analysis of regional organizations’ responses to climate security challenges demonstrate fundamental differences in how these challenges are understood. The analysis raises critical questions about how dependencies and power relationships within and among organizations influence proactive actions enabling sustainable development.

REFLECTIONS ON HOW THE RESEARCH HELPS SWEDISH STAKEHOLDERS

Research under the work stream contributes insights into new modes of scholarly thinking on global politics and security with the advent of the Anthropocene. The two case studies of Swedish actors shed light on how two Swedish government entities are revisiting their roles and mandates in light of increasing manifestations of climate crises. This work provided insights into how organizational changes may enable improved policy responses to ongoing challenges and possible tensions.

In 2019 we actively engaged in international debates. Events include, for instance, a session examining the United Nation’s work on climate-related security risks, presented at the 2019 Planetary Security Conference; a US congressional visit at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), a talk at a conference of leading policy planners in member states of the North American Treaty Organization (NATO); and a week-long course with Nordic actors working on civil protection.

These engagements give us unique insights into current policy debates on climate security challenges and tensions in the multilateral systems. In turn, these insights inform our dialogues with Swedish actors. In Sweden, we actively engage in outreach activities that include seminars, lectures and dialogues with actors such as the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sida, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), and organizations such as Forum Syd, Journalistfonden (lectures to Swedish journalists), Red Cross, Swedish Defense University (FHS), Folk och Försvar. Work Package 1 also produced the Mistra Geopolitics podcast “En värld i förändring”, with six episodes in 2019 featuring research from the Mistra Geopolitics programme.



WORK PACKAGE 2: IMPACT PATHWAYS IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENTAL AND GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT

This research addresses three parallel themes: conflict, transboundary climate risks and migration.

Conflict: Researchers developed novel methods to analyse the relationship between environmental change and armed conflict (Mach et al., 2019). Our research shows that whilst climate change still plays a minor role as a driver of conflict, strong feedback effects exist between armed conflict and vulnerability to climate change. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, armed conflict increases vulnerability to climate change, and climate change increases the risk of armed conflict (Busby and von Uexkull, 2018). Efforts to reduce vulnerability to climate change (for example, through donor-led programmes for climate change adaptation) need to better account for the role of armed conflict as a driver of vulnerability. SDG-focused strategies also need to be framed and implemented via programmes that are more conflict sensitive and conflict aware. Our research also found feedback relationships between environmental change, armed conflict, and economic growth at local and national scales in developing countries (Gilmore et al., 2019).

Transboundary climate risks: We developed novel methods to assess exposure to transnational climate risk at global and national scales. These assessments revealed that the global distribution of environmental risks is much more varied and context specific than is often assumed (Hedlund et al., 2018). This means that import- and export-dependent countries like Sweden depend far more on

the success of sustainable development policies in other countries than is often thought to be the case. For example, Sweden’s food consumption increasingly depends on Brazilian-grown soy, which is embedded in meat and dairy products consumed by Swedish households. Climate risks to production and transport threaten such supply chains. Moreover, increasing trade dependence raises concerns about future political ties with countries whose policies increasingly diverge from Sweden’s international objectives to achieve the SDGs. Our research suggests that Sweden’s limited ability to bilaterally reduce vulnerability to environmental change and security risks in developing countries makes multilateral cooperation a necessary response to the globalization of environmental risks (Benzie and Persson, 2019; Nadin et al., 2019). At the same time, we find that global governance institutions (such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) that shape the geopolitical space for distribution of financial and political resources for climate risk management, currently fail to account for the globalization of environmental risks (Benzie et al., 2019).

Migration: Our work identified an increase in total trans-regional migration. Projections through the end of the century suggest that migration from Africa to Europe will continue to grow; however, climate change and conflict are more likely to lead to greater numbers of people displaced within their own countries, rather than in the wider region beyond their national borders. A Stockholm Geopolitics Scenario exercise, conducted to assess the potential



Malin Mobjörk leads Work Package 1: Geopolitics and Security in the Anthropocene.



impacts of geopolitical changes on global migration flows, underscored potential increases in unmanaged, irregular international migration (Bremberg and Palme, 2019a). This work highlights the challenges and opportunities for Swedish migration policies – in terms of addressing domestic issues and assisting controlled South-South migration. Our recommendations to improve the coherence between Swedish competitiveness and supporting SDG achievement include embarking on an approach to migration policy that takes account of environmental change, the SDGs and geopolitical trends (Bremberg and Palme, 2019b). Such an approach will help to manage risks to migrants whilst maximizing the beneficial impacts of controlled migration for both sending and receiving countries.

HOW DOES YOUR WORK CONTRIBUTE TO A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE GEOPOLITICS OF SUSTAINABILITY?

The sustainability of development in Sweden depends on the success of the sustainability of development in other countries. Given Sweden's deep integration into the global economy, the potential for cascading risks comes from both direct and indirect links that extend across sectors and countries. Sweden has connections to all corners of the world. In this new world, supporting the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals globally, and maintaining peace are not only the right things to do from the perspective of justice, equity and ethics; such measures are increasingly in Sweden's national interest. National strategies and international private actors too often ignore the risks from the cross-border impacts of climate change, conflict and environmental degradation. Clarifying the ownership and governance of these risks is an urgent, emerging policy challenge.

REFLECTIONS ON HOW THE RESEARCH HELPS SWEDISH STAKEHOLDERS

Research identified hotspots of risk from the perspective of Swedish actors, including Swedish peace and development actors and Swedish-based traders and businesses. Examples of our research findings include the following:

- Our work revealed where the biggest risks to Swedish imports may lie. This helps stakeholders from government and business embark on new dialogues about how to manage such risks, and about the division of responsibility between companies, investors, insurers, the state and consumers.

- Our research contributed to many global policy and engagement processes in which the stakes for Sweden are high. We engaged in global peace, conflict and climate processes within and beyond the United Nations. A prime example of such engagement includes the creation of the Adaptation Without Borders Initiative, launched in 2019 at events in Stockholm, London, New York and Paris. This ongoing initiative provides a solid foundation for the advancement of these avenues of research in a potential second phase of Mistra Geopolitics.

The impressive list of speakers who participated in the Madrid COP25 side event, "Reimagining Adaptation", underscores the convening power of both this topic and the Mistra Geopolitics partners.

In 2020 we aim to consolidate many of these innovative research activities, with a concerted effort on stakeholder engagement and dissemination across the three pillars of work.



Magnus Benzie leads Work Package 2
– Impact pathways in a changing environmental and geopolitical context.

WORK PACKAGE 3: GOVERNANCE RESPONSES TO ENVIRONMENT-RELATED SECURITY RISKS

This workstream addresses climate adaptation and mitigation in domestic and global governance.

Climate adaptation: Our work aims to increase understanding of how adaptation is integrated, across issue areas and over time, in international institutions (including international organizations, and transnational companies in the mining sector). We seek to understand how links between climate adaptation and certain issues are integrated and contested. We examine how these dynamics are likely to play out in targeted issue areas and at various levels of government across institutions and over time. Health, fisheries and food security emerge as crucial issue areas that deserve attention from climate researchers, policymakers and international organizations.

Five key findings are:

- Climate researchers and policymakers in international organizations most often link climate change to development and disaster risk management; they seldom make similar connections to trade, peace and security.

- International organizations dramatically increased adaptation responses after 2008. This consisted largely of an increase in rhetorical measures (e.g., declarations, frameworks and reports), rather than in funding.

- International organizational capacities and interests combine to shape global adaptation governance (including, for example, matters related to fisheries). Our work highlights the ways in which problem complexity, institutional fragmentation, and financial insecurity play roles in determining why climate change connects to some issue areas but not to others, and why institutions integrate climate adaptation to various degrees.

- Multinational mining companies exert increasing authority in climate adaptation, but their aims are not always in line with domestic adaptation planning goals.

- UN-coordinated aid after climate-related disasters has decreased slightly since 2012 (see figure below). Our findings suggest that UN-coordinated aid is motivated by needs-related factors, in contrast to bilateral aid which is often influenced by powerful donor interests.

Domestic and global governance:

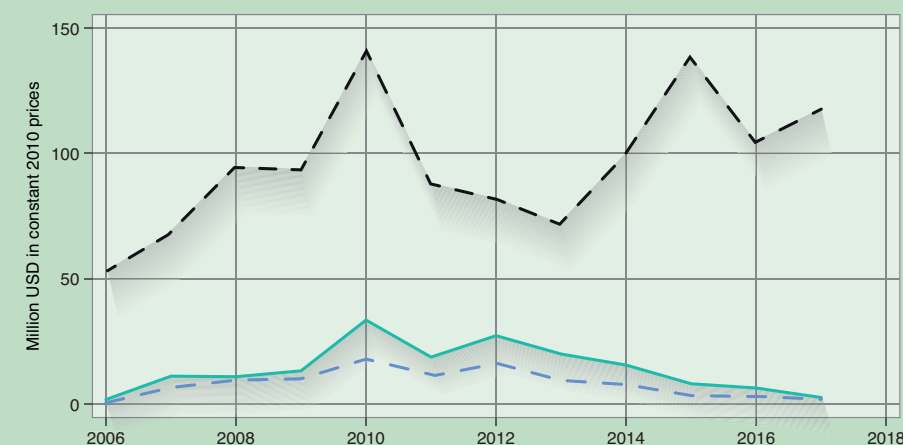
Our research activities address the questions of the capacity of domestic governments to respond to global environmental change, and the conditions in which responses are most effective. We conduct comparative studies of environmental and migration policymaking in member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Four key findings are:

- Our exploration of whether countries with better-stocked environmental policy portfolios experience less environmental degradation shows that environmental policies work – but not always.

- The effectiveness of environmental policies differs markedly depending on the institutional context in which such measures are introduced. Policies with similar levels of stringency can be very effective in addressing environmental problems in one institutional context, but almost powerless in another context. We suspect that this has to do with differences in underlying policymaking logics embedded in different political systems.

RELIEF FUNDING AFTER CLIMATE-RELATED DISASTERS



Total UN funding required and received to safeguard human security after climate-related natural disasters. Source: Dellmuth L.M., Bender F., von Uexkull, N., Jonsson, A., and Rosvold, E. (forthcoming), "Managing complex emergencies: International interventions into climate-related natural disasters". Stockholm University. (Part of the Strategic Reserve Project "Managing Complex Emergencies", lead author, von Uexkull, N., at Uppsala University).

--- Humanitarian aid by disaster-struck country, all donors
 --- UN-coordinated aid received for each disaster occurred, all donors
 — Aid required for each disaster, estimated by UN

“Green growth and climate-induced migration are both at the heart of ongoing climate mitigation.”

Several countries, including Sweden, have the capacity to decouple emissions from economic growth. Clearly, policy can advance the reduction of different types of emissions sources (e.g., NOx and CO2) at local and global levels.

Preliminary findings from a data set of global protest events and extreme weather events during the 1946-2005 period suggest that there is a link between environmental issues and political and social unrest. Our work focuses on the likelihood that extreme weather events (such as droughts, storms, floods and wildfires) may trigger protests.

HOW DOES YOUR WORK CONTRIBUTE TO A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE GEOPOLITICS OF SUSTAINABILITY?

Our emphasis on climate linkages to fisheries and food security in global adaptation governance adds to understanding of the geopolitics of sustainability. This represents the first research effort to disentangle how the complex interrelationships between ideas, resources, and institutions at the global level affect global adaptation activities. This work, thus, contributes directly to SDGs 2 (zero hunger) and 16 (peaceful and inclusive societies). Our academic and policy-oriented contributions to these two SDGs rely on systematic analyses spanning domestic and global governance, and linking geopolitics to both climate adaptation and mitigation.



REFLECTIONS ON HOW THE RESEARCH HELPS SWEDISH STAKEHOLDERS

Our research on global governance adds knowledge on the venues of power in global climate adaptation governance. This work provides new insights into the ways in which climate adaptation is understood, debated, addressed, and linked to issue areas such as health, migration, and security at domestic and global levels. These insights help Swedish stakeholders understand where they should turn if they want to impact the adaptation activities of global institutions, such as UN agencies, bodies, and programmes, as well as other institutions, such as the Arctic Council, Pacific Island Forum, and the African Union. Our topics – climate health, fisheries governance, and food security – are emerging issues in global governance. Swedish leaders need to be aware of these issues and the related linkages, and to know which actors need to be convened across the public and private sectors to achieve global governance within planetary boundaries.

Work on domestic governance sheds much-needed light on the linkages between domestic political institutions, countries' contributions to green growth, and countries' vulnerability to climate change through events such as natural disasters and climate-induced migration. This work shows that several countries, including Sweden, have the capacity to decouple emissions from economic growth. It underscores that policy can enhance domestic performance in climate mitigation, the availability of green jobs, and the reduction of different types of local (e.g. NOx) and global (e.g. CO2) emissions.

Green growth and climate-induced migration are both at the heart of ongoing climate mitigation and adaptation debates at domestic and global levels. Understanding patterns of green growth and climate-induced migration over time is crucial for navigating current policy challenges, and for setting priorities for Swedish leaders to act on these issues.



Lisa Dellmuth leads work package 3 – Governance responses to environment-related security risks.

WORK PACKAGE 4: THE INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN GEOPOLITICS AND THE SDGs

Access to and control over physical resources such as fossil fuels, water, food and minerals have played important roles in shaping geopolitical interests. The strategic roles of these resources and the potential revenue streams they represent affect the interests of different state and non-state actors, and how they position themselves in relation to sustainable development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Our research aims to gain a deeper understanding about how perceived geopolitical challenges and interests affect the choice of political strategies for attaining the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. The research focuses on indirect effects of environmental change, such as implications for global governance and local conflicts arising as a result of responses to mitigate environmental change.

This workstream addresses three core lines of research. The first seeks to understand and explain SDG attainment interactions for different geographies. Approaches include expert assessment of interactions for different countries and contexts, and statistical analyses of the indicators used as proxies for the respective SDGs. This research advances the understanding of how contextual conditions affect SDG interactions. It underpins a forthcoming study to develop sustainability scenarios that are compatible with historical patterns among groups of countries with similar patterns of progress and failure on the indicators.

“We seek to understand how links between climate adaptation and certain issues are integrated and contested.”

A second topic seeks to map and understand state responses to environmental change in light of geopolitical agendas. Here, the empirical focus is on nationally determined contributions (NDCs). This research focus on climate change mitigation strategies demonstrates that states have different views on the scope of climate change as a political problem, and that they hold different views about the means that are appropriate for dealing with the related issues.

A third line of research focuses on the materiality of low-carbon energy transitions. Renewable energy is more geographically dispersed than fossil resources, but it can use more materials. Some needed metal reserves are concentrated in few countries. Our work quantified the demand of renewable energy systems for the metals perceived as critical, mapped the distribution of metal reserves, and estimated the magnitudes of future revenues for countries that possess these metals.



“More than half of national contributions to the Paris Agreement highlight the national security challenges of a changing climate.”

HOW DOES YOUR WORK CONTRIBUTE TO A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE GEOPOLITICS OF SUSTAINABILITY?

Our work advances the understanding of the geopolitics of sustainability by showing which sustainability goals are incompatible with each other, and/or unlikely to be attained given a set of “boundary conditions”. Global country-level tracking of synergies and trade-offs in SDG attainment since 2000 shows that the SDG agenda is overwhelmingly characterized by synergies. Countries performing well on one SDG tend to do well on the rest of the agenda, too. The studies on international and national SDG interactions have been complemented by case studies at the subnational level in four countries (Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and Iraq). These studies show that states’ geopolitical positioning and context-specific internal dynamics affect the attainment of the SDGs at the local level (such as reduced inequalities (SDG10), climate action (SDG 13) and peace (SDG16)). Our work shows that peacekeepers can improve subnational food security (SDG2) in post-conflict regions.

Research at national and international levels shows that traditional geopolitical indicators (developed/developing countries, income level, geographical region) are important for understanding states’ different priorities. Despite current arguments that a more decentralized and dynamic world order is emerging, conventional geopolitical groupings to a large extent still hold. So, although the geopolitical landscape is changing, these categories are still important for understanding how states position themselves in international climate and sustainable development politics. More than half of national contributions to the Paris Agreement highlight the national security challenges of a changing climate.

The research on new resource demand for renewable energy contributes to the understanding of how and why climate change mitigation can change perceptions about the value of certain natural resources. Such changes are likely to affect certain countries rich in supplies, with some likely to gain importance (and revenues) as suppliers of new, key natural resources, and others facing the prospect of losing importance (and revenues) as the value of fossil fuel-related

resources declines. The research shows that, on an individual-country level, future revenues from these key metals are not likely to be as important as current revenues for fossil fuels. The local impact from mining may still be significant in many countries, not least due to the environmental intrusion. These insights advance understanding of the geopolitics of sustainability. Previous research had mainly addressed the geographical distribution of stranded fossil fuels and renewable energy resources, while the economic value of metals had been largely overlooked.

REFLECTIONS ON HOW THE RESEARCH HELPS SWEDISH STAKEHOLDERS

Our approach in studying SDG interactions emphasizes working in close collaboration with decision-makers to facilitate use in policymaking processes. The tools developed can be used to identify policy synergies and trade-offs – and thereby to facilitate prioritization. Network analysis and clustering techniques can help identify possible collaboration patterns amongst implementation actors. The combined research on SDG interactions and on state responses to environmental change explains why some sustainable development pathways are unlikely to materialize if present interests and governance dynamics prevail. Policymakers can take this on board; they can instead focus on other, more promising sustainability pathways, and they can think about how to respond to identified trade-offs.

Research conducted at the subnational level in developing countries is relevant for Sweden, other aid donors, and those who conduct peacekeeping missions. Our research can be used to improve future missions and development initiatives in conflict-affected settings so that these efforts better align with the SDGs. The research suggests that, should demand for metals for renewable energy sectors increase, a handful of identified countries are at increased risk of suffering a “resource curse” – that is, they may experience less democracy and worse economic and development outcomes compared to countries with fewer natural resources.



André Månberger leads work package 4 – The interrelationships between geopolitics and the SDGs.



WORK PACKAGE 5: FORESIGHT – SWEDEN IN A CHANGING GEOPOLITICAL LANDSCAPE

This research explores competitive opportunities and solutions for Sweden in a future characterized by growing global uncertainties with new geopolitical landscapes playing an increasingly important role in determining the prospects for sustainable development. The work builds on a research co-creation process. A range of Swedish stakeholders assess the options available to navigate growing global uncertainties, and they explore opportunities to contribute to a societal transformation towards global sustainability. This research agenda employs and advances a range of methodologies, including (visualization-supported) focus groups, scenario workshops and horizon scanning.

“Our work sheds light on the role of narratives, and how these might influence understanding of societal transformations.”

Our work scrutinized preconditions, challenges and opportunities for Swedish actors to navigate towards the Sustainable Development Goals in a rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape, and in relation to different plausible futures. Focus groups with Mistra Geopolitics stakeholders explored how Swedish agents of change make sense of challenges and opportunities to achieve the SDGs under geopolitical uncertainty. The research identified perspectives and implicit trade-offs that point towards the inherent complexity and different understanding of societal transformations and geopolitical change (Eliasson et al.,

2019). This complexity is evidenced by the variety of actors assigned agency to achieve the 2030 Agenda, the relationships ascribed to these different actors, and the identified drivers that influence and enable change.

Similarly, a **dual picture emerged of Sweden and Swedish business as both forerunners and leaders, and as actors that depend on imports, and generate environmental impacts abroad**. This exemplifies the multifaceted roles and responsibilities for high-income countries and businesses in societal transformations. Our work sheds light on the role of narratives, and how these might influence understanding of societal transformations. The research identified narratives, created multiple entry points for dialogues, and revealed different perspectives on opportunities and challenges for achieving the 2030 Agenda. The work underscored the need to reflect on ways to facilitate cross-sectoral learning and communicative processes that ensure common platforms to support deliberative transformations, respond to emerging transformations, and seize the opportunities of the 2030 Agenda.

To map out future plausible geopolitical landscapes for Swedish actors, **we developed and convened a series of explorative scenario workshops with Mistra Geopolitics researchers and stakeholders**. These workshops generated a robust set of future scenarios that took seriously the intersection of environmental change, economic development, and human security. This work underpins the report, *“The Stockholm Geopolitics Scenarios: Shift, Deal, Mosaic, and Fracture”*.

Explorative scenario exercises are useful not because they predict the future, but because they stretch our collective imaginations, and provide the context for critical strategic planning. Will the future be one marked by an increasingly antagonistic and authoritarian world order? Or, will the future be characterized by a market-driven push toward sustainability? Or will degrowth and community development shape the future? In an uncertain world, strategic actors can and should plan for a number of possible outcomes to seek to position themselves for success no matter how the future unfolds. The Stockholm Geopolitics Scenarios provide this backdrop. They have quickly become critical tools for grappling with an uncertain future, for use in Mistra Geopolitics and among our stakeholders.

Further, this work developed and assessed methods and tools for co-creation research. Here, key contributions include the development of a visualization tool for resource flows and mineral reserves, and for the explorative scenarios developed in this work package. This work sets the stage for further methodological innovations to help Swedish stakeholders contend with these issues.

The *Stockholm Geopolitics Scenarios* are based on a state-of-the-art, mixed-methods approach, drawing on expert inputs through a series of workshops to consider how various “drivers” of geopolitical change may relate to one another. We brought together world-leading thinkers on environment, development, and security to develop the full set of drivers, consider their interactions, and build plausible storylines for how particular scenarios could be realized. Our scenario development used four methodological approaches that had never previously been combined. These approaches allowed us to identify cyclical causality loops, assess the roles of dominant drivers, and determine changes in economic growth, CO2 emissions and other relevant items. Our work represents a significant leap forward for developing explorative scenarios in a co-creative, robust manner – an important step in helping Sweden to prepare for any eventuality.

HOW DOES YOUR WORK CONTRIBUTE TO A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE GEOPOLITICS OF SUSTAINABILITY?

Findings presented in Eliasson et al. (2019) point towards a complex relationship between sustainability and geopolitics in a Swedish context. It shows that Sweden is both a sustainability forerunner, and a country with a high global dependency, causing environmental impacts worldwide.

Our work explored this complex relationship between sustainability and geopolitics in a focus group study that examined Sweden’s role in a global sustainable food system. The findings from an analysis of this material will contribute to the understanding of the geopolitics of sustainability by drawing on the perspectives of agents of change within the Swedish food system (Eliasson et al., forthcoming).

The insights from the explorative scenarios process likewise considerably develop our understanding of the geopolitics of sustainability. The Stockholm Geopolitics Scenarios deeply consider the ways in which various drivers of geopolitical change intersect with one another. The scenarios incorporate the explicit intent to address sustainability, development, and security in tandem. While the scenarios should not be considered to present a definitive picture of how geopolitics will develop, they strongly confirm that geopolitics and sustainability intersect, and should be integrated into the broad global conversation to facilitate strategic planning across all levels and sectors.

REFLECTIONS ON HOW THE RESEARCH HELPS SWEDISH STAKEHOLDERS

Eliasson et al. (2019) contributes to understanding of how geopolitics, human security and global environmental change interrelate. Based on the knowledge of Mistra Geopolitics stakeholders, the analyses examined the impacts associated with the Anthropocene and changing geopolitics, response options and implications for the Swedish society, and ways to use this knowledge to address these complex problems that are unfolding.

Our work supports and advances the development of forecasting capacity by successfully involving researchers and stakeholders in scenario workshops. We supported methodological innovation by developing and evaluating co-creation processes, including methods for explorative scenario workshops and visualization-supported focus groups. The development of interactive tools and methodologies advance the co-creation process to enhance knowledge exchange between stakeholders and researchers. This helps to ensure the relevance and legitimacy of these dialogues. Innovations in scenario methodology enhance the design and implementation of the scenario process. Through these co-creation activities, our work offers fora and structures for ongoing dialogue, facilitating the exchange of knowledge.



Tina Neset leads Work Package 5: Foresight – Sweden in a changing geopolitical landscape.



FEATURES

WILL CLIMATE CHANGE INCREASE CONFLICT RISKS?

Climate change is increasingly regarded as humanity’s greatest collective challenge, which threatens to permanently alter the foundations of life and societies across the world. Rising global temperatures will challenge food production, threaten coastal settlements, and increase population displacement and health risks. Concerns that these impacts directly or indirectly translate into security risks are high. In response to these concerns, many states, including Sweden, are working to raise international attention and capabilities within the United Nations to tackle and prevent potential conflicts and geopolitical challenges arising from global warming. In this context, civil conflict risks have received particular attention. Conflicts such as the Syrian civil war drive millions to migrate. Such conflicts undermine regional and global prospects for sustainable development.

However, the evidence on how climate change affects armed conflict risks has been far from clear. Previous academic studies have both asserted and refuted connections between climate variability and change and the potential consequences for the risk of violent conflict. Different academic disciplines take different methodological approaches – and reach different conclusions. To reconcile these differences, a study published in *Nature* in July 2019 brought together eleven highly cited experts on climate change and armed conflict, representing different disciplines. The participants, whose previous research

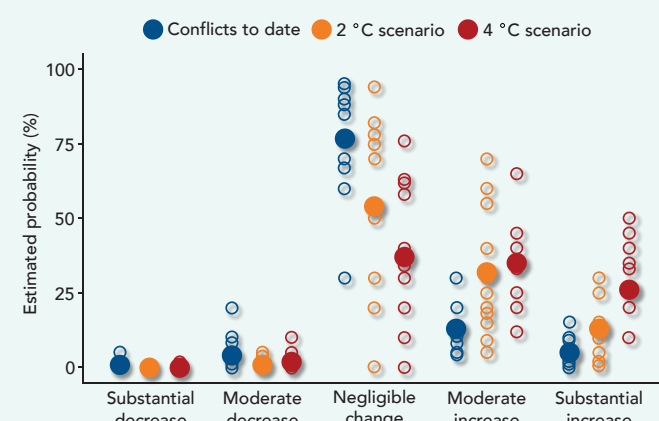
had reached different conclusions about climate-conflict links, worked together in an unprecedented, comprehensive process led by Katharine Mach, director of the Stanford Environment Assessment Facility. Covering political science, geography, environmental studies and economics, they individually and jointly documented the evidence of conflict related to climate change over the past century. They also assessed what would be likely to occur in the future under scenarios of global temperature increase of 2 degrees and 4 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The multi-stage process included a collective design of a survey to all co-authors, workshop discussions at Stanford University in December 2017, a revision of survey responses, and a collective revision of a summary of findings.

Synthesizing views among these assembled experts, the study estimated that climate has influenced between 3 percent and 20 percent of armed conflict risk over the last century. It concluded that the influence will likely increase dramatically with increasing climate change.

A key finding of the study is an agreement that climate change has increased conflict risks historically, but other drivers, such as low socioeconomic development and low capabilities of the state, are much more influential. However, estimated risks increase with intensifying climate change. In a scenario with 4 degrees of warming, the best estimate across experts is a 26



Some of the researchers who participated in the study, *Climate as a risk factor for armed conflict*, published in 'Nature' in July 2019.



Estimated changes in the relationship between climate and conflict risk under increasing climate change. Mach, K. J., Kraan, C. M., Adger, W. N., Buhaug, H., Burke, M., Fearon, J. D., Field, C. B., Hendrix, C. S., Maystadt, J.-F., O'Loughlin, J., Roessler, P., Scheffran, J., Schultz, K. A., & von Uexkull, N. (2019). *Climate as a risk factor for armed conflict*. *Nature*, 571(7764), 193–197.

percent chance of a substantial increase in conflict risk. While uncertainty about pathways is substantial, the study underlines the potential for important security implications if the emission of greenhouse gases is not curbed. It shows there is agreement on fundamental issues across this diverse set of experts, and documents the range of judgements in this field. In the face of major uncertainties, this systematic assessment gives important guidance on pathways and strategies to reduce risks, as well as the degree and sources of uncertainty in what we know to date.

This study hence provides crucial synthesis from research

to inform Swedish and international policy on the extent of related research to date. More importantly, the study also provides well-documented and transparent estimates from key researchers about what they consider to be the likely future developments in different climate change scenarios. Because the international community needs to act now to alter climate change trajectories, the expert-elicitation work and discussion of scenarios are an important addition to the lessons that can be learned from rigorous studies of the role of climate in current conflicts.

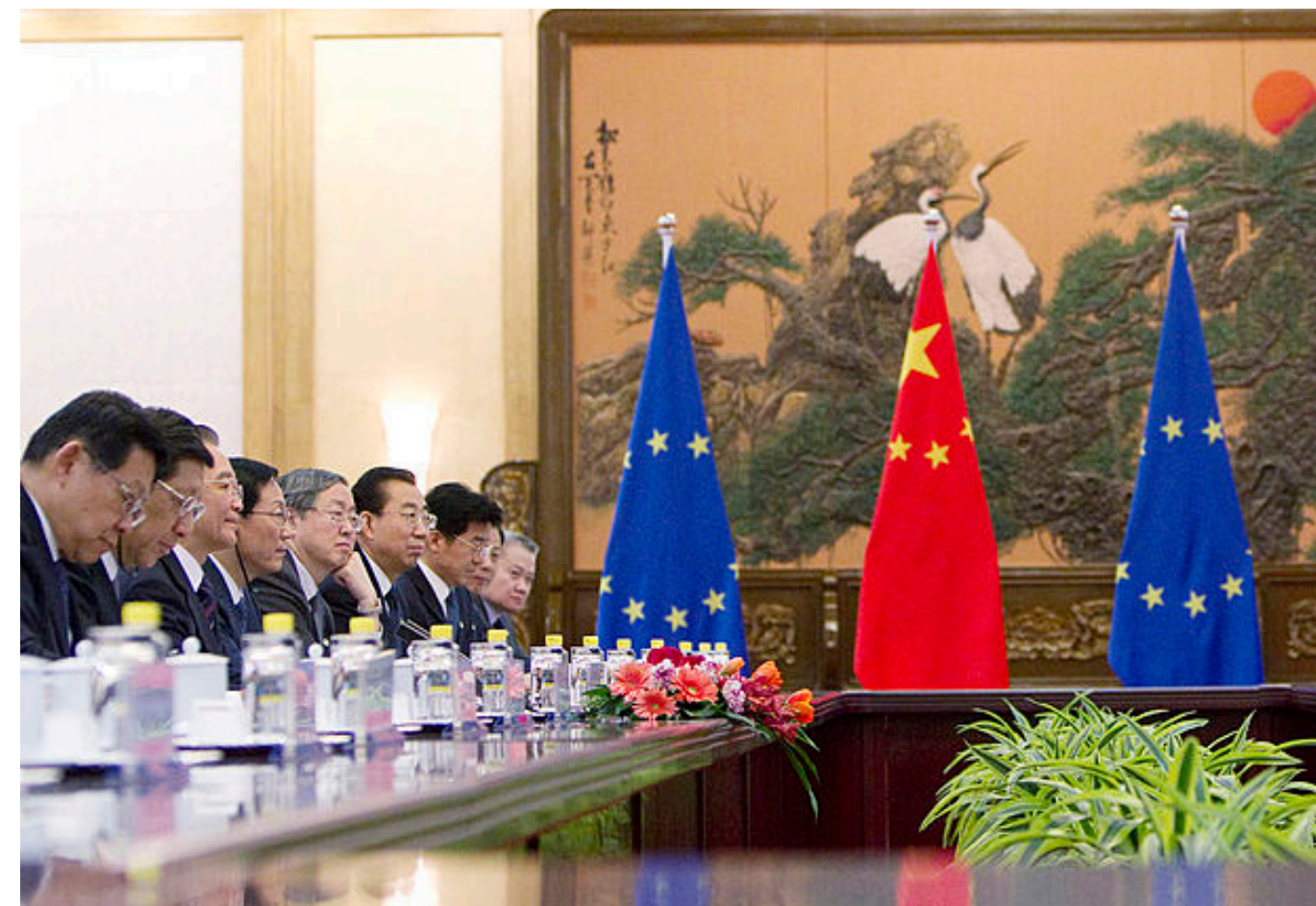
Three representatives of the Mistra Geopolitics programme were among the co-authors of the study. They are: Nina von Uexkull, who works on Work Package 2, and is assistant professor at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University and associate senior researcher at the Peace Research Institute Oslo; and two members of the scientific advisory board, Neil Adger, professor of human geography at the University of Exeter, and Halvard Buhaug, research professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo and professor of Political Science at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nina von Uexkull is Assistant Professor at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University and Associate Senior Researcher at the Peace Research Institute Oslo. Her main research interest is in the implications of climate change for armed conflict and human security. In Mistra Geopolitics, she works on quantitative scenarios for security developments for different climate change trajectories and on synergies and trade-offs between different Sustainable Development Goals.



Nina von Uexkull – Researcher, assistant professor, Uppsala University.



CHINA'S RISING ROLE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND PEACEBUILDING CONTEXTS

Since the early 2000s, China has become an increasingly significant development actor and a source of foreign direct investment, operating alongside and parallel to traditional donors and institutions associated with the Global North. Over the past decade, China has also increased its profile and contributions to peacekeeping operations and conflict mediation, and it has even begun to engage in peacebuilding. China's growing international presence in this arena – along with its perspective on security-development linkages, and modalities of aid and investment – is clearly influencing outcomes related to peace, security and sustainable development. This has implications for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including those related to the environment.

In 2019, Mistra Geopolitics organized a session co-hosted by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs at the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development. The aim was to explore China's growing economic and political footprint in fragile and developing-country contexts. The session brought together experts, practitioners, and perspectives from international agencies, and from other observers across Africa, South Asia, and other regions in which China is emerging as a significant donor, financier, and political and security actor. Two key questions under-

pinned the discussions: How are China's aid modalities and perspectives on security affecting outcomes related to peace, security and sustainable development in the Global South? And, what are the implications of China's role for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including those related to the environment?

“What are the implications of China's role for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?”

Jiayi Zhou, a PhD student at Linköping University and a Mistra Geopolitics researcher at SIPRI, moderated the session and summarizes her reflections below.

The session found that China's ability to make a positive contribution to – or to provide the impetus for – more sustainable outcomes in developing-country contexts depends on local partners as well as on China's own modalities of acting. In certain country contexts, Chinese investment activities and projects have been a catalyst for greater local government attention to national development, and China has helped stakeholders shift from



Jiayi Zhou moderating a session at the 2019 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development.

security-centred to growth-centred models or paradigms. In other contexts, China has fed into systems of corruption and low institutional capacity in ways that promote economically and socially unsustainable outcomes. On environmental questions, China has labelled its flagship Belt and Road Initiative as “green”. But the lock-in effects of its previous and continuing “brown” investments (e.g. coal-fired power plants) raise concerns.

China’s tools and instruments of aid are similar to those of traditional development actors in certain respects, but at the same time, they are different. China has in several respects followed the footsteps of previous or traditional development actors and funders, including Western states, Japan and South Korea. China has committed some of the same kinds of historical mistakes as its aid predecessors in terms of tied aid, low levels of transparency, and corruption scandals. However, there is growing recognition that China needs to update its way of operating, and to come into line with OECD standards. In addition, there is a need for more coordination with traditional donor communities, and more engagement with local actors and stakeholders outside of local government. These issues must be addressed if China is to be perceived as – and act as – a legitimate and genuine contributor to sustainable development.

On peacebuilding, China has increasingly expanded its overseas security footprint. This initiative is mostly tied to its growing economic interests abroad, but in some cases, economic relationships follow strategic interests. In general, China does not think about “peacebuilding” in the conventional (traditional developmental community) sense of the term. Instead, it works through its own model,

for example, undertaking quiet diplomacy and economic development as the basis of peace. It is learning, including through its participation in peacekeeping operations.

China has said many times that its “model” of development is not exportable. However, many developing countries have increasingly looked to emulate the Chinese experience of poverty alleviation. Now, in conjunction with the sheer amounts of assistance that China is able to provide on the world stage, a new alternative to traditional or Western developmental models and assistance is clearly emerging.

At the session, participants expressed concerns over how the emergence of China will affect the SDGs and climate goals. Participants’ concerns addressed transparency, civil society engagement, strategic motivations and other geopolitical problems. However, other participants were more hopeful, underscoring that a more inclusive global framework is essential for achieving the SDGs, and that this inevitably includes the participation of China and the use of Chinese resources.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jiayi Zhou is a PhD student at Linköping University and a Mistra Geopolitics researcher at SIPRI, working on Work Package 1 – Geopolitics and security in the Anthropocene. Her PhD thesis examines the tensions between human- and state-centred definitions and practices of food security in Russia and China. She is interested in how emergent and resurgent state actors shape the landscape of global governance in ways that are inevitably going to shape those broader global pathways and trajectories. She hopes to discuss ways in which these actors’ concepts and policies related to (food) security are caught between state-centric, more zero-sum perspectives on resource security and human-centric framings that speak to a shared and common pathway towards sustainable development.



Jiayi Zhou, a PhD student at Linköping University and Mistra Geopolitics researcher at SIPRI



A PODCAST ABOUT GEOPOLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE ONGOING TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

”En värld i förändring” (A changing world) is a podcast featuring conversations with experts, social debaters and Mistra Geopolitics researchers on climate, environmental change and international security. The podcast, in Swedish, is available on all regular podcast players.

In 2019 we kicked off a conversation series. The idea behind it was simple: we asked one researcher in the Mistra Geopolitics programme to invite a guest to a 45-minute conversation on selected topics. All episodes are hosted on SoundCloud and available on www.mistrageopolitics.org

The aim of the podcast is to provide a platform for engaging discussions on public debates in Sweden by bringing together researchers in the programme and stakeholders beyond academia. The podcast complements Mistra Geopolitics research that is published in peer-reviewed academic journals, reports, policy briefs and blogs.

The target audience is comprised of representatives of Swedish governmental bodies, policy organizations, think tanks, agencies, enterprises and industries.

EN VÄRLD I FÖRÄNDRING

Podcast produced by Mistra Geopolitics
Listen on your podcast player, SoundCloud
or directly from our webpage:
www.mistra-geopolitics.se/podcast/
The podcast is in Swedish.

In each episode, researchers and guests are asked to recommend their favorite book. Presented on our webpage, the book suggestions vary from fiction to policy reports. By discussing participants' recommended reading, we are able to broaden the scope of their perspectives. The podcast is moderated by Eva Krutmeijer.



EPISODE 1: CLIMATE EMERGENCY — ALARMISM OR POWER GATHERING?

During the spring and summer of 2019, several votes suggested that Sweden declare a "climate emergency". Johanna Sandahl, chair of the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, and Björn-Ola Linnér, programme director of Mistra Geopolitics and professor of Environmental Change at the Centre for Climate Science and Policy Research, Linköping University, kicked off the first episode of this podcast by discussing this issue.



Is announcing a climate emergency the right way to go? In May 2019, the United Kingdom was the first nation to declare such an emergency after a decision in the UK Parliament. In Sweden, initiatives were proposed in Gothenburg, Malmö and Örebro to achieve the sense of urgency believed to be necessary to create real change. Is the situation so serious now that it is reasonable to announce an emergency? Initially broadcast in the summer, this episode was revived in the autumn in connection with a debate then emerging in Europe, with the European Parliament deciding to declare a climate emergency in November 2019.

In the episode, neither Johanna Sandahl nor Björn-Ola Linnér were in favour of a state of emergency. They argued that such a declaration might lead to short-term, possibly ill-considered decisions and behaviours. In addition, they felt that the designation sends a signal about the situation in a way that may be problematic in the future. If we consider this to be a climate emergency now, what will we call it in five or ten years?

At the same time, both stressed that the situation is serious and urgent, and that action cannot wait. As Johanna Sandahl put it, **"Of course, there's nothing wrong with the sense of emergency. But to announce a climate emergency nationally is a completely different matter."**

EPISODE 2: CLIMATE-RELATED SECURITY RISKS — HOW DOES THE UN THINK?

The second episode addressed issues of climate and security. Discussing these issues were Ulrika Modéer, who heads the Department for External Relations and Impact Work (BERA) of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and Malin Mobjörk, who heads the Climate Change and Risk Research Program at the Stockholm International Peace Research (SIPRI) Peace Research Institute, and who leads the *"Geopolitics and security in the Anthropocene"* work package in Mistra Geopolitics.



Geopolitical consequences are becoming increasingly important to consider when shaping national and international policy. Climate change has been increasingly recognized since the mid-2000s, but what do we mean by climate-related security risks? And how have these risks been adopted by the UN system? The UN is often criticized for being a large, heavy-handed and bureaucratic organization. What is needed for an organization like the UN to change?

The discussion underscored that conflicts never have one simple cause. Malin Mobjörk provided an update on current climate-conflict-related research issues. Ulrika Modéer gave an inside perspective of how the different parts of the UN system have adapted to deal with the complexity and urgency of the topic.

"In the climate issue, we must dare to be clearer, and this is something that I think the UN has become. Still, we think it is going too slowly. But today, the climate issue is a reality for many people, and it is evident in how the UN addresses it", Ulrika Modéer said. "There is a lot we from UNDP can do by building on Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement and supporting the member states."

EPISODE 3: WHERE HAS NATURE GONE?

The third episode focused on the Anthropocene. The discussion brought together two scholars with slightly different views and perspectives. The episode featured Eva Lövbrand, a senior lecturer and associate professor at Linköping University and co-director of Mistra Geopolitics, and Victor Galaz, a political scientist and research lead at the Stockholm Resilience Centre.



The Anthropocene is an age that places human action on a geological timescale. Perhaps this is the reason for this discussion's philosophical tone, and emphasis on several existential issues. Our energy systems, transport patterns, and eating habits are changing the way our earth's biogeochemical processes and systems will function for thousands of years to come. Is it at all possible to make political decisions with geological time frames? How do we look at the relationship between us and nature – is it even possible to compare the two?

"One concrete thing I've experienced as a consequence of the breakdown of the separation between nature and culture is that I have found new and humble ways of approaching a changing world", Eva Lövbrand said. "Hiking is one such practice. By walking, we enter into a dialogue with nature. It has inspired me very much."

At the end of the conversation, Victor Galaz emphasized, **"There is always a risk that the Anthropocene discussion becomes a little depressing. It's about such great risks. At the same time, we know that we, the human species, have a tremendous ability to cooperate. That gives me hope."**

EPISODE 4: BEHIND OUR BATTERIES — METALS, PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT

This episode addressed the ongoing transformation away from fossil fuels and towards more electrified vehicles. Discussants were two Mistra Geopolitics researchers: André Månberger, associate senior lecturer at the department of environmental and energy systems studies, Lund University, and Maria-Thérèse Gustafsson, researcher at the Department of Political Science at Stockholm University.



Renewable energy and electrification of the transport sector are important ways to reduce our climate impacts. The increased interest in electric cars has also sparked a discussion around the geopolitical consequences of the transition from petrol to batteries.

André Månberger noted that China offers one example of the geopolitical changes emerging. "Mining has a large local environmental impact, and depending on how stringent environmental legislation a country has, it will either be profitable or not, to extract these metals and metalloids", he said. "This has enabled China to grow at the expense of the United States in this market."

Who will be the new winners and losers in electrification? What natural resources are used in these techniques? Are there enough of these resources? How can we deal with the conflicts that arise between mining and sustainable development? The researchers gave insights from their different research perspectives. They discussed how different actors, including consumers, can act to positively influence mining practices and mining communities.

Maria-Thérèse Gustafsson discussed the need to shift our mental focus from "there" to "here":

"We need to clarify and visualize the effects of our consumption in other countries and discuss how we can influence it from here – so that the problem does not always end up elsewhere, at local level in countries far away", she said.



Six more episodes will be broadcast in 2020. Listen to the podcast (in Swedish) at www.mistra-geopolitics.se/podcast/.

EPISODE 5: CREATING A FOSSIL-FREE SWEDEN — FROM SHAME AND GUILT TO DESIRE AND LONGING

This episode addressed how to generate a fossil-free economy in Sweden. Karin Bäckstrand, environmental research professor at Stockholm University, and Svante Axelsson, national coordinator for the governmental Fossil Free Sweden initiative, discussed the related issues.



Can we find the “kitchen entrance” to the climate issue? How do we communicate the positives and show that it is actually possible to change the world for better?

Karin Bäckstrand noted that the Paris Agreement has given the world’s 196 countries new roles “as facilitators for the transition to a sustainable world”.

Svante Axelsson said he is very enthusiastic about this bottom-up movement in Sweden, where industry trade associations have presented roadmaps on how they will become fossil-free enterprises.

“It is quite a fantastic endeavor with many important lessons learnt, not the least around how we communicate to involve people in the ongoing transformation”, he said.

Both guests addressed the importance of shifting perspectives, away from shame and guilt, and towards a positive tone that motivates people by emphasizing the evolution of a better world. The discussion also raised concerns that the fossil-free story only engages an already enlightened elite. The guests stressed that we must address difficult distributional political challenges.

EPISODE 6: GEOPOLITICS, CLIMATE AND SECURITY — HOW THE EU THINKS

The last episode of 2019 featured two experts on current events in the European Union. Ambassador Mikael Lindvall, head of the EU Representation Unit for Foreign and Security Policy, and Niklas Bremberg, senior researcher in the European Program at the Institute for Foreign Policy, gave insights into ongoing work in Brussels and EU member states. They discussed the EU Green Deal, and geopolitical issues relating to China and its Belt and Road Initiative.



At the time of the podcast, Ursula von der Leyen was poised to assume the presidency of the European Commission, a body she has referred to as a “geopolitical commission”. What does this mean? How does the EU deal with climate and security issues? And what new geopolitical challenges are on the table?

The discussion addressed how the relationship between climate and security is playing out in a European context. The podcast took place at a time when the proposed European Green Deal was on the horizon. Against this backdrop, Mikael Lindvall said that that in his own work, people are trying to work and think more proactively. **“...I find that very exciting”, he said. “The most rewarding part of my job is when we succeed in taking the EU’s foreign policy forward.”**

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS



E3G RULES OF THE ROAD: THE GEOPOLITICS OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES IN EURASIA.

A new E3G report, “Rules of the road: the geopolitics of electric vehicles in Eurasia”, finds that most countries are not prepared for the impacts of unexpectedly rapid market penetration of electric vehicles. Against the backdrop of rising populism and protectionism there is a risk that the transition to electric vehicles will exacerbate geopolitical tensions.

Conservative forecasts show significant growth in the adoption of electric vehicles over the next several decades. Under most scenarios the trend towards electrification of the transport sector will continue and could happen much faster than mid-range forecasts predict. A rapid transition to electric vehicles would increase the risk of disruption, especially against the current backdrop of rising trade barriers and resource nationalism.

The report envisions how countries might respond to rapid market penetration of electric vehicles to increase awareness of the geopolitical risks and identify ways to strengthen rules-based international cooperation.

“History shows new technologies can be adopted at exponential rates.”

Taylor Dimsdale, research director at E3G, leads E3G’s research for Mistra Geopolitics. Work in 2019 included a project examining the geopolitical implications of electric vehicles in Eurasia. The aim was to develop a better understanding of key drivers and possible scenarios to help mitigate the risks of geopolitical tensions, reduce the likelihood of a disorderly energy transition, and identify avenues for dialogue and international cooperation. The project included a literature review of the geopolitics of the clean energy transition; a review of various national security strategies and other governmental policies and planning documents; interviews with a diverse range of stakeholders in technology, security and foreign policy fields; and expert workshops.

“History shows new technologies can be adopted at exponential rates”, Taylor Dimsdale said. “If electric vehicles keep growing at their current pace, batteries could be to the 21st century what oil was to the 20th. The shift could be disruptive and carries all sorts of risks for oil producers and vulnerable regions. But electric vehicles are also an opportunity for countries to work together on technology, energy and trade. This would reinforce regional stability and dramatically reduce climate risk.”

THE RISE OF 'GREEN' FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

\$120bn

The approximate value of the global EV market in 2017



EV costs must fall rapidly if sales are to grow to deliver a transport sector compliant with the Paris Agreement.



Fast growth requires an expansion of global supply chains, regulatory cohesion and market integration which could prompt a rise in 'green' free trade agreements.

UNFAIR SOCIAL TRANSITION AND STRATEGIC TRADE TENSIONS



Countries struggling to compete with new EV technology will lose market share and car-making jobs.



To protect domestic industries they raise import tariffs on EVs and stifle global trade and take up of EVs.

Adopting electric vehicles is likely to influence geopolitics through several interrelated mechanisms, including international trade, energy security and competition over strategic resources. Electric vehicles will also have second- and third-order effects with geopolitical and human security implications, in large part due to a declining tax base in oil-producing countries. In each case electric vehicles have the potential to be either a catalyst for greater cooperation or a source of conflict.

Expert interviews and a review of publicly available national security and intelligence documents and other grey literature show that only very limited attention has been paid to the geopolitical or security implications of a scenario in which electric vehicles are adopted at high rates. Most commentary addressing the adoption of electric vehicles does so from a techno-economic perspective. The reviewed national security strategies show that governments address some related matters, such as the security risks of climate change, risks to resource supply chains, and the opportunities of new energy technologies. However, none of the examined government documents deal directly with the implications of electric vehicles or the electrification of transport more generally. The lack of preparedness, particularly for high rates of electric vehicle adoption, could increase the risk of geopolitical tensions in the future.

The report proposes several recommendations with the aim of strengthening rules-based international co-operation to help mitigate the risks of both geopolitical tensions and disorderly energy transitions:

G20 Energy Ministers should establish a task force on trade and electric vehicles.

The G20 trade task force should launch a working group on harmonizing regulatory approaches on electric vehicle standards.

The US, EU, China, Japan and Korea should pledge to increase support to international R&D initiatives such as the multi-government forum, the Electric Vehicle Initiative; they should also direct more funding towards next-generation battery technologies.

The EU and China should stress test their security and economic strategies against a scenario in which the adoption of electric vehicles is high.

The EU should work more strongly with countries with deposits of EV metals and minerals to improve resource governance including through capacity building and technical assistance.

The EU should work with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to assess the risks that electric vehicles pose to the macroeconomic stability of oil producers.

The report is on the Mistra Geopolitics website, and was featured in a blog published by New Security Beat, the blog of the Environmental Change and Security Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

In 2019 E3G also began a second project examining the geopolitical consequences of climate risk in the global financial system. This project involves desk-based research, and a workshop and interviews with financial experts and other stakeholders. The aims are to improve understanding of the issue, and to offer recommendations emerging recommendations about how the G20 and other financial institutions can help the world avoid the instability that would result from a failure to manage the financial risks of climate change. The final report is scheduled to be published in 2020.

E3G

is an independent climate change think tank operating to accelerate the global transition to a low-carbon economy. With independent experts on climate diplomacy and energy policy, E3G is considered to be a thought leader in developing a practical risk management approach to addressing climate change and responding to climate security issues.



ADELPHI

CAN GEOPOLITICS LEAD TO A CARBON LOCK-IN?

Since 2001, adelphi has worked to analyse trends of environmental change, and develop innovative cooperative responses. The events of 2019 underscored the urgency of a low-emission transformation. The global wave of protests inspired by Greta Thunberg stood in contrast to policy responses, which ranged from limited political action to inaction and outright hostility from those in power. Dennis Tänzler, adelphi's director of international climate policy, and his team are working to understand how international levers can accelerate climate action, and, in turn, how this might change international politics. adelphi's research seeks to identify next steps to support climate ambition while providing for a mindfully guided transformation.

"Scholars and analysts point out that decarbonisation of the global economy will impact international affairs and geopolitics. But do we agree on what geopolitics of decarbonisation is – and what it is not?"

Within the Mistra Geopolitics programme, adelphi helps develop and structure the research field of geopolitics of

decarbonisation to pave the way for policy recommendations. In its first Mistra Geopolitics paper, adelphi suggested a conceptual framework for geopolitics of decarbonisation. It then used the framework to collaborate with colleagues in the programme to developing specific focal points for research. The process led to the research aim of identifying geopolitical aspects raised by decarbonisation issues, such as just transitions and carbon lock-in.

Increasing numbers of scholars and analysts point out that the necessary decarbonisation of the global economy will impact international affairs and geopolitics. But do we agree on what geopolitics of decarbonisation is – and what it is not? The 2019 adelphi publication, "Geopolitics of Decarbonisation: Towards an analytical framework" suggests one way to structure the links between geopolitics and decarbonisation – both broad topics that have inspired academic and policy thinking. The paper draws on existing literature to help define geopolitics of decarbonisation as a field of inquiry. It clarifies the questions underpinning this emerging research agenda. The publication examines the extent to which decarbonisation research fields already incorporate geopolitical thinking. The publication also explores the geopolitical tools scholars can use to analyse the decarbonisation trends.



The key ideas underlying the framework are that geopolitics and decarbonisation can mutually affect each other in multiple ways, and that to better understand these interactions, one needs to disaggregate these two complex research fields. The paper does this by delving deeper into their conceptualization in the literature. For geopolitics, the framework adopts a narrow definition, based on the interaction of international politics and geographical factors. For decarbonisation, the framework uses three different low-emission transition perspectives – political, socio-technical and techno-economic – as developed by Cherp et al. (2018).

A second adelphi study to be published in 2020, is examining how geopolitics can have an impact on decarbonisation pathways if it exerts an influence on infrastructure decisions. This research focused on China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), an infrastructure development effort involving investments in dozens of other countries. The initiative

and its geopolitical motivations are likely to shape the infrastructure of the target countries substantially, thus affecting their decarbonisation pathways. To gain detailed insights, adelphi concentrated on BRI investments in Kazakhstan, where Chinese investments meet a national policy context in which higher-level aspirations to create a diversified, knowledge-based economy compete with path dependencies of energy and resource intensity. The study found that both push factors (the motives and interests behind the BRI) and pull factors (the investment demand in Kazakhstan) are important for decisions over high- or low-emission infrastructure.

As part of its broader foreign policy research, adelphi examined the political and socio-economic conditions in countries that depend on fossil fuel exports. This work identified countries that can be categorized as “smooth”, “challenging”, or “fragile” transformers, depending on their exposure to climate risks, the potential for energy diversification, and the level of policy ambition. Based on this, adelphi outlined comprehensive approaches for European foreign policy – encompassing climate, energy, peace, security and economic diplomacy.

In the coming year, adelphi will continue exploring how geopolitics of decarbonisation link to and potentially impact different fields of international politics. Work in collaboration with Mistra Geopolitics partners will focus on trade and investment as one possible vehicle of interaction between geopolitics and decarbonisation dynamics.

ADELPHI

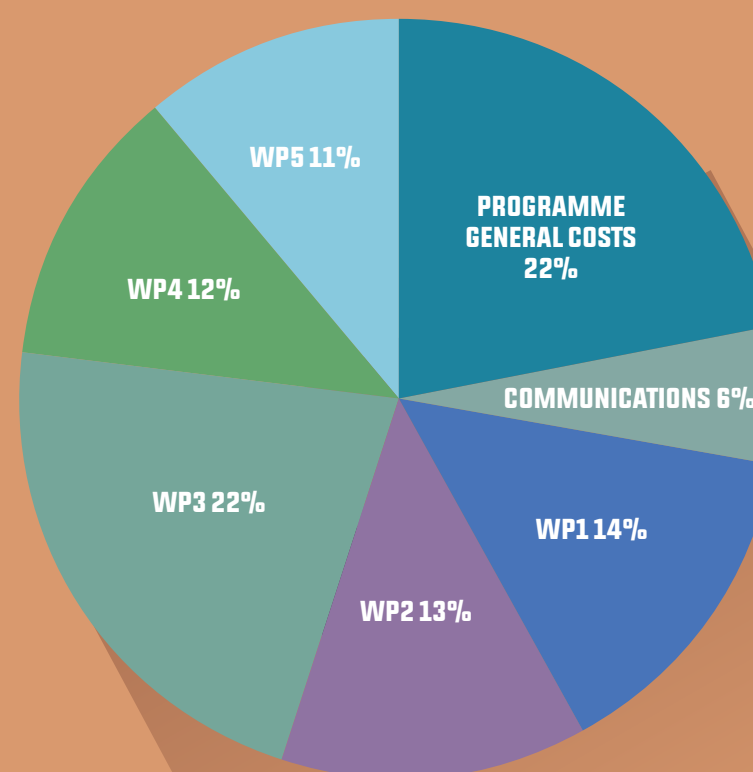
is a leading independent think tank and public policy consultancy on climate, environment and development based in Berlin. adelphi's mission is to improve global governance through research, dialogue and consultation.

Download and read Geopolitics of Decarbonisation: towards an analytical framework on the Mistra Geopolitics website – (www.mistra-geopolitics.org)

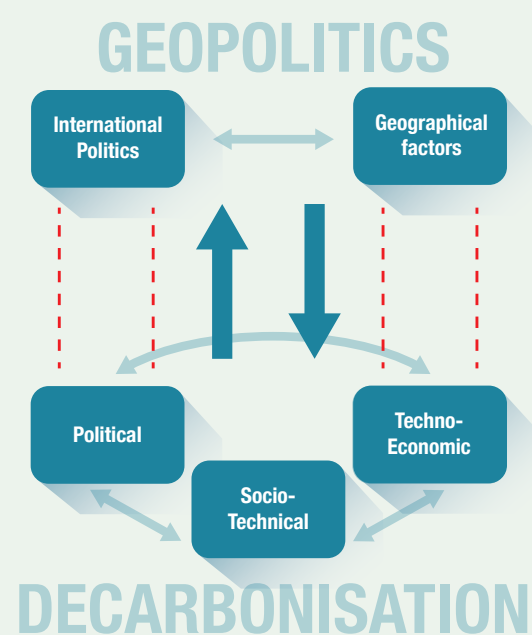
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Revenues	SEK
Mistra	15 358 995
Co-funding from programme partners and Stakeholders	3 138 812
Total revenues	18 497 807
Expenditure	
Salaries	11 720 844
Travel	506 717
Consumables	3 755
Other direct costs	1 656 002
Purchased services	537 060
Indirect costs	2 995 135
Strategic reserve	1 078 294
Total expenditure	18 497 807

EXPENDITURE BY WORK PACKAGE



Expenditure by work package	SEK
Programme general costs	4 256 222
Communications	1 017 060
WP 1: Geopolitics and security in the anthropocene	2 478 887
WP 2: Impact pathways in a changing environmental and geopolitical context	2 282 811
WP 3: Governance responses to environmental related security risks	3 795 350
WP 4: The interrelationships between shifting geopolitical landscapes and the SDGs	2 027 384
WP 5: Foresight – Sweden in a changing geopolitical landscape	1 916 493
Total expenditure	17 774 207



MEDIA APPEARANCES

A GROWING INTEREST FROM MEDIA

Several **Mistra Geopolitics** researchers have been featured in various media, in both digital and print such as Swedish national radio and television, Swedish newspapers Expressen and Dagens Industri, and international publishers like Bloomberg.



THE FOLLOWING LIST HIGHLIGHTS EXAMPLES OF MEDIA APPEARANCES IN 2019.

Interview with Björn-Ola Linnér on Swedish Radio's Science programme "Klotet" on Swedish environmental policy.	23 Jan 2019
Björn-Ola Linnér and Eva Lövbrand quoted in article on Dagens Nyheter: "We climate researchers support Greta and the schoolchildren"	14 Mar2019
Interview with Björn-Ola Linnér on Svenska Dagbladet: "The government's plan is not enough to achieve the goals"	10 April 2019
Interview with Karl Hallding on Expressen: "China dictatorship cannot solve the climate crisis"	16 April 2019
Interview with Karl Hallding on China's role in the environment and climate change, featured in The Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI) podcast's 'Global China Series'.	17 April 2019
Björn-Ola Linnér comments in SVT news piece on Linköping municipality's climate targets.	29 May 2019
Eva Lövbrand featured in article on Breakit: "Does climate compensation really work?"	3 June 2019
Nina von Uexkull in Uppsala Nya Tidning: "Increased risk of armed violence with changing climate"	12 June 2019
Nina von Uexkull on Swedish Radio: "A warmer planet increases the risk of conflict"	17 June 2019
Eva Lövbrand in Aftonbladet: Climate compensation: salvation or flop?	21 June 2019
Eva Lövbrand in Dagens Industri: Climate compensation: does it work?	24 June 2019
Interview on Swedish Radio with Karl Hallding: "China, Climate and us"	6 Aug 2019
Interview with Eva Lövbrand on Expressen, titled: "Climate scientist's criticism: Climate compensation is no quick fix"	10 Aug 2019
Video interview with Karl Hallding on Expressen TV: "China's climate bluff - a threat to the world".	1 Sep 2019
Interview with Eva Lövbrand on SVT: "How eating meat affects climate – you can change your food emissions."	19 Sep 2019
Interview with Björn-Ola Linnér on Swedish Radio's 'Godmorgon Världen' on the limitations of climate summits.	20 Sep 2019
Nina von Uexkull on Expressen: "Why Greta Thunberg deserves the peace prize"	10 Oct 2019
Eva Lövbrand quoted in Aftonbladet: "The travel industry's green promises are difficult to control"	09 Oct 2019
Interview with Karl Hallding on Swedish Radio's 'Godmorgon världen': Anger as Chinese company builds Swedish subway (ca 8:38 into the clip)	13 Oct 2019
Essay by Björn-Ola Linnér in Dagens Nyheter titled, "The climate movement can learn from the struggle against slavery"	23 Oct 2019
Article in Dagens Industri on Björn-Ola's keynote address at the Dagens Industri and Aktuell Hållbert's conference: "Businesses must adopt geopolitics"	13 Nov 2019
Interview with Björn-Ola Linnér on Swedish Radio: "Swedish disappointment over climate summit outcome"	16 Dec2019
Björn-Ola Linnér quoted in article in Expressen about Greta Thunberg's Fridays for future movement and Swedish government's lack of climate justice perspective.	18 Dec2019



Björn-Ola Linnér



Karl Hallding



Eva Lövbrand



Nina von Uexkull



Karin Bäckstrand

EVENTS

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

‘Climate change – the science, international politics, SDG interactions, business perspective’ – for the Swedish diplomat training programme at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs	10 Jan 2019
‘Establishing a UN joint Climate-Security Risk Mechanism’ at the Planetary Security Conference	19 Feb 2019
The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor – Stirring Tensions or Spurring Development?	10 April 2019
‘Institutional responses on climate-related security risks’ at the International Studies Association Conference	28 March 2019
‘Climate-conflict research enters policy’ at the International Studies Association conference	29 March 2019
”Security and climate change: Fixing the missing links?” – a joint event by the Centre for International Security at the Hertie School and the United Nations Association of Germany.	12 Nov 2019

SEMINARS

“The world’s greatest news – why we have such a hard time imagining the future”. Seminar with Björn Wiman, Dagens Nyheter’s Cultural Manager and author of ‘Sent på Jorden’.	24 Jan 2019
“The effects of climate change on security”	30 Sep 2019
Almedalen: Climate change – new business opportunities and new geopolitical risks	01 July 2019
Almedalen: Thinking long-term about China’s global ambitions – does Sweden have a China strategy?	01 July 2019
Almedalen: How does China affect Swedish business?	02 July 2019
Water as a symbol: The Israel-Palestine water conflict	01 Feb 2019
Financing the future – driving sustainability within Belt & Road projects	02 April 2019
Board Meeting at The Hague. Visit by the Mistra Geopolitics Board and Management Team including organized seminars with various dignitaries.	05–06 Sep 2019
States and Nature: The Effects of Climate Change on Security	30 Sep 2019
International migration and the impact on climate change	08 Oct 2019
10 years to 2030: A new playing field for the business sector	13 Nov 2019
Critical Geopolitics of Climate Change: perspective from Global South	20 Nov 2019

WORKSHOPS

Climate & Conflict, EU Commission Joint Research Center	05 Feb 2019
’Klimatförändringar och konflikter’ at seminar organized by Kvinnor för Fred	06 Feb 2019

Decision Support Systems for Climate Change Mitigation Planning and Practice	25 March 2019
The Geopolitics of a changing Arctic	09 May 2019
‘Climate-sensitive Armed Conflict Projections for the 21st Century’ at the Peace Research Institute, Oslo	6 June 2019
‘Synergies and Trade-Offs in Reaching the Sustainable Development Goals’ at the Peace Research Institute, Oslo	6 June 2019
‘Climate-sensitive Armed Conflict Projections for the 21st Century’ at Barcelona Summer Forum Workshop Forecasting Political and Economic Crisis: Social Science Meets Machine Learning	17 June 2019
The geopolitics of sustainable oceans	03 Sep 2019
Multimethodology for developing transparent representative sets of long-term scenarios	06–07 Nov 2019

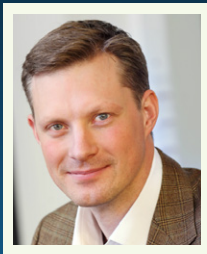
PRESENTATIONS

The Anthropocene and the political imagination	24 Jan
Network for Education and Research on Peace and Sustainability (NERPS) Scoping Workshop	10 Feb 2019
‘The Conflict Trap in the 21st Century: Projecting Armed Conflict and Economic Growth, 2019-2100’ – at International Studies Association Annual Meeting	28 March 2019
‘Climate-Sensitive Armed Conflict Projections for the 21st Century’ at the International Studies Association Annual Meeting	28 March 2019
A New World: The Geopolitics of the Energy Transformation	09 May 2019
The Arctic as a Strategic Space: Geopolitics of the Northern Flank	24 May 2019
‘Climate Change and Armed Conflict’ at Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs	27 May 2019
The legitimacy of the UN in a changing geopolitical landscape: Is the liberal world order threatened?	04 Sep 2019
Presentation of the paper “The Conflict Trap in the 21st Century: Projecting Armed Conflict and Economic Growth, 2019-2100” at VIEWS – a political Violence Early Warning System Workshop.	15 Oct 2019
“Climate-sensitive Armed Conflict Projections for the 21st Century” Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington DC.	29 Aug 2019
“Climate-sensitive Armed Conflict Projections for the 21st Century” at VIEWS Brownbag Seminar Series, Uppsala.	08 Oct 2019

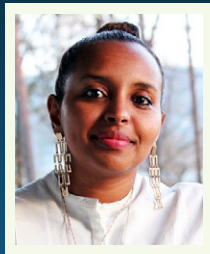
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Chair of the Board



ROBERT EGNELL
Board Member



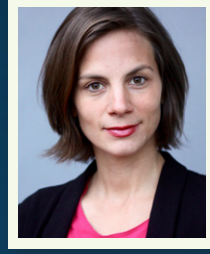
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Board Member



CAROLINE ANKARCRONA
Board Member



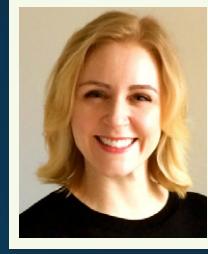
ANNIKA MARKOVIC
Board Member



NINA VON UEXKÜLL
Researcher, assistant professor, Uppsala University



HÅVARD HEGRE
Researcher, professor, Uppsala University



LISA DELLMUTH
Researcher, associate professor, Stockholm University

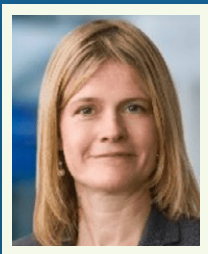


ANDREAS DUIT
Researcher, professor, Stockholm University



KEVIN ADAMS
Research Fellow, Stockholm Environment Institute

MANAGEMENT TEAM



INGER BUXTON
Board Member



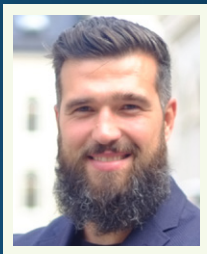
BJÖRN-OLA LINNÉR
Programme Director



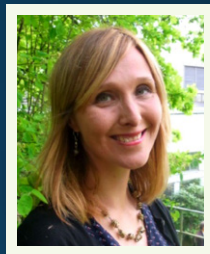
KARL HALLDING
Co-Director



EVA LÖVBRAND
Co-Director



BERNARDAS PADEGIMAS
Programme Manager



MARIE-THERESE GUSTAFSSON
Postdoctoral research fellow, Stockholm University



ANDRÉ MÅNBERGER
Researcher, Associate senior lecturer, Lund University



TINA NESET
Senior researcher, Linköping University



VICTORIA WIBECK
Researcher, professor, Linköping University



SARA TALEBIAN
Research fellow at Stockholm Environment Institute

RESEARCHERS



NATALIA HEINI
Finance controller



EVA KRUTMEIJER
Communications Lead



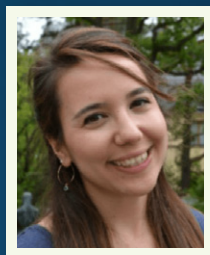
BRENDA OCHOLA
Communications Officer



KARIN BÄCKSTRAND
Researcher, professor, Stockholm University



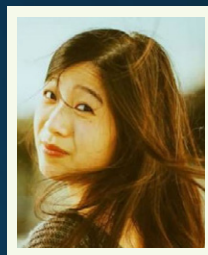
MALIN MOBJÖRK
Senior Researcher and Director, SIPRI



ECE KURAL
Phd Student, Stockholm University



KARIN ELIASSON
Phd Student, Linköping University



JIAYI ZHOU
Phd Student, Linköping University

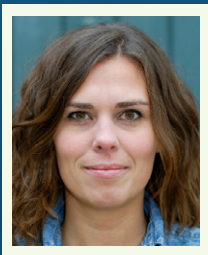


ANTON AHLÉN
Phd Student, Uppsala University



MARIA NORDBRANDT
Phd Student, Uppsala University

PHD STUDENTS



ÅSA PERSSON
Research Director and Deputy Director, Stockholm Environment Institute



BENGT JOHANSSON
Researcher, senior lecturer, Lunds University



HENRIK CARLSEN
Senior research fellow, Stockholm Environment Institute



MAGNUS BENZIE
Research fellow, Stockholm Environment Institute



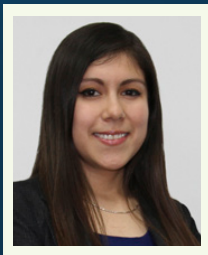
JOAKIM PALME
Researcher, professor, Uppsala University



MARIA JERNÅS
Phd Student, Linköping University



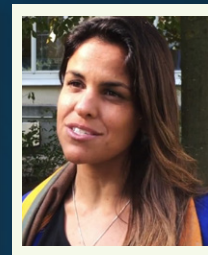
LAURI PETERSON
Phd Student, Uppsala University



ADY CHINCHAY
Doctoral Student, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru



AYODEJI ANTHONY ADULOJU
Doctoral Student, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria



BEATRIZ RODRIGUES BESSA MATTOS
Doctoral Student, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro



KRISTINA PETROVA
PhD student, Uppsala University

PARTNERS



STAKEHOLDERS



PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

Biermann, F. and Löwbrand, E. (2019). Anthropocene Encounters: New Directions in Green Political Thinking. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Linnér, B.-O. and Wibeck, V. (2019). Sustainability Transformations: Agents and Drivers across Societies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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II. REPORTS

Benzie, M., Harris, K., Adams, K. M., Klein, R. J. T., Nadin, R., Roberts, E., Opitz-Stapleton, S., Vallejo, L. and Magnan, A. K. (2019). Wilton Park Agenda on adapting to transboundary climate risk. West Sussex: Wilton Park.

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III. POLICY BRIEFS

Ahlén, A. (2020). Managing migration and integration in European nation states: the case of family immigration. Department of Government, Uppsala University, forthcoming.

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IV. WORKING AND CONFERENCE PAPERS

Gilmore, E. A., Hegre, H., Hoyle, F., Olafsdottir, G. and Petrova, K. (2019). Economic growth, armed conflict and the implications for climate change, working paper.

Löwbrand, E., Mobjörk, M. and Söder, R. (2019). The Anthropocene and the geo-political imagination: re-writing the earth as political space, paper presented at the 'Geo-Imaginations' workshop in Sigtuna, 25–27 September 2019.

MISTRA GEOPOLITICS
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SE-115 23 STOCKHOLM
INFO@MISTRAGEPOLITICS.ORG

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