

Research on international relations, foreign policy and Norwegian interests

Knowledge base for research and innovation policy

Division for Society and Health



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Research Council of Norway
Office address: Drammensveien 288
P.O. Box 564
NO-1327 Lysaker
Phone: (+47) 22 03 70 00
post@forskningsradet.no
www.forskningsradet.no/

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Summary

Following a period of steadily increasing global cooperation and relative stability, most indicators now point in the direction of **a more turbulent and unpredictable world**. Global challenges relating to the climate and environment, migration and inequality give cause for concern. In the last Report to the Storting on this topic, *Setting the course for Norwegian foreign and security policy* (Report to the Storting No 36 (2016–17)), the Government states that Norway is facing a more serious security policy situation than it has done for a long time. This is also why a strong research effort is needed.

This knowledge base for research and innovation policy will lay **the foundation for the Research Council of Norway's upcoming research on foreign policy, international relations and Norwegian interests**. The goal is to describe a framework for a future research agenda, and to propose how future research in this field should be organised. This knowledge base has been commissioned by the Research Board for the Division for Society and Health at the Research Council and it has been prepared in close collaboration with a reference group comprising representatives of key research communities from the whole of Norway.

Norway has strong, and in some cases world-leading, research communities that focus on foreign policy and security policy. They work in both the institute sector and the university and university college sector. The full breadth of social science disciplines, as well as a broad range of humanities disciplines, make significant contributions to this work, and interdisciplinarity is common. Recent evaluations show that many of them score well in terms of scholarly quality and relevance to users. There is a significant value-added potential that can be realised by adjusting the framework conditions for funding, the user dialogue and the division of labour.

This research field is very broad thematically, and it partly overlaps with other focus areas, including extremism, migration, and energy and the environment. **The report outlines key research topics relating to the political order, the economy, resources and climate, as well as security**, although it does not aim to present an exhaustive agenda. At the overarching level, it is a challenge to ensure that Norway has robust and multi-faceted knowledge in areas of major strategic importance, at the same time as it stimulates new research on topics that might appear less central, but that can prove to be the key to addressing new trends that are significant for Norway.

The report is also wide-ranging in geographical terms. For some parts of the world that are of major importance to Norway, our research efforts are worryingly low. This applies, for example, to research on the USA, Europe and China/East Asia. At the same time, however, it is also important, as above, to carry out research on other countries and areas than those that seem most important here and now, both because this can help us to understand new developments and because it gives us access to knowledge that can be useful in contingency situations. In a world that is increasingly interconnected, it is a structural challenge to ensure that we have a sound basis for studying global trends, for conducting comparative studies and for researching transnational networks and phenomena.

The knowledge base **concludes with some concrete recommendations for Norway's research on international relations, foreign policy and Norwegian interests** in the years ahead. The recommendations are presented in brief below (a more detailed presentation is provided in Chapter 6):

- #1: Establish research on international relations, foreign policy and Norwegian interests as a focus area
- #2: The effort should be structured to enable a combination of funds with different budgetary purposes
- #3: Swift start-up in priority areas
- #4: Develop new project formats with integrated user dialogues
- #5: Cultivate scholarly quality
- #6: Ensure access to new research talents
- #7: Cooperate internationally
- #8: Cooperate at the national level
- #9: Include the field in the Long-term Plan for Research and Higher Education

1.0 Background

The goal of this document is to lay the foundation for a strategic and long-term research focus on international relations, foreign policy and Norwegian interests. The research should combine high quality with great relevance to users, and help to develop contingency knowledge that can help us to deal with the new challenges Norway will face.

A knowledge base for research and innovation policy summarises the status of the research efforts in a given field, points to knowledge gaps that need to be filled and proposes measures to overcome structural obstacles, thus ensuring the best possible conditions for achieving the goals set for the research focus. The work on this knowledge base is also an opportunity to take a broader look at the possibilities available to the authorities and society and their ability to utilise the results. A knowledge base is thereby the stage before a more concrete research strategy defining the framework and direction for what is to be done within a given period (for example a programme plan).

It is the Research Board for the Division for Society and Health at the Research Council that has commissioned this document. The work has been carried out in dialogue with researchers and leaders at institutions that work on foreign policy and security policy. This document primarily focuses on key topics relating to global, regional or transnational change processes in the political, economic and security field, with particular emphasis on Norway's research needs.

A number of areas with great relevance to the field, but that are covered by parallel processes, are only given limited attention here. This applies, for example, to research on the environment, energy, oceans, extremism, migration and civil security, as well as the large development field. It is important to acknowledge that a number of issues in these areas can have great relevance to the issues that this document addresses, and that other research initiatives in these fields will not necessarily prioritise foreign policy and security policy dimensions. Watertight dividing lines between different areas will therefore not be expedient for the type of focus proposed here.

Key government documents that define the framework for this knowledge base for research and innovation policy include:

- Report to the Storting No 36 (2016–2017) *Setting the course for Norwegian foreign and security policy*
- *Nordområdestrategi – mellom geopolitikk og samfunnsutvikling* (2017)
- Proposition No 151 to the Storting (2015–2016). *Kampkraft og bærekraft*. Long-term plan for the defence sector
- Report to the Storting No 37 (2014–2015). *Global security challenges for Norway's foreign policy – Terrorism, organised crime, piracy and cyber threats*
- Report to the Storting No 24 (2016–2017) *Common Responsibility for Common Future: The Sustainable Development Goals and Norwegian development policy*.

The new sustainability goals are also worth noting. They challenge the budgetary distinction between aid and other foreign policy efforts, and there is an increasing need to develop solutions that facilitate

coherent efforts, also in the research sector. The Research Council's NORGLOBAL programme covers a broad spectrum of research questions relating to development policy, with significant overlapping – and thereby with a potential for coordination and synergies – with the focus proposed in this document.

The Government's Long-term Plan for Research and Higher Education 2015–2024 largely concerns strengthening research and innovation that promote restructuring and growth in Norway. Global and international perspectives are absent, despite the fact that these perspectives have a strong influence on domestic conditions in Norway. It is a goal to include global and international perspectives in the revised long-term plan in order to ensure national knowledge development relating to understanding changes and international relations, and how they affect Norway and Norwegian interests.

The various reports to the Storting set a course for Norwegian foreign and security policy in the years ahead. Of particular interest to this knowledge base are the signals that Norway will see the High North as its most important strategic area, that it will focus on strengthening cooperation in the Arctic and on maintaining as constructive relations with Russia as possible. Similarly, a desire to continue the transatlantic cooperation, but also to build stronger bilateral relations with selected European countries (and the EU) and to further develop Nordic cooperation, has also been strongly signalled. The fight against extremism and terrorism, efforts to stem migration, aid policy and the continuation of Norway's commitment to peace efforts are reflected in particular in the ambition to increase our efforts in vulnerable states.¹

Norway has a broad and highly qualified research community at the foreign policy and security policy institutes and in university and university college departments. Several of them are world-leading in their fields. The Research Council's evaluations (of university social science departments and institutes, and the humanities) also show that the best of these communities score high on relevance, and that they have a sound understanding of how this can be ensured through targeted communication and user contact. At the same time, both important users and many in the research sector experience that there is a lot to be gained from improving the mutual understanding of each other's needs and work methods, and that relevance could be further strengthened through a structured dialogue between users and researchers. Users experience to some extent that researchers do not understand their needs, while the researchers experience that the multi-faceted contributions made by research are not sufficiently appreciated. We will return to these questions, especially in Chapter 4 on the research field, and again in the recommendations, where it is proposed to include a built-in dialogue between researcher and users in the project design.

A reference group has contributed input and background to the knowledge base. The group has worked from August 2016 until 1 September 2017. The group has had two meetings, its members have contributed extensive input and a final draft of the report has been circulated for comment.

¹ Here, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented [a separate strategic framework](#) in June 2017.

Participants in the reference group:

Kristian Berg Harpviken	The International Peace Research Institute (PRIO)
Tone Fløtten	The research foundation Fafo
Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørsv	The Arctic University of Norway (UiT)
Cathrine Holst	Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo
Sven G Holtsmark	Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies (IFS)
Geir Hønneland	Fridtjof Nansen Institute (FNI)
Torbjørn L Knutsen	Department of Sociology and Political Science, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)
Hilde Lorentzen	Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR), Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences
Halvor Mehlum	Department of Economics, University of Oslo
Ottar Mæstad	Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI)
Lise Rakner	Department of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen
Anne Julie Semb	Department of Political Science, University of Oslo
Anne Elizabeth Stie	Department of Political Science and Management, University of Agder
Ulf Sverdrup	Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)

Kristian Berg Harpviken has acted as moderator for the group in cooperation with the representative from the Research Council. He had been responsible for reworking the input from the reference group and formulating it in this document.

The work on the knowledge base has, among other things, taken place through:

- Discussions in the reference group on the research field and on research questions that can shed light on the scope and relevance of the research, organisational challenges and input on funding arrangements etc.
- Dialogue meetings with researchers and heads of institutes and university departments
- Mapping of the Government's ambitions (reports to the Storting, Norwegian official reports (NOUs), statements to the Storting etc.)
- Consultation of various documents that describe the status of research in the area (evaluations, application analyses, portfolio analyses etc.)

2.0 A time of global change?

It is both true and trivial to state that the world is changing, and that what tomorrow will bring is unpredictable. It is nonetheless a widely held view that we are currently in a period where the pace of change has dramatically increased, where the world is so interconnected that changes in one place can have consequences in completely different places, and, even more importantly, where changes in power structures challenge established values and cooperative institutions. For Norway, a small state with an open economy and a strong international political engagement, this development gives cause for concern. In Report to the Storting No 36 (2016–2017), *Setting the course for Norwegian foreign and security policy*, which was presented on 21 April 2017, the opening paragraph begins on a serious note:

Norway's current security situation is more challenging than it has been for a long time. Unpredictability has become the new normal. The world as we know it is changing. Cooperation is being put to the test.

Norway has strong research communities in the field of international relations and foreign policy. The report to the Storting emphasises how important research-based knowledge is in order to make informed decisions, not least in areas of particular strategic importance to Norway. This knowledge base for research and innovation policy aims to define the contribution of research, to point to key thematic issues and geographical priorities, and to propose measures that will ensure that Norwegian research on international relations combines high scholarly quality with great relevance.

The global changes have political, economic and security ramifications. Combined with the complexity of modern society, this global interconnectedness makes Norway vulnerable. The changes have also been incorporated into analytical approaches. Traditionally, studies of international relations took individual states as their point of departure. They emphasised the safeguarding of material assets and established values – such as military defence of borders, territory and the population, as well as protecting institutions to ensure value creation, governance, welfare and resource distribution.

After the end of the Cold War, new perspectives emerged in research, with the emphasis on internationalisation and globalisation. New approaches often drew on insights from several different disciplines, shifting the focus towards political economy, geopolitics, cultural hegemony and questions of identity. New approaches often involve looking at society in a regional context and understanding tensions and conflicts as social and cultural communication. New approaches often draw on social and psychological theories. They focus on mechanisms for order and control – mechanisms that contribute to the state's control of its surroundings and to prestige and reputation, but also mechanisms that strengthen socialisation and integration. This research sees mechanisms that can combine citizens' freedom with consensus, shared values and solidarity as factors that contribute to security.

A broader and more open analytical platform has made research better equipped to understand the world and to shed light on the changes we are currently experiencing. At the same time, we must expect today's global changes to influence the analytical perspectives. It is not difficult to envisage a return to a traditional paradigm where the integrity of the nation state is a primary reference, but, in such case, it is not likely to be either particularly precise or especially expedient. On the contrary, it will be necessary to draw on the full breadth of disciplines, methodological approaches and analytical perspectives in order to

understand the change processes and be capable of contributing to informed policies, for both Norwegian authorities and others. A quick look at some of the important forces that are in play illustrates the need for multiple approaches.

In geopolitical terms, we see a rapid shift of power from the USA and Europe to emerging states such as Turkey, India and China. The USA is no longer the undisputed superpower, neither politically nor economically. The division between North and South is becoming less and less clear thanks to an enduring rate of growth in the least prosperous countries that is far more than twice the growth rate in traditional industrial countries. The centre of gravity of the global economy is moving to East Asia, where China in particular is developing into a global power. Multilateral cooperation and the global legal order, which small states like Norway see as very beneficial, are under pressure.

European cooperation is being challenged. The after-effects of the financial crisis, particularly on the currency collaboration, are being manifested in clearer and clearer divisions between member states. The huge influx of refugees and migrants in 2015, and the difficulties of agreeing on a coordinated policy to handle it, are putting the Schengen cooperation, and thereby the principle of free movement of labour within the EU, to the test. The UK's Brexit referendum, which ended in victory for those who wanted the country to leave the EU, highlights the crisis.

New types of actors are gaining in influence in international politics. Multinational companies, transnational criminal networks, global civil society networks and militant organisations contribute to increased complexity. This entails both limitations and possibilities. A country like Norway can find new partners in the private sector or in civil society, but it can also be threatened by criminal or militant organisations. Vulnerable states are breeding grounds for these threats, both because they can end up as hosts for them and because their own political practice increases support for them. Transnational networks and non-state groups challenge a world order based on sovereign states, at the same time as they cooperate and interact with them.

Demographic trends play an important role. This applies to both global population growth, which accentuates resource shortages and unequal distribution, and the geographical population shift, where countries that succeed in creating growth and opportunities profit from having large cohorts of working age. In continuation of this comes migration pressure, which challenges both values and institutions in potential receiving countries, at the same time as the latter, paradoxically, have a demographic situation that demands a supply of extra labour. For the sending countries, migration can increase the supply of both money and knowledge, but it can also lead to a loss of labour and innovation as well as to demographic imbalance.

Exponential technological development is also driving change. Politically, this creates new opportunities for political engagement, for coordination and for communication. Economically, it is driving up productivity, although it also makes many jobs superfluous. In the security field, the development of, among other things, new weapons technology is becoming important. We see that the cyber domain itself is also becoming a new arena for waging war. Fundamental dilemmas relating to economies of scale, efficiency and coordination, as well as full-scale surveillance of citizens, are putting values to the test.

The media landscape is changing in step with technological developments. Where it used to be the content producers that were the key players, it is now increasingly those running the platforms for the distribution of content that hold the key. Paradoxically, we are now seeing the emergence of global quasi-monopolies at the same time as the news stream is being individualised. Where the nation state largely used the media to build shared references and narratives, this is only possible today if one has control of both the media and the internet. Diversity makes it possible to choose monotony and one-dimensionality where people previously had to relate to continuous diversity, a diversity that was more or less the same as other citizens of the same state faced.

Democracy as a system of government has been growing steadily since the mid-20th century, but it has stagnated in the past decade. Several countries are now developing in a less democratic direction. They are experiencing increasing dissatisfaction with the representative political system and with politicians in general. There is great variation in what people are dissatisfied with (supranational government, state regulation, immigration, Islam, globalisation in general), but one common feature is a forceful political rhetoric that defines an antagonism towards the existing political elite. This is often manifested in demands for more direct democracy, a weakening of the rule of law and the emergence of independent power centres. In the foreign policy context, this trend is often manifested in increasing isolationism.

Greater inequality is often highlighted as the most important driver of populism. This primarily concerns economic inequality, where the political debate increasingly acknowledges that, even though the aggregated consequences of globalisation are positive, many people are net losers. Inequality is more than just economic inequality, however, and it is particularly potent when economic inequality is combined with inequality in political influence, in how people perceive their personal safety, or when all these different inequalities follow the dividing lines between identity groups.

A potted analysis of this kind cannot do justice to either the issues involved or to the contributions research has made to understanding them. It nevertheless provides a backdrop to understanding what types of connections research must turn its spotlight on, given that the goal must be to contribute research of outstanding quality that is relevant to Norway as a society, as a nation state and as an actor in the world.

3.0 The research field in Norway

Research on international relations meets a number of society's needs, ranging from contributing to knowledge-based policy formation to ensuring quality and relevance in education (see Fonn og Sending, 2006; Knutsen, 2013, for interesting reviews). A number of disciplines are relevant, most of them in the social sciences and humanities. Norwegian research in the field is of high quality. It is important for Norway, a small country with extensive exposure to the outside world and major foreign policy ambitions, to have good academic environments that both make a strong mark internationally and ensure that relevant expertise is available nationally. Norway is in a good position to ensure that it has strong research communities going forward that both meet national knowledge needs and contribute to advancing the international research front. This will primarily require dedicated resources (see Chapter 6), but also that good mechanisms are found for keeping transaction costs in check, promoting a sensible division of labour in the sector and strengthening relevance, while at the same time ensuring research's independence.

3.1 The contribution of research

It is an important task for research on international relations to contribute to a knowledge-based foreign and security policy. This means that research must be able to combine depth and breadth. In areas that are important to Norway, it is important that we have research communities of a certain size, and thus in-depth knowledge, as well as the ability to view the same topics from multiple perspectives and using diverse methods. At the same time, however, we must be able to maintain the breadth of the knowledge research produces, both in order to be able to identify new trends and as contingency knowledge when faced with the unexpected. A broad factual basis and a diversity of approaches are prerequisites if we are to contribute new ideas and insights beyond the traditional and customary. This is necessary, both in order to identify vital interests in changing circumstances and in order to pursue them through practical policy formation.

Research plays an important role in education. This applies at all levels, but most clearly in higher education, where the ideal of research-based education has high priority. Sound research at the national level ensures both that national interests and challenges are reflected in the education system and that the country's own educational institutions base their teaching on scholars of a high international standard. Large parts of the public administration, civil society and the private sector recruit from Norwegian educational institutions, and an understanding of research, knowledge about the world from a Norwegian perspective and good Norwegian academic environments are very important to productivity and our ability to adapt.

An open democracy is dependent on a well-informed public debate, not least in the foreign policy and security policy context. There has been a high degree of continuity in Norway's foreign policy, which has proven to be a comparative advantage. At the same time, ordinary people show great engagement and the knowledge level is high compared with many other countries (Harpviken, 2016). The knowledge base that research represents is important to the public discourse, both directly through researchers' active participation and indirectly through politicians, journalists and other participants in debates drawing on

research. This report is being written in a period when ‘fake news’ is attracting great attention, and, even though manipulation and strategic propaganda are nothing new in historical terms, having facts and analyses available is perhaps more important than ever before.

Research builds international networks, mutual understanding and cooperation. Awareness has increased in recent years of the importance of what is called ‘science diplomacy’, not least through the EU calls for proposals in this area.² The fundamental idea is that the norms and rules that apply to scientific cooperation make it possible to also establish cooperation with states with whom relations are problematic. Science diplomacy that focuses on knowledge about foreign policy and security policy issues is interesting and challenging because it largely concerns the relationship one is endeavouring to strengthen. The palette is broad, however, ranging from talking about war and peace from a philosophical or theological perspective to discussing one's own political system from a democracy perspective.

Science diplomacy

Scientific cooperation across national borders has been a key dimension of international political cooperation ever since the late 19th century. The first international organisations to be established were founded on scientific cooperation. The European integration project, which started with the European Coal and Steel Community, was based, for example, on the idea that scientific and technical cooperation could lead to more extensive political cooperation. The same idea is reflected in how international organisations started, in that they were established as bureaucratic organisations with independent expertise rather than as political secretariats. During the Cold War, the USA invested massively in the establishment of international expert networks, both via state funding, such as the Fulbright Foundation, and via private foundations such as the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations.

Norway participated in this international cooperation from an early stage – Norway’s participation in the Institute of International Law and the Inter-Parliamentary Union dates back to the 19th century; and the Nobel Institute, Chr. Michelsen Institute and the Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture helped to give Norway a strong reputation in fields such as peace, democracy and international relations in the early 20th century (Knutsen, Leira, Neumann, 2016). As early as the 1920s, the Norwegian linguistics scholar Georg Morgenstierne carried out studies of languages and dialects in Afghanistan and North West India (today’s Pakistan) that created a school of thought and that are still well-known far beyond linguistic circles a hundred years later (Ringdal, 2008). Research contributes to reputation, both directly through research cooperation and indirectly through the application of research. If, not least, Norway cultivates research in areas where it generally has a strong profile – for example offshore oil recovery or peace processes – then sound research-based knowledge can make a strong contribution to the country’s reputation.

Research on international relations and security policy is important to all countries. A lot of the research that is produced internationally is also relevant to Norwegian policies, the government administration and

² The EU uses a much broader definition of ‘science diplomacy’ that includes 1) ‘science in diplomacy’; 2) ‘diplomacy for science’ (support for and facilitation of research cooperation) and 3) ‘science for diplomacy’. Here, ‘science diplomacy’ is only used in the latter sense. See, for example, [Moedas 2015](#).

research, and it is very desirable that research communities outside Norway contribute to this research. At the same time, however, it is crucial to ensure research that addresses the Norwegian context and Norway's foreign policy and security policy challenges. The Norwegian research communities that work on these issues must be ensured predictability in the long term, so that young researchers can be recruited and cooperation established with more, new research communities, also outside Norway.

3.2 Status of Norwegian research

Norway has highly qualified research communities, both at the internationally oriented institutes and in university and university college departments. The Research Council's evaluations are perhaps the best basis we have for saying more on this matter. At the time of writing, final reports are available from evaluations of the university social science departments and institutes (including the internationally oriented institutes) and for the humanities (primarily universities and university colleges), but the ongoing evaluation of the social sciences will not be completed until 2018. Several evaluations have also been carried out of relevant programmes, which will not be discussed in detail here, but that confirm the impression given in the broader evaluations.³

Findings from the evaluation of a total of 22 social science university departments and institutes show that the group of internationally oriented institutes is very strong (Forskningsrådet, 2017a). This group includes the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI), Fridtjof Nansen Institute (FNI), the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO) and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI). It is worth noting that the defence sector's own research community, which includes the principal research groups in Norway for studies of defence and security strategy, is not part of the evaluation.

In the evaluation, the internationally oriented institutes stand out in all important areas.

- A high degree of relevance and an excellent understanding of what is required to design, carry out and communicate research in a way that contributes to changing policy or in other ways (based, among other things, on what are known as 'impact cases').
- Users report a high degree of satisfaction with their analytical and methodological expertise
- A high publication frequency with an average number of publications per researcher that is more than double the average for the sector, and a high proportion of publications in recognised journals (42% in Level 2 journals).
- A high citation rate for publications. In international relations and political science, the citation frequency is 121% and 116%, respectively, higher than for the other research communities. In these areas, around 25% of the institutes' publications are among the 10% most cited publications (normally 50–60 of the total number of citations).
- A high number of completed doctorates

³ This primarily concerns programme evaluations and reviews, such as the evaluations of NORRUSS (Oxford Research, 2014) and POVPEACE (Oxford Research, 2015).

- A high funding success rate in international arenas (especially EU programmes) and with the Research Council.

The report also shows that the Norwegian institutes are particularly academically strong in a number of areas that have great relevance for Norway, including Europe, Russia, the High North, peace and conflict, and security policy. It is emphasised that the institutes have a clear division of labour, each having their own distinct profile and defined purpose. Moreover, the evaluation also underlines that there is a strong tradition of interdisciplinarity.

A comprehensive evaluation of the humanities, which for the first time aimed to cover the entire field, was presented in June 2017 (Forskningrådet, 2017b). The importance of the humanities to research on international relations is self-evident, including languages, area studies (focus on a geographical area, preferably combined with relevant linguistic competence), history, religion and culture, as well as philosophy and ethics. The humanities evaluation focuses on research groups (a total of 97 from 36 different institutions). It covers 24 subject areas. A total of eight panels evaluated their allotted share of the research groups. The division of responsibility between the panels did not involve some of them focusing on research on international relations in particular, with the result that research groups of interest in this context are spread across most of the panels (and, naturally, quite a lot of the research groups do not focus exclusively on either national issues or international relations). A number of the findings from the evaluation are nonetheless interesting here:

- Research in the humanities is concentrated at the large, established universities, and there is a tendency for other environments to be small and fragmented. Of the 36 institutions involved, there are only 4 institutes (and, of these, it is only PRIO and the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies that are primarily geared to studying international relations).
- Publication rates are very uneven, with the strongest groups maintaining a high international level (both quantitatively and in terms of choice of publication channel), while many others produce little. The proportion of humanities publications in relation to the total volume in Norway is 2.4%, which is relatively high. Twenty-five per cent of the researchers who participated in the evaluation had not published anything in scholarly channels in the last five years.
- Especially languages and area studies are in decline as regards volume (and access to resources).
- As regards influence on policies and society, the feedback on the impact case studies is generally good.
- The humanities are very internationally oriented in terms of recruitment, partnerships and co-authorship. At the same time, however, there are great internal variations, and, in many areas, the evaluation emphasises that research on Norwegian issues is carried out without including a comparative perspective and in isolation from the international context.
- Many of the research groups evaluated as 'excellent' (based on a number of criteria, including research quality, publications, relevance/impact and organisation/management) primarily focus on international relations.⁴

⁴ For example, this includes the following groups: China Airborne (UiO), Political, Social and Ideological Change in the Middle East (UiO); Regions and Powers (PRIO); The Fate of Nations (NTNU); Law, Ethics and Religion (PRIO);

- The humanities in Norway have a relatively strong position and good access to resources, particularly at the established universities (where basic funding is available). External funding is limited and primarily comes from open programmes.

The evaluation coincides with the Government’s white paper on the humanities, which expresses a clear ambition to strengthen the position of the humanities, not least as regards cooperation with other disciplines and in research on international relations. Going forward, the humanities have a great potential to play a greater role in Norwegian research on international relations, both based on the strong academic environments that have been established and by developing new environments.

Unfortunately, at the time of writing, no corresponding evaluation is available for the social sciences. An evaluation is currently ongoing, and it is scheduled to be launched in summer 2018. The evaluation follows the same design as the comprehensive humanities evaluation and will contribute an updated status for subject areas that are important to studying international relations. The evaluation committee will also make recommendations for further development and for new measures to strengthen research and education in the relevant disciplines.

3.3 Framework conditions

The framework conditions, which are primarily a political responsibility, are partly defined by the general research policy, and partly by the sector ministries’ willingness and ability to support research in their respective fields in Norway. Here, we will look at the dilemmas associated with framework conditions in three key areas – funding, the relationship to users and the division of labour in the sector – and outline how they can be handled. We will return to the latter issue in more concrete terms in Chapter 6, where we will discuss priorities going forward.

3.3.1. Research funding

One important challenge for the independent institutes, and increasingly for the university and university college sector, is their dependence on external funding. The institutes, in particular, must adapt to what is to some extent a shifting and fragmented market. On the one hand, this entails a market adaptation that is desirable and that contributes to strengthening the institutions' ability to change and adapt and to be responsive to the priorities of a range of different clients. On the other hand, the transaction costs this involves can be very high and be at the expense of their ability to focus on research and communication. It can be especially demanding for them to maintain and further develop the necessary competence in these areas.

The ministries have a general responsibility for research in their sectors, both for more basic research and for applied research. The different sectors have different ways of following up this responsibility, but it is important that the resources the ministries have at their disposal for research and communication are

Indigenous Religion(s): Local Grounds, Global Networks (UiT); Tracing the Jerusalem Code (MF). It is also worth noting that several research groups that focus on the High North or on global media developments are ranked as ‘very good’ (i.e. 4 out of 5 on a scale where 5 is ‘excellent’).

divided between meeting short-term knowledge needs in the form of reports and ensuring long-term competence development in key areas.

The small and large programmes for which the Research Council is responsible are an important source of funding. It is demanding and time-consuming to identify suitable programmes and opportunities in the Research Council's funding structure, to develop partnership constellations and to design projects. Lack of continuity in the efforts and programmes addressing foreign policy and security policy can make it difficult to retain the competence base that it has taken a long time to build up, but that can be lost very quickly.

If funding primarily comes in the form of short-term or small-scale projects, this will over time undermine individual institutions' ability to build critical mass in a given field, and thereby lead to competence being spread, with the result that it is not possible to build up sufficiently strong academic environments. One possible solution is to develop long-term strategic programmes in important knowledge areas that are defined so that fundamental research-driven knowledge development in a field can be combined with the capacity to respond to more immediate needs in dialogue with the users.

3.3.2 The relationship to users

A related dilemma can arise as regards the research institutions' relationship to their users. On the one hand, the integrity of research is based on full independence, which is when its value to users is greatest. On the other hand, the relevance of research is based on an understanding of users' knowledge needs and work methods that requires direct relations.

When a government prioritises a field of foreign policy or security policy, this will entail an increased need for research-based knowledge. For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs often commissions tailored reports on specific topics. That is perfectly natural and legitimate, but it requires that relevant competence already exists that can be mobilised in order to provide good answers quickly. This is possible to achieve if the academic environments have long-term agreements covering the thematic areas in questions or if there are long-term, thematic research programmes in place.

Relatively close links between the sectors and the different institutions have many advantages. This can make research more relevant and contribute to the government administration making more use of research as the basis for its policy development. At the same time, this contact can become too close over time. When researchers become dependent on short-term research project funding from official bodies, this can lead to them failing to ask questions or raise issues that should be researched. In the worst case, it can lead to the withholding or manipulation of research results or to self-censorship. A development in this direction will weaken the legitimacy of research and contribute to new ideas and alternative perspectives not being included.

There is no systematic documentation in Norway that can help us to assess the extent to which this is a problem. At the dialogue meetings between the research institutes and the Research Council, some people report that strong selection mechanisms in the externally funded market preclude questions and approaches that they believe to be important. Others believe that this is not a problem, while at the same time acknowledging that financial dependence on one source of funding leads to vulnerability. In

principle, this challenge can be handled by having a stronger focus on the long-term perspective and on competence development. It is perfectly possible to ensure that there are robust funding arrangements in place that, on the one hand, safeguard independence, while, on the other, formalising arenas for dialogue between the clients and research communities. This is a key function when sector ministries fund research through the Research Council's programme activities.

3.3.3 Division of labour in the sector

Research communities are encouraged to both compete and cooperate. There is a certain conflict in this in research policy terms. On the one hand, it contributes to healthy competition that promotes both quality and relevance. On the other, it can weaken the division of labour if it leads to everyone endeavouring to focus on the field there is interest in at any given time.

In their dialogue with the Research Council, the university departments and institutes have stated that they are generally positive to cooperation with both Norwegian and international research institutions. Several of the university departments and institutes report that they have extensive cooperation nationally and internationally and that the scope of this cooperation is increasing. In a short-term perspective, the ideal cooperation between institutions in Norway is a partnership based on complementary strengths. At the same time, in the long term, it is not expedient if one research community has a 'right' to a specific subject area, thereby preventing new questions, methods and perspectives being raised.

The institutions are positive to cooperation being required in order to avoid unfortunate duplicate competence being developed. They are reluctant to being tied to specific partners, however. None of the university departments and institutes want to see organisational measures being taken that force them to cooperate, whether directly or through financial incentives. They all emphasise the need for a stronger focus on multidisciplinary research cooperation, both in order to meet user needs and because the research fronts indicate that this is important. Such research takes place both within each department or institute and through cooperation between departments and institutes with different research profiles.

The necessary financial resources must be in place, however, if it is to be possible to build clear profiles and strong expert environments. The key issue here is that research funding must be structured in a way that ensures that a significant proportion of the funding is long term and focused on ensuring robust research capacity in important areas. At the same time, there must be genuine competition that ensures that research communities that fail to renew themselves are replaced. Herein lies the key to ensuring a certain division of labour between the different research communities, while at the same time avoiding the division becoming permanently fixed.

4.0 Key research topics

The agenda is necessarily wide-ranging, with clear boundaries, and it must be expected that new issues will arise that we do not currently envisage. In the following, we will nonetheless outline what we believe are the key issues relating to political order, the economy, resources and climate, as well as security. We will also tentatively formulate some broad questions that can inspire further research in the field, without this list being in any way intended to be exhaustive.

4.1 Political order

States – and cooperation between states – is the key framework condition for international politics. For Norway as a small state, its relations with other states, and well-functioning multilateral cooperation forums, are decisive. They take place within a framework defined by international norms and rules of law, on the one hand, and the power balance between states, on the other.

Twenty-five years after the end of the Cold War, global power structures are rapidly changing. Established legal and normative principles are being challenged. Norway's freedom of action is being redefined. Norway is facing new limitations and new opportunities that it will be important to understand both in general and in key areas such as democracy, human rights and gender equality, or in the political effort to ensure stability and peace (Lunde m.fl., 2008). These changes are also reflected in foreign policy practice, which it will be important to analyse.

4.4.1 The state system

We are currently in a period where the global distribution of power is being redefined. We are transitioning from a unipolar, global order dominated by the USA to a new order dominated by several strong states with divergent political ambitions. This creates a need for new knowledge, not just about relations between states and about multilateral cooperation, but also about internal developments within states. With its spectacular economic growth, China will, in relatively few years' time, bear comparison with the USA and will express new foreign policy ambitions. A number of other countries are strengthening their relative positions and aim to translate this into greater influence both regionally and globally. The changes in the state system are reflected in new alliances, new lines of conflict and less predictability and stability.

The sovereignty of states has been challenged during the period since the end of the Cold War in 1991. An alternative discourse focused on human security. States that actively oppressed or for other reasons were unable to safeguard their own inhabitants could be sanctioned and, in extreme cases, could be subject to military intervention. The idea of human security is being strongly challenged, not least by states that claim that the principle of national sovereignty takes precedence. At the same time, the room for action has been expanded, and the notion that other states have a responsibility to intervene to prevent massive suffering has far from been erased.

We are also increasingly seeing transnational actors and networks creating opportunities that the state system is unable to control. In the economic sphere, this applies to both multinational companies and criminal networks. In the security context, we have globally oriented non-state groups, for example radical Islamist groups. Politically, we see interest groups and elite networks that coordinate their initiatives in various national and multilateral arenas. One interesting hybrid is the development of transnational bureaucracies, either within multilateral organisations or within national institutions, or both, that, based on the state system, can develop a significant freedom to define agendas and engage in politics (*see the box on p. 21*). Political parties are not the primary channels for political influence to the same extent, but are complemented by popular movements, often focusing on single issues.

At the same time, attention is being drawn to vulnerable states that, for various reasons, are at risk of losing the ability to offer their citizens basic security and welfare. Although the period since the Cold War has seen steady improvement in most of the political, economic and security-related indicators, global political changes, and regional unrest and brutal warfare in the Middle East give cause for great concern. In Report to the Storting No 36 (2016–17), *Setting the course for Norwegian foreign and security policy*, the Government defined vulnerable states as a key focus area.⁵ One important aspect is that weakened state power creates precisely the kind of power vacuum that transnational militant groups fill in order to secure support, resources and legitimacy – but in such case in cooperation with, rather than in isolation from, other state actors. This is particularly critical in states with low social trust, few or weak civil organisations and big differences in living conditions.

These geopolitical changes also lead to more unpredictable relations. In Norway, this has been highlighted by our relations with Russia in particular, where there is widespread agreement that, in a difficult security policy situation, it is especially important to maintain other forms of cooperation, but also considerable disagreement about what this means in practice (Harpviken, 2016). The challenge in relation to traditional allies is not necessary any smaller, with a politically divided USA whose president is reserved in his support for the principle of transatlantic solidarity and for fundamental shared values. Norway's response has been to maintain relations with the USA, while at the same time investing more in Europe and the Nordic countries. Relations continue to function, but our capacity to build and cultivate them is not unlimited, and there are many questions relating to how a small state can best safeguard its interests in relation to other states.

4.4.2 *Cooperation and the legal order*

International politics is largely governed by the prevailing norms and rules for what states can and cannot do. These rules are based on international law. Out-and-out violations of international law occur at times. But international law is also elastic and changes in step with changing power structures and practices. This is why we are currently in an interesting period in terms of international law, where established principles are being challenged and new realms of possibility are opening up. The international legal order is the foundation for multilateral cooperation, and competence and innovation in such cooperation will be of critical importance as the pace of change increases.

⁵ This is also being followed up with a separate strategy document (Utenriksdepartementet, 2017).

Global political changes are reflected in the multilateral cooperation context. The decades after World War II were characterised by the Western powers building strong structures for cooperation and order. They included global and regional organisations such as the UN, the World Bank, NATO and the EU. These institutions have proved to be robust, but they have also to some extent shown little ability to change. Even when a need for reform is self-evident, complex decision-making structures make changes difficult to implement. Heightened international antagonism makes reform even more difficult.

Governance challenges relating to the emergence of autonomous international bureaucracies

It is often pointed out that the world is more interconnected than ever before and that increasing mutual dependence makes the need for supranational coordination and cooperation even stronger. Climate change, migration, economic recessions etc. are challenges that individual states are unable to handle alone. The development of international organisations is a way for states to regain (some of) their ability to influence and control policy development. At the same time, studies also show that many international organisations with permanent secretariats or bureaucracies have a great influence on the global governance agenda (Biermann and Siebenhüner, 2009), that they transform the distribution of power between actors (Egeberg and Trondal, 2009) and that they change how the public sector is governed at the state level (Keohane et al., 2009). In other words, rather than acting as a passive and technical support system for the member states' governments, such international bureaucracies have themselves become active and (relatively) independent political practitioners. Studies show that international bureaucracies wield influence over policy formation and sometimes actually take part in implementing decisions that have a binding effect on ordinary citizens' actions and life choices (Knill and Bauer, 2016). We also see a trend, both nationally and internationally, towards more informal and closed policy formation processes (Reh et al., 2011: 1114), where international bureaucracies play an active role. It is therefore important to study *how autonomous* international bureaucracies actually are, and *how (and when) they influence* political decision-making.

New institutions were established after the Cold War, many of them following Asian initiatives. They include New Development Bank (NDB), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), all founded at China's initiative. Other less formal arenas, such as G20, are also becoming increasingly important. They are new structures that often challenge the old ones. There is a duality here, with new organisations that represent change and can take on tasks that are not otherwise addressed, but they equally often entail a shift of power to new parallel structures where one or more non-Western powers play the leading role.

4.4.3 Democracy, human rights, gender equality

There is no doubt that we are currently experiencing a period in which democracy as a system of governance is being globally challenged. Research shows that, in general, democracy correlates with peace, economic growth, redistribution and welfare. The USA-based Freedom House, which systematically collects data on the status of democracy in the world, using an indicator comprising a

number of variables, has long sounded the alarm.⁶ In its report for 2016 (Freedom House, 2017), it shows that the proportion of democratic countries in the world has declined somewhat in the past decade (from 47 to 45%), while the proportion of non-democratic countries has increased (from 23 to 25%). For the eleventh year in a row, the number of countries where democratisation is being reversed – where the development is in a negative direction – is higher than the number where the development is positive (*see the figure below*).

The threats to democracy are manifested in many different ways, but citizens’ perception that the nation state is not delivering, that they are not ensured welfare, that inequality is increasing and that the normative foundation for politics is becoming more heterogeneous, can lead to a loss of trust in political leaders and thereby to a desire for simple solutions (in the form of direct democracy or a strong leader).

The concrete processes are different in Syria, a country that has never had genuine democracy, and the USA, one of the most established democracies in the world. However, despite the positive examples that do exist, the trend is global. Among other things, this means that there will be fewer countries that set a good example, and less willingness to expect close allies to promote democratic development.

11 YEARS OF DECLINE

Countries with net declines in aggregate score have outnumbered those with gains for the past 11 years.

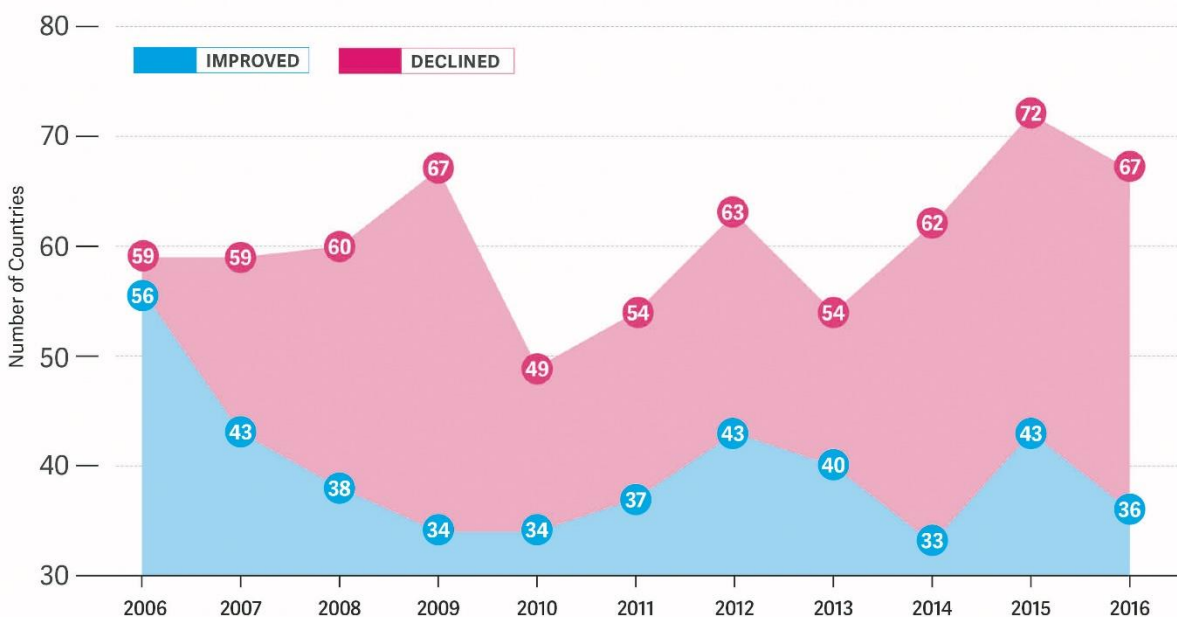


Figure 1: Countries with net improvement versus decline on the Freedom House democracy index, 2006–16

Other indexes paint a less dramatic picture or even raise doubts about whether the development is in fact negative. The Polity index, for example, shows a high degree of stability in the number of democracies and dictatorships, and even a marked decrease in the number of dictatorships in the past 10 years.

Unsurprisingly, given the close correlation between democracy and human rights (political rights are a significant component of Freedom House's democracy index), we see similar trends in the human rights area. For Norway, a small country that has had much to gain from international treaties and normative commitments, and that has built a lot of its foreign policy capital on raising human rights issues, this entails significant dilemmas (Sverdrup, 2012). On the most fundamental level, this is about how human rights issues can best be raised in a world where receptiveness to such issues has changed dramatically. However, it is also about how one chooses to relate to other states in the human rights context, whether they be big powers like China and the USA or less powerful states in which Norway is engaged in different ways, such as Angola or the Philippines.

In continuation of this comes increased surveillance of ordinary citizens, driven by new technological possibilities and an increasing political acceptance of the need for surveillance, with clear limitations on the nation state's possibility of isolating itself.

Gender equality, including promoting women's access to education, health and welfare services, as well as their participation in politics and employment, is an important part of Norway's success story since World War II. Norway has seen promotion of the gender equality agenda as an important foreign policy task. Norway's experience – from kindergarten provision to gender quotas for boards of directors – has attracted interest internationally.

The UN International Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995 was very important nationally and internationally in relation to spreading gender equality norms, legislation and practice. The Beijing+20 Conference in New York in 2015 and the process leading up to it were plagued by major conflicts, between the EU and Russia, among others. There has always been strong opposition to some aspects of the Beijing platform, for example from some Muslim states and the Vatican. In connection with Beijing+20, Russia also spoke out with a defence of 'the family' and 'family values', criticising the focus on women's individual rights in both the process and the draft final document. It is difficult to see this conflict in isolation from the generally higher level of tension between the EU and Russia, among other things in the wake of the Ukraine conflict.

For Norway, this entails both foreign policy and domestic policy challenges. Because Russia, our neighbouring major power, links gender equality policy to the increasing international tension, this alters Norway's leeway to engage in what is referred to as 'gender equality export'. In domestic policy terms, a possible weakening of the international processes will reduce Norway's freedom of action in the gender equality context (Tryggestad, 2014).

4.4.4 Peace mediation and conflict prevention

Peace – with the emphasis on the facilitation of peace processes – is a special focus area for Norway. Internationally, Norway has built a reputation as a skilful and competent actor with the ability to handle the always important relations with global and regional powers (Carvalho, 2013). The extensive position Norway has carved out for itself in this area, partly independently of its closest allies and often outside the auspices of the multilateral organisations, is special. Views diverge as regards whether the results have been positive for the conflict states, but there is broader agreement that Norway's efforts have both contributed to its reputation and given it access to key actors.

Since the Cold War, we have seen a continuous decline in both the number of armed conflicts and conflict mortality (Gleditsch, 2016). This trend seems to have been broken from 2012 onwards (see the figure). Conflict patterns are changing, with more fragmented conflicts (many actors), more intervention by other states (both regional powers and major powers), and a greater role for transnational extremists that use terror (Gleditsch, Melander and Urdal 2017). In general, the belief in military force is greater than in peace diplomacy. So far, Norway has shown a remarkable ability to adapt its peace diplomacy to changed framework conditions (Neumann, 2015). Ongoing change processes raise new challenges, however, and the need to adapt will probably increase.

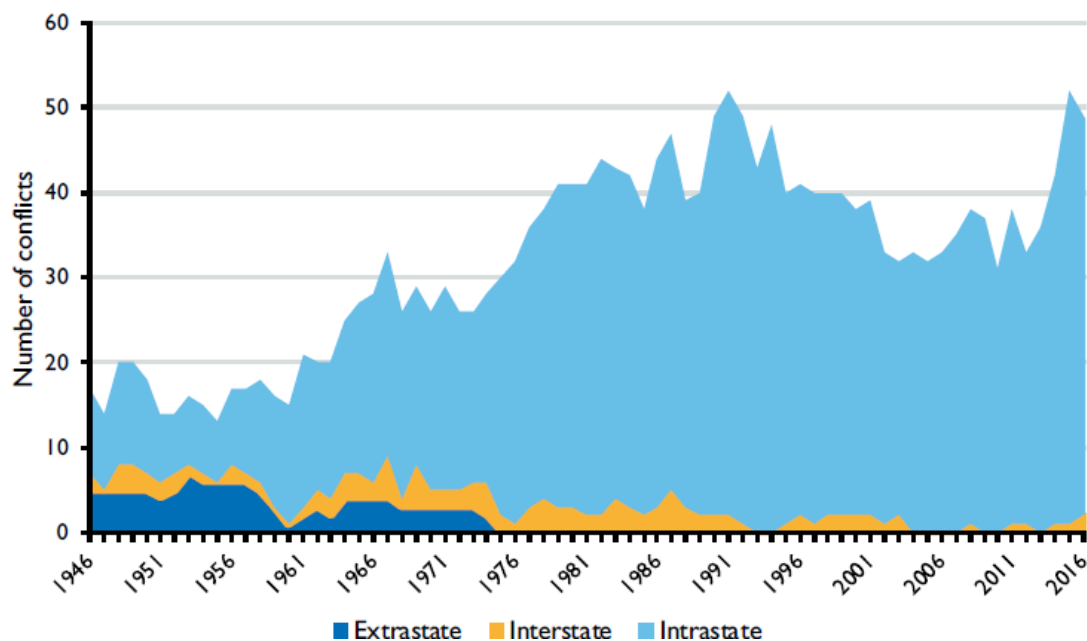


Figure: Number of armed conflicts per year, categorised by type of conflict ⁷

Against the backdrop of an increasing number of conflicts and the prospect of a reduction in the resources available for conflict management, UN Secretary General António Guterres has stated that conflict prevention must be prioritised. This is also based on the recognition that the number of ‘vulnerable states’ is increasing and that conflict prevention costs little compared with an active conflict. This is very much in line with Norway’s desire to increase the effort for vulnerable states.

In autumn 2017, the UN and the World Bank are launching their flagship report on conflict prevention, where Norwegian research communities have provided important input (United Nations and World Bank, pending 2017). The study focuses on the importance of development and distribution, including recognising that the emphasis on institution-building as a preventive method is only partly useful given the huge challenges and the time it takes to build institutions.

It is challenging to implement peace settlements. In reality, it is also about preventing conflict – the only difference is that the point of departure is a situation where an active conflict has been brought to an end

⁷ The figure is taken from Dupuy et al. 2017

– and the goal is to ensure that it does not reignite. We have increasingly come to the recognition that implementation is not something that starts after the peace treaty is signed, but rather that many decisions that are made while the conflict is still ongoing will affect both the peace settlement and the ensuing agreement. One example is transitional justice, where amnesties, appointments and alliances concluded in the heat of battle impose clear constraints on what type of reconciliation process is possible and how it can be implemented. For Norway, which emphasises its long-term engagement in peace processes, this is a very important field.

4.4.5 Foreign policy and security policy practice

Foreign and security policy is a complex field in which a number of different actors are involved, where the risks can be high and where secrecy is common. We see, not least, that the international actors involved are changing as new types of actors emerge. Partly as a result of these changes, but largely also as a result of innovation, political and diplomatic practice is changing. This is a field in which we have limited research-based knowledge.⁸ At the same time, research on precisely this area could contribute constructively to self-reflection and, potentially, to more informed choices as regards changing approaches.

The question of how – given the proliferation of new actors and the reorientation of many who should be known quantities – a small country like Norway builds alliances and coalitions to raise issues internationally is highly important. Similarly, it would be interesting to know more about how those who implement Norwegian defence and security policy use their time – what tasks are given priority and at the expense of what? To what extent have we succeeded in cultivating the willingness to take risks and accept failure that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs called for in the Report to the Storting *Setting the course for Norwegian foreign and security policy*? What institutional constraints and control mechanisms form the basis for political decisions, and how does this compare with other countries?

The power of the narrative

Language is power. Rhetoric, theatrics and normative appeals shape how conflicts are presented. Selective information, distortions and misrepresentations play a part in defining the nature, status and legitimacy of the parties. States and political movements have always used loaded and targeted communication as a political tool. In today's world, with digital platforms, social media and electronic analyses of different target groups, seductive rhetoric is everywhere. All regimes – both legitimate and illegitimate, state and non-state – use language and spin in addition to (and sometimes instead of) economic and military power. In the West, it is challenging to relate to 'fake news' in what is perceived as an information war conducted by countries and extremist groups. We believe in the value of freedom of expression – even when what is said is presented as news and subjected to the market economy principles of supply and demand. Our values and norms make it difficult for us to control the media in the same way as we see in some countries. In Norway and Europe, we are dependent on having an informed population where people have sufficient knowledge and

⁸ Fonn, Neumann og Sending, 2006 *Norsk utenrikspolitisk praksis*.

information to mobilise a robust scepticism and be a counterweight to distorted news and propaganda rhetoric in the information flow.

4.1.6 Possible research questions relating to the political order

- *What are the key changes in the distribution of power between states, globally and regionally, what forces are driving them, and what effects have these changes had on the international and regional political order?*
- *What influence do normative principles, whether enshrined in treaties or established practice, have on international politics under changing power structures?*
- *How do transnational actors behave in the international system and what interaction (or autonomy) do such actors have with states and multilateral institutions?*
- *What factors contribute to the weakening or breakdown of states, and what are the most effective strategies for ensuring that such states achieve stability (in both the short and long term)?*
- *How can a small state like Norway strengthen its freedom of action in the foreign and security policy context by cultivating several alliances simultaneously, and what costs and risks does such an approach entail?*
- *How is international law changing in a world where dominant states adopt distinctly different positions, and what room is there for strengthening existing principles, or establishing new ones, in such a context?*
- *What factors are driving reform in complex multilateral organisations, and to what extent do they offer opportunities for strategically motivated reform?*
- *What are the primary motives for the establishment of new multilateral institutions and arenas, and how does this affect the effectiveness and legitimacy of existing institutions?*
- *What mechanisms weaken democracy, what do democracy reversal processes have in common and what separates them, and what are the key factors that need to be elucidated in order to renew democracy and ensure political legitimacy?*
- *What can small countries that set great store by human rights do to ensure that, de facto, they are not weakened globally, and what are the possible consequences of compromising on key human rights issues (in both the domestic and foreign policy context, and the interaction between the two)?*
- *What are the consequences for the global gender equality agenda of key powers, partly in alliance with other actors and partly combined with the use of force or threats, actively promoting an alternative approach based on traditional gender differences?*

- *What are the conditions for peace mediation or facilitation in complex conflicts where militant extremists have a strong position and many external states are involved?*
- *How can external actors help to strengthen vulnerable states in the short and long term?*
- *How can the best possible foundation be laid for sustainable implementation of a peace agreement throughout the process, and how can external actors contribute most fruitfully to challenging implementations of peace agreements?*
- *How is foreign policy practice changed through exposure to new long-term challenges, changed approaches to recruiting and retaining the best people, and externally imposed expectations and standards, and what does this mean in terms of playing an active foreign policy role?*
- *How are alliances between states formed and maintained, and what do they mean in a rapidly shifting international political landscape in which new powers with big regional and global ambitions are emerging?*

4.2 The economy, resources and climate

Norway's economy is open and dependent on a well-functioning, inclusive economic world order. There are many signs that economic integration is under pressure: leading countries are changing their policies in a protectionist direction and ambitious free trade agreements are being shelved. The world's combined economic growth is substantial. In broad terms, this is the result of industrialisation and freer trade combined with technological progress. At the same time, however, it is a widespread view that inequality, both globally and within individual states, is increasing. While this is undoubtedly true within individual states, there are strong indications that global inequality is decreasing. The perception of increasing inequality nonetheless appears to be robust.

The Norwegian economic model is based on a broad consensus that economic redistribution increases productivity, among other things through education, health, taxes and social schemes, combined with trust and cooperation between the social partners. Despite the general trends, this model still attracts great interest in many parts of the world. Energy policy is an area of particular relevance to Norway, because of Norway's large revenues from oil and gas and the challenges relating to a 'green transition'. Energy issues have always been closely linked to high-level international politics. Ongoing changes in the global balance of power, a more offensive Russia and unrest in the Middle East are factors that will make energy policy a challenging field for Norway going forward.

4.2.1 Trade and investments

Norway is a technologically advanced society with state-of-the-art expertise, and it is a major exporter of commodities and a big global investor. Global changes in trade patterns, investments, value chains, currencies and exchange rates are very important to Norway's welfare. Europe has long been the centre of gravity of the Norwegian economy, but we now see that other regions, especially Asia, are becoming relatively more important to Norway's economy. Economic interests can be more or less compatible with

goals in fields such as human rights, development or security policy. In some areas, there is a conflict between security policy and, for example, foreign ownership of and investments in critical infrastructure. In other areas, there are special interests represented by influential organisations that expect the state, and not least the foreign service, to promote their interests.

In 2012, NUPI conducted a survey, based on self-reporting by the foreign service missions, of what kind of matters were given highest priority. Economic matters topped the list, from both the embassies and the receiving countries' perspective (Sverdrup et al., 2012). This field can become even more demanding in future, and it raises immediate questions about priorities and the need for competence. At a more fundamental level, it also raises questions about how Norway handles conflicts between different goals, such as the need to safeguard Norwegian investments in countries that are in conflict with Norway or with close allies of Norway (Melchior, 2016). Similarly, questions can be asked about the foreign policy effects of Norway's investments.

There are several trends that suggest that globalisation – with increasingly free movement of goods, capital and labour – is coming to a halt, at the same time as individual states' economic policies are becoming more introverted. Firstly, the financial crisis uncovered that the degree of interconnectedness between the world's financial systems made every country vulnerable to shocks in individual countries. This has led to opposition to globalisation, but at the same time renewed interest in global and regional reform aimed at better regulation that can reduce the system risk.

The financial crisis (but also the Asian crisis ten years earlier) revealed that imbalances between countries with big trade surpluses and countries with trade deficits created a market for cheap financial capital that could finance unhealthy financial bubbles. Secondly, the ensuing stagnation in the global economy showed that individual countries could not automatically rely on trading partners to help them to reduce unemployment and increase growth. Thirdly, workers with low levels of education in all countries have experienced that they see little of the benefits of globalisation. (*More about inequality in 5.1.3.*) However, it is not given that the development in the time ahead will necessarily be in the direction of less openness and cooperation in the international economy. On the contrary, it is conceivable that the challenges will be addressed through new cooperative initiatives, such as regulation of the financial sector, global arrangements for taxing multinational companies, international agreements for pay and working environment standards, and redistribution and taxation systems across countries.

Through the Government Pension Fund Global and state-controlled companies, Norway is a major investor. While the fund is not formally part of Norway's foreign policy, it nonetheless influences Norway's status and relations internationally. Geopolitical tensions also affect the fund, for example relating to risks in different jurisdictions and sanctions (Sverdrup, 2016). It is not just the fund that is a big investor. Studies of Norway's direct investments abroad show that state-owned companies have a greater appetite for risk and invest more in countries with weak institutional frameworks and a high degree of corruption than other Norwegian companies do (Hveem, 2009). The Government Pension Fund Global, which is the world's biggest sovereign wealth fund, is owned and managed by Norges Bank, the Norwegian central bank, precisely in order to ensure a certain distance to the political authorities (Bjerkan, 2016). The Fund is the property of the Norwegian state, and it is in the country's interest to protect it. That is also how it will largely be perceived by states and other international actors that have dealings with Norway.

4.2.2 *Distribution*

Since industrialisation started 200 years ago, inequality between the world's inhabitants has increased. This is largely because the countries that became industrialised early on have become very much richer, while other countries have experienced more moderate income growth. This trend has reversed in the past 30 years. China's economic growth is a major contributor to this. Through increased participation in the international exchange of goods, China creates jobs in its own export industries, sells cheap goods to rich countries and uses the profit to make new investments and to purchase products from other countries.

All countries take part in the exchange of goods, but some profit more than others from participating. Norway is one of the countries that profits most; valuable natural resources are traded for low-priced labour abroad. The core of the matter lies in the income differences. The system will continue as long as there is abundant access to labour, possibilities for rationalisation and functioning price competition. But the balance is being disturbed. This is partly because former low-cost countries (e.g. China) are moving up the value chain, partly because former winners no longer see that the system benefits them to the same extent (e.g. the USA), and partly because new forms of automation (including artificial intelligence) can replace employees. The paradox is that, even though the system produces a net gain, many participants are marginalised. Some countries are asking whether the system serves their interests, and whether they benefit as much from the international division of labour as they used to. Combined with dissatisfaction with inequality on the home front, this has international consequences.

Escalating inequality within countries is at least as great a concern. Even though the connection is far from absolute, we see that the combination of political and economic outsidership is generating discontent. The literature on conflict shows that the probability of conflict increases significantly in situations where economic inequality follows the dividing lines between identity groups (Bahgat et al., 2017). This kind of inequality – referred to as 'horizontal inequality' – is in continual decline. At the same time, we see that the perception of inequality can be important in itself, irrespective of what the objective figures say. Moreover, some of the political discontent that is expressed in Western countries is probably due to lower-than-expected growth in prosperity relative to other groups in society, rather than to an absolute reduction in people's standard of living over time. We need more knowledge about such mechanisms. This political discontent reflects the perception of inequality, or of redistributions where individual groups fare relatively less well than expected, rather than inequality increasing in objective terms. This has major political implications.

4.2.3 *Energy*

Norway is an important actor in the energy context, being a major exporter of oil and gas, critical commodities that everyone needs, but that are controlled by a small number of states. Oil and gas have been important geopolitical drivers in general and in high-level politics in particular. If oil and gas become a less important input factor, this will have major geopolitical consequences. A green transition could create new dependencies and international tension.

Norway's role as an energy nation has resulted in big revenues and boosted its international influence. Oil and gas recovery has led to the development of special expertise that is in great demand. This is self-evident as regards technology, particularly relating to the recovery of oil and gas at great ocean depths. But it also applies to Norway's oil policy itself. The Norwegian approach – with strong state control, taxation, domestic redistribution and the creation of a sovereign wealth fund – shows that it is possible to avoid what is called 'the resource trap'. Norway's experience, where oil and gas were first discovered after strong government institutions were already in place, is unusual, and one important question concerns which elements of the policy can have transfer value and how they can be transferred to countries that do not necessarily have the same starting point. Oil and gas are price-sensitive commodities, however, and dependence on them is also a vulnerability.

Globally, the energy sector is undergoing strong change. Many countries are facing major energy challenges that limit the possibilities for economic development and for reducing poverty and inequality. Others have challenges with managing the large assets that oil and gas represent. They risk being caught in a resource trap in which easily negotiable resources can be used to enrich a few, making democratic development difficult and enabling those who control state power to buy popular support, while at the same time putting a strong security force in place. It is important to Norway to understand these connections, both in order to understand how to position itself in a complicated international landscape and to be able to contribute constructively to multilateral processes that address the energy squeeze many countries find themselves in.

There are a number of parallel issues relating to the 'green transition'. The point of departure is that a lot of research and innovation is taking place in the technology field that concerns energy sources, transfer, storage and more energy-efficient solutions. However, we know less about how to move from technological innovation to changing energy consumers' consumption patterns and, not least, about which political initiatives can speed up large-scale behavioural change in an expedient manner. In this connection, the spotlight is also turned on actors who profit from oil and gas, Norway included, and how they will respond to the change processes that have already started.

4.2.4 *Climate*

Climate change is by nature global and it can only be dealt with through international cooperation, which, in turn, requires knowledge about the conditions for effective cooperation between states. Why have endeavours to establish a well-functioning global climate regime failed? Here, we need to understand the processes at the national, regional and global level, as well as the dynamic *between* the different levels. The EU, for example, is both a separate political system geared to handle the problem regionally within Europe and an actor in the global climate negotiations. Moreover, international climate policy is closely linked to other policy areas, for example international energy, transport and trade policy. Changes in greenhouse gas emissions are not necessarily the result of climate policy as such, but can also be due to developments in other policy areas and to market-related, technological and demographic changes. One key question is how the burdens climate policy entails can be divided between the North and South in order to best ensure robust and legitimate solutions.

4.2.5 Possible research questions relating to the economy, resources and climate:

- *What are the most important dilemmas between economic goals and other tasks, what approaches is it possible to adopt to handle them, and to what extent does Norway have special challenges?*
- *What measures do countries have at their disposal to reduce the negative consequences of economic globalisation, how do they interact with each other, and how can they become more effective through binding international cooperation?*
- *How does being the owner of the Government Pension Fund Global affect Norway's foreign policy priorities, and how does it affect other countries' perception of Norway?*
- *Which factors are decisive for economic inequality between states, which development paths are possible, and what is the relationship between this and the states' support for an open global economy?*
- *What is the relationship between inequality – objective, relative or perceived – and support for the existing political system?*
- *How can Norway's experience of recovering and managing oil and gas be made applicable to other countries with different political and institutional frameworks?*
- *What does the international imbalance in access to energy mean, and how does the ongoing 'green transition' affect this?*
- *What effect do different political measures have on the transition to other forms of energy?*
- *What are the main obstacles to the efforts to achieve a functioning global climate regime, and what political processes can be proposed that ensure solutions that are both effective and legitimate?*

4.3 Security

Security policy is geared to ensuring the nation state's survival and safeguarding its citizens. It is often referred to as the 'primary consideration' in foreign policy. Ultimately, security policy considerations can trump all other considerations (Græger, 2016). For Norway, since World War II, this has meant giving very high priority to its relationship with the USA, because the USA, though NATO, is the ultimate guarantor of Norway's security (Allers, Masala and Tamnes, 2014).

For Norway, maritime questions and the situation in the High North and the Arctic are particularly important. During the Cold War, the pattern of conflict was unpredictable, and defence policy was largely about having an effective deterrent and credible alliances. The big powers intervened in wars far from their own territory, but were little involved in face-to-face confrontations, and military participation by allies like Norway was not expected. Twenty-five years after the end of the Cold War, deterrence and conventional warfare capabilities are again at the top of the agenda, although in new forms, given the new weapons technology and new societal vulnerabilities.

NATO has engaged in what are known as 'out-of-area' operations, and the member states' participation in international operations has become far more important. Especially after 2001, military interventions became the key platform for cultivating cooperation with close allies. The types of international operation became increasingly diverse, ranging from UN-led peacekeeping operations to peacemaking operations. On Norway's part, participation in US or NATO-led interventions took precedence. The geopolitical changes have also affected the disarmament field, where the possibility of pushing through mutually binding agreements is more limited than just a few years ago, and the focus is changing from disarmament to non-proliferation and control.

4.3.1 Defence of the nation state

The changes in the geopolitical situation have major consequences for Norway (Ekspertgruppen for forsvaret av Norge, 2016). NATO's security guarantee no longer seems to be quite so unwavering. Russia, which Norway shares both a land and sea border with, is pursuing a more offensive policy, partly in violation of international law (Heier og Kjølberg, 2015). Other powers, especially China, are becoming stronger both militarily and economically, and are putting the delicate balance in East Asia to the test. After a long period without any major conflicts between states, the situation is now tense in several places – in the South China Sea, on the Korean peninsula, in relations between India and Pakistan – so that conflicts between states cannot be ruled out. This is taking place in parallel with an increase in both the intensity and number of civil wars with strong involvement by regional powers, primarily in the Middle East. Demands that the big powers must get involved are increasing. The threat has become more complex. Everything is connected to everything else, and the limits to what can be categorised as defence of the nation state are becoming less clear.

A technological shift is taking place and many countries are investing heavily in new military materiel and weapons systems. Cyber attacks underline society's vulnerability. The concept of 'hybrid warfare' focuses on a situation where the dividing line between war and peace is becoming less clear. Norway has based its territorial defence on membership of a stable defence alliance that is capable of effective deterrence, and that will swiftly and effectively come to the country's rescue if it is attacked. The overarching security policy approach depends on having an understanding of complex global change processes, precisely because a security crisis in a distant corner of the world can quickly change the priorities of both allied countries and others, and could even require Norway to decide whether to become involved.

In military strategy terms, we see a significant shift, whereby defence of the nation state and its institutions against territorial threats is again becoming the primary consideration. Traditional theories about the balance of power and deterrence are being given new life following a long period when international operations far from home were seen as the primary task. But traditional theories do not necessarily match the current realities, which differ greatly, both geopolitically and militarily. Following a period in which the USA has been the supreme hegemonic power, the global bipolar system from the days of the Cold War is now changing into something different, and it is not so easy to identify which dimensions or which analytical level is the primary one. A spontaneous outburst from the leader of a small group of insurgents in Syria can have global ripple effects.

The nature of the military complex has also changed. This concerns military forces and their munitions, where the technological development of long-distance precision weapons, unmanned platforms and

autonomous weapons systems appear to give air and land-based power an increasing role, not least in terms of controlling the seas. But warfare is also moving into new domains, and modern society's dependence on information and IT systems, in particular, make it vulnerable to what is known as 'hybrid warfare'. The purely military changes, which have a direct bearing on security policy assessments, are both targeted and wide-ranging: New weapons technology is redefining the battlefield at the same time as larger and larger parts of society are becoming targets in possible conflict situations.

This takes us to possible threats to the nation state that are primarily internal, and that to a great extent cancel out the dividing line between (externally oriented) defence and (internally oriented) civil security. The most important security policy resource is society's social capital – shared values, the commitment to comply with adopted rules, trust in political institutions and leaders, and the ability and willingness to cooperate. In brief, without a substantial consensus on what we wish to protect, the defence of the nation state has little meaning.

One key area, IT security, can serve as an example. Large, open systems improve the information flow, increase efficiency and improve services, but at the same time contribute to greater vulnerability. The state's right to access information also entails a responsibility to ensure that information does not fall into the wrong hands and come into conflict with protection of privacy considerations. The risk of abuse, or slip-ups, is self-evident, with serious potential consequences for people's trust.

The dividing line between foreign and domestic issues is becoming blurred, among other things because of our open economy, new communication channels and the outsourcing of national tasks to international contractors. The threats to Norway's social capital do not appear to be immediate. The situation is different in many European countries, and, just as the rage on the streets of Cairo has ripple effects in Norway, so will a weakening of trust in countries closer to home.

4.3.2 International operations

Norway's participation in international operations has traditionally been limited to UN-led peacekeeping operations. Norway continues to support operations of this kind, including with personnel. However, peacekeeping personnel have made up a relatively small proportion of the soldiers who have served internationally since 2001 (Heier m.fl., 2014). Many criticisms have been made of international peacekeeping. It can contribute to conflicts becoming deadlocked, and it can legitimise abuses by refraining from the use of force except in self-defence. It can also contribute to an artificial economy, and, in some cases, to an extensive sex trade. Studies have shown, however, that peacekeeping can be a very good investment. And its use has increased – from around 10,000 soldiers globally at the lowest in the late 1990s to around 100,000 in 2015 and 2016.

Traditional contributors in the West contribute less in relative terms, while there has been a large increase in contributions from other parts of the world, especially South Asia, East Asia and Africa. This is to some extent related to the fact that more and more peace operations are of a regional nature. They build on initiatives taken by regional cooperative bodies, which are subsequently given a UN mandate that helps to legitimise them and to ensure access to resources. The regional shift in peacekeeping is a change that there has been both a desire and a will to bring about. It is seen as largely positive, even though it can also be a problem that actors that take the lead in a given operation are from the same area and have clear interests of their own.

International peacekeeping is evolving towards the use of a broader spectrum of force (including 'peacemaking operations'), new technology and intelligence. We are also seeing renewed interest in the UN's peacekeeping operations among big countries like China and the USA. Peacekeeping will probably remain a key tool of international conflict management. Norway will continue to support it both financially and with personnel, and it is in a good position to contribute to a more knowledge-based peacekeeping practice.

Norway's military participation has increasingly been in other types of military operations, justified either on grounds of self-defence (as in Afghanistan) or a humanitarian need to protect civilians (as in Kosovo and Libya). The latter, in particular, raises a number of dilemmas. Essentially it is a question of legitimacy. Many of the humanitarian interventions have not had a mandate from the UN Security Council. The humanitarian justification raises a dilemma in itself, because civilian lives and infrastructure often suffer in such operations. The experiences from Afghanistan and Iraq show that the challenges associated with regime-changing interventions are massive. It is generally accepted that military means can only have an effect when they are part of a realistic political strategy, but such a strategy is difficult to agree on, not least in the case of multilateral coalitions of actors operating far from home. There is nonetheless good reason to assume that we will see different types of intervention in future as well, and that Norway will commit to participating.

Participation in international operations, particularly by highly competent defence forces, is increasingly taking the form of capacity building (often combined with supplying weapons and other equipment, and intelligence). There are a number of reasons for this, including less risk to one's own personnel, a stronger long-term effect and the greater legitimacy that local forces can be expected to enjoy among the local population. In Afghanistan, the Norwegian military effort gradually came to focus more and more on various training functions (usually integrated, i.e. that mentors also participate in military operations). Norway's contribution to the war against Isil also consists of training teams that have worked with local groups at centres in Iraq and Jordan. In general, we have little systematic information about the effect of supporting local security forces. In the Norwegian context, this is defined as a component of the efforts in vulnerable states.

4.3.3 Disarmament and non-proliferation

Disarmament has been an important topic for Norway, although it also raises dilemmas relating to alliances and the security guarantee from the USA (Sjursen, 2015). Several innovative measures have been taken recently, including the removal of chemical weapons from Syria and the replacement of enriched uranium in Iran. Norway played a leading implementation role in both these cases.

Similarly, given that there is little room for large-scale disarmament, it is even more important to pursue initiatives that in other ways can reduce the risk of weapons being used – through effective control mechanisms and communication channels and by building relations. Endeavours to limit military forces and the use of weapons are encountering new obstacles, however, in a period when we are seeing heightened tension in general, and particularly in relations between the big powers. This applies to both conventional capabilities and to weapons of mass destruction. The work on non-proliferation, where one of several goals is to prevent non-state actors from gaining control of weapons of mass destruction, is not affected to the same extent.

Weapons of mass destruction are a separate category, primarily because their use will be in conflict with established normative perceptions of what constitutes legitimate warfare. As regards biological and chemical weapons, they are in reality subject to a taboo enshrined in binding treaties. In addition, international agreements are also in place that prohibit the use of anti-personnel landmines (1997) and the use of cluster munitions (2008). In both cases, the agreements were negotiated on the basis of humanitarian arguments about the consequences of the weapons, which many people believe contravene fundamental principles of international law. A later initiative to prohibit nuclear weapons, based on their unacceptable humanitarian consequences, has gained increasing support, and a proposal to ban nuclear weapons was supported by 122 countries at the UN General Assembly in July 2017 (countries known to have nuclear weapons and NATO member states did not support the proposal). The road to binding nuclear disarmament therefore appears to be a long one, despite the good arguments and large-scale mobilisation in favour of it.

4.3.4 Possible research questions relating to security

- *What effect do global changes in power, alliances and conflict patterns have in purely security terms, and what implications does this have for Norway's ability to manage threats to its own security?*
- *What military-strategic trends do we see relating to new weapons technology and possible attacks on society's infrastructure (especially cyber attacks), and what kind of security policy implications does this have?*
- *What is the basis for a country's social capital, and how can a country ensure that it develops in step with a changing world, so that it remains a strength for the security of the nation state?*
- *What trends do we see as regards the situations that peacekeeping operations can be expected to deal with, and to what extent are their organisation, access to resources and political support adequate?*
- *How can we ensure that future interventions have the necessary legitimacy, both internationally and locally, and under what circumstances are outside interventions appropriate?*
- *What are the long-term and short-term effects of international support and training programmes for local armed forces?*
- *How can we most effectively reduce the risk of large-scale use of weapons in general – and the use of weapons of mass destruction in particular – in a climate of increasing geopolitical tension?*
- *What forms of non-proliferation and risk reduction relating to weapons of mass destruction will best be able to lay the foundation for future disarmament initiatives?*

5.0 Geographical focus

There is a close connection between the thematic focus areas discussed in the preceding chapter and geography. At the general level, we have been through a long period when many people have regarded geographical distance as being of minor relevance to the debate. In the second decade of the 2000s, geopolitical analyses – with the emphasis on geographical location, size, resources and communication – have again become dominant. This is partly the result of changes in global power politics and new tension between the big powers. In many people's view, this marks the end of the global cooperation and widespread respect for universal norms that dominated the first two decades after the end of the Cold War.

For Norwegian research priorities, the challenge is to pursue two ideas at the same time. On the one hand, we must ensure that, in crucial areas, Norway has sound research communities, preferably with diverse approaches being assured through more than one community being involved. On the other hand, Norway has interests in many places in the world and it is more and more strongly affected by far away developments. It is therefore also important not to concentrate all our resources on ensuring sound knowledge about the areas that are clearly important to Norway today, but to make sure that we also cultivate knowledge about other parts of the world. The latter is essential if we are to be able to pick up on new trends, and to have sound contingency knowledge in a shifting landscape.

In plain language, this means that Norway must ensure that it has sound research communities that engage in relevant research in key areas such as the Nordic countries and Europe, the USA, Russia and the High North. At the same time, it must support research that focuses on the Middle East, Africa and Asia or Latin America. It will be particularly important in this context to ensure that we have expertise on parts of the world where Norway is heavily involved, whether economically, politically or militarily. Knowledge about China (and, in part, about North-East Asia), about other emerging powers, about the Middle East and North Africa will be especially important in this context. Ultimately, thematic and geographical focuses are very closely connected. We can envisage a matrix with geographical areas on the one axis and thematic focuses on the other – where shading from white to various shades of grey is used to mark which thematic focuses are particularly important in different areas of the world. Countries and regions of existential importance to Norway, such as Europe and Russia, will have darker shading in many of the cells. More peripheral areas, such as Mexico or Jordan, will have lighter shading.

5.1 The High North

In the past decade, the High North has been defined as the first priority of Norway's foreign policy. Our security policy and economic interests are self-evident. International Arctic policy is changing, and there are many different actors involved (Østerud and Hønneland, 2015). Ecosystems and the resource basis are changing, management regimes are being challenged and new actors are making their interest known. As an Arctic coastal state, it is natural for Norway to also keep track of High North politics when they move beyond areas close to Norway. Norway has strong research communities that study foreign policy and security policy dimensions of this development, particularly in the Oslo area, but also in Central Norway.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has recently helped to build knowledge development capacity in the north of Norway, mostly with a more natural science or business and industry policy focus.⁹

5.2 Russia

Russia has been a historical constant in Norwegian security policy in general, and in the High North policy context in particular. Russia's revival after the fall of the Soviet Union has made the need to understand the dynamic of and rationale behind Russia's foreign policy greater than ever. Research on Russia has been important to Norway for several decades, and there are a number of good research communities in both the university and institute sectors. This is also a comparative advantage in foreign policy terms, since it is reflected in a high level of knowledge in large parts of the government administration.

5.3 Europe

Norway's most important trading partners and allies are European. Norway's knowledge about Europe and the EU has developed quickly in recent decades thanks to institution-based research programmes and the establishment of European studies at several of the country's universities. At the same time, research funding is a challenge. The funding level is generally low, and it fluctuates unpredictably (this also applies to other areas, Russia not least). Our knowledge about political processes, dividing lines and contentious issues in individual countries is also relatively weak. Europe's key role for Norway and the importance of the EU programmes to international research cooperation make it important to increase both the volume and predictability of funding.

5.4 USA

The USA has been Norway's most important ally since World War II. The US-led NATO Alliance has been Norway's – and other small European states' – most important security policy anchor. While our knowledge about Russia and Europe has been developed systematically, although concentrated in particular research communities, knowledge about the USA has been more random, anecdotal, ideological and fragmented. Possessing good knowledge has usually depended on individuals rather than being institution-based. This has changed in recent years, however. Knowledge about the USA has become both more systematic and stronger. But the strongest institutions in this context are in humanities disciplines such as language and history (and thereby primarily at the universities), and less in social science disciplines.

5.5 Non-Western countries and regions

Norwegian politics and the Norwegian economy are being increasingly influenced by developments in non-Western regions. One important aspect here is related to the emergence of new global and regional powers, spearheaded by China and India. In the Norwegian context, this concerns the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), a constellation that dates back to 2001 (although South Africa did not become a member until 2011). These five countries are also among the eight Panorama countries that are given priority in Norway's research policy (together with Japan, Canada and the USA). The global landscape is changing rapidly, however, and it is by no means certain that countries like Brazil and South

⁹ This includes the Arctic University of Norway, Nord University, the Norwegian Polar Institute, and FRAM – High North Research Centre for Climate and the Environment.

Africa will have greater influence on international politics in future, or in relation to Norway, than other countries currently enjoying strong growth (economically, politically and in populations terms), such as Nigeria and Turkey. It is especially important to strengthen research on China, which will undoubtedly be a leading global player going forward.

It is nonetheless important that Norwegian research also has ambitions to understand the world beyond the big powers and countries close to us (politically and geographically). Knowledge about languages, cultures, political structures and economic organisation elsewhere in the world is highly valuable, not just in the pursuit of Norwegian interests, but also in relation to understanding ourselves and our role in a comparative perspective. The ability to identify new trends, contingency knowledge that can equip us to deal with the unexpected, our general understanding of diversity of development paths and political priorities all depend on a broader approach.

5.6 Global trends and comparative studies

In relation to understanding global change processes, it is important to engage in substantial research that is not area-specific, but that aims to understand broad trends and universal connections. The use of sophisticated quantitative methods is very useful. Norway has strong research communities that engage in quantitative research, and the big data revolution combined with new computer tools (not least geo-referenced analysis – ‘spatial statistics’) are presenting new opportunities. It is equally important to safeguard comparative research. A systematic comparative analysis of Brazil and India, as regards both their regional and global political ambitions, would probably provide insights that separate analyses of the two countries would not. In the government administration, areas of responsibility and budget lines are often defined geographically, and it is therefore very important that calls for proposals for programmes allow for analyses that are not geography-specific.

6.0 Recommendations

Global political developments call for sound, innovative and user-oriented research. The agenda is wide-ranging and calls for insight from a broad spectrum of disciplines. Norway is in an exceptionally good position, with its long-standing traditions and strong research communities and higher education institutions. The role of the Research Council of Norway is to promote research quality and relevance, both by running national competitive arenas and through different structural measures. A handful of key recommendations are outlined below for how we should ensure the necessary resources, organise the programmes and design the cooperation between researchers and users.

Future research efforts in the foreign policy and security policy field are dependent on support and additional resources from those who will use the research. For them, it is critically important that research is not just of high quality, but that it is also relevant and topical. This does not just depend on which questions are asked, but also on the organisation and communication of research. It is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that is primarily responsible for the field in question. At the same time, there are significant points of contact with the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, and, although to a lesser extent, the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Health and Care Services and the Ministry of Climate and Environment.

#1: Establish research on international relations, foreign policy and Norwegian interests as a focus area

The Research Council should establish a new ambitious programme that aims to promote high-quality research of great relevance to Norway's foreign policy. Substantial funding should be provided for this effort in the long term. The point of departure should be a broad agenda, both thematically and geographically, that involves a wide range of approaches. The specific priorities should to a large extent reflect political developments and the users' needs, and they should be decided through a structured dialogue between the Research Council and the funding ministries.

#2: The effort should be structured to enable a combination of funds with different budgetary purposes

In a world that is increasingly interconnected, the need for research that adopts an overarching perspective and sees new connections is greater than ever. Through recent changes to its procedures, the Research Council has succeeded in running programmes with funding from different sources, each with their own earmarking. We should draw on this experience in the international field as well. It is particularly important that the new programme can combine funding earmarked for development purposes with other budget funds.

#3: Swift start-up in priority areas

A new programme will serve as an umbrella for a large field, while at the same time mobilising resources for a broad, long-term effort, which means that it is desirable, and must be possible, to

quickly issue calls for proposals in priority areas. Europe, the High North and Russia are examples of such initiatives that could continue recently completed programmes within a new framework.

#4: Develop new project formats with integrated user dialogues

One priority in the foreign policy and security policy area is to ensure that the research – and the way in which it is communicated – is designed in a way that enables the users to apply the results. New project formats are needed here. One model will be to increase the time frame for research projects on given thematic areas (e.g. five years), to increase the financial framework (e.g. NOK 5 million a year), and to earmark a certain percentage of the budget (e.g. 20%) for research and other measures relating to the project's overarching theme, which will be agreed through a structured dialogue between researchers and users. To succeed in the competition for funding, projects must, in addition to the usual criteria, demonstrate that they have broad networks and sound competence, as well as the ability to effectively communicate the results of the research to a varied group of users.

#5: Cultivate scholarly quality

The strong research communities in Norway are a unique resource that must be built on. At the same time, it is acknowledged that in some areas – also areas of great importance to Norway – research is weak and fragmented. Research on these areas can be assured partly by existing research groups shifting focus, partly through cooperation between new initiatives and strong existing research communities (in Norway or internationally), and partly by cultivating new initiatives in which both the level of ambition and the ability to achieve results are convincing.

#6: Ensure access to new research talents

Research on international relations is of great strategic importance. At the same time, unique talents are required to build good research groups that produce research of the highest quality in close dialogue with the users. This field is strong in Norway, which also makes it attractive. A long-term focus, with programme formats that make it possible to pursue an agenda over time in dialogue with users, will make a research career in this field even more attractive. In the concrete programmes, it is important that both the size of the budget and the requirement for recruitment positions is weighed against the need to ensure that capable, established researchers in the field are ensured conditions that enable them to build on the expertise they have acquired, and to ensure research groups with a healthy demographic composition.

#7: Cooperate internationally

Not surprisingly given their thematic focus, the research communities in this field have good international exposure. This is important in all research fields, but it is particularly important here – because the ability to identify new trends is largely the result of international exposure, and because, more than in other fields, science diplomacy is one of the tasks of research in this field. In concrete terms, in the calls for proposals for the research programmes in question, it is

important that the desire for internationalisation is operationalised in a way that does not reduce the possibility of running co-located research groups of a certain size over time.

#8: Cooperate at the national level

Nationally, it is important to ensure good utilisation of resources and to avoid fragmented environments and unnecessary duplication. In areas of major strategic importance, it is expedient that there are several research communities that cultivate alternative approaches. In more peripheral areas, a small coordinated group is often preferable to several individuals with no common agenda. Norway does not just have good research communities, it also has great potential through the institute sector and large departments at many universities and university colleges. At the interface between institutions, the potential added value of cooperation is great, and measures that promote this can have a major effect on research, communication and education.

#9: Include the field in the Long-term Plan for Research and Higher Education

There is broad agreement that international relations are changing rapidly and that this presents a number of challenges for Norway. Norway has strong research communities in the field, but a period of reduced access to resources is now having effects. A long-term focus on research in this field that exploits the big potential of the excellent Norwegian research communities will require both more resources and a long-term approach. In autumn 2017, the time has come to revise the Long-term Plan for Research and Higher Education 2015–2024 (Report to the Storting No 7 (2014–2015)).

A renewed initiative should be grounded in the long-term plan for research, so that it is also possible to achieve good interdepartmental cooperation on the supply side in relation to these major societal challenges.

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The Research Council of Norway

Drammensveien 288
P.O. Box 564
1327 Lysaker

Telephone: +47 22 03 70 00
post@rcn.no
www.rcn.no

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