By seeking to achieve the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UN members are striving to respond to the global challenges of our time in an interlinked and collaborative way. Through these goals, environmental, social and economic aims are defined and coordinated. In a way, it is remarkable that an organization as huge and unilateral as the UN has managed to deliver a work programme such as the SDGs, which include targets and sub-targets. Looking at today’s policies and legislation on both national and international levels, it is rare to find similarly over-arching ambitions.

When the first phase of Mistra Geopolitics was formatted, the aim was to critically examine how the dynamics of geopolitics, security and global environmental change interrelate in the 21st Century with four key contributions: scientific advancement, increased forecasting, methodological innovation, and the strengthening of Sweden’s international research profile. The five work packages of Phase I have all delivered greater knowledge, better foundations for decision-making and improved policies.

In a world that has changed so radically due to the 2020 global pandemic, where poverty is again increasing, climate and biodiversity solutions are delayed, and established behaviour between states is being questioned, programmes like Mistra Geopolitics become even more important. The programme’s Board, and indeed its participating research-institutions and partners, are therefore happy that Mistra Geopolitics can continue and move into a second phase!

Summarizing the results so far, and the ambitions for the next four years of work, the Board of Mistra Geopolitics and I are proud to introduce you to the annual report, with all its knowledge and forward-looking proposals. The world needs solutions.

*Lena Ek,
Chair of the Board,
Mistra Geopolitics*
Mistra Geopolitics was initiated in 2016, in a world quite different from the one that exists today. This new world has been shaken by the COVID-19 pandemic and the limitations it has placed on our ability to effectively meet sustainability threats, challenges and opportunities, in both the short and long term. We are now faced with a number of pressing questions: Will countries become more isolationist or will we see them shoulder leadership through cooperation, and pursue a geopolitics of generosity? Will we see major changes in international trade and supply systems? Will COVID-19 lead to social and technical innovations? Will it drive shifts in perspectives on how our societies should be organized, how we should live our lives and how we interact across national borders? Given that the consequences of disruptive events in dynamically complex societies cannot be fully predicted, the core rationale for the Mistra Geopolitics programme is to enhance foresight capacity among government agencies, businesses, and civil society.

Ongoing efforts to secure sustainability through the landmark Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have injected positive momentum into global affairs. The call for sustainability transformations resonates in many governments, companies and organizations around the world. At the same time, however, this world is marked by fragmentation, rising authoritarianism, and mounting conflicts, and the severe impacts of climate change and carbon emissions have once again begun to rise after decreasing during the pandemic.

In the context of the changing “geopolitics of sustainability”, Mistra Geopolitics has established itself as an important international hub of academic research, foresight and co-creation with societal actors. In its first phase, the programme contributed significantly to scholarship on the complex interlinkages between changing geopolitics and opportunities for achieving sustainability. The Mistra Geopolitics Research School has fostered a vibrant national and international network of early-career scholars. Through extensive inter-actions with stakeholders, the Mistra programme has also contributed to the establishment of geopolitical foresight at the top of industry organizations, agencies and financial institutions. Last year, for example, we brought together national experts from a wide range of fields (including finance; trade; migration; food security; innovation; aid; sustainable development; values and peace and security) to participate in the development of scenarios outlining what the pandemic might mean for Swedish and international actors, geopolitics, and ultimately for the 2030 Agenda.

The second phase of Mistra Geopolitics, which will take place over the coming four years, will deepen our analysis of the geopolitical risks and opportunities arising from three interconnected transformations: global environmental change; societal transformations towards sustainability; and the rapid deployment of transformative technologies. This Phase II research will rest on the themes that were developed in Phase I in close collaboration with stakeholders: Food security; Sustainable Oceans; and Decarbonization. Fore-sight Capabilities and Emerging Technologies and Synthesis and Rapid Response are additional work packages incorporating the three thematic areas in their deliveries.

Our aim moving forwards is to understand how these transformative processes are remaking the scene for global politics and governance, and how they are thereby shaping the prospects for advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Björn-Ola Linnér
Programme Director, Mistra Geopolitics

WHAT IS MISTRA GEOPOLITICS?

Mistra Geopolitics is a research programme that critically examines how the dynamics of geopolitics, security and global environmental change interrelate in the 21st Century. It seeks to develop strategies to better navigate and tackle increasing geopolitical insecurity while taking advantage of opportunities created through innovation and technological development. Mistra Geopolitics combines theory testing and development with a co-creation approach. A variety of stakeholders from the public, private and civil society sectors are actively involved to improve research design and ensure that the programme’s theoretical perspectives and empirical research are relevant for the people who will translate them into policy and action.

HOW WE WORK

Mistra Geopolitics is an interdisciplinary research programme that brings together researchers from different fields of expertise, to combine their intellectual skills. This effective, and sometimes challenging, approach is necessary to understand the complex world we live in. The programme consists of two phases, each lasting four years; 2020 marks the final year of Phase I. During the first phase of the programme (2017-2020), the research was comprised of five interrelated work packages (WPs) (see Figure 1 above). However, entering Phase II, which will run until 2024, the research will mainly focus on three empirical focus areas, or themes, developed in close dialogue with our stakeholder partners from Phase I. The Mistra Geopolitics programme partners are: the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI); the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI);

Linköping University; Uppsala University; Stockholm University; and Lund University. The think tanks E3G (“Third-Generation Environmentalism”, UK) and adelphi (Germany) are also research partners. The programme is funded by Mistra, the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research.

NEXT PHASE OF MISTRA GEOPOLITICS – THROUGH THE LENS OF THREE EMERGING THEMES

Due to the unpredictable nature of global developments and the geopolitical landscape that prevailed at the beginning of the programme, Mistra Geopolitics was initially designed around thematic orientations rather than specific geographical factors. Building on this foundation, joint geographical and empirical focus were identified, through an iterative process based on co-creation with stakeholders, evaluation of global developments, and workshops. During the first year of the programme, researchers and stakeholders came together for focus group meetings and workshops which, along with survey-based inputs, resulted in the identification of three empirical focus areas. A strategic study relating to each area was then conducted, funded by the Mistra Geopolitics reserve. These three empirical focus areas form the basis of the following thematic orientations, which will guide the programme’s research as it enters Phase II:

- The Geopolitics of Food Security
- The Geopolitics of Sustainable Oceans
- The Geopolitics of Decarbonization

Read more: https://www.mistra-geopolitics.se/work-packages/
The aim of the Geopolitics and Security in the Anthropocene project was to investigate the political drivers, risks and security implications of global environmental change, and ask how this changing environment is reshaping our understanding of security and geopolitics. We also looked at future prospects, an area we plan to further explore through stakeholder dialogues. The term “Anthropocene” is used here to describe a world of globalized and manufactured risks, in which neither security nor the environment can be interpreted or acted upon in traditional ways. This concept presents a global scene of complex interconnections and interdependencies that cut across conventional geographical and temporal scales and species boundaries. In this time, state-centric security thinking no longer makes political or moral sense.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE EMERGING DEBATE ON ANTHROPOCENE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND WORLD POLITICS

This included a mapping of the academic debate on the Anthropocene-security-geopolitics nexus, which has shown how the dangers and security implications of an earth radically transformed by humans are challenging some of the core assumptions that underpin the study of international relations and geopolitics, such as the logics of inclusion/exclusion and friends/enemies (Lövbrand, Mobjörk and Söder 2020). We also contributed to two edited volumes, which gathered different groups of authors engaged in the debate on world politics, security and environment in the Anthropocene. Overall, our work has contributed to the discussion of the Anthropocene as a new global scene of complex interconnections and interdependencies, and invites both a reconsideration of core concepts and a search for new forms of governance responses (Bierman and Lövbrand eds. 2019; Lövbrand and Mobjörk eds., forthcoming).

“In this time, state-centric security thinking no longer makes political or moral sense.”
Our work has focused on changes currently underway in world politics that have been sparked by the radical transformation of the environment as a result of human activities. As part of this work, we asked what these changes mean for security. It is too early to tell where this environmental rethinking of the world politics will lead us, but by engaging with this debate we have contributed our interpretations of where it is heading and what this may mean for decision-making in the future.

To advance an interdisciplinary debate and reach a broader audience, including policy actors, we invited a mixed group of environment and security scholars, as well as policy experts, to contribute to an edited volume in which the notion of “Anthropocene Insecurities” is critically explored. The edited volume will be published in the autumn of 2021 in collaboration with SIPRI and Oxford University Press, and will embolden further conversation bridging academic research and policy dialogues.

Through our active engagement in international debates, we have a unique insight into current policy debates on climate security challenges and the tensions in multilateral systems. This informs our dialogues with Swedish actors such as the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sida, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), and organizations such as Forum Syd, Journalistfonden (which delivers lectures to Swedish journalists), the Red Cross, Swedish Defense University (FHS), and Folk och Försvar.

EXAMINING THE SHIFTING FOOD SECURITY DISCOURSES IN A STATE-BASED CONTEXT (RUSSIA) AND IN AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION (FAO).

In these two contexts, we traced both the historical and material origins of food security discourse, which itself includes tensions between different referent objects of security, but also how this discourse is affected by a changing climate (Zhou, forthcoming PhD thesis). In addition, we contributed to an analysis of the geopolitics of food security as part of a broader collaboration within the programme (Zhou et al. 2020).

HOW OUR WORK HELPS KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND CONTRIBUTES TO THE DEBATE OF GEOPOLITICS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Our work has focused on changes currently underway in world politics that have been sparked by the radical transformation of the environment as a result of human activities. As part of this work, we asked what these changes mean for security. It is too early to tell where this environmental rethinking of the world politics will lead us, but by engaging with this debate we have contributed our interpretations of where it is heading and what this may mean for decision-making in the future.

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IMPACT PATHWAYS IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENTAL AND GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT

Our research focus and key contribution

The aim of this work package was to clarify the ownership and governance of the risks of cross-border climate change impacts, which are an emerging and urgent policy challenge. Sweden, like many other countries, is deeply integrated with the global economy, increasing its exposure to emerging risks, which can be both direct and indirect, and extend across different sectors and countries. The research activities in this work package examined the direct and indirect economic, political and social impacts of global environmental change, including the nature of their pathways. They have been organized around three parallel themes:

- Conflict
- Transboundary Climate Risks
- Migration

Conflicts

As part of our work, we have developed novel methods for analyzing the relationship between environmental change and armed conflict (Mach et al. 2019). While climate change still often, owing to the role of armed conflict as a driver. SDG-focused strategies also need to be framed and implemented via programs that are more conflict-sensitive and conflict-aware. We also examined the relationship between armed conflict and economic development (Gilmore et al. 2019). In developing countries in particular, we have found feedback relationships between environmental change, armed conflict and economic growth at the local and national scale.

Transboundary Climate Risk

We have developed new methods for assessing exposure to transnational climate risk at both a global and – via the trade climate risk pathway – national scale. Import- and export-dependent countries like Sweden are far more reliant on the success of sustainable development policies in other countries than we often assume (Hedlund et al. 2018). For example, Sweden’s food consumption is increasingly dependent on soy grown in Brazil, which is embedded in many meat and dairy products. Not only are the supply chains which bring soy, and many other commodities, to Sweden threatened by the impacts of climate risks on production and transport, but growing trade dependence also raises concerns about future political ties with countries whose policies increasingly diverge from Sweden’s international objectives in terms of achieving the SDGs. Since Sweden’s ability to bilaterally reduce vulnerability to environmental change and security risks in developing countries is limited, our research suggests that multilateral cooperation is a necessary response to the globalization of environmental risks (Benzé et al. 2019; Smith et al. 2019). At the same time, we have found that global governance structures such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change currently fail to account for the globalization of environmental risks (Benzé et al. 2019).
MIGRATION

Under the migration theme, we have identified an increase in total trans-regional migration, as well as projections of increased migration from Africa to Europe by the end of the century. However, climate change and conflict are more likely to increase the number of displaced people within their own countries than to drive trans-regional migration.

Our research has highlighted the challenges of, and opportunities for, Swedish domestic policy on migration and assisting controlled South-South migration; we have also set out recommendations on improving the coherence between Swedish competitiveness and supporting SDG achievement (Bremberg and Palme 2019b). A more coherent approach to migration policy at home and abroad, taking account of environmental change, the SDGs and geopolitical trends, will help to manage risks to migrants whilst maximizing the benefits of controlled migration for both the sending and receiving countries.

HOW THE RESEARCH HELPS KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Supporting the SDGs globally is a matter of national interest given that sustainability in Sweden is dependent on successful sustainability development in the wider world. With this in mind, there are a number of ways in which the research from this work package has helped to identify hotspots of climate-induced risks from the perspective of key stakeholders, a group including peace and development actors, traders and businesses. Our research has led to the following work:

The launch of the Adaptation Without Borders initiative, which brings together new coalitions of countries to improve the governance of cross-border climate change risk.

This initiative is an outcome of, and was supported by, the Mistra Geopolitics programme during Phase I. This year, the initiative’s website (www.adaptationwithoutborders.org) was launched with a series of events and engagements. An Adaptation Without Borders Annual General Meeting was held with partners from four continents and senior representatives from funders and the UNFCCC.

Engagement with the UNFCCC on the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

A formal submission was made by Mistra Geopolitics to the UNFCCC Adaptation Committee on the subject of operationalizing the global goal on adaptation. Direct support to Swedish Expert Council on Adaptation during their revision of the National Adaptation Strategy.

Support has been given through participation in expert workshops, and continues to be provided through comments and recommendations offered to the Expert Council and the Swedish Knowledge Centre for Climate Change Adaptation. Support for the EU on trade and climate change adaptation.

A seminar, “Climate Resilient Trade and Production”, was organized, bringing EU member states, and trade and adaptation representatives together to discuss the linkages between climate risk and trade.

Bringing Mistra Geopolitics insights to the research community.

Magnus Benzie, a research fellow at the Stockholm Environment Institute and Mistra Geopolitics, was a contributing author to a cross-chapter box on interregional risks in the IPCC’s Sixth Assessment Report.

A World Adaptation Science Programme Policy Brief on Transboundary Climate Risk and Adaptation was published and launched at the UNFCCC Research Dialogue 2020.

Improving the understanding of climate and conflict linkages.

Our research has produced insights into the likely impact of climate change on conflict in current societies, as well as projections for the future, which are crucial for Swedish foreign and development policy (Mach et al. 2019; Von Uexkull et al. unpublished). For instance, Sweden has promoted discussion of climate and security issues in the UN Security Council.

We have provided insights into knowledge gaps and have set the agenda for future research in this area (Mach et al. 2020).

By taking armed conflict into account, our work has facilitated important corrections to the future global economic growth projections of the Shared Socio-economic Pathways (SSP) framework (Gilmore et al., submitted). This is crucial for climate research, which routinely uses the SSP framework, but is also evidence of overlooked long-term impacts of conflict on global growth.

“Import- and export-dependent countries like Sweden are far more reliant on the success of sustainable development policies in other countries than what we often assume.”

Magnus Benzie leads Work Package 2 – Impact pathways in a changing environmental and geopolitical context.
GOVERNANCE RESPONSES TO ENVIRONMENT-RELATED SECURITY RISKS

OUR RESEARCH FOCUS AND KEY CONTRIBUTION

This work package aimed to address climate adaptation and mitigation in domestic and global governance. For climate adaptation, the research has focused on increasing our understanding of the processes behind adaptation, how it is integrated in international institutions and the links between climate adaptation and certain issues, as well as how its dynamics play out over time, at various levels and in targeted issue areas. The research has also involved questions of domestic governments’ capacities to respond to global environmental change and the conditions in which responses are most effective. The overarching aim of this research work has been to understand, theorize, and analyze the political dynamics that shape the ability of human governance systems to respond effectively and legitimately to global geopolitical and environmental change. Our work has been divided into two parts:

1. Enhancing our understanding of the responses of global governance institutions to climate-related security risks, and the conditions under which these responses are legitimate and effective.
2. Advancing our knowledge of the role of the state in addressing the problems that emerge from the interaction between environmental change, welfare provisioning problems, and new patterns of global migration.

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Climate security is portrayed differently across international organizations, especially in terms of state and human security (Delmuth et al. 2018). International organizations such as the EU, the UNFCCC, the UN Security Council, the World Bank and the WHO are increasingly addressing the linkages between environmental and geopolitical change. However, the capacity of such organizations to effectively or adequately respond to the impacts of climate risks on human livelihoods and national security is weak due to shortfalls in legitimacy (Delmuth 2019), fiscal pressures, problem complexity and the fragmentation of institutions at the global level (Delmuth and Gustafsson, forthcoming).

INSTITUTIONAL LEGITIMACY AND RESOURCES:

Rhetorical calls for forceful multilateral environmental action are not matched by the levels of climate-related funding that would be necessary for international organizations to step up their work on adaptation (Delmuth et al. 2020). A series of survey experiments in Germany, the Philippines, South Africa and the USA suggest that, while there are a number of qualities of international security and economic organizations that are important for increasing their legitimacy in the eyes of citizens, the legitimacy of the UNFCCC depends on other factors, which are largely out of the hands of international policymakers. These include, for example, citizens’ pre-existing beliefs and their attitudes towards climate change (Delmuth et al. 2019; Delmuth et al. 2020).

We also found that UN aid in the aftermath of climate-related disasters is largely driven by humanitarian need. The UN seems able to avoid the strategic influence of various donor states and allocate the most aid to areas with the greatest hazard severity most urgent need. Based on this finding, we argue that the UN lives up to its stated principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence in disaster aid, strengthening the institution’s legitimacy in allocating this aid (Delmuth et al. 2021).

Findings from last year show that, when it comes to global environmental institutions, multinational corporations dominate in strength and number (Delmuth et al. 2020). Private companies are also increasingly engaged in climate adaptation. (Gustafsson et al. 2020, in preparation) carried out an analysis of how the 57 largest mining companies engage in adaptation, and the extent to which their adaptation responses were transparent and accountable to local communities. Moreover, we analyzed how private adaptation responses in the mining sector were regulated in two countries heavily dependent on mining and vulnerable to climate risks. Our findings suggest that private adaptation in the mining sector is focused on business resilience, while transparency and accountability towards local communities is weak. An explanation to these shortcomings is the absence of public regulations that coerce companies to address climate risks in a manner that reduces societal vulnerability (Gustafsson et al., in preparation). Our results underline that there is an imminent risk of the low-carbon transition furthering inequalities and social conflicts in mining localities in the Global South.

GOVERNMENT ACTION AND POLICY:

In recent decades, the rapid expansion of large-scale resource extraction in the global South has helped reduce poverty in some countries. At the same time, however, it has placed immense pressure on water supplies and livelihood assets, incited social conflict, and contaminated the environment in the affected areas. Research to date has concentrated largely on why the transfer of extractive revenues often reinforces a “local resource curse” (where countries with high quantities of valuable natural resources become less democratic and experience worse economic and development outcomes compared to countries with...
fewer natural resources). In the mining sector, evidence suggests that an interplay between institutional capacity and subnational political dynamics affect how subnational governments seek to intervene in mining expansion (Gustafsson and Scurrah 2020).

Migration
There has been a rapid increase in civic integration policies (CIPs) for third-country nationals in Europe in the 21st century. While these policies have mainly been motivated by concerns about immigrant integration, evidence from a cross-country empirical analysis shows that there are connections between the extension of CIPs and reductions in family and labour immigration among European countries (Ahlén and Böring 2018).

Admission policies for family-related immigration have become more restrictive in European countries since 1990, mainly due to the introduction of stringent qualifying conditions that require applicants to fulfil various integration requirements to obtain entry and residence for family reasons. This development reflects a new type of migration management which increasingly features the use of behavioural integration measures to pursue migration control (Ahlén, unpublished). Family immigration policies have varied historically between different welfare state regimes. Turning to the explanatory factors of family immigration policies, a time-series analysis using data from the period 1985-2010 suggests that welfare state regimes have influenced both the effects of unemployment on family immigration policies, and the effects of immigration on family immigration policies (Ahlén, unpublished).

As universalism continues to be a cornerstone of the Swedish welfare state, the nationality or immigration status of a person does not determine their entitlement to social security benefits. However, since the introduction of temporary migration legislation in 2016, individuals with temporary residence permits face more obstacles when it comes to accessing welfare benefits. Since 2016, it has also become more difficult to reunify families of migrants who are receiving income support. The political debate in Sweden has drifted in recent years, with some parties increasingly arguing for the restriction of newcomers’ and immigrants’ access to various social benefits (Ahlén and Palme 2020).

How this research helps key stakeholders and contributes to the debate of geopolitics of sustainability
Our work has been centred on how the geopolitics of sustainability interacts with different issue areas in domestic and global governance, especially disasters, fisheries, food security, health, mining, and human security. Assessing the prospects for sustainable development requires an understanding of these policy areas that goes beyond humanitarian issues to include linkages with geopolitics. We have examined these linkages explicitly in our work on international organizations, climate risks, and food security. The interactions of geopolitics with all these issue areas reshapes both the physical landscape and political calculus. These overlapping linkages require further integrated policy engagement and analysis.

In Phase II of Mistra geopolitics, we will build on these insights by examining how international organizations’ engagement with climate risks and aid allocation shape local food security, acknowledging that geopolitical challenges are central to both the theory and practice of aid disbursements, as well as to their effects.

Moreover, we will build on our insights in the area of ocean governance and explore the feasibility of different proposals for improving sustainable development in the Arctic. In a new project at the Department of Economic History and International Relations at Stockholm University, we conceptualize feasibility as a function of key stakeholders in Sweden, complementing this with analyses of stakeholder perceptions of different policy proposals in Russia.

The inter-relationships between geopolitics and the SDGs
Access to and control over physical resources such as fossil fuels, water, food and minerals have played important roles in shaping geopolitical interests. The strategic roles of these resources and the potential revenue streams they represent shape the interests of different state and non-state actors, and affect the ways in which they position themselves in relation to sustainable development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Our research has aimed to gain a deeper understanding of how perceived geopolitical challenges and interests affect the choice of political strategies for achieving the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. The research has focused on indirect effects of environmental change, such as its implications for global governance and the local conflicts that arise from efforts to mitigate it.

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

“On an individual country level, future revenues from key metals are not likely to be as important as current revenues from fossil fuels.”
This workstream has addressed three core lines of research:

- Understanding how the different SDGs interact and the extent to which they are compatible with each other.
- Understanding how states’ geopolitical agendas can affect their prioritization of different SDGs and their interest in pursuing them.
- Assessing how natural resource flows are affected by various strategies for achieving SDGs, and the impact that changed flows can have on different actors.

“Our work shows that the presence of peace-keepers can improve subnational food security (SDG2) in post-conflict regions.”

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Our research has advanced the understanding of the geopolitics of sustainability by showing which SDGs are incompatible with each other, and/or unlikely to be attained given a set of “boundary conditions”. Global tracking of synergies and trade-offs in SDG attainment, at a country level, since 2000 shows that the SDG agenda is overwhelmingly characterized by synergies; countries that perform well on one SDG tend to do well on the rest of the agenda, too. Our research on international and national SDG interactions has been complemented by case studies at the subnational level in four countries (Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and Iraq). These case studies show that states’ geopolitical positioning and context-specific internal dynamics affect attainment of the SDGs at the local level. Our work has demonstrated, for instance, that the presence of peacekeepers can improve subnational food security (SDG2) in post-conflict regions.

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

Our research on new resource demand for renewable energy contributes to the understanding of how and why climate change mitigation can affect which resources are perceived as valuable and, thus, which countries are likely to gain importance as suppliers of metals seen as “critical”. The research has shown that, on an individual country level, future revenues from these metals are not likely to be as important as current revenues from fossil fuels, and that the local impact from mining may still be significant in many countries, not least due to the environmental intrusion. These insights advance our understanding of the geopolitics of sustainability. Previous research had mainly addressed the geographical distribution of stranded fossil fuels and renewable energy resources, while the economic value of metals had been overlooked.

HOW THIS RESEARCH HELPS KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Our approach in studying SDG interactions has emphasized working in close collaboration with decision-makers to facilitate their discussions and understanding of SDG interactions. We have developed tools that use network analysis and clustering techniques. These tools can help identify possible collaboration patterns amongst implementation actors, and can be used to identify policy synergies and trade-offs, thereby facilitating prioritization. The combined research on SDG interactions and state responses to environmental change explains why some sustainable development pathways are unlikely to materialize if present interests and governance dynamics prevail. Policymakers can take this on board; they can instead focus on other, more promising sustainability pathways, and can think about how to respond to identified trade-offs. This research also underpins a forthcoming study in Phase II that will develop sustainability scenarios compatible with historical SDG-interaction patterns.

Research conducted at the subnational level in developing countries is relevant for Sweden, other aid donors, and those who conduct peacekeeping missions. Our research can be used to improve future missions and development initiatives in conflict-affected settings so that these efforts better align with the SDGs. The research suggests that, should demand for metals in renewable energy sectors increase, a handful of identified countries are at increased risk of suffering a “resource curse” – that is, they may become less democratic and experience worse economic and development outcomes than countries with fewer natural resources. We have so far identified that recycling can change resource dependencies, and the ways in which this can interact with geopolitical interests will be studied further in Phase II of Mistra Geopolitics.

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FORESIGHT – SWEDEN IN A CHANGING GEOPOLITICAL LANDSCAPE

“...the project has systematically identified and assessed how the influence of COVID-19 on different global uncertainties may generate alternative geopolitical patterns and outcomes.”

OUR RESEARCH FOCUS

This research has explored competitive opportunities and solutions for Sweden in a future characterized by growing global uncertainties. New geopolitical landscapes are playing an increasingly important role in determining the prospects for sustainable development. The work has rested on a research co-creation process and has been conducted using a variety of foresight methodologies, such as visualization-supported focus groups, participatory scenario development and elite panel-based horizon scanning. In this approach, a range of Swedish stakeholders assess the options for navigating growing global uncertainties, and explore the risks and opportunities in pursuing sustainable development and competitiveness, and contributing to a societal transformation towards global sustainability.

Exploitative scenario exercises are useful not because they predict the future, but because they stretch our collective imaginations, and provide the context for critical strategic planning. Will the future be marked by an increasingly antagonistic and authoritarian world order? Will it be characterized by a market-driven push toward sustainability? Or will it be shaped by degrowth and community development? In an uncertain world, strategic actors can and should plan for a number of possible outcomes in order to position themselves for success, no matter how the future unfolds.

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

The first round of focus groups explored how Swedish agents of change make sense of the UN 2030 Agenda in a context of geopolitical uncertainty (Elässon et al. 2019). The study identified a number of narratives, and therefore multiple entry points for dialogues and different perspectives on opportunities for and challenges in achieving the 2030 Agenda. This indicated the importance of narratives in understanding societal transformation towards sustainability. The results indicate a need to reflect on how cross-sectoral learning and communicative processes...
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a rapid response project began in April 2020, in close cooperation with the Swedish Defense University (a Mistra Geopolitics stakeholder partner). Using ‘Swedish actors’ views of the world as its vantage point and combining Delphi-based horizon scanning with explorative scenario development, this project systematically identified and assessed how the influence of COVID-19 on different global uncertainties may generate alternative geopolitical patterns and outcomes, with a 12 to 36 month perspective.

**COMPONENTS OF AN ITERATIVE RESEARCH PROCESS**

By reviewing literature on transdisciplinary research and interviewing representatives of Mistra’s research and management teams, we have conducted an assessment of the programme’s co-creation efforts. The literature emphasizes the importance of self-reflexivity in transdisciplinary research, and this assessment forms part of the efforts to evaluate the programme’s co-creation efforts halfway into the eight-year programme. We explored three stages of co-creation that the literature pinpoint as key for transdisciplinary research: co-design of the research agenda; co-production of knowledge, and co-dissemination – should not be treated as consecutive steps, but as components of an iterative research process.”

“The three areas of co-creation – co-design of the research agenda, co-production of knowledge, and co-dissemination – should not be treated as consecutive steps, but as components of an iterative research process.”

**MISTRA GEOPOLITICS RESEARCH SCHOOL AND PHD ASSOCIATES**

Mistra Geopolitics works with a number of associated PhDs, external graduate students and doctoral students, some enrolled in our two-year research school. The research school seeks to train the next generation of scholars in methods, theories, and data collection for advanced analysis of geopolitics and sustainable development.

**MEET OUR PHD CANDIDATE JIAYI ZHOU**

Why did you decide to join the Mistra Geopolitics research school?

I formally began my participation in the Mistra Geopolitics Programme as a PhD student in October 2017. What compelled me most about Mistra Geopolitics was its overarching research topic. The intersection of sustainable development and geopolitics (especially to the extent that the latter involves power politics) is a space that encompasses so much real-world activity. But it also falls between two very different communities of expertise, and a lot of research tends to speak well to one community but not the other. I was very excited to be in a research programme committed to working towards bridging this gap, since my own research interests very much fall between these two areas.

What is your research area of interest?

My main area of interest is the geopolitics of food security. This interest started in relation to previous work I had done on agrarian change in the far east of Russia, and quickly expanded to encompass international dimensions: how food and agriculture is seen through the lens of state security, not only by the Russian government. Russia is by no means unique in this regard, since a national security perspective on food production, availability and supply is present in a very broad range of countries around the world. At the same time, the study of this phenomenon seemed to be missing in a lot of the literature on food security, which tends to focus on human security and developmental aspects of the issue. My own research interests essentially stemmed from this area, which I wanted to know more about and explore further.

What is the most exciting finding from Phase I?

In my own research, my tracing of food security concepts across geographies and histories has led to many interesting findings that I had no idea about before. As it relates again to Russia, one of the most interesting findings was how prominent a critique of shock therapy and the (neo)liberal reforms adopted by the country's leadership. When Putin came to power in the 2000s, and in his early press for an open economy, it was an opposition discourse with which he had to contend. But as time went on and relations with the West became strained,
his government would also come to embrace more secu-
ritized and autarkic approaches to food. In this regard, the
history of food security in Russia really ties into broader
political history of the country.

What will you take with you from your time in Mistra
Geopolitics?

I think the broad emphasis on interdisciplinarity, and the ability
to communicate across broad divides (to include both
science and policy) have been two huge personal takeaways
for me from Mistra Geopolitics. Interdisciplinarity can be
difficult to navigate, since it requires being able to not only
research but also speak across the concerns of distinct
communities. Without strict templates for how to go about it,
I have sometimes felt unmoored. But it is so very worth it,
because I think that is where you are forced to think very hard
about broader societal relevance.

What happens next?

I have been employed at SIPRI before and during the duration
of my PhD. For the time being, I’ll continue to work there and
will hopefully expand my portfolio of work regarding precisely
the mix of topics that Mistra Geopolitics has helped open
the door for. This will likely be with a focus on other geographies,
however, with more research on China, for example.

MEET OUR PHD CANDIDATE ECE KURAL

Why did you decide to join the Mistra Geopolitics
research school?

I started the Mistra Geopolitics programme in September
2017. The multi-disciplinary nature of the programme was a
pull factor for me. The fact that such diverse scholars are
working on different angles of contemporary topics such as
the environment and geopolitics is a great strength.

What is your research area of interest?

My research interests are climate change adaptation and
international organizations. International organizations are
central actors in global governance and play a vital role when

it comes to fully comprehending the global governance of
climate adaptation.

What is the most exciting finding from Phase I?

After I analyzed 31 international organizations’ climate
adaptation activities over the last three decades, I could see
that, regardless of their main area of focus, all of them had
engaged with climate adaptation. This exciting empirical
evidence shows that, while it occurs at varying degrees and
levels, climate change adaptation has become a concern
and an agenda item for wide range of organizations, whether
their focus is in the fields of migration, security or trade.

What will you take with you from your time in Mistra
Geopolitics?

The research school and programme have taught me the
importance of communicating one’s research to a multi-disci-
plinary audience. Simply explaining research questions and
findings is a necessity for our generation of researchers, and
I was happy with the emphasis that Mistra Geopolitics put
on this skill.

What happens next?

Currently I’m exploring how the World Health Organization
(WHO) carved the health and climate change adaptation
nexus. Describing the strategies and backlashes that the
WHO encountered during this process sheds light on how
and why organizations create new nexuses.

What is your area of research within Mistra Geopolitics?

My focus is on transboundary climate risk, understanding
how countries are linked through climate change risk and
how this will affect trade, and specifically agricultural trade.

What have been the most surprising findings from your
work in Mistra Geopolitics?

A lot of my work to date in Mistra Geopolitics has been
quantitatively exploring how countries transmit climate risk
through trade. For me, one of the most surprising findings
has been that even countries which we tend to think are
well-insulated from climate risk, like Sweden or the UK, are
highly exposed. We tend to think that the diversification of
imports will help us reduce our risk. But this only applies for
isolated shocks; with a long-term risk like climate change,
which impacts everyone, this just means you have more
sources of risk, but not less risk overall.

Another surprising result has been the finding that not every
country is likely to experience a decline in agricultural yield
production due to climate change. As we know, there is a lot
of uncertainty in climate impact modeling, and depending on
which models you use, some major exporters may produce
more or less of a key commodity. I think that these changes
are going to be at the centre of a new era of climate diplomacy,
in which countries are both experiencing risks differently and
competing over market share as traditional production
patterns shift.

You have an exciting new job – please tell us more!

I have accepted a new position as a Foreign Affairs Officer at
the US Department of State, where I will work on climate
finance issues. In addition, I have moved my PhD studies at
the London School of Economics to part-time and hope to
keep engaged with Mistra Geopolitics that way.

The opportunity to be part of the team that brings the US
back into the Paris Agreement is really incredible. The next
couple of years, and 2021 in particular, pose such an opportunity
for climate policy as we begin to set the stage for achieving
the goals we aspire to in 2030. The United States is going to
play a key role in that conversation. I am very much looking
forward to taking my experience as a researcher on these
issues and engaging directly in US foreign policy at this key
moment in history.

What are your expectations for US Climate Policy in the
coming four years?

We have already seen strong signs that climate change is at
the top of the agenda for the Biden-Harris administration.
The most important element for me is that the US has an
opportunity to engage in the international deliberations as a
constructive partner and counterpart. The US has this unique
ability in the world to act as a convener, raise our collective
urgency, and work towards taking action. This shift is what I
am most excited about.

How will your experience with Mistra Geopolitics
correspond to your new role?

In a lot of ways! Mistra Geopolitics has put several issues on
the map that are very relevant for the administration. For
example, the work on mining and minerals is very important
for energy transition issues and the research on global
governance is relevant in considering how to build effective
structures and policy processes. Not to mention the work on
transboundary risks, which is very near to my own heart.

For me personally, Mistra Geopolitics and SEI, Stockholm
Environment Institute, have helped to facilitate so many
connections with European, Swedish, and developing
country partners. I hope that this will be an asset to me in my
new role, so that I can bring this wide diversity of perspec-
tives into the discussion, as well as the most cutting-edge
research and thinking on the issues we deal with every day.

What are your thoughts about our ability to address
the issue of climate change?

I have never been so optimistic about our ability to address
climate change. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic
there is a strong appetite to invest capital and policy attention
in a green recovery. Together with growing political will and
the urgency being felt in capitals all around the world, we are
at a truly unique moment to take bold steps forward and
chart the course for an ambitious decade of climate action.

MEET OUR PHD ASSOCIATE KEVIN M. ADAMS

Kevin M. Adams is a part-time PhD associate in the Mistra
Geopolitics programme and has a new role as Foreign Affairs
Officer at the US Department of State.

What is your area of research within Mistra Geopolitics?

My focus is in the fields of migration, security or trade.

What have been the most surprising findings from your
work in Mistra Geopolitics?

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Kevin M. Adams is a part-time PhD associate in the Mistra
Geopolitics programme and has a new role as Foreign Affairs
Officer at the US Department of State.
HUMANITARIAN NEED DRIVES MULTILATERAL DISASTER AID

This new study published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) finds that aid provided by the United Nations (UN) in the aftermath of climate-related disasters is driven by humanitarian need rather than by strategic donor interests. The results underline the importance of climate-related hazards in understanding aid disbursements.

The study “Humanitarian need drives multilateral disaster aid” provides the first estimation of UN climate-related disaster aid worldwide. Although it cannot be entirely ruled out that powerful donor states’ interests shape UN aid flows, the UN seems able to fend off donor states’ strategic interests and, following disasters, allocate more aid to the areas where hazard severity is greatest and need is most pressing.

Threats to human livelihoods from natural hazards are increasing due to climate change. Climate-related disasters such as floods, storms and droughts have destroyed homes, reduced crop yields, harmed livestock, and sparked conflict, especially in developing countries. To provide adequate disaster relief, states rely on multilateral institutions, particularly the UN.

Yet the determinants of where UN disaster aid is disbursed are poorly understood. To fill this gap, researchers from Stockholm University and Uppsala University, affiliated with the Bolin Centre for Climate Research and the Mistra Geopolitics programme, examined the determinants of UN disaster aid using a dataset of UN aid which covered almost 2000 climate-related disasters between 2006 and 2017.

“Knowing whether the severity of a climatic hazard is important for explaining multilateral aid has implications for what we can do to better alleviate humanitarian crises in the aftermath of climate-related disasters,” said the study’s lead author Lisa Dellmuth, who is an Associate Professor of International Relations at Stockholm University and member of Mistra Geopolitics.

The principal findings of the study are twofold. First, humanitarian need largely drives UN aid in the aftermath of climate-related disasters. Rather than being beholden to the strategic interests of donor states, the UN appears to be able to allot higher amounts of aid to the places experiencing greater hazard severity, where the need for such assistance is more urgent. Based on this finding, the study argues that the UN lives up to its stated principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence in disaster aid; these results underpin the legitimacy of the UN when it comes to allocating disaster aid.

“Understanding the determinants of multilateral climate aid is important not only for increasing the ability of the international community to provide humanitarian assistance, but also for improving resilience in the face of increasing risk of climate-related natural disasters,” said Nina von Uexkull, study co-author, senior lecturer in International Relations at Stockholm University and researcher in Mistra Geopolitics.

The study was written by Lisa Dellmuth, Frida Bender, Aiden Jönsson, Elisabeth Rosvold, and Nina von Uexkull, Stockholm University, the Bolin Centre for Climate Research, and the Mistra Geopolitics programme. It is a journal article published in PNAS 20 January 2021, and has been cross-posted on the websites of EurekAlert, Stockholm University, SEI, Cision News and Mistra Geopolitics.

Read the study and press release on the Mistra geopolitics website (www.mistra-geopolitics.org).

JUST TRANSITION AND THE GEOPOLITICS OF DECARBONIZATION IN THE EU

This policy brief explores how the European Union (EU) Green Deal operationalizes the concept of just transition. It shows how the EU Commission’s approach to just transition may influence the politics of decarbonization within the EU.

The EU’s “territorial” approach builds engagement with subnational carbon-intensive regions as a political strategy to generate action and bottom-up support towards decarbonization, despite the resistance of the national leadership.
also requires the managed retreat of both carbon intensive firms (Bridge et al. 2013) and the production of fossil fuels (Green and Denniss 2018; Lazarus and van Asselt 2018). The concept of just transition explicitly draws attention to the locations affected by the move away from carbon-intensive sectors and recognizes them as sites of political action regarding decarbonization.

In this discussion brief, a geopolitical lens is adopted to understand how the EU Commission’s operationalization of just transition is challenging the historical politics of decarbonization at the EU level. The study explores how the Commission operationalizes this concept to shape new geographies that, through a process of “rescaling”, can help it reach its political objective of carbon neutrality by 2050.

The brief outlines both the concept of just transition, and how it has been politically instrumentalized in defence of diverging views about low-carbon transitions. Key EU strategic policy documents in the fields of climate, energy, and industry over the past decade are then reviewed to understand how the Commission is territorially operationalizing the principle through the Just Transition Mechanism, and what this means for the geopolitics of decarbonization within the EU. Finally, the research reflects on some additional policy challenges associated with the EU’s territorial approach to just transition.

**KEY MESSAGES**

- The EU’s territorial approach to just transition strengthens subnational authorities’ agency in decarbonization efforts.
- Through such “rescaling” of aspects of the EU’s decarbonization policy, the Just Transition Mechanism of the EU Green Deal challenges the historical politics of decarbonization in the EU.
- Indicators proposed to assess the effectiveness of the Territorial Just Transition Plans lack provisions for monitoring their impacts on vulnerable groups. The absence of monitoring raises questions about whether such plans will be fair, in practice.
- EU member states must incorporate just transition principles into their foreign policy and aid programmes to support carbon-intensive regions outside the EU, especially in low-income countries.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Claudia Strambo is a research fellow at the Stockholm Environment Institute, SEI and a researcher in Mistra Geopolitics.

**FIRE SALE – MANAGING THE GEOPOLITICS OF CLIMATE-RELATED FINANCIAL RISK IN THE AGE OF COVID**

COVID-19 starkly illustrates how the international community and global financial architecture are woefully ill-prepared for a scenario of cascading sovereign insolvencies and their geopolitical consequences.

E3G launched a report this year within the Mistra Geopolitics programme arguing that, if not managed, the risk posed by climate change to the stability of the global financial system threatens to spill over into international affairs and increase geopolitical tensions. Avoiding a scenario where the implications of, and disagreements around, cumulative climate bailouts of sovereigns threaten international financial stability will require a much stronger degree of international cooperation than currently exists.

Discussion of the risks climate change poses to financial stability has focused mostly on how companies should
prepare for and respond to rising insurance premiums and stranded fossil assets. Yet most of the world’s fossil fuels are owned by states and state-owned entities, and it will be governments that pick up the tab for more frequent and extreme climate-driven weather events.

New rules are urgently required to determine how responsibility for climate financial risk is shared and managed between countries and institutions. Agreement is needed in two specific areas: first, how to respond to sovereign risk from climate change, including capital flight from vulnerable regions that could lead to instability; and second, how to improve debt transparency and prevent countries from attempting to offload underperforming fossil fuel assets to opaque jurisdictions.

Taylor Dimsdale, Director of Risk and Resilience at E3G, said: “Far too much investment is still going into fossil fuels. This won’t be one financial time bomb going off in a single year, but dozens if not hundreds of time bombs over decades. The G20 members can barely agree on a lunch order these days. But they will need to decide which countries get climate bailouts, and under what terms. Sovereign nations bear the risk, but it is everyday citizens in the poorest countries who will suffer most. The only solution is a coordinated global approach.”

COVID-19 must be a wake-up call; along with the global debt crisis, the pandemic has already increased the potential size of these risks. But it also provides a window for the world to act to address the discrepancy between, on the one hand, the near certainty of transition and the physical risks of climate change, and, on the other, the failure to systematically consider and prepare for the catastrophic cost on financial stability, fiscal health and foreign relations. The paper offers several recommendations for how the G20 and other international financial institutions (and their major sovereign shareholders) can use the COVID-19 recovery period to implement a robust reform agenda to address this discrepancy. The recommendations focus on strengthening risk reporting and risk mitigation, and strengthening the global financial architecture for climate risks.


THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE IN KAZAKHSTAN:

DOES THE GEOPOLITICS OF CHINA’S OUTWARD INVESTMENTS PUT THE BRAKES ON DECARBONIZATION?

China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is an example of how decarbonization processes interact with the geopolitical dynamics. The success of the Paris Agreement’s implementation depends on the emissions trajectories of the BRI partner countries and the infrastructure choices made today.

China’s support for energy, transport and industrial projects might influence some of these choices, and these investments often underpin the geopolitical aspirations of the country and its partners. “The Belt and Road Initiative in Kazakhstan: Does the geopolitics of China’s outward investments put the brakes on decarbonisation?”, a report prepared by adelphi within Mistra Geopolitics, provides an insight into the decarbonization impacts of China’s Belt and Road Initiative in Kazakhstan.
Throughout 2020, several large external seminars were held under the Mistra Geopolitics umbrella, with details published on the Mistra Geopolitics website. Below are some highlights:

**GLOBAL ADAPTATION GOVERNANCE BEYOND UNFCCC**

International institutions such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) are increasingly addressing climate risks, even though their mandates did not originally include climate change.

The seminar “Global Adaptation Governance beyond UNFCCC” was held in January 2020. It featured presentations by Dr. Lisa M. Dellmuth, and Dr. Maria-Therese Gustafsson, both from Mistra Geopolitics, of their research on global adaptation policy, and a discussion of the promises and pitfalls of integrated governance, in light of the Agenda 2030.

“Climate adaptation has, over the past ten years, been catapulted on the top of the global political agenda. Recently, we have seen dramatic events happening worldwide, showing us how important climate adaptation is; for example, the wildfires in the Amazon and Australia,” said Dr. Lisa M. Dellmuth, Associate Professor at Stockholm University and researcher in Mistra Geopolitics.

The event was organized by Naturvårdsverket and Mistra Geopolitics, and funded by Mistra Geopolitics and the Formas project Glocalizing Climate Governance.

The seminar was streamed via YouTube, with 114 unique viewers.

**EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL – WHAT’S IN IT FOR SWEDEN AND SWEDISH BUSINESS?**

What does the European Green Deal (EGD) mean for climate change, and as a net-zero emission engine? In what way will the European Green Deal be able to stimulate investment in sustainable solutions and technologies? How will China and the US act? And how can we use the EGD in Sweden to boost the ongoing transformation in energy and circular economy? These were questions discussed at the breakfast seminar “European Green Deal – What’s in it for Sweden and Swedish business?”

The report’s analysis offers three takeaways for European climate diplomacy:

- Greening the BRI (a “push” factor) and raising climate ambition in BRI target countries (a “pull” factor) are both essential to achieving low-emission development. To grasp the push and pull factors fully, and to act on them effectively, we need to understand their geopolitical dimensions, and how these interact with their economic rationales.
- Engaging with China and the BRI target countries will not only require cooperation on climate topics but a comprehensive, cross-cutting approach to international relations and diplomacy more broadly.
- An accelerated domestic transformation within the EU and its Member States has the power to influence the structure of economic, financial and geopolitical incentives for fostering climate-compatible economies beyond European borders.

To raise climate ambition, Europe will need to explore the incentives it can mobilize through important fields of engagement such as trade and investment relations,” said Daria Ivleva.

A key conclusion of the report’s analysis is that climate goals need be serve as a compass for cooperation across policy domains between China, and the EU and its Member States.

Author: Daria Ivleva, Senior Advisor for adelphi in the field of international cooperation, climate, and energy. With contributions from Karl Hallding of the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and Mistra Geopolitics, and Dennis Tänzler, Director of International Climate Policy at adelphi.

Read “The Belt and Road Initiative in Kazakhstan: Does the geopolitics of China’s outward investments put the brakes on decarbonisation?” on the Mistra Geopolitics website (www.mistra-geopolitics.org )

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Daria Ivleva is a Senior Advisor for adelphi in the field of international cooperation, climate, and energy.
The seminar was held at Sjöfartshuset in January 2020, and was arranged by Hagainitsivet and Mistra Geopolitics. Speakers included Annika Korzinek, Deputy Head of the European Commission Representation in Sweden; Mia Pantzar, Senior Analyst at the Institute for European Environmental Policy; and Ronan Palmer, head of the Clean Economy Program at the international think tank, E3G, a Mistra Geopolitics partner organization. It was Palmer who noted that “it is extremely important that the EU Green deal is seen as an instrument of development. And the success of it will be very dependent on what each EU member state does in their own country.”

The seminar was streamed live via Facebook, with 464 unique viewers.

THE GEOPOLITICS OF COVID-19 AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Could the COVID-19 pandemic be the catalyst for a societal transformation toward sustainability, as envisioned by the UN and the European Union? Or will efforts to restore business as usual drive a new surge of carbon emissions, fear and international distrust?

Our April 2020 webinar, “The geopolitics of COVID-19 and climate change”, explored these questions and proved immensely popular, with over 600 participants from around the globe.

Among the event’s main speakers were Björn-Ola Linnér, Programme Director of Mistra Geopolitics; Nick Maibey, Chief Executive and founder director of E3G; Åsa Persson, SEI Research Director; and Mattias Frumerie, Climate Diplomat for the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

“The Corona crisis is a 100 meter race, and the climate crisis is a marathon. We have to run both at the same time.” – Victor Galaz, Stockholm Resilience Centre.

The event was published on the Stockholm Environment Institute’s website and was the site’s “top content” piece in 2020, with a total of 6338 pageviews between April 2020 and January 2021.

Extensive scenario research on the geopolitical consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic was carried out in 2020, in close collaboration with Mistra Geopolitics’ partners. Several seminars based on the results of the research were produced.

Climate, Security and Geopolitics – How do we navigate in corona times?

How is climate change affected by the COVID-19 pandemic internationally, nationally and in organizations? What are the new geopolitical consequences? What are the effects on food supply, security issues and new trade conflicts? How does COVID-19 affect the work towards climate action?

These were among the questions that the “Climate, Security and Geopolitics – How do we navigate in corona times?” event, held in August 2020, sought to discuss. Organized by Hagainitsivet, the Stockholm Environment Institute and Mistra Geopolitics, the seminar was broadcast in SVT Forum on Swedish Television.

THE GEOPOLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Several Mistra Geopolitics researchers appeared frequently in various media in 2020. News articles, TV segments and op-eds featuring representatives of Mistra Geopolitics have been published by both Swedish and international media outlets including Science Magazine, Targeted News Service (USA), Dagens Nyheter, SVT Rapport, SVT Forum and TV4.

UN disaster aid is driven by humanitarian need rather than by strategic donor interests

Published by Science Magazine in January 2021

This article was based on the PNAS study “Humanitarian need drives multilateral disaster aid”, which provided the first global estimation of UN climate-related disaster aid. While it can’t be definitively concluded that UN aid flows aren’t shaped by powerful donor states’ interests, the UN does seem to be able to stave them off when it comes to postdisaster response. This allows the organization to therefore allot aid to different areas based on hazard severity and need.

“Knowing whether the severity of a climatic hazard is important for explaining multilateral aid has implications for what we can do to better alleviate humanitarian crises in the aftermath of climate-related disasters,” said Lisa Dellmuth, lead author of the study. Associate Professor of International Relations at Stockholm University and member of Mistra Geopolitics.


The Paris Agreement forces a step-by-step increase in ambition

Published by Dagens Nyheter in December 2020.

“Five years after the Paris Agreement was adopted, Åsa Persson, Research Director of SEI, and Björn-Ola Linnér, Professor at Linköping University and Mistra Program Director, discussed various issues of climate politics – including where we are now and where we need to go – in an article in Dagens Nyheter.

“‘It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the Paris Agreement’, said Linnér. ‘It has not delivered the carbon dioxide budget needed for global warming to be below 2°C, even less towards the 1.5°C target. But, it has clearly proved to be a strong driving force in climate work. The agreement has become a benchmark – everything that countries do, that cities do, that companies do to reduce climate change has always been the reference point in the Paris negotiations.’

How has COVID-19 impacted energy use?
Published in TV4, Dagens ETC and Transport och Logistik, in April, May and October 2020.
Throughout 2020, André Månberger, researcher in environmental and energy systems Lund University and Mistra Geopolitics, commented on how COVID-19 has impacted energy use and oil prices in TV4 business news; Dagens ETC; Transport och Logistik; and Forskning.se.

“At halt climate change, oil use must decline faster than market forces lead,” Månberger told Dagens ETC. “If the crisis in the oil industry does not become the subject of any rescue packages, there will probably be fewer companies that survive. On the other hand, if Sweden and other countries do not reduce their dependence on fossil fuels, oil producers will charge a higher price in the future.”

Discussing the links between geopolitics and sustainable development on Forskning.se, he said, “oil prices have fallen before, but this reduction in demand is spectacular.”

Dagens ETC: Är oljebolagens kris permanent? https://www.etc.se/klimat/ar-oljebolagens-kris-permanent

Time for Sweden to step up its support for new regulations to stop business impunity
Published in Omvärlden, December 2020.

At the EU level, new regulations on forest risk commodities, and human rights and environmental due diligence are under discussion. Writing in the Swedish magazine Omvärlden, Mistra Geopolitics researchers Maria-Therese Gustafsson and Almut Schilling-Vacaflor argued that it is high time for Sweden to step up its support for the measures needed to hold corporations to account for environmental damage and human rights violations abroad.

Limiting global deforestation, they noted, is necessary to curbing climate change, and preventing outbreaks of pandemics such as the COVID-19 crisis.

Op-ed article by Maria-Therese Gustafsson, Assistant Professor at Stockholm University and researcher at Mistra Geopolitics
Almut Schilling-Vacaflor, post-doctoral researcher at Osnabrück University and Mistra Geopolitics.
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Revenues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SEK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mistra</td>
<td>13,228,779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-funding from programme partners and Stakeholders</td>
<td>3,748,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total revenues 16,977,379

Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>SEK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>10,317,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>56,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumables</td>
<td>46,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other direct costs</td>
<td>1,247,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchased services</td>
<td>454,533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect costs</td>
<td>2,530,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic reserve</td>
<td>2,325,002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total expenditure 16,977,379

PROGRAMME GENERAL COSTS

- Programme general costs 28%
- Communications 7%
- WP1 Geopolitics and security in the anthropocene 12%
- WP2 Impact pathways in a changing environmental and geopolitical context 12%
- WP3 Governance responses to environmental related security risks 17%
- WP4 The interrelationships between shifting geopolitical landscapes and the SDGs 12%
- WP5 Foresight - Sweden in a changing geopolitical landscape 13%
- Stakeholder partners in-kind contribution 4%

Total expenditure 16,977,379

2020 ACTUAL FIGURES BY WORK PACKAGE

EVENTS AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahlén, A. “A progressive dilemma? Investigating cross-country variations in family immigration policy through the lens of welfare state regimes”, at the ECPR Virtual General Conference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karl Hallding, presentation and panel discussion in the conference “Omstart Sverige: Fyra perspektiv på det nya normala - post-coronapandemin”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnus Benzie, intervention at the 17th Meeting of the Adaptation Committee (UNFCCC), Agenda item AC/2020/3 on the Global Goal on Adaptation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henrik Carlsson and Linn Järnberg ran a workshop at the conference “Nu kör vi” on SDG implementation in Sweden. Organized by the National Coordinator for SDG implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karl Hallding participating in a panel at a roundtable arranged by SIPRI “EU-China Roundtable Dialogue: Towards Harmonized Approaches for Financing Green Development”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karl Hallding participating in a roundtable dialogue “1.5 dialogue with experts and officials on the EU’s involvement in the Indo-Pacific” including an intervention on global issues focusing climate change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Månberger, A. Sustainable food and security: a framework for analysis. Poster presentation, Global food security conference, online.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PRESENTATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magnus Benzie, 1st Adaptation Without Borders Annual General Meeting, Paris, France.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRESENTATIONS (CONTINUED)

Presentation
Dellmuth, Lisa M., “Climate Change Adaptation beyond UNFCCC”, Public Outreach Event, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), Stockholm. January

Presentation
Gustafsson, Maria-Therese, “Climate Change Adaptation beyond UNFCCC”, Public Outreach Event, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), Stockholm. January

Presentation
Frida Lager, Henrik Carlsten, presentations and input to a series of expert workshops organized on behalf of the Swedish Expert Council on Adaptation on the topic of transnational climate effects. Feb–April

Presentation
Nina von Uexkull “Climate change and armed conflict”, Invited presentation, Defense and Security Academy, Folk och Försvar. 24 April

Presentation
Frida Lager, Climate-Resilient Trade and Production, Online seminar with the European Commission and Adaptation Without Borders. 9 July

Presentation
Nina von Uexkull “Climate change and armed conflict – pathways and scope conditions” Invited presentation, Berlin Climate Security Conference part II. 18 Sept

Presentation
Magnus Berntz, Chatham House Climate Change 2020 conference, session: Understanding Climate Risk. Mitigating and Adapting. 5 Oct

Presentation
Nina von Uexkull “Climate-sensitive armed conflict projections for the 21st century” Invited presentation at the Center for Comparative and International Studies Colloquium, ETH Zurich and Universi-ty of Zurich. 23 Oct

Presentation
Henrik Carlsten presented SDG Synergies at the conference EEEN 2020: European Environmental Evaluators Network Forum. 4-5 Nov

Presentation
Nina von Uexkull “Security Implications of Climate Change”, Invited presentation, Folk och Försvar Academy, Stockholm. 5 Nov

Presentation
Gustafsson, Maria-Therese “Kan gruvnäringen bidra till hållbar utveckling”, Open lecture ABF Stockholm. 16 Nov

Presentation
Karl Halding, presentation at Världens Bio “China – threat or op-portunity in the global sustainability game” Stockholm University (video presentation with 1h live Q&A session) 1 Dec

Presentation
Ilvvard Hege & Kristina Peteva “Economic growth, armed conflict and the implications for climate change.” Presentation at the Nordic Climate-Conflict Research Seminar. 4 Dec

SEMINARS

Seminar
Global Adaptation Governance beyond UNFCCC – Naturvårdsverket and Mistra Geopolitics featuring Maria-Therese Gustafsson and Lisa Dellmuth. Live-streamed via YouTube 17 Jan

Seminar

Seminar
Can the EU and China save the Paris Agreement in 2020? SEI, Mistra Geopolitics featuring Mattias Furumete, Climate Finance and Climate Diplomacy, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Niklas Bremberg, Stockholm University, Jiayi Zhou, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and Björn-Ola Linnér, Mistra Geopolitics and Linköping University. 12 Feb

Seminar
Webinar: The Geopolitics of COVID-19 and Climate Change Live-streamed via YouTube 3 April

Seminar
Coronapandemin, geopolitik och miljöfrågor Swesif and Mistra Geopolitics seminar featuring Karl Halding, Jiayi Zhou and Björn-Ola Linnér. Live-streamed via YouTube 27 May

Seminar
Climate, Security and Geopolitics – How do we navigate in corona times? Hagainitiativet and Mistra Geopolitics featuring Åsa Persson, Karl Halding, SEI, Johan Kuylenstierna, Climate Policy Council, Björn-Ola Linnér, Mistra Geopolitics, Anna Karin Hatt, LRF, Jens Holm (V) and Karin Karlströ, MEP (L). Live-streamed via Facebook 25 Aug

Presentation
Global climate implications of the US elections Mistra and Mistra Geopolitics seminar featuring Dallas Burtraw, Resources for the Future and Mistra Carbon Exit, Karl Halding, SEI and Mistra Geopolitics, Karin Bäckstrand, Stockholm University and Mistra Geopolitics, Enka Ejerbraten,JVT. Live-streamed via YouTube 21 Oct

Presentation
China’s climate promises Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences and Mistra Geopolitics seminar featuring Lena Ek, Mistra Geopolitics Board, Karl Halding, SEI and Mistra Geopolitics and Lena Sellgren, Business Sweden. Live-streamed via YouTube 3 Dec