

**EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT OF THE NORGLOBAL/HUMANITARIAN POLICY RESEARCH ACTIVITY
(HUMPOL) OF THE RESEARCH COUNCIL OF NORWAY**

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INTRODUCTION

At the end of October 2015 Mr. Jan Monteverde Haakonsen, Department of Cooperation and Development Research of the Research Council of Norway (RCN), approached three external experts (Joost Herman, Globalisation Studies Groningen, Groningen University/NOHA¹; Sara Pantuliano, ODI²; Jens Stilhoff Sørensen, School of Global Studies, Gothenburg University) to undertake a review of four ongoing research projects on humanitarian policy funded through HUMPOL, a sub-programme of NORGLOBAL. This is a Norwegian umbrella research programme dealing with various aspects of development issues, funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The three external experts were given access to all relevant documentation through the protected extranet of the RCN. It was agreed that each of the experts would go through the general documentation and the four sets of project applications, project descriptions and project progress reports separately, preparing for a two-day face to face meeting in Oslo on 13th and 14th January 2016. Senior executive officer Karin Rosenberg of the RCN prepared this two-day visit, organizing a full morning of meetings and discussions with staff from RCN's Department of Cooperation and Development Research (UTSAM) and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Mr Bjørn Tore Kjellemo, Director of UTSAM; Ms Inger-Ann Ulstein, NORGLOBAL Coordinator; Ms Reidun Bugge Otterøy, Senior Adviser, MoFA). The afternoon of the 13th and the full day on 14th were reserved for interviews with the Principal Investigators of the four separate research projects. The aim was to have a critical dialogue with the project leaders to enable the reviewers to deepen the understanding of (the progress of) the projects.

At the end of the two-day visit Mr. Haakonsen and the 3 external reviewers had a concluding session in which the proceedings of the two days were discussed. The reviewers asked for additional documentation which was instantly provided. An agreement was reached on the format of the final review report and the intended deadline for submission, scheduled for mid-February 2016.

The external reviewers sincerely thank the Research Council of Norway for its invitation to be part of this assessment, its hospitality and support during the process and above all for allowing us to be involved in this relevant and challenging research initiative.

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ASSIGNMENT AND SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

NORGLOBAL is a programme established for the benefit of various research activities within the issue area of development studies in the Research Council of Norway. HUMPOL – Research on Humanitarian Policy is one such activity with its own programme plan.

The HUMPOL programme set out to contribute to strengthen Norwegian research on humanitarian issues and enhance the relevance of research in national and international humanitarian policy debates through the publication of articles in internationally recognised journals, the preparation of policy briefs and fact sheets to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other dissemination activities. More particularly, HUMPOL aims to foster the development of new knowledge and increase competence in the Norwegian research community, and through this contribute to shaping the humanitarian policy agenda, including by offering research based advice to the Ministry on current political and humanitarian issues, and to stimulate informed debate about key humanitarian issues in Norway and in countries affected by humanitarian crises.

To this end there was one call for proposals with a 10th October 2011 deadline. Out of the 19 project proposals submitted, four projects were awarded funding. All these four projects were commenced in 2012 and are expected to be completed in the course of 2016. These projects include: Economic conditions of displacement; Humanitarian policy in a changing climate; Armed violence in urban settings; and Protection of civilians.

The HUMPOL programme plan envisaged that "*The HUMPOL-programme will be subject to a mid-term review to assess overall progress and to determine its future direction*". Indeed, the Research Council and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) had hoped that such a review would be carried out in 2015.

RCN has been given the responsibility of initiating and overseeing the review. Three external experts in the field of humanitarian policy were recruited for this task and to act as a panel. The aim of the review is to assess what the research funded by the HUMPOL programme has achieved so far and how it is implemented, and to identify future knowledge needs in the realm of humanitarian policy. The review is also expected to include recommendations for future research initiatives in the field of humanitarian policy, including recommendations for a new funding period. The review should also consider the extent to which HUMPOL has helped strengthen Norwegian research expertise in

humanitarian policy and whether the initiative has contributed to informing debates on humanitarian issues in Norway.

The external experts were asked to consider the following themes and questions in particular:

- a) To what extent has HUMPOL helped to develop new knowledge in the field of humanitarian policy?
- b) Has the programme helped to establish multidisciplinary research expertise?
- c) Has HUMPOL helped to increase cooperation with the South-based research institutions?
- d) To what extent has the research funded through HUMPOL influenced the debate on humanitarian questions?

HUMPOL has also aimed to lay the foundation for a knowledge-based humanitarian policy development in Norway, including through advice directly to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. To what extent has this goal been achieved?

HUMPOL wants to raise awareness and contribute to the debate on humanitarian issues both in Norway and in countries in the 'South', not least when it comes to humanitarian activities and humanitarian preparedness and response. Have the projects contributed to or planned to do this when the research will be completed?

HUMPOL covers a variety of areas within humanitarian policy, including the four main areas that are featured in the programme schedule: The prevention of and preparedness for humanitarian disasters; the protection of civilians; armed violence; and future challenges in international humanitarian emergency assistance. Each of these main themes has several sub-themes. To what extent are these topics or issues covered in the ongoing projects? Are there topics and issues that should get more attention in the follow-up of the activity?

Finally, the experts were asked to consider the merit of extending the HUMPOL programme for an additional period and offer specific recommendations and advice for future research priorities.

This review report presents an assessment of the HUMPOL programme along the lines and questions mentioned in the above description of the assignment. It includes an overall point of view concerning the HUMPOL programme and its future. It also contains a thorough analysis and assessment of the quality and relevance of the research that has been carried out by the four projects and

recommendations for future priorities for humanitarian policy research in Norway. The final report is presented to the Section for Humanitarian Questions of the MoFA and the Board of NORGLOBAL.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME HUMPOL

Traditionally Norway is one of the most prominent and relevant state actors in international humanitarian action. Not only is Norway in the top-five donors to important organisations like UNOCHA and other UN-agencies, but the Norwegian government also actively participates in creating policy that will influence the core characteristics and operational parameters of international humanitarian assistance. A primary goal is to reach a higher level of effectiveness of and coordination within the humanitarian system to save lives and alleviate suffering.

The reviewers deem the decision of the Norwegian parliament to make available sizeable funding for Norwegian research on humanitarian issues in 2012 in line with the general policy goals outlined above. The ambition to produce policy relevant outputs through thorough research in a way pre-empted the position taken by the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) Synthesis report (https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_global/synthesisreport) in 2016 and the 2015 European Union's positioning paper towards the WHS (http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5576_en.htm). In both documents a strong call for better and greater involvement of academia and research networks in the field of humanitarianism can be found. Interdisciplinary research involving local stakeholders in the South (mixed methodology, participatory approach) is fundamental to gathering disaggregated data that can help achieve better coordination and greater effectiveness. Rigorous accumulation of knowledge and continuous sharing and disseminating of research outputs will facilitate policy relevant advice and evidence-based programming.

Based on the documentation and the briefing given by the management of RCN and officials from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it became clear that Norway deemed it advantageous, coming from a background of strong involvement in development issues and peace and security issues, to support Norwegian research on humanitarian affairs to strengthen capacity on humanitarian policy within Norway as well as to position Norwegian researchers / institutes firmly in relevant international circles. The programme was framed as a pilot project.

The decision to link up with the RCN to create a policy relevant project-based research programme has been broadly beneficial, according to the reviewers. Firstly, the RCN as home for this particular project fitted the existing NORGLOBAL institutionalisation to underline the important input of

Norway in all issue areas of global importance and proportions. Nevertheless, (based upon interviews conducted by and the documentation available to the reviewers) from its inception a certain tension seems to have been discernible between the RCN putting emphasis on academic rigour that may not have been most fitted for policy research, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs aiming for policy-relevant research. Secondly, the overarching project description and call for proposals have internalised all the important elements outlined above. Academic (research) rigour and innovation; cross-cutting issues and interdisciplinarity; policy relevance; involvement of the practitioners' community; inclusion of global partners, especially from the south; and strategies for knowledge dissemination have been rightly positioned as key criteria for getting any research project funded.

The reviewers find it necessary to note that the project outline and call for proposals could have put additional emphasis on the methods to be selected by the projects to interact more both with policy makers (MoFa / practitioners' head offices – policy implications of findings) and with society at large (dissemination of knowledge, sustaining societal support for humanitarian goals of Norway). The project documents and other information given to the reviewers suggested that all parties involved expected frequent interaction and information exchange amongst themselves. However, this interaction seems to have materialised on an ad-hoc and informal basis only, with all parties involved acknowledging too little initiative to achieve more strategic communication. The ad-hoc nature of interactions may have resulted in missed opportunities to strategically disseminate research findings in order to inform and influence policy outcomes. Also, based upon the experience of the reviewers with other funding schemes, the seemingly absent necessity to have the applicants' home institutions co-commit during and after the research projects are finalised seems sub-optimal. This is not so much an issue of additional monies that need to be made available, but more the intent of commitment to institutional capacity building in Norwegian institutes on this important issue. The only possible exception is the creation of the Norwegian Centre for Humanitarian Studies (constituted by CMI, NUPI and PRIO) headed by Dr. Kristin Sandvik. The centre's creation fits the project goals HUMPOL set out to achieve; however, the reviewers point out that the current funding base allowing the Centre to exist is a mix of HUMPOL seed funding attached to one of the four projects and funding from other unrelated institutions. Project funding has thus been used to support the creation and working of the Centre which, with the need for other external funding, raises concerns over the financial sustainability of the initiative.

Based upon the files to which the reviewers were given confidential access, they deem the selection process by NORGLOBAL/HUMPOL to have been adequate. In total 19 project proposals were received, 4 of which received funding. The assessment board meticulously applied the criteria to rank these 4 highest for content, inclusion of cross-cutting issues, partnerships, academic quality and

policy relevance. However, criteria such as a strategy for interaction with policy makers and a communication strategy for effective and creative outreach to stakeholders (society at large, practitioners and peers / peer institutes) seem not to have played a significant role.

The selected projects were initiated in the course of 2012 are most of them are currently in the finalisation phase. Based upon careful scrutiny of the general documentation, the project progress reports and the interviews conducted, the reviewers offer the following observations:

1. The initiation and shaping of the HUMPOL-programme in partnership with the Norwegian MoFa has been advantageous. Taken as a pilot project, the reviewers feel that the goals grosso modo have been reached. The project has initiated and strengthened the growth of research expertise on humanitarian policies of contemporary relevance and has stimulated interdisciplinary teams of researchers, practitioners and global (south) partners to join forces and create added knowledge accumulation. However, outreach strategies (communication, dialogue) to policy relevant institutes and general humanitarian stakeholders (society, civil society sector) have been less prominently and clearly described/prescribed (see also under 4). In connection, or even preceding this, the reviewers cannot fully see HUMPOL having reached the goal of laying the foundation for a knowledge-based humanitarian policy development. The less than intense and continuous interaction with the MoFa and other policy makers seem to be at the heart of this, having formally created a foundation but de facto not having put flesh to the bones (see also under 3.).
2. The concrete shaping of the research project, the call for proposals and the selection process have been well taken care of, meticulously, although again the elements of criticism under 1. apply here as well. Academic rigour seems to have been a focus of the assessment process. Less attention has been given to the all-important elements linking policy relevance, policy impact and strategic dissemination. The reviewers would like to call specific attention to the acceptance of project 217192 'Courting Catastrophe' that scored equal marks during selection as the other three projects, but which in the eyes of the reviewers would have merited lower marks (see below).
3. The project implementation and oversight of the projects at a respectful distance while running (mainly through progress reports) by HUMPOL/RCN can be looked upon benignly (technically speaking). However, the reviewers take the position that the progress reports have been reporting not so much against outcomes, but against activities undertaken. Also, 'just' reporting on activities and research output level indicators without linking these with the objectives set out by the HUMPOL funding scheme makes it rather impossible to review how far the HUMPOL objectives have been met. The reviewers see a necessity to adapt

progress report guidelines to create a firmer link between output level indicators per research programme funded and the overarching objectives set out by HUMPOL. Also, the reviewers feel that HUMPOL/RCN could play a more active umbrella-role to create a platform for dialogue and exchange for those involved in research projects, the funding/commissioning body and MoFA. This platform could be used to reach out to other policy makers and practitioners in a concerted and strategic manner. This may be one avenue to strengthen research dissemination, policy dialogue and ultimately policy impact and influence societal debate on humanitarian questions at home and abroad (but: see also under 5.).

4. From a more technical point of view the reviewers feel that the form of reporting is not well-designed for reflecting the substance of the research. It is too technical, with reporting criteria and work-sheets and tables. It diverts attention from the actual substance and findings of the research. A considerable simplification of the reporting, that for example emphasizes a narrative form (writing 2-3 pages) on major research findings, and (2-3 pages) on major publications and forms of dissemination in both academic and policy / popular form would be advisable. This could possibly be complemented with a short (1-3 pages) narrative of how the researchers see these findings in relation to current policy, i.e. why and how they are policy-relevant. Accompanied by a conventional financial report that the funds have been spent in accordance with regulations and the application, this format of reporting should be sufficient. These points are equally elaborated upon in the sections below on the specific projects. The stage of implementation in which the projects currently are, the comments made by the Principal Investigators/project leaders during the interviews and the observations of the reviewers solicit the conclusion that HUMPOL/RCN could have played a more active guiding role for the benefit of coming closer to the self-imposed strategic objectives of the programme.
5. The Norwegian Centre for Humanitarian Studies stands out as a very tangible result of the HUMPOL project. Founded by CMI, PRIO and NUPI, financed from the existing HUMPOL grant-budget awarded to the Protection of Civilians project (with some additions from other sources), Dr. Sandvik and her team have striven to create a concrete tool for inter-institutional, interdisciplinary, policy relevant knowledge build-up amongst Norwegian researchers and their partners, also meant to be a platform for informing public debate. However, whilst outputs and activities are visible, true outreach to the public domain (other than the traditional humanitarian stakeholders) is sub-optimal. Also, and more worrisome, the sustainability of the Centre is insecure, based as it is primarily on HUMPOL funding for the 2012-2016 period. As it is, with only three months of administrative funding for the full

2012-2015 period available, Dr. Sandvik has been able to creatively come up with smaller amounts from different sources to keep a staff member in a 0,25fte position for 2013-2015. Thus, she has been able to make the Centre into an umbrella for all the HUMPOL projects. It is in this de facto hub-position that the reviewers see the possibility of sustainable development for the second phase of HUMPOL's overall objective to establish strong multidisciplinary research expertise with a continuous outreach to direct stakeholders and the public at large in Norway. As outlined above under point 3 the need to create a more active interface between the overarching objectives of HUMPOL and the concrete actions / outcome level indicators at programme level funded by HUMPOL; to establish continuous interdisciplinary dialogue and exchange of ideas amongst the programmes funded by HUMPOL; and to entice public debate on humanitarian issues and the role played by Norway could be satisfied by more substantially financing the Centre to assume these roles on behalf of HUMPOL.

INTERVIEWS AND ASSESSMENT OF PROJECTS 1

Project number: 217262

Project title: Economic Conditions of Displacement

Project manager: Bøås, Morten

Project owner: FAFO Institutt for arbeidsliv- og velferdsforskning **AS**

Project period: From 20120415 to 20160830

Overview of the project

This research seeks to contribute to displacement and refugee studies through a series of case-studies that critically and empirically examine the conditions of displacement in Northern Uganda (Acholiland), Southwestern Uganda (Nakivale), Eastern DRC (Lubero, North Kivu), Liberia (Grand Gedeh) and Zimbabwe (Bulawayo). The primary objective is to produce new conceptual and theoretical knowledge that can inform humanitarian policy and approaches, with a clear focus on lessons for future humanitarian assistance.

A secondary objective is studying the relationships and interactions of three "stakeholders": displaced people, host communities, and national and international humanitarian actors. By recognising the interactions of the displaced population into the wider local economy, this project has an objective of empirically exploring whether changes in economic behaviour of the host communities can be traced to a general trend, the arrival of a displaced population per se, or the implementation of humanitarian and development assistance.

The research methodology includes a mixed-methods approach (with both qualitative and quantitative data collection), in which qualitative methods inform and support quantitative and econometric analysis.

Reported progress and preliminary findings

All of the fieldwork for the five case studies has been completed, and the primary emphasis is now on finalising analysis and disseminating results. Numerous articles and publications are in progress, including a potential book contract (currently being negotiated). Based on learning from the project, the book is intended to capture insights from the global refugee crisis, and in doing so inform policy and practice related to the current migration challenge in Europe. The PhD component of the project has been a success, and two PhDs (instead of the intended one) will be produced: one has already been submitted, and the other is expected mid-2016. In addition to media engagement and written outputs (articles, blogs, op-eds, etc.), dissemination activities have thus far included: international

presentations (including at the Oxford Refugee Studies Centre); briefings to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, parliament and political parties; and engagement with NGOs (including the Norwegian Red Cross, Norwegian Refugee Council).

Emergent findings from the case studies illustrate the dynamic relationship between refugees, hosts and stakeholders (both local and international), and analysis of the variety of ways in which some gain and some lose from these encounters have led the researchers to propose a typology of 'winners' and 'losers.' Critically, one cannot assume that refugees and displaced people are the ones who are affected most badly – while forced displacement is traumatic, recent results from the Nakivale and Liberia case studies also suggest that it can be a transformative experience, opening a new set of social and economic opportunities for certain groups of refugees, whereas others do not have access to similar opportunities. For example, in the case of Nakivale it is of great interest to observe the relative affluence of parts of the community of Somali refugees (due to access to credit through the Hawala system), the relative marginalisation of some poor Ugandan farmers (outcompeted by agricultural products from the refugees as these are subsidised by the input factors they receive for free from humanitarian actors) and the opportunity for access to cheap seasonal labour that the camp represents for Ugandan farmers with relatively large banana plantations.

Findings from this study are of relevance to the current refugee situation in Europe. The typology of winners/losers, for example, as well as findings related to integration in host communities (which suggest there may be a finite post-displacement time period in which the displaced can be 'at home' abroad – after which they either integrate or return home).

These and other findings from the project will be presented in greater detail in forthcoming publications, and the researchers will draw particular insight from the comparative dimension between the case studies in order to enable more general discussion concerning the impact of the findings for humanitarian policy and practice.

Assessment

Critically considered against the criteria of the evaluation, the 'Economic Conditions of Displacement' project is assessed as having performed strongly out of the four HUMPOL research projects.

The project has strengthened multidisciplinary research expertise, drawing together a range of researchers from diverse backgrounds and imparting cross-disciplinary learning for the PhD students in Norway and Southern partner institutions (Mbarara University of Science and Technology in Uganda and University of Liberia). Although facing the ordinary challenges associated with any research partnership, the North-South research partnerships of this project were, overall, positive,

stimulating and mutually beneficial. Southern partners were able to embark on large-scale, multidisciplinary, multiyear research projects they would not otherwise have resources to undertake, while Norwegian researchers benefited from the knowledge of local partners, who had valuable insight into the research topics and problematized the research questions, which served to enhance the research and its relevance. Ultimately, the Principal Investigator (PI) credited HUMPOL with helping improve collaboration with South-based research partners, because while the basis for the partnership rested in pre-existing, longstanding relationships with researchers in Uganda and Liberia, the scale and duration of HUMPOL funding facilitated the depth and success of the collaboration.

Lastly, the Displacement project has influenced the debate on humanitarian questions and contributed to new knowledge in the field of humanitarian policy. Specifically, researchers involved with the project have been a seminal part of the migration/forced displacement discussions in Norway, and have begun to engage with scholars in Europe more broadly. While the PI would, as an academic, have participated in policy engagement regardless, HUMPOL encouraged and facilitated further policy engagement, providing connections, opportunities and the HUMPOL name as a point of reference. The timing of this study coincided with the significant rise of mixed-migration flows to Europe – while this made it topical, the extent to which the study generated policy relevant findings can be attributed to the adeptness of the project team, who were able to extrapolate global relevance from country specific case studies.

Conclusion and future outlook

While much of the success of the project can be attributed to the researchers involved and the relevance, design and execution of the project, in the context of the Displacement project HUMPOL's added value was that it provided support to a small but critical mass of researchers in Norway, who were able to produce and exchange dialogue around policy relevant research; it provided predictable funding, and thus the opportunity to for more systematic and extensive research; and it contributed to preparing a Norwegian research community, embedded in humanitarian issues, that is able to contribute directly to policy makers (formally, through written outputs and public engagement, and informally through discussion).

During the evaluation the PI highlighted what he considered the inevitability of the current European refugee challenge, given the increasing scale and duration of global crises. He noted in particular the limited capacity of developing countries neighbouring those in protracted conflict to absorb all of those seeking refuge; the typology of 'winners and losers' in forced displacement, and integration – issues that, while rooted in the experience of forced displacement in developing countries, have relevance in the context of onward movement and forced displacement globally.

While focusing on such issues (primarily related to humanitarian *response*) in developing contexts and globally is of importance and relevance to humanitarian policy, the PI for the Displacement project emphasised the need for greater and sustained focus on the root causes of humanitarian crises. The issues HUMPOL was established to address remain pertinent, and continued support would enable researchers to build on the research foundation they have developed, sustain partnerships and collaboration, and capitalise on the capacity HUMPOL has built.

INTERVIEWS AND ASSESSMENT OF PROJECTS 2

Project number: 217192

Project title: Courting catastrophe? Humanitarian policy and practice in a changing climate

Project manager: Eriksen, Siri

Project owner: Institutt for internasjonale miljø- og utviklingsstudier, Noragric

Project period: From 20121014 to 20160829

Overview of the project

The project 'Courting Catastrophe? Humanitarian Policy and practice in a changing climate' has three main goals: enhance understanding of the long term implications of humanitarian interventions for the benefit of building resilience and sustainable climate change adaptation; identification of lessons learned in this domain; and develop guidelines for better humanitarian action for the benefit of climate change adaptation. In co-operation with Norwegian, European and Global South partners the project has adopted a descriptive methodology supported by general theoretical connotations, supported by six case studies in vulnerable areas in the area of climate change. The overall outcome aimed for has been described as linking academic findings with policy relevant guidelines for action, to be able to capture the parameters of vulnerability for climate change and to link with local capacities to improve intervention.

The set-up of the project hinges upon different combinations of identified project-stakeholders that will conduct field research for each case study and advance the envisaged guideline development. Existing research staff and specific post-doctoral fellows have been identified to conduct the research. A series of (international) conferences, workshops and academic articles have been envisaged throughout the project as progressive output. The ethical and environmental 'clearance' has been taken clearly into consideration.

Progress reports and initial findings

Through the progress reports the ongoing nature of the six case studies is made visible. Concerning Ethiopia, Kenya and Zambia, mapping exercises are underway to pinpoint the exact nature of their respective vulnerabilities in general and country-specific, whilst also past humanitarian action concerning reducing vulnerability is being recorded. Concerning the Asian case studies (Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan) the mapping exercise has concentrated so far on the elements of governance and of access to land in relation to vulnerability of people and households. Each case study also singles out specific country characteristics and has different actor perspectives in the search for vulnerability indicators.

Early findings are quite diverse. Whilst in Ethiopia food aid dependency is key, in Kenya livestock-keeping and climate risk assessment in urban settings, and in Zambia extreme weather events and pre-disaster interventions are central. Concerning the Asian case studies malign governance responses in Nepal and humanitarian organisations' early access to vulnerable households seem to be singled out for being key to vulnerability, whilst access to (remaining) land after floodings in the Bangladesh case to decrease vulnerability in the recovery process seems key. Pakistan, lastly, initially shows that focusing on longer term mitigation of vulnerability through a comprehensive approach seems key: broader social, economic, political and environmental issues need to be addressed by humanitarian actors in order to help the layers of government to cope with unpredictable insecurities due to climate change in the region.

At a 'central' level (Norway) the two post-doctoral fellows (later in the project one of these positions was converted into a researcher position) have been progressing their research under the project, while the different sets of institutional partners have been responsible for progressing the case studies and early findings. To date 3 popular science publications, 13 reports and public presentations (addressing amongst others the public at large) and 2 scholarly articles have been produced within the framework of this project.

Assessment

Critically considered against the criteria of the evaluation of the HUMPOL mid-term review, the 'Courting Catastrophe' project is assessed as having performed least strongly out of the four HUMPOL research projects.

The main reason for this is an apparent weakness in having from the onset clearly developed research objectives and a rigorous theoretical framework and ensuing methodology that would allow for at least a minimum of comparability between the case studies and for generic development of the envisaged guidelines. The enhancement of understanding of long term implications of humanitarian interventions for efforts to build resilience and long term adaptation to climate change, as well as the identification of lessons learned from current interventions remain at the level of description/mapping too much and are not interlinked to an analytical approach of explaining the parameters of successful interventions based upon the parameters of climate-vulnerability and their reasons. The lack of this analytical approach also hinders the grounded-in-evidence step towards objective 3 to develop guidelines, which, with the project well underway despite justifiable delays, seems to be not yet off-the-ground. Based upon the progress reports, it is indeed difficult at the moment to assess the possibility that such guidelines will be forthcoming from the project.

The lack of a proper analytical approach also is a result of the initial envisaged theoretical and methodological framework which promises to look into existing models (e.g. Eriksen et al.) for further development along the way. Although the project description foresaw a joint development of an appropriate analytical framework in the early stages of the project (year 1), the evidence of success is not visible for the reviewers, nor could the acting P.I. during the interviews truly elaborate on this. As a consequence, the erstwhile outcomes of the case studies are to be considered valuable building bricks for the project, while cement still needs to be added.

The project has so far strengthened multidisciplinary research expertise in Norway and beyond, drawing together a range of researchers from diverse disciplinary backgrounds and forging bonds between Northern and Southern partner institutions, both from a research and a practitioners' perspective. Moreover, it seems that local partners / partners working locally have been able to draw in local expertise through interaction with local stakeholders / households. Thus, the envisaged researcher-practitioner dialogue interlinking with the vulnerable populations is a tangible result of the project already. However, concerning the project organisation and implementation (related to the sub-optimal analytical focus and generic nature of outcomes), the wide number of partners and division of responsibilities (although Noragric predominantly positions itself as spider in the web) has resulted in too diverse approaches, actor perspectives, singled out issue areas and outcomes, without a visible strategy to generate useful and generic elements for inclusion in the guidelines.

Lastly, the Courting Catastrophe project has reached out to the public domain through public events and dissemination of 'popularised' knowledge in order to stimulate the debate on humanitarianism and climate change and has contributed to new knowledge in the field of humanitarian policy addressing vulnerabilities due to climate change. Due to HUMPOL's emphasis on this particular goal, outreach to a larger audience than just the peer-organisations and stakeholders seem to have been pursued. Because of the importance of the issue and the predictions concerning migrant flows over the next decades because of land degradation and lack of access to resources such as water and arable lands, HUMPOL's framework has enabled it to become more relevant in society at large, but it will be the extent to which the study generates analytical, generic conclusions and thus policy relevant findings that determines the further success of this outreach to civil society in Norway.

Conclusion and future outlook

While the intermediate results of the project need of course to be attributed to the researchers involved, through the Courting Catastrophe project HUMPOL has provided support to a group of researchers and practitioners in Norway and the Global South that otherwise would not have been able to further outline a project in a relevant issue area; HUMPOL has provided predictable funding,

and thus the opportunity to for more systematic and extensive research; and it contributed to preparing a Norwegian research community, embedded in humanitarian issues, that is able to contribute directly to policy makers (through written outputs and public engagement, and through multilevel discussion). Nevertheless, the outcome of the project and the possibilities for future (ongoing) funding depends very much on the consortium leader (Noragric) being able in the finalisation of the project to systematise and generalise the outcomes of the case studies into a coherent set of variables that will outline vulnerabilities in relation to climate change as well as the drivers that facilitate or block increased resilience through meaningful and effective humanitarian action. Only the creation of at least rudimentary guidelines for the humanitarian community in both the Global South as well as the Global North will be achievable.

INTERVIEWS AND ASSESSMENT OF PROJECTS 3

Project number: 217260

Project title: Armed Violence in Urban Settings; New Challenges, New Humanitarianisms

Project manager: Sending, Ole Jacob

Project owner: Norsk utenrikspolitisk institutt (NUPI)

Project period: From 20120801 to 20160331

Overview

As stated in the project outline, the premise of the project is that while armed violence is becoming increasingly important as a humanitarian challenge, it is not clear how humanitarian organisations are responding to it. The project set out to research how armed violence is understood by humanitarian actors, how it is acted upon, and how their operations are adapting to or changing in relation to the circumstances and in relation to other actors. This was also to assess the implications of these changes in our understanding of humanitarianism. The project was to offer new knowledge on how humanitarian actors adapt to address the challenges outside their core mandate. It was to produce a PhD, a total of four articles and several policy briefs.

A mixed methodology was used – qualitative comparative analysis, large-n and in depth comparative case studies – and focus was on three large humanitarian actors, the Red Cross, MSF, and World Vision, in three areas (legal, medical and religious, developmental) and with field studies undertaken in Honduras, Haiti and East Africa. The project group included three researchers, including one Ph.D candidate.

While the project retains the potential to achieve its outputs, it has generally adopted a more academic approach to research, and less of a policy-oriented one. This steering away from the original goal of the project requires a revisiting by the project leader and his team. The project has reasonable grounds for extending its time-period and is likely to produce some new findings and knowledge that are of high relevance to Norwegian humanitarian policy. This includes both analysis of the organisational toolbox and set-up available for humanitarian access in urban settings, and a critical engagement with the assumptions and grounds of humanitarian policy. The oral work-in-progress report hinted at both new findings and some avenues for future research that will be of direct relevance to humanitarian policy. The general impression is that the project has been a well-worth research investment.

A more detailed assessment of the project based on the interviews conducted and its outputs is in the following section.

Interviews and Assessment of the Project

Two interviews were conducted with the project manager. This is a well-designed and coherent research project with good academic rigor. While the project has thus far only produced one article and hence not a great deal of research output, there is good reason to expect that it will do so in the near future.

Initial research findings include an examination of how humanitarian organisations in urban conflict areas may come in conflict with basic humanitarian principles, the question of access and of endangered independence in relation to security and legal frameworks. One of the problems noted by the project is the lack of a public debate or even a good discussion with policy-makers (MFA) on how to change humanitarian policy, or even what kind of policy humanitarian policy is. Essentially this means that humanitarian policy often becomes defined by the organisations involved, with a great amount of dependence on and acceptance of these 'self-stories'.

With regards to what the project has achieved, a paper on the humanitarianization of urban violence was published by Simon-Reid Henry and Ole Jacob Sending in *Environment and Urbanization* (2014). Analysis was presented at a conference to engage a wider audience. The paper contributes to an understanding of how IHOs are adapting their operations to working in an urban environment characterized by armed violence. That said, a policy brief based on this paper is recommended to engage a policy audience. It should be noted that the interviews did underscore confusion as well as a disconnect between the requirements of the Research Council and those of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), both of which oversee the HUMPOL. The MFA, however, did not engage the researchers, and outputs of the project were to be assessed by the Research Council which was deemed to prioritize academic outputs rather than policy-oriented ones.

Conclusion and future outlook

With regards to what the project is yet to achieve, it is yet to complete its initial project outputs (4 articles, 2 policy briefs and 2 op-eds) as well as updating its website to reflect progress. Further engagement with the policy community is required to achieve the goal of laying the foundation of knowledge based humanitarian policy development. Finally, while the researchers did rely on local actors to facilitate data collection, stronger engagement with local actors and institutions is needed to increase cooperation with south-based research institutes.

INTERVIEWS AND ASSESSMENT OF PROJECTS 4

Project number: 217170

Project title: Protection of Civilians: From Principle to Practice

Project manager: Sandvik, Kristin Bergtora

Project owner: Institutt for fredsforskning (PRIO)

Project period: From 20120801 to 20160104

Overview of the project

This research project seeks to contribute to the more practical understanding of protection of civilians in contemporary conflict / manmade disasters through developing knowledge and creating practical suggestions on the main research question: “What is the role and impact of contemporary policies and practices of the Protection of Civilians?” The enactment and perception of and the response to protection of civilians is being investigated from a beneficiary perspective in a variety of case study countries (e.g. Afghanistan, Colombia, the Sudans, Liberia and Uganda).

A second main objective is to create thematic understanding in three areas (corresponding with the created three work packages): local practices, processes of institutionalisation in a geopolitical setting and the comparison of findings from work packages one and two in the framework of an ethical assessment of the role and impact of the protection of civilians from which a consistent set of policy implications should emerge.

Secondary objectives have been described as establishing humanitarian studies as a field of study in its own right, in Norway and across the globe; and to stimulate critical debate on humanitarian issues and policy in Norway.

The research methodology consists of a comparative case study approach at local and a thematic case study approach at a more global level. The research is of a high interdisciplinary nature and includes a participatory approach generating empirical (mainly qualitative, some quantitative) data to be used for evidence based analysis of direct relevance for policy making.

Progress reports and initial findings

The progress reports in detail indicate the proper implementation of the work schedule as it was included in the application documentation. The envisaged post-doctoral fellowship has indeed been realised, thanks to top-up funding from NUPI. The envisaged field work has been done, except for the case study in Liberia that was cancelled due to the outbreak of Ebola. The main emphasis is now on

finalising the analysis of the empirical findings and insert them in the thematic research done in work packages two and three. Through this field work the envisaged collaboration with partners in the global south has materialised, be it mainly through the networks of the Northern partners involved and be it at a limited level of interaction due to the shortness of the various field visits. The envisaged dissemination of results has been more than realised. Through scholarly publications (6), popular science publications (15), media appearances (5) and various dissemination measures (reports, articles, presentations; 30) the project has reached by far the highest level of exposure in the humanitarian stakeholder community and the public at large. All the remaining envisaged deliverables are expected to be met mid-2016, although the larger synthesised output may take a while longer.

Initial findings from the country case studies show a variety of highly interesting and comparable outcomes. In all case studies the necessity for external protection providers to acknowledge the agency of the people in need of protection. Determining what protection is and should be is a process in which the people in need of protection have to be involved much more, doing away with top-down biases, like the 'sedentary bias' and the 'temporary bias'. No less relevant is the related conclusion that definitions of protection conflict and overlap with one another, leading to a fragmentation of responsibility of a large array of potential protection providers and thus ineffectiveness. Finally, the understanding of the relevance and impact of protection measures hinges upon taking the beneficiaries' perception on board and their assessment on how these measures interact with self-protection mechanisms employed by the beneficiaries (agency).

The findings of the country case studies will now have to be merged with the outcomes of work packages 2 and 3, on which the progress reports do not deliver much detail. Publications of the staff involved in these work packages are discernible, but the specific output on the institutionalisation of protection of civilians' policies, the realpolitik of protection of civilians and the perspectives of vested and emerging powers on protection of civilians is not spelled out. Since the results from the country case studies and from work package 2 are essential to the envisaged approach in work package 3 also concerning the latter detailed results are yet not available, despite listed publications in the progress report. For the envisaged creation of a consistent set of policy implications concerning the future of the protection of civilians in humanitarian crises progress needs to be made

Specific attention (but shortly, because this is done also in the main text of this report) should go to the establishment and running of the Norwegian Centre for Humanitarian Studies. Incorporated into the Protection of Civilians project proposal to meet HUMPOL's call for co-operative mechanisms of an interdisciplinary nature between researchers and institutions in Norway and beyond, PRIO, NUPI

and CMI joined forces. The ambition was to create a hub for humanitarian research and further the cause of humanitarian studies. From the progress reports is clear this ambition – through impressive input by the staff involved, notably Dr. Sandvik, and through creatively locating additional smaller amounts of co-funding – has turned into a tangible reality. More than that, the Norwegian Centre for Humanitarian Studies has become an umbrella for all four projects funded by the HUMPOL programme, stimulating cross-project and cross-disciplinary fertilisation and creating an interface between Academia, policy makers and practitioners and the society at large.

Assessment

Critically considered against the criteria of the evaluation, the ‘Protection of Civilians’ project is assessed as having performed strong amidst the four HUMPOL research projects.

The project has strengthened and even institutionalised multidisciplinary research expertise in a policy relevant issue area, bringing together researchers from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. Although Southern partners were limitedly involved via the country case studies they and the Norway-based researchers benefited from the knowledge generated. Indeed, the knowledge generated seems to satisfy the observation that the primary objective of the project has been met, whilst laying the foundation for successful completion of work packages 2 and 3. During the interviews with the Principal Investigator (PI) and the Principal Investigator a.i. HUMPOL was credited with helping to establish the Norwegian Centre for Humanitarian Studies, to help create the Humanitarian Exchange (all activities and events organised under the banner of the project, but in effect beneficial to all four projects and their interaction with policy makers, practitioners and the public at large), and thus to help disseminate relevant knowledge to a wide variety of stakeholders in Norway. Finally, a spill-over effect can be discernible through the Norwegian Centre for Humanitarian Studies already engaging in new issue areas such as technological innovation in humanitarianism that may help HUMPOL to engage in follow-up programming.

Despite the reported good interaction with policy makers (e.g. MoFa) and practitioners (Red Cross, MSF, NRC) up so far the project leans more on an academic approach than a policy oriented approach, or a mixture of both. With the results of the country case studies being inserted in the more overarching objectives of work packages 2 and 3 it is believed that a balance can be found and the envisaged consistent set of policy implications created. The ongoing informal discussions between the project team and the MoFa will also be advantageous to this effect.

Conclusion and future outlook

While much of the success of the project can be attributed to the researchers and the PI involved and the relevance, design and execution of the project, in the context of the Protection of Civilians project HUMPOL's added value was that it provided support to a small but critical mass of researchers in Norway, who were able to produce policy relevant research and disseminate findings to a variety of stakeholders. The creation of the NCHS is without a doubt an extremely valuable outcome of HUMPOL's programme, beyond the project it originated from. HUMPOL provided predictable funding and the opportunity for more systematic and extensive research. Finally, HUMPOL supported a Norwegian research community to grow and to contribute directly to policy makers (formally, through written outputs and public engagement, and informally through discussion).

CONCLUSIONS

The project: the pilot nature, goals and results

The reviewers take the position that the HUMPOL programme has been a timely initiative of Norwegian political authorities (especially Parliament and the MoFa) to strengthen the global position of Norway as a humanitarian actor and a contributor to humanitarian policy relevant knowledge. Given Norway's traditional strength in development issues and peace and security studies, this addition has been almost a logical consequence of growing humanitarian needs and the demand for quality, effective humanitarian responses. Given that these demands will not dwindle in the short term; and that Norway as a major humanitarian donor harbouring important humanitarian NGO's has an interest in supporting humanitarianism and the creation of more evidence-based policy research, the necessity to continue HUMPOL with open calls at regular intervals seems desirable and logically defensible.

The goals of the programme have been ambitiously set and coincide with the demand in the issue area of global humanitarianism. The interdisciplinary knowledge build-up amongst Norwegian institutes in cooperation with global (southern) partners and the contribution to the development of evidence-based humanitarian policy have been promisingly formulated.

The selection process of the projects has been adequately handled according to the reviewers, with a proper application of all the set criteria applied to the 19 projects handed in. The selected 4 projects showed reliable strength to produce the required outcomes.

The midterm review assesses overall that HUMPOL has effectively created a research environment that fulfils the goals set in the programme document. The interim-results of the four selected projects to varying degrees address the specific and cross-cutting issues that were called for; produce the output relevant for policy making; and take care of knowledge dissemination and public outreach. Reshaping, especially simplifying, the format of reporting could enhance the expressiveness of the results in terms of tangible knowledge output, its policy relevance and its dissemination into society.

The projects: progress

The project on economic conditions of displacement (217262) up so far has performed strongly. It has strengthened multidisciplinary research expertise in togetherness with partners from the South; it has generated relevant new knowledge in the field of humanitarian policy; and it has influenced

the debate on humanitarian questions in the wider Norwegian society. Finalising this project and preparing for a sustained focus on this issue will enable the research group to build upon the foundation they have developed and benefit from the capacity HUMPOL has built.

The project on courting catastrophe (217192) is a weaker project amidst the four projects HUMPOL financed. Having reached out to the public domain through the organisation of events and the dissemination of 'popularised' knowledge; having seriously included partners from the Global South; having strengthened multidisciplinary research expertise in Norway; and having been operational in a highly relevant issue area to humanitarianism, the project up so far has suffered from the lack of clearly developed research objectives and a rigorous theoretical framework. The successful finalisation of this project hinges upon the ability of the project leader to systematise and generalise the outcomes of the case studies, so that the envisaged creation of the guidelines for resilience and climate change adaptation can still be feasible.

The project on armed violence in urban settings (217260) has tackled the issue of producing new knowledge on how humanitarian actors address the challenge of violence in urbanised areas. To date the project has produced new findings and knowledge that are of high relevance to Norwegian humanitarian policy. An outreach to the wider society has been realised. As such, the project is already a well-worth investment, but in its implementation the project has assumed a more academic instead of a policy oriented approach. For the successful finalisation of the project the present and envisaged findings will become of direct relevance for policy when the researchers involved in the project will increase their level of interaction with the relevant policy and practitioners' organisations, the partners in the Global South.

The project on protection of civilians (217170) is a strong project on creating understanding what protection of civilians is from a beneficiaries' perspective, and how these findings tie in with overarching concepts of practices, institutions and ethics. A consistent set of policy implications is expected to emerge from this project. An impressive amount of publications and public outreach events have been originating from this project. Moreover, the creation of the Norwegian Centre for Humanitarian Studies within the project quickly has become an overarching structure for all four projects and humanitarian stakeholders in Norway at large. Successful finalisation of the project now hinges upon corroborating the findings from the country case studies (work package 1) into the more theoretical frameworks developed under work packages 2 and 3.

Specific recommendations for follow-up activities of HUMPOL/RCN

Given the pilot nature of the HUMPOL programme and the expected demands of quality policy relevant research input over the next decades, it is advised to create a follow-up strategy to

capitalize on the early results and to strengthen support for robust interlinkage between humanitarian research and the domains of policy and practice.

HUMPOL is well situated to continue the programme and frame new calls accordingly, and to act as a platform for interaction between the research community and the policy / practitioners stakeholders. In particular, HUMPOL is in a unique position to support engagement with policy institutes in order to ensure the relevance - and maximize the potential impact - of their projects, as well as improve communication strategies and dissemination of information to wider humanitarian stakeholders. This should be done for the benefit of joint agenda setting (research priorities), joint implementation (increased North-South co-operation) and joint evidence-based input in public discussion on humanitarianism. Thus, the emerging research community in Norway will be allowed to mature and deliver relevant outputs at a relatively modest cost.

A related remark is the inclusion of stronger project conditions when it comes to requirements of interdisciplinary exchange of information in between the programmes that are funded; the necessity of frequent dialogue in between the policy and practitioners' domain; the fortification of relations with partners in the global south; and the dissemination of outcomes, especially vis-à-vis the public at large. Here the HUMPOL programme itself can be of help to the research consortia funded, by offering existing channels of the RCN for the benefit of reaching out to civil society beyond the already 'humanitarianly' engaged public organisations and peer research groups. Also, RCN could help explore different ways of helping create this interface and hub-type of platform.

Indeed, while the creation of the Norwegian Centre for Humanitarian Studies is a positive, tangible output of one of the projects, in effect it is positioning itself as umbrella over the four awarded projects and embracing / materializing all goals of the HUMPOL programme. At present, its sustainability is not secure. This coincides with the seemingly low level of commitment on behalf of institutions from which the researchers in the projects originate. Stronger requirements for a certain amount of co-funding from these institutions could be demanded by HUMPOL in combination with / in exchange for HUMPOL's more substantial financial support for a permanent centre for humanitarian studies. Thus, the sustainability of policy relevant research for which the seeds have now been sown by HUMPOL would be secured.

Over the course of the review, several new research themes emerged that – should HUMPOL continue – could be of relevance to its programming, and humanitarian policy more generally. These include better understanding the root causes of humanitarian crises and methods of early recognition and prevention; the future of the refugee regime in the context of climate change; the increasing importance of technological innovation in humanitarianism; and the concepts of resilience

and preparedness in urban settings. These seem to be four of the most pressing areas where there is a need for research to inform evidence-based programming and relevant policy making.