

Disinformation and people: impacts on societal trust and resilience (FAKENEWS)

1. Excellence

1.1 State of the art, knowledge needs and project objectives

Carl von Clausewitz claimed that the “moral factors” – the spirit of the people - are “the precious metal, the real weapon, the finely-honed blade” of war (Clausewitz 2008: 185). Today, [a]ttacking an adversary’s most important center of gravity – the spirit of the people – no longer requires massive bombing runs or reams of propaganda. All it takes is a smartphone and a few idle seconds. And anyone can do it.” (Singer & Brooking 2018: 18). Trust and resilience are cornerstones of democracy (EPD 2017). The linkage between “the spirit of the people,” democracy (trust and resilience), and security warrants increased attention.

Disinformation has increasingly played a role in destabilising societies by targeting general populations and eroding *societal trust* (Filipec 2019). *Disinformation* is designed to increase doubt and *mistrust* between people and their governments as well as between groups of people within a society (Freedman et al 2021). Innovations in digital technology and the ways in which disinformation is able to intrude and influence people’s lives are often one step ahead of people’s or society’s *resilience*, or ability to resist or adapt to crisis and the consequences of crisis (Singer & Brooking 2018; Shu et al. 2020). Scholarly literature as well as policy making has recognized the relevance of societal trust and resilience to national security and crisis management (Ridley 2017; Meld.St.5 2020-2021; MSB 2019).

Crisis management requires collaboration between a government and the population. The strength of this collaboration is central to a society’s “resilience” (Cohen, Goldberg et al. 2016, Hoogensen Gjörv 2020). A state’s capacity or resilience to combat disinformation-related threats – be they about a frightening disease or the “other” (migrants) - depends a lot on the resilience of its population (ibid). Resilience relies upon mutual trust between authorities and people – societal trust.

Thus we know societal trust is instrumental to the success of societal resilience and security. We know people play an increasingly crucial role than ever in the development of conflict as they respond and react to their perceptions of security as they are inundated by information and disinformation. However there is no a systematic examination of the role of civilians, everyday people, in potentially exacerbating conflict, how they specifically impact societal trust and, influence the ability for authorities and communities to resist potential destabilization or conflict. Without this knowledge, crisis management strategies will be insufficient to combat today’s attempts to destabilise trust and reduce resilience of societies.

FAKENEWS examines the ways in which people are either influenced or able to resist the power of disinformation, and further examines what role people have in contributing to societal resilience and overall security.

There are many theories of trust coming from a variety of academic disciplines including organizational theory, sociology, psychology, political science, and security studies. While there are rival definitions (Nooteboom 2002, Misztal 2013, Considine 2015), they share some common elements: 1.Trust is intimately linked with uncertainty for the future; 2.Trust is the willingness to be vulnerable under conditions of risk; and 3. The less information we have, the more we need trust (Hawthorn 1988). Contemporary research does not consider distrust and trust as a simple dichotomy; rather it is a complex continuum of phases. Societal resilience is a relatively recently popularised concept for addressing crisis. It emphasises the adaptive, and recovery capacities and capabilities of a system under pressure (Aldrich and Meyer 2015, Meerow, Newell et al. 2016; Hoogensen Gjörv 2020).

In FAKENEWS we focus on two types of crisis that impacted two Nordic countries - Norway and Sweden – that are both credited with high societal trust levels but managed our case study crises in different ways (Sefton 2020). We examine the 2020/2021 COVID-19 pandemic and the 2015 migration crisis. Each crisis tested the trust and resilience of these societies. The pandemic continues to test civilian-government trust relationships, and may have differential long term effects on future trust levels in these two countries. The migration crisis

also affected societal trust and resilience, both horizontal trust between civilians, as well as vertical trust between civilians and their governments (Bilgic et al 2019).

FAKENEWS' primary objective is to generate new data on civilian roles in crisis, as well as a theoretical *resilience* framework through which different crisis scenarios can be analysed and understood, to better predict the impact of disinformation within society, and the possible weakening or strengthening of societal trust and measures to strengthen resilience. FAKENEWS will help governments and civilians understand the role of mis- and disinformation, which is relevant to a broad range of crises.

Gaps in knowledge:

1. We lack bottom-up, civilian-centric knowledge that can inform theories of societal trust, societal resilience, human and national security and how these further interact with, and impact, national security;
2. We lack knowledge about the relationship between media and people and the draw of disinformation, and how media contributes to strengthening or weakening the effects of disinformation, and societal trust;
3. We need to know more about the societal trust impacts of the relationship between the “top-down” crisis management measures from emergency laws and the potential derogations and restrictions upon general populations, to the protection of populations and their human rights including free speech;
4. We lack knowledge about how people perceive their own responses to crisis and to mis- and disinformation and their views on how societal trust operates;
5. We have little to no knowledge about the resilience of people during crisis. We need to test resilience of trust levels in society in light of targeted disinformation;
6. Research too infrequently engages and cooperates with communities, especially after the completion of a project. We need mechanisms to continue the linkages between research and community, contributing to ongoing societal trust.

We answer these 6 gaps with 6 main objectives answered through each work package:

1. Resilience framework: Design and produce a theoretical framework for understanding the role of people in crisis management (including insights from theory (trust, resilience, security) and concepts (disinformation, threat) and further informed by case study analyses and scenario testing);
2. Media and the mind: Collect data and analyse media's relationship with their audiences, and the ways in which people are potentially influenced by disinformation, and impact societal trust;
3. Government gaps: Collect data and analyse Norwegian and Swedish's government policy and legal frameworks for dealing with crisis, and the impacts on people and their rights;
4. Listening to people: collect data and analyse of civilian responses and insights regarding trust, resilience and security during crisis, and the impacts of disinformation, and analysing in relation to intersectional categories;
5. Testing resilience: design and test one scenario on the basis of the indicators from the previous WPs
6. Including people: outreach to communities and education programme

1.2 Research questions and hypotheses, theoretical approach and methodology

Grounded in and building upon interdisciplinary expertise at UiT (Law, Media, Technology, Security) this project cooperates with national and international partners to answer the following:

How do the interactions between civilians and disinformation influence societal trust and resilience?

We further ask:

1. How is societal trust affected by mis- and disinformation that is targeted at civilians?
2. How does the level of social trust affect societal resilience?
3. What measures can be taken, in cooperation with civilians, to strengthen societal trust and resilience?

Theoretical approach & Methodology:

Societal trust cannot be treated as a unidimensional factor that characterizes an entire civilian community at any given time. Drawing on the recent work of Bilgic, Hoogensen Gjörv and Wilcock on how societal trust becomes differentiated according to context, we will further theorise trust, distinguishing between generalized trust and distrust and between particularized trust and distrust (Bilgic, Hoogensen Gjörv et al. 2019) using intersectional insights into understanding better how identity often shapes the dynamics of trust. The nature of

trust may change according to the nature of the crisis and also according to identity; e.g., *I trust you because you are like me* (gender, ethnicity, class, etc). Intersectional analyses reflect a bottom-up approach –from an individual or civilian perspective as opposed to a top-down or state/institutional perspective – and imperative for capturing the implications of diverse, sometimes contradictory, threat perceptions amongst people based on their positionality or identity claims (Bilgic, Hoogensen Gjørsv et al. 2019). We therefore are examining both vertical trust relationships (between people and their governments) but simultaneously horizontal trust relationships, between groups of people themselves. We enhance this understanding by employing insights from social capital. Societal trust concentrates attention on the trust between the population and its government or authorities, whereas the social capital focuses on the horizontal trust between actors within the population itself (Aldrich and Meyer 2015).

Our novelty emerges as we start mapping theories in WP 1, simultaneously looking at the ways in which all these approaches – trust, resilience, human security and national security – which have been largely treated separately or in simpler combinations (trust and national security; trust and resilience, etc) speak to each other and/or expose weaknesses across assumptions about ordinary people’s perspectives and roles in conflict, peace and security. Our focus on human and national security will be used to link the relevance of everyday threat and security perceptions to societal and national security. National security is operationalized through crisis management, therefore we bring people more directly into crisis management challenges. Given our unique emphasis on the role of people in conflict in general, and with regard to the impact of disinformation in particular, we also will make clear how we define “civilian” or “ordinary people” as well as other relevant actors who contribute to security and resilience during a national crisis including civilian organisations and authorities (government ministries, business, NGOs/civil society organisations, unions, political parties, regional and international organisations such as NATO and EU), and military.

Trust is instrumental to resilience (Cohen, Goldberg et al. 2016). Trust relationships need to be better understood in relation to resilience, which in crisis management terms all too often also focuses on the resilience of authorities and governments to tackle a crisis, with less focus on understanding resilience as that which arises when distrust between people and governments, and between people, is minimized and people feel represented or heard in crisis planning. At the same time, we move beyond arguments that resilience is used as a neoliberal form of governing, putting the burden of responsibility on civilians (Chandler 2014).

Trust in institutions responsible for crisis response is based on confidence that the policy choices of authorities are driven by evidence. In crisis conditions data is likely to be uncertain, incomplete, or missing entirely while decisions have to be taken quickly and communicated coherently. Much of a society’s resilience lies in its population and people’s abilities to respond to a crisis, and perhaps more importantly, people’s abilities to adapt to abrupt and potentially long-lasting change. One issue pertaining to predictability, trust, and resilience is the reach of national emergency law. It can weaken resilience if trust is withdrawn by the population as a response to attempts to increase governmental power. National emergency law can be assumed to enhance predictability and trust in societal structures; however, wide-ranging powers may give the impression of unpredictability because the population is at the mercy of the government. Norway and Sweden serve as very good case studies in this regard, because emergency measures have been invoked in the former but not the latter during the COVID-19 crisis.

Overarching methodologies –interdisciplinary intersectionality

FAKENEWS will employ intersectional and interdisciplinary methods throughout the project. “Interdisciplinarity “only makes sense in a disciplinary world” (Moran 2006: 73). Interdisciplinarity offers the opportunity for innovation, where instinctive questions are not adequately answered by hierarchal disciplines (Lyle 2017). We will employ an interdisciplinary method – intersectionality – that has been used to raise questions about hierarchies of knowledge from STEM disciplines (Chouinard 2016) to social sciences (Clarke and McCall 2013) and law (Tomlinson et.al 2018), and work towards creative answers that are not constrained by the power of individual disciplines.

To better understand the civilian landscape we will examine the various positions or identities within civilian communities that can be vulnerable or resistant to invisible threats of disinformation. Intersectionality focuses

on the experiences of people, and how identities shape experiences including fear, hatred, belonging, etc. It finds its roots in a critique of feminist approaches that were insensitive to the different experiences of women on the basis of race, class, orientation, ethnicity, and other markers of positionality that impacted their power and agency (Marfelt 2016; Crenshaw 1991). We will use intersectionality as a central analytical tool when examining the power dynamics of civilians in relation to the creation, maintenance, and strengthening of trust in a society, and in relation to the articulations of state actors who have a particular influence on how trust is understood and perpetuated socially.

Methods and workpackages: *(leads indicated, allocation of tasks to project team members in section 3.2)*

In **WP1** all partners contribute to the design of an innovative and novel “resilience” framework by mapping current literature on societal trust, societal resilience, and human as well as national security. We identify core assumptions or factors and concepts within these theoretical approaches, and create a theoretical matrix highlighting which concepts and factors are considered most essential to understanding the phenomena, the ways in which the theories relate to one another, as well as identify potential overlaps. We identify gaps employing our respective disciplinary lenses (media, law, technology, security) combined with intersectional methods that highlight identity and power dynamics between identity markers in civilian communities during crisis. We will organize an intersectionality workshop with all partners to discuss and explore how to engage intersectionality within and across our disciplines. We ensure additional concepts that are central to the project are included (such as mis- and disinformation, threat). We use these gaps to formulate our questions for our surveys (and subsequent questions during the workshops and citizen cafés – see WP 4). On the basis of the matrix, we develop an initial framework that reflects linkages between actors, perceptions of trust in relation to perceived threats, and impacts on resilience and security. We begin with a preliminary framework based on the insights gathered from our mapping and matrix exercise, producing an innovative framework for testing (run through scenario in WP 5).

In WP1 we establish the parameters of the cases by specifically defining the nature of the threats under examination and what we currently know about the role of mis- and/or disinformation in these cases, drawing from primary sources and literature in Sweden and Norway, in preparation of our analyses about how trust “holds up” in two “high trust” societies.

We develop initial indicators on the basis of our preliminary theoretical exploration (above), which are tested through the cases within each of the subsequent WPs. These indicators are tested in WP5 through an exercise, evaluated, and potentially revised as our research findings further inform our understanding of societal trust and resilience. The results of each WP feed into WP 5 (scenario testing), generating either repeat or new indicators, that feed back into our final theoretical framework for milestone 5 (M48).

In **WP2**, we focus on civilian reactions to disinformation and examine media sources, assessing the media for practices that inhibit/prevent or facilitate the spread of disinformation, creating another matrix classified by types of media, who controls it, and approaches to disseminating information. We catalogue themes and trends in disinformation to both identify to what degree the COVID 19 pandemic and the migration crisis was subjected to disinformation, and in which ways. Pötzsch (UiT) and the post-doctoral candidate (social sciences) employ web scraping, document, discourse and sentiment analysis of selected media sites and web-based/online discussions with focus groups (voluntary invitation through facebook event). The post-doctoral fellow specifically addresses technologies of media, collecting data on current and emerging technologies for disseminating information and disinformation including the use of bots, deepfakes, and artificial intelligence on different platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, Parler, etc.

This work is combined with van der Hulst (TNO) research focusing on the psychological effects of disinformation, an area of disinformation discourse that currently lacks empirical investigation. Content analyses are used to identify and characterize overarching narratives or narrative strategies in projected disinformation. These narratives are connected to key psychological theory, e.g. Integrated threat theory (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) or Cognitive appraisal theory (Roseman, 1996), in a way that generates models of psychological effects in citizens exposed (e.g. lower institutional trust, higher shame responses). These models are tested experimentally through our survey as well as the citizen cafés, and then statistically test the difference in responses on psychological factors, depending on the strategic narratives to which people responded. This

provides more conclusive, evidence-based findings of psychological effects and the individual differences in the target audience that may exacerbate these effects. These insights will contribute to the development of effect-based policy and countermeasures against disinformation.

In **WP3**, we examine the role of authorities during crisis, looking at law, science, and crisis management. We examine current crisis management strategies in Norway and Sweden, including communications with general populations; examine the relationship between science and government and the degree to which crisis management and policy is evidence-based; and examine Norwegian and Swedish statutory emergency law, as well as constitutional emergency powers (Slaughter and Ratner 1999). Magne Frostad (UiT Law) and the post-doctoral candidate in Law address domestic emergency law in Norway and Sweden in the doctrinal tradition (Skoghøy 2018), including parliamentary legislation and constitutions, as well as constitutional customary law. They examine the impact of emergency powers on the regime established by the European Convention on Human Rights, with regard to both restrictions and derogations and with a focus on protecting civilians, and impacts on civilian rights such as free speech, including the sharing of disinformation. They apply the modified positivist approach to international law to assessing the relevant international legal regulations (especially under the 1950 European Human Rights Convention). Additional legal arguments are sought from case law and legal literature.

At the same time, Pursiainen (UiT) leads the overview of crisis management strategies for Norway and Sweden, with support from Eklund (Umeå) and Hoogensen Gjørsv (UiT). They generate the initial understanding of the two national strategies that will be assessed against the SIPRI/PRIO analysis of evidence-based policy, as well as in relation to the law. Fedchenko (SIPRI) with Bergersen (PRIO) contribute to the development of the survey by designing questions to examine to what degree citizens in Norway and Sweden believe that the policies of the other is evidence-based, and what factors shape Norwegian perceptions of evidence-based policy making by Sweden, and vice versa. They additionally conduct document analysis, surveys, and indepth interviews with relevant authorities on current crisis policies and procedures, including describe, analyse, compare and contrast the ways and means by which decision-makers in Norway and Sweden countries receive scientific advice in crises. The data from this WP will be discussed at expert workshops (one each in Sweden and Norway) to collect expert opinion (policymakers, practitioners, academics, civil society actors – in Oslo and Stockholm) on the impact of mis- and disinformation on civil society during previous crises, with emphasis on migration crisis of 2015 and COVID-19 crisis of 2020/2021; followed directly by a citizen café (linking to WP4, same day, same location to save costs).

In **WP4** we complete the survey design with input from WP1, 2 and 3, and carry out nationwide online surveys using Repons or Norstat (getting estimates) for both Norway and Sweden, pertaining to trust levels. After gathering and analysing the data from the surveys, we identify outstanding gaps and/or queries of interest that we will bring to “citizen cafés” which invite the general public to dialogue (facebook event) to discuss the results of the surveys and learn what sort of questions the survey results generate within the audience. Citizen cafés invite general public to accessible venues (in Oslo and Stockholm these are held at PRIO and SIPRI respectively, in conjunction with the expert meetings held in WP3). Separate citizen cafés will take place in northern regions in the two countries as well. Eklund (Umeå) and Hoogensen Gjørsv (UiT) will lead the data collection and analysis, and compare findings between north and south regions. These regions have been characterized by different levels of societal trust that southern regions (Stein et al 2019). Bergersen (PRIO) works with WP3 regarding crisis management strategies and assess to what degree civilian responses and reactions are taken into account, what measures of communication between government/authorities and civilians exist, and draws upon synergies from the recently completed EU project Driving Innovation in Crisis Management for European Resilience (in which Bergersen was PRIO lead). We map information about civilian responses to communications strategies through surveys, and citizen cafés including questions measuring the degree of trust people have in their authorities.

In **WP5** we test the data. Relying on the expertise of Pursiainen (UiT), and van der Hulst (TNO) with the additional assistance of colleagues at SIPRI, we draw from the indicators established in the preceding WPs to design a scenarios that will be tested through table top exercises (TTX) at TNO, Hybrid CoE and the NATO Defence College (NDC, Rome). The scenario move through two crises - a migration crisis followed by a pandemic - and make use of the indicators to create “injects” (small vignettes or storylines that influence or challenge the original scenario) into the scenario to test different combinations of the indicators. We thereafter

analyse the scenario outcomes, and determine what resulting indicators, concepts, and theoretical insights dominated as a result of the exercise. We include a significant number of injects so that numerous different possibilities can be tested and evaluated during the exercise. These concepts, indicators and theoretical insights are reintroduced into the resilience framework in WP1.

WP6 includes a combination of initiatives to make FAKENEWS known to both scholars, practitioners and not least, everyday civilians. This is accomplished through digital platforms such as a website and social media accounts, but also through annual, open seminars, cooperation with local and national outreach projects (eg UTSYN in Norway). We produce a municipal/civilian-centric strategy plan to be shared with the municipalities we have visited during our citizen cafés based on our research results. We are very active in writing editorials, and general media commentaries that reach out to the general public. Finally, we develop an application to Diku (the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education) to fund a start-up initiative for a co-led master- and PhD programme between UiT, Umeå, and the NATO Defence College in the category of Arctic Research and Studies (with Norway and Sweden as the primary partners). In this way we hope to establish an ongoing focus on education and research in strengthening trust and resilience.

Finally, **WP7** is dedicated to the management of the entire FAKENEWS project, ensuring a smooth operation of the project, from opening and closing conferences, to annual reporting and management of funds. This is handled primarily by the administrative staff at UiT, where the project will be housed.

Ethics: Care will be taken with regard to research conducted with all respondents (citizen cafés, survey, focus groups). To this end, we employ the guidelines on ethics published by the Norwegian National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH). All phases of the project are approached within established rules and standards of ethical research, safeguarding anonymity where relevant. Protecting confidentiality where relevant is essential to ensure both informants' safety and data quality. The study is conducted in accordance with prevailing ethical standards and approval from the Data Inspectorate and data security policy at UiT.

Risks (and levels)		Mitigation measures and/or contingency
Research-related risks	Limited access to research sites (low)	Mitigated by intimate knowledge of local context and strong local networks in both Norway (Hoogensen Gjörv; Bergersen) and Sweden (Eklund; Fedchenko); availability of alternative research sites
	The difficulty of recruiting participants for workshops (low to medium)	Mitigated through strong connections with researchers working in different regions
	Safety and security: risk going to dangerous places (low)	Sweden and Norway are generally not considered high risk regions. Researchers travel in pairs/groups; personal connections to regions
	Pandemic (medium)	We will ensure all medical (vaccination) and social precautions are taken at all times, also as the possibility of the disease subsides.
Management-related risks	Currency; travel costs, and knowledge exchange activities (medium)	Mitigated through meticulous follow-through of WPs, in accordance to timelines; digital solutions (zoom/teams etc) where practical
Dissemination and exploitation of results-related risks	Interview data at workshops, if published, could put participants at risk or cause distress (medium)	We will obtain signed or oral consent from all participants. They will be contacted before the release or publication of findings. Interviewees can decline at any time.

Gender perspectives: The project is led by a woman who is full professor in her field and experienced in leading international research projects. Intersectional analyses gives depth to understanding civilians and threat perceptions from varying positions such as gender, age, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation. All surveys, interviews, and other contact with communities will be sensitive to inclusion, whereby genders are represented, as well as other relevant identity markers (indigenous, immigrant, etc). Diversity in employment.

Environment: Environmental impact is minimized given the project centre of gravity at UiT, however a certain amount of travel by partners and to end-users will be necessary. We mitigate against excessive travel by using videoconferencing. We prioritise paper free solutions where practical and possible. **Stakeholder/user knowledge:** the core of FAKENEWS is about learning from, and including, the average civilian as a stakeholder in crisis strategy and management. Continuous engagement (activities during WPs) with both civilians respondents as well as experts keeps stakeholders informed, and the data we collect during this engagement contributes to crisis management strategies that are more inclusive of, and informed by, the civilian stakeholder. Practitioners, policy makers and scholars are represented on the Advisory Board.

1.3 Novelty and ambition

FAKENEWS investigates the role of civilians – ordinary people – for societal resilience. The impact and influence of civilians on crisis is seriously understudied, and this project fills this important gap in knowledge. We are innovative in our emphasis on applying bottom-up methodologies (intersectionality) to societal security, which has usually been approached using top-down, state-centric foci. We also provide a new data set focusing on people's experiences during crisis, which is valuable information for local communities and for state actors developing policy and law. The data and analysis from this project will be directed towards the directorates for societal security in both Norway and Sweden (DSB and MSB), as their interest is confirmed. FAKENEWS will deliver knowledge that will make crisis planning and management more flexible and responsive to different crisis scenarios, as well as integrate civilian perspectives more fully into such planning.

It is also the ambition of FAKENEWS that UiT (The Arctic University of Norway) can build on the interdisciplinary strengths that will be combined in this project across faculties (Law; Humanities, Social Sciences and Education; and Engineering and Technology) to become more of a national, regional, and even international contributor and leader on understanding and applying the relevance of civilian perspectives of trust to societal resilience strategies.

2. Impact

2.1 Potential for academic impact of the research project

FAKENEWS will be the cornerstone project for the UiT “The Grey Zone” research group (<https://uit.no/research/thegreyzone>), providing some of the first scholarly analyses focusing on civilian roles in crisis, and comparing COVID-19 and migration-targeted crisis management approaches between Norway and Sweden. FAKENEWS provides new research and analyses regarding how societies with very high societal trust levels behave depending on the crisis. In other words, we question whether it can be taken for granted that civilian responses, and collaboration with authorities, will always be the same regardless of crisis, just because societal trust levels are generally high. This project nuances such assumptions and provides greater insight into how resilience functions, providing new knowledge that will inform both further academic debate as well as policy development. FAKENEWS is the first conceptual exercise trying to identify processes and mechanisms behind the dynamics of trust and resilience in cases of hybrid threats and pandemics. The knowledge gathered in FAKENEWS serves as a departure point for future research on the interactions of trust and resilience to security, and a continued focus on the impacts of civilians threat perceptions on security.

2.2 Potential for societal impact of the research project

FAKENEWS builds on the work started by project leader Hoogensen Gjørsv with “Resilient Civilians” (NATO funded seed project) to better understand the roles of civilians during crisis and how they affect crisis, partnering with the Hybrid Centre of Excellence (Hybrid CoE) in Finland. Hoogensen Gjørsv was further invited to be a core theme leader on resilient civilians in the EU networking project EU-HYBNET, currently consisting of 25 partners examining different issues around hybrid threats and disinformation (launched May 2020). This groundwork has garnered significant attention, from Norwegian national actors like DSB and Ministry of Defence, to international actors like the NATO Defence College and CIMIC Centre of Excellence (The Hague, NLD). FAKENEWS will share data and analysis with the growing network of European agencies and research institutions both at NATO and the EU through the Hybrid CoE and the EU-HYBNET project, but also will impact research and planning in Norway and Sweden specifically, through our links to societal security practitioners, government ministries and local communities. Through FAKENEWS we will have established, and will maintain, contact and cooperation with local communities through our workshops and citizen cafés. Working directly with communities/municipalities with our project results, we will be able to continue developing ideas and measures beyond the scope of this project itself. Finally, in keeping with expressed commitments by UiT The Arctic University of Norway, and the Centre for Peace Studies, to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), FAKENEWS explicitly addressed SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, combined with SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities and SDG 5 Gender Equality. Using intersectional analyses to expose the power dynamics between inequalities to better understand societal trust and resilience, FAKENEWS will contribute to strengthening mechanisms that support people-centric/democratic institutions and foster peace.

2.3 Measures for communication and exploitation

A dissemination plan is provided in the electronic grant application form as well as in the WP tables, with more specific targets for dissemination activities. In addition:

Dissemination to academic audiences: We will present our research findings at 5 international conferences, spread across our disciplines (see electronic form). Conference presentations will be used to solicit feedback before submission of academic papers for publication. Papers on various aspects of the research will be submitted to peer-reviewed journals (see above). We intend to publish the final findings of the research in a special issue in “European Journal for Security Research” (targeted).

Dissemination to and Exploitation for students: The research findings will be disseminated and transferred to undergraduate and graduate students within all the participating disciplines. Open, cross-disciplinary seminars hosted by faculty research groups (e.g., *The Grey Zone* research group and *War and Peace Dynamics group* at the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education; *Societal Security* group at the Faculty of Science and Technology) will be held on a regular basis. Research groups and student venues at partner universities will do the equivalent. A masters/PhD programme is slated for development (ideally with additional funding from Diku, see WP 6), to use the research results in teaching and fostering further research.

Exploitation for organizations and policy makers: We will communicate policy-relevant findings and conclusions through factsheets, policy briefs and executive summaries through and in cooperation with our end-users, not least our partner HybridCoE, which plays a significant policy role for partner nations (including Norway) and organisations such as the EU and NATO.

Communication to communities/public: WP6 focuses heavily on interaction with the broader community and general public and will include community-oriented strategic crisis planning seminars and briefs available on our publicly accessible website and social media platforms, as well graphic-rich posters with key findings and factsheets with summaries of key findings that can be located in local libraries, cityhalls, shopping centres (with permission).

3. Implementation

3.1 Project manager and project group

The management of FAKENEWS is located at the Centre for Peace Studies, UiT, under the leadership of Gunhild Hoogensen Gjörv who has managed numerous international projects. She is an expert in security studies including trust and security, Arctic security, human security and gender perspectives that focus on civilian experiences in conflict, particularly in relation to hybrid threats. She is a part of the UiT core research team, joined by Frostad who is a leading expert on international law, laws of war, and human rights. Pötzsch contributes an extensive background into critical analyses of media technologies and the politics of media manipulation and distortion, while Pursiainen, who cooperates extensively with DSB in Norway is an expert in Nordic approaches to crisis planning and perceptions of security. Of our international partners, Bilgic brings expertise on trust theories, intersectionality, and on migration, and van der Hulst brings expertise on scenario planning as well as on psychological analyses. Fedchenko at the renowned Swedish research institute SIPRI provides data collection expertise through surveys and focus groups (workshops, roundtables), as well as providing insights into the Swedish case, whereas Bergersen, at the equally renowned Norwegian research institute PRIO is a leading expert on theories and concepts around crisis management and communication. Niklas Eklund at Umeå is a key expert on Swedish security perspectives, particularly in the Arctic or north, and also contributes to Swedish research on hybrid threats, complementing the strengths of Hoogensen Gjörv, and providing important insights to north/south threat perceptions dynamics in Sweden.

3.2 Project organisation and management

WP 1	Resilience framework: Gunhild Hoogensen Gjörv (UiT) and Ali Bilgic, Loughborough (UK)
Objective	Design and produce a theoretical framework for understanding the role of people in crisis management
Tasks	1.1 Mapping theories and concepts: matrix (M12) 1.2 Initial questions for survey derived from (WP 4) 1.3 Case development: COVID 19 and migration crisis (M6) 1.4 Breaking past the state of the art – innovative framework (M18)

	1.5 Indicators: Generate and collect initial indicators (M22) 1.6 Intersectionality workshop (M3)
Outcomes	1. Initial and final theoretical framework on trust, resilience and security. 2. Indicators for trust and resilience for scenario building (WP5). 2. Special issue in OA journal in “European Journal for Security Research” on trust and resilience in crisis and the role of civilians in crisis.
Milestone 5	Final theoretical resilience framework completed (M 45)
WP 2	Media and the Mind: lead Holger Pötzsch, UiT with post-doctoral candidate (HSL)
Objective	Collect data and conduct analysis of media’s relationship with their audiences, in particular everyday civilians, and the ways in which people are potentially influenced by disinformation
Tasks	2.1 Mapping media and media analysis: Media assessment and analysis based on the role of media technologies, institutions, and practices in creating/ maintaining/ destabilizing environments (M31) 2.2 Technology analysis: post-doctoral candidate, analysis of emerging technologies (M32) 2.3 Psychological analysis: Deepen psychological perspective on the relationship between disinformation, lack of trust, and cognitive resilience (M22) 2.4 Checklist: Design checklist of media sources and platforms as well as psychological indicators to be tested in WP 5 (M33)
Outcome	1. Three scholarly articles in OA journals (eg. <i>Social Media & Society</i> ; <i>Big Data & Society</i>); first on media technologies and social responsibilities in relation to audiences; second, on current and emerging technologies influencing disinformation; and on psychological effects of disinformation (eg. <i>International Review of Social Psychology</i>) 2. Policy brief on relevance of media in crisis management; 3. Indicators for scenario building in WP5.
Milestone 2	Analysed data on media, technology, and people, data to WP5 (M32)
WP 3	Governance gaps: lead Magne Frostad (Law/UiT) with postdoctoral candidate (Law)
Objective	Data collection and analysis of crisis management strategies, evidence-based government policy and legal frameworks for dealing with crisis and how these impact people.
Tasks	3.1 National emergency laws, rights and disinformation (M15) 3.2 International/EU emergency laws and disinformation (M21) 3.3 Overview of crisis planning (M33) 3.4 Crisis planning and communication: Expert workshops (followed by Oslo/Stockholm citizen cafés (M34) 3.5 Indicators generated on law and disinformation, and civilian-govt communication (M34)
Outcome	1. One scholarly article on comparisons of Nordic (Norwegian and Swedish) crisis management strategies and responses by civilians to OA journal <i>Cooperation and Conflict</i> . 2. One scholarly article on implications of emergency law during crisis to OA journal <i>Review of Arctic Law and Politics</i> . 3. Indicators established for scenario building in WP5.
Milestone 1	Completed analysis of crisis management plans, legal obligations and challenges, and impact on/interaction with civilians – data to feed WP5 (M 28)
WP 4	People first: lead Stine Bergersen (PRIO) and postdoctoral candidate (ITS)
Objective	Data collection and analysis of civilian responses and insights regarding trust, resilience and security during crisis, and the impacts of disinformation, and analysing in relation to intersectional categories.
Tasks	4.1 Surveys on societal trust, distribution and analysis of results (M36) 4.2 Northern citizen cafés: Organize citizen/civilian cafés with general population participants (Norway: Tromsø, Kirkenes; Sweden: Kiruna, Umeå) (M37) 4.3 Analysis of information/communication campaigns by authorities from civilian perspective (M37)
Outcome	1. Analytical report based on the workshops. 2. Analytical report based on the citizen cafés, 3. Scholarly articles on civil engagement/responses to crisis; 4. Indicators established for scenario building in WP5.
Milestone 3	Compilation of data and analyses on civilian actions/reactions during crisis – data to feed WP5 (M38)
WP 5	Testing Resilience: Christer Henrik Pursiainen, ITS/UiT, with Anja van der Hulst TNO
Objective	To provide an in-depth test of the concept of societal resilience.
Tasks	5.1 Scenario design: working with our expert partners on scenario design (especially TNO (Netherlands) and SIPRI (Sweden)), we will draw from the indicators established in the preceding WPs to design scenarios that will be tested through table top exercises (TTX) at TNO and the NATO Defence College (NDC, Rome). 5.2 Test scenarios 5.3 Analysis of scenario outcomes 5.4 Map resulting concepts and theoretical insights for input into framework WP 1
Outcome	1. Eklund/Pursiainen/Hoogensens Gjørsv article on on societal resilience to <i>Cooperation and Conflict</i> . 2. Policy recommendations for integrating resilience knowledge into crisis planning for Sweden and Norway. 3. Policy output modeling types of information affecting civilians’ trust (negative and positive). 4. Completed and ready-to-play scenarios for exercises and training for crisis planning and management.
Milestone 4	Framework and indicators tested & validated, results to WP1 (M 41)
WP 6	Outreach & Education Gunhild Hoogensens Gjørsv (UiT) and Niklas Eklund (Umeå)
Objective	To share project results with communities, practitioners, and experts; integrate results into long-term dissemination strategies including education programs
Tasks	6.1 Establish and manage digital dissemination platforms such as a website and social media. (M1) 6.2 Annual seminars hosted by partner institutions (May of each year)

	6.3 Cooperate with national outreach projects (eg: UTSYN, Norwegian outreach project for foreign and security related issues), ensuring the visibility of FAKENEWS research and results to both policy actors and civil society in Norway and in Sweden (M48) 6.4 Produce municipality/civilian-centric strategy plan for countering disinformation based on research results (M46) 6.5 Ensure that academic publications will be regularly disseminated to general audiences through media outlets including editorials, commentaries and policy briefs. 6.6 Develop cooperative master and PhD programme between UiT and NATO Defence College for extending dissemination to future generations of scholars through additional funding (DIKU – Norwegian Directorate for International Education) (M41)
Outcome	Scholars, practitioners and communities aware of FAKENEWS; education programme underway (M48)
Milestone 6	Conference at NATO Defence College presenting results; apply for course development funding (M 47)
WP 7	Project Management Gunhild Hoogensen Gjörv UiT, with UiT administration
Objective	To conduct smooth management of the project to completion, and timely reporting
Tasks	7.1 Project administration (accounts, deadlines, etc) established. 7.2 Organisation of opening conference (at UiT) (M1) 7.3 Annual reporting 7.4 management and distribution of operational funding (travel, logistics, R&D services such as scenario building and outreach services) 7.5 Organisation of closing conference (at UiT) (M47) 7.6 Final report submitted to Research Council of Norway
Outcome	All administrative tasks completed in a timely fashion with annual and final reporting submitted to the Research Council of Norway.
Milestone 7	Final report to NRC– right after project is completed (M48)

	2021				2022											
	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
WP 1			1.6						1.3			1.1			1.2	
WP 2																2.2
WP 3					Postdoc Law										3.1	
WP 4																
WP 5																
WP 6	6.1/6.5								6.2							
	2023												2024			
	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
WP 1		1.4				1.5		Postdoc HSL								
WP 2						2.3/2.5									2.1	2.2
WP 3					3.2							3.3				
WP 4																
WP 5	Postdoc ITS															
WP 6					6.2											
	2024								2025							
	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.
	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
WP 1									Milestone 4				Milestone 5		Milestone 6	Milestone 7
WP 2	2.4															
WP 3	3.3	3.4/3.5														
WP 4				4.1	4.2/4.3											
WP 5						5.1			5.2		5.3/5.4					
WP 6	6.2								6.6				6.2	6.4		

Allocation of tasks: Allocation of leads are indicated in the WP table above. UiT partners Hoogensen Gjörv, Pursiainen, Frostad and Pötzsch provide the core senior team, coordinating WP lead efforts and providing co-mentoring to all the post-doctoral fellows. The post-doctoral fellows will be under three different disciplinary “houses” (social sciences and humanities/Centre for Peace Studies, Law, and technology and security) and will bring their respective disciplinary strengths to the project, but will be anchored in an interdisciplinary atmosphere and part of “The Grey Zone” research group. All post-docs assist with leading a workpackage in cooperation with a core senior partner to gain some project management experience. Workpackage leadership is shared between 2 partners for support and accountability. All partners contribute equally to WP1. Bergersen (PRIO) is contracted to provide two scholarly papers (one co-authored) and co-lead WP 4 and participate in WP . Fedchenko (SIPRI) is contracted to provide 2 articles, one co-authored, as well as participate in WP (see dissemination in electronic portal).

A specific WP (WP1) has been allotted to the Management of FAKENEWS and has defined risks and contingency plans. Daily management of actions, including financial and administrative management procedures, are the responsibility. Full administrative support is provided. The core UiT team (Hoogensen Gjörv, Pötzsch, Frostad, Pursiainen) will meet monthly to ensure progress. Annual meetings with the project team (either onsite or digital, depending on need) will take place. The Advisory Board consists of international experts who are part of the NATO financed "Resilient Civilians" seed project which has done some of the ground work behind FAKENEWS: including: Sten Rynning (U of Southern Denmark), Sergii Glebov (Odessa U), Sebastian Rietjens (Netherlands Defence Academy), Jane Freedman (Université Paris 8), Cedric de Coning (NUPI), Christopher Holshek (Alliance for Peacebuilding). We also welcome Odd Jarl Borch (Nord University) leader of the HYBTHREAT application and Benjamin Knox (NTNU/Cyber Defence), Arild Bergh (FFI) Ørjan Karlsson at DSB for academic/practitioner's viewpoints. Advisory board members will be invited to start and end conferences, as well as annual project meetings. They will also be kept informed about and invited to (where appropriate) all dissemination and outreach events.

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