



Climate measures less expensive than you think

We have to cut back on emissions of greenhouse gases and check the greenhouse effect, and these climate measures are going to cost a lot of money. “However, climate measures can also generate income in one or more ways”, explains the environmental economist Snorre Kverndokk (left) as Reyer Gerlagh nods his agreement.

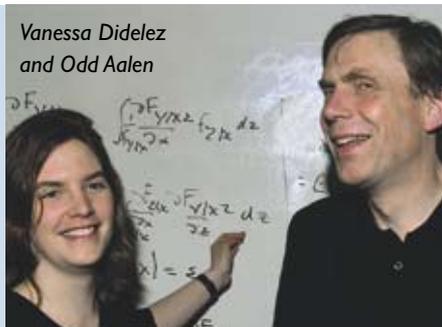
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Effects without causes

The use of statistics in medicine revolves in large part around to finding correlations between causes and effects, for example, when new drugs are tested. But correlations can often be extremely difficult to find, and sometimes things happen for no reason at all. People are quite simply overly eager to find causal connections.

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Vanessa Didelez
and Odd Aalen



Nanking: The story forgot

Roughly 140 000 people were killed by the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945. About



70 000 people were killed in Nagasaki three days later. But why does no one remember the more than 260 000 victims killed in Nanking eight years before? “It is hard to understand Japan’s role in World War II if we only remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki”, points out Anne H. Thelle (picture).

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Innovative research spaces and frontier research

In the run up to the EU's 7th framework programme, concepts such as *innovative research spaces* and *frontier research* have been launched to stimulate creativity, innovation and quality.

The European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) proposed in 2004 that the European Research Area (ERA) should contain *innovative research spaces* for the social sciences and humanities. These spaces were to give leading senior researchers sufficient 'creative time' to consider the content of and approach to their own research through stays in inter- and multi-disciplinary communities. The spaces were also to serve as 'Ibsenesque melting pots' in the shaping of promising younger post-doctoral candidates. The EU Commission could not accommodate the measure, but the idea was planted and is reflected today in the establishment of the European Research Council (ERC), which is intended to support basic research.

The EU is increasingly using the concept *frontier research* rather than *basic research*, which implies traditional disciplines, while the EU encourages research in new fields and across conventional disciplinary boundaries. It has been said that 'society has problems, while research has disciplines'. The poorly concealed irony in that statement is based on the realisation that problems do not always

conform to disciplines. Problems have a tendency to straddle disciplines. Now the idea is for the disciplines to conform to the problems, through cooperation, rather than vice versa. This means that the creativity inherent in the interface between the disciplines will be used for the EU's applied objectives in future.

For the moment, the EU has dropped the idea of innovative research spaces and is using the concept 'frontier research' instead. Insofar as interdisciplinary research is only possible through disciplinary research, this trend is in line with CAS' paramount objective, i.e. to engage in basic research in depth and breadth.

WILLY ØSTRENG
Scientific Director, CAS



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Climate measures also have an income side

It is going to cost a great deal of money to save the global climate. However, the costs will not be quite as formidable as the engineers claim. The environmental economists Snorre Kverndokk and Reyer Gerlagh explain several ways in which climate measures can generate income.

A pronounced example of how climate measures can generate one or more types of income comes from South Africa. Reyer Gerlagh was recently part of a group of scientists who showed that climate measures can be quite simply good business in South Africa, in the sense that they lead to social and financial advances.

"The South African authorities have considered introducing a carbon tax, i.e. a green tax on emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) to the atmosphere. Our analysis indicates that a prudently designed green tax can result in what we economists like to call a *triple dividend*. First of all, CO₂ emissions and climate-related problems are reduced; second, the gross domestic product (GDP) grows; third, poverty and unemployment are reduced. However, this will only happen if the State's revenues from the green tax are spent in a particular way, i.e. to decrease indirect taxes on food", says Gerlagh.

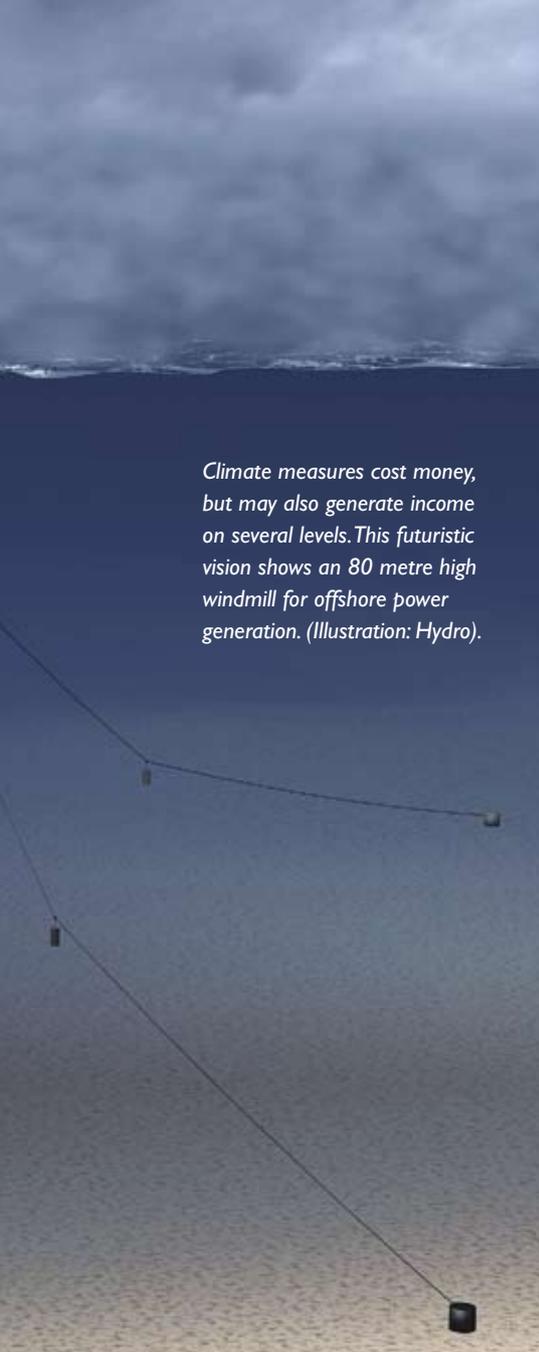
These sensational results can be achieved

because South Africa has a large number of unemployed and poor people who spend large parts of their income on food. If taxes and thus food prices are reduced, the poor will gain more purchasing power, meaning the demand for food will increase. This can lead to more unskilled workers being employed in food production, thus increasing their purchasing power and spurring demand even further. In fact, the aggregate effect can be so strong that the GDP will expand and the number of poor people will diminish, at the same time as South Africa will have made a genuine contribution to the global climate.

"South Africa has a very special double decker economy with one social class that lives almost like in the West, and another impoverished class that lives in a developing country. Accordingly, these results cannot be transferred to many other countries. But I would like to take part in a similar analysis on Brazil, for example", comments Gerlagh.

The South African authorities have now





Climate measures cost money, but may also generate income on several levels. This futuristic vision shows an 80 metre high windmill for offshore power generation. (Illustration: Hydro).

asked a group of economists to try to frame a bill that would translate the research results into practical policy.

We have to do something

The subject of environmental economics is based on the natural scientific view that the planet Earth is already far along in a process of global warming and climatic changes owing to man-made greenhouse gas emissions such as CO₂ and methane. “We have to cut back emissions of greenhouse gases and slow the greenhouse effect if we are to avoid severe adverse effects in the long term. Although the example of South Africa has few parallels in other countries, it shows that costly climate measures can also generate dividends”, maintains Snorre Kverndokk. He has taken part in a similar analysis for Spain, where climate measures were shown to entail distinct advantages.

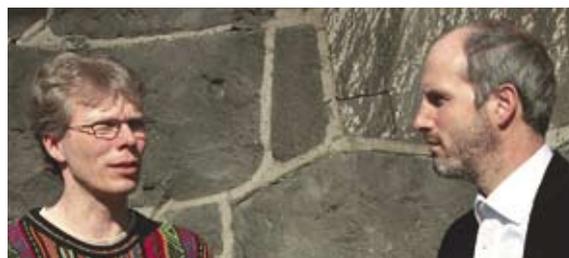
But let us begin at the beginning. The primary dividend generated by a climate measure is, naturally, a reduction in the damage caused by global warming and climatic changes. Reducing emissions of CO₂ as a result of less consumption of fossil fuels also leads to reductions in other pollutants such as sulphur, nitrogen oxides and particles. In the 1990s, economists began to investigate whether there might be other beneficial effects.

Dividends on several levels

“There is now a great deal of literature on what we call double dividends, that is, dividends in addition to the primary and secondary environment-related dividends. The conclusion is that a double dividend can be generated e.g. if a green tax is introduced on CO₂, provided the State’s earnings from the green tax are used to reduce other taxes. One might envisage, for example, that the income is used to reduce the tax on labour, making it less expensive for enterprises to hire more people. Thus we can reduce unemployment and increase employment in addition to earning the climate dividend”, explains Kverndokk.

The general prerequisite for a double dividend is that the original taxation system is inefficient, in the sense that some inputs are taxed harder than others. Thus the income from the green tax must be used to reduce taxation on the inputs that are overtaxed.

The double dividend can, theoretically speaking, be so strong that it will offset the entire primary cost of the climate measures (a *strong* double dividend). However, there are not many such examples. Calculations have been made for a number of European countries, including Norway. They show that the green tax could result in at least a *weak* double dividend, that is, that the costs will be lower than they would have been without that tax revenues being pumped back into the economy. “This can nonetheless be profoundly important for policy making, since the result is



Snorre Kverndokk (left) is a senior researcher at the Ragnar Frisch Centre for Economic Research at the University of Oslo. Reyer Gerlagh is an associate professor at the Institute for Environmental Studies at Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. Both are members of the Environmental Economics Research Group at CAS.

that society’s overall spending on CO₂ reduction measures may be lower than what the engineers tell us”, emphasises Gerlagh.

Back to Spain

Back to Spain, where Snorre Kverndokk and a group of researcher colleagues have tried to calculate the potential income items that could be generated by different climate measures. “The point of departure is that Spain has had exceptionally high unemployment for many years. We found that a green tax would lead to a *weak* double dividend, in the sense that employment would increase if the income from the green tax were used to decrease taxation on labour”, explains Kverndokk.

The researchers even found that employment would increase most if the tax on *skilled* labour were reduced more than the tax on *unskilled* labour. “However, we are talking about a measure that most people would perceive as politically distasteful, not least since the unemployment rate in Spain is highest among unskilled workers. This is actually a classic dilemma in economics: Measures that increase national economic efficiency can also often widen the social gap”, adds Kverndokk.

Lining the pockets of the power producers

Otherwise, it is not easy to design climate measures with double dividends or other beneficial side effects. In 2005, the EU introduced a system for buying and selling pollution permits for greenhouse gases, where an enterprise that discharges less than its quota can sell the unused portion to another enterprise which, owing to high expenses or other circumstances, has not managed to reduce its own pollution. “But the discharge permits are handed out free of charge, meaning there is no taxable income generated that the State can use to cut other taxes”, says Gerlagh with regret. Instead, the dividend that could have been used to benefit both the climate and the economy has ended up lining the pockets of the power producers.

“Unfortunately, there is no reason to believe that the climate measures needed could result in a strong double or triple dividend on the global level, e.g. through stronger economic growth”, emphasises Gerlagh. “Notwithstanding, the situation is that we *must* implement these measures if we are to avoid severe adverse effects in 50 or 100 years.”

That being said, according to the two environmental economists, the double or triple dividends we are talking about could help decrease the cost of climate measures in the short term.

Nils Klim Prize to Dag Haug

Associate Professor Dag Trygve Truslew Haug (picture), a member of the research group *Linguistic Theory and Grammatical Change* in 2004–2005, was awarded the Nils Klim Prize for Younger Nordic Researchers at a ceremony held at the Knut Fægri House in Bergen in November 2005.



The Board of the Ludvig Holberg Memorial Fund awards the Nils Klim Prize based on a recommendation from a Committee of Experts consisting of respected Nordic researchers. The prize is awarded to researchers in the humanities, social sciences, law or theology.

Dag Trygve Truslew Haug is an unusually sharp, versatile and talented linguist who has attained a prominent position in the field of classical linguistics at the age of only 29. His fields of research include both traditional historical linguistics and modern linguistics applied to classical languages.

The Committee of Experts also emphasised that Haug has already demonstrated that he is a talented educator and communicator, not least in connection with his lecturing activities and a series of radio programmes. Haug has previously received H.M. the King's Gold Medal for Younger Researchers for his PhD thesis on the language in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences and Letters' Prize for Younger Researchers in the Humanities for 2005.

UiS joins the CAS team

"This is a link in the efforts to strengthen basic research and our internationalisation. The two things are, in fact, closely intertwined", remarks Rector Ivar Langen of the University of Stavanger (UiS). UiS recently signed a cooperation agreement with the Centre for Advanced Study, as the seventh Norwegian partner institution.

"The Centre for Advanced Study (CAS) gives our researchers the opportunity to concentrate over time on theoretical basic research in groups comprised of international researchers. We hope this cooperation can help improve our basic research and the internationalisation of UiS. It is important for us to strengthen basic research as the foundation for much of the applied research we conduct. Moreover, we consider the interdisciplinary atmosphere of the Centre to be very exciting", states Rector Langen.

The Centre for Advanced Study was founded in 1992 with the then four Norwegian universities of Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø as partners. In 2004, the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration and the then Agricultural University of Norway



Rector Ivar Langen.

(now UMB) joined the team. Accordingly, after Stavanger University College became the University of Stavanger on 1 January 2005, it was natural to seek cooperation with CAS. The cooperation agreement means that researchers from the seven partner institutions can compete on a level playing field for a year of in-depth study at the Centre.

Hiroshima is not the whole story

Everyone remembers Hiroshima, where the world's first atomic bomb ever used in time of war claimed roughly 180 000 Japanese lives in 1945. Yet very few remember Nanking, where Japanese soldiers tortured and massacred an estimated 260 000 Chinese in 1937. This is the case, despite the fact that Hiroshima and Nanking are in many ways different chapters of the same story.

It was a beautiful, peaceful August morning, and the first children were already outside playing in the sunshine. Abruptly, the idyllic scene turned into hell on earth. The atomic bomb dropped by the US bomber the *Enola Gay* wiped out no less than 59 per cent of Hiroshima's population in a split second. Three days later, all hell broke loose again in Nagasaki, where about 70 000 people were killed instantaneously.

This is by and large the official Japanese version of Hiroshima which, by the way, constitutes one of humanity's strongest collective memories from WW II. Hiroshima has subsequently gone down in history as a symbol of peace, disarmament and the struggle against nuclear weapons, and that is well and good. But: "The literature on Hiroshima has focused intently on personal tragedies and suffering, and that is understandable. Of course the citizenry of Hiroshima must be viewed as victims of the atomic bomb. The problem with this interpretation of history is that Japanese officialdom has also defined itself into the role of victim of World War II", relates the researcher Anne Helene Thelle.

The other side of the story

The above description falls a bit short of being the whole story, to put it mildly. For example it leapfrogs over the story of Nanking, where Japan was anything but a victim.

In this context, it is important to remember that the European part of WW II began with Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939 and that the US joined the war only after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. In Asian eyes, however, World War II started with the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1931. The occupation was a link in the aggressive expansionary policy that did not end until Japan's capitulation on 15 August 1945.

In brief: One of the bloodiest chapters in the history of the world began on 13 December 1937, when Japan took Nanking, the new capital of the Republic of China. An international tribunal subsequently estimated that more than 260 000 non-

combatant Chinese were killed during a few gory weeks. Young men were shot with machine guns, burned alive or used for target practice by soldiers who wanted to learn to kill with bayonets or by decapitation. At the same time, between 20 000 and 80 000 Chinese women were murdered, raped, tortured or mutilated in the cruellest ways. Soldiers documented their own abuses in writing and photographs, without so much as a thought to the fact that they were disgracing themselves in the eyes of posterity.

New stories about Hiroshima

"The problem with the history of Hiroshima focusing solely on the suffering is that it has suppressed the stories involving Japan's own

China and Japan still disagree about the history of World War II. The Chinese authorities responded by a



hole story

aggression. Several initiatives have now been taken in Japan to rectify this skewed historical account. However, time is growing short, since all the first-hand sources from World War II will soon no longer be among us”, says Thelle.

Anne H. Thelle reports that some of the surviving victims of Hiroshima have begun to tell their story in a different, more balanced manner. One woman who helped found *Katarukai* (‘The Society of Tellers of the Hiroshima Story’) has, for example, travelled extensively through Southeast Asia, collecting stories about the atrocities the Japanese committed there. Another *Katarukai* member usually starts his own story about Hiroshima by showing pictures from the Nanking massacre.

Other stories about Japan during World War II have also been suppressed. “For example, the official story depicts the Japanese as the only ones who suffered in Hiroshima, but the truth is that city had a large contingent of Koreans imported as labour. The survivors and remaining Koreans also wanted to commemorate their dead, but the idea was not well received. Ultimately, they were allowed to erect a monu-

ment, but only if it were placed outside the Peace Park”, recounts Thelle.

A half-hearted settlement

“The US occupying forces after World War II made sure that some admirals and generals were sentenced for war crimes, but the trial was far less illuminating than the one in Germany. The Americans even chose to retain the emperor as head of state. This helped preclude Japan from ever having a proper showdown with its aggressive military hegemony”, Thelle points out.

In other words, Japanese officialdom has summed up World War II with a trial that was far from adequate and with history books that obfuscate the facts. “Despite criticism from writers and other intellectuals, the official Japanese version still projects an image of Japan as a victim of World War II. That is probably one reason why Japan’s relations with China and South Korea, among others, are still strained. The Chinese and South Koreans feel that Japan has never made any sincere admissions or apologies; the apologies that have been forthcoming have been perceived as half-hearted. Of course,

it does not help that the Japanese prime minister insists on paying annual visits to a monument to Japanese soldiers fallen in World War II. Japanese culture implies that this type of monument is almost like a deification of the soldiers, and this raises problems, given that many of the soldiers buried there were guilty of war crimes”, continues Thelle.

Learning from history

Anne H. Thelle, a resident of Japan for 18 years, is a research fellow at the Department of Cultural Studies and Oriental Languages at the University of Oslo. She has previously published the prize-winning book *Japan – Origin of the Sun*, and is now working on a thesis on the Japanese author Nakagami Kenji. According to Thelle, Nakagami is among those who believe that Japan’s unilateral focus on the role of victim has been at the expense of understanding the role the country played throughout most of the war.

Thelle is affiliated with CAS’ research group *Narrative theory and analysis* in 2005–2006. One of the group’s goals is to study different kinds of narrative about Nazi genocide during World War II. “There may be no obvious connection between holocaust research and my studies of Nakagami Kenji, but the two fields have many overlapping elements in terms of theory and method. For example, the holocaust can be used as a basis for exploring other collective historical traumas”, she suggests.

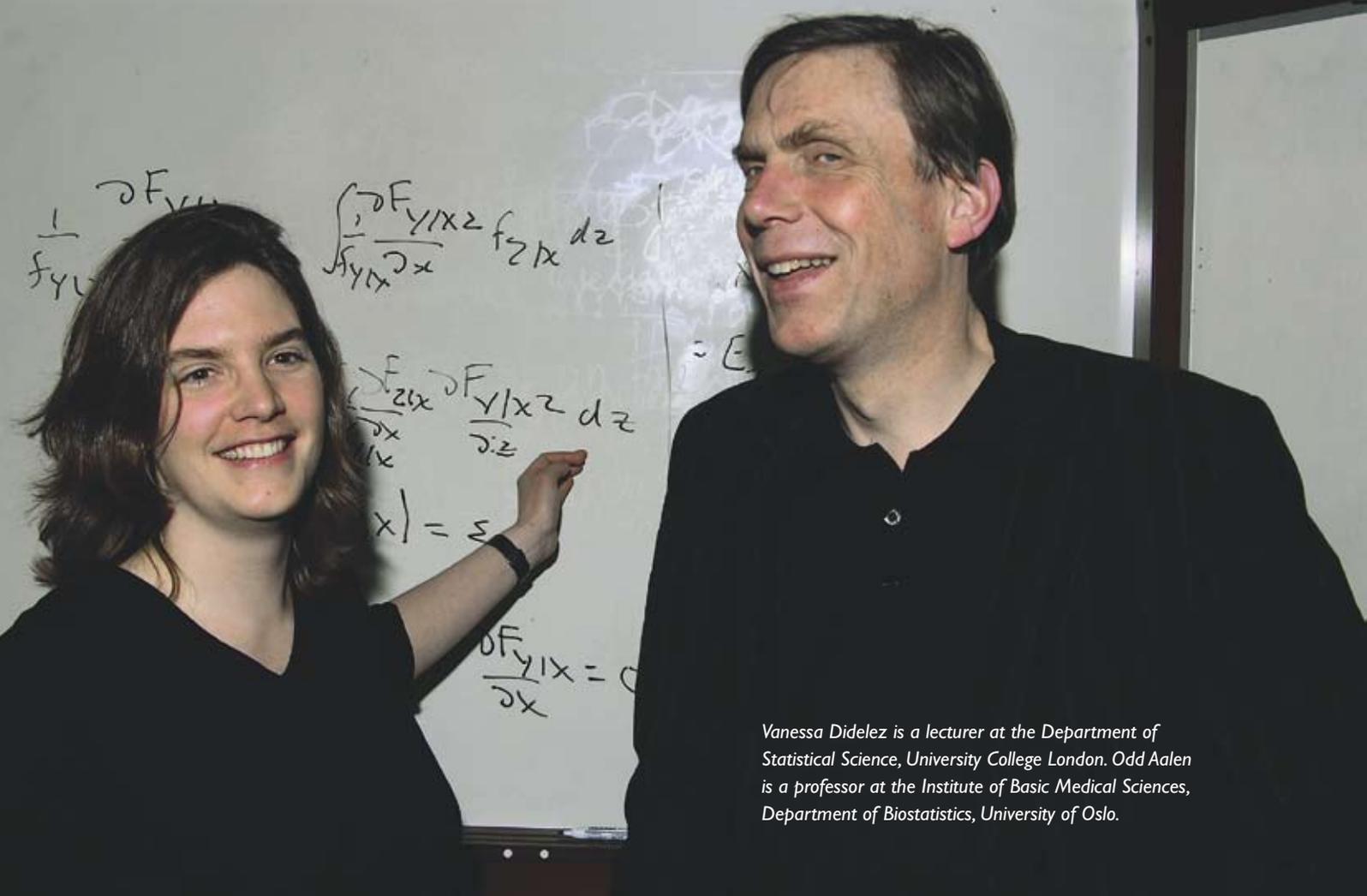
“I must emphasize that I am opposed to nuclear war as well as other kinds of war. However, if the reports from Hiroshima persist in focusing unilaterally on the human suffering of innocent Japanese, it could undermine the historical understanding of the events that led up to the atomic bomb. The decision to bomb Hiroshima was taken in response to prolonged Japanese aggression. For the Americans, the alternative was a ground war that might have claimed even more lives. On that account, it is absolutely decisive that the other stories also be heard. If we are to learn from history, we must at least try to get the story straight”, concludes Thelle.



Research fellow Anne H. Thelle lived in Japan for 18 years.

er II, and the controversy flares up sporadically. In 2000, Japanese soldiers and a historian denied the occurrence of a ceremony to commemorate the victims of the 1937 massacre. (Photo: Scanpix/AFP Photo/Xinhua).





Vanessa Didelez is a lecturer at the Department of Statistical Science, University College London. Odd Aalen is a professor at the Institute of Basic Medical Sciences, Department of Biostatistics, University of Oslo.

Far from a lost cause

The researchers Odd Aalen and Vanessa Didelez are helping to develop new methods to add to statisticians' toolbox, which must necessarily be big and heavy to distinguish between causes and effects. To complicate matters, it appears that not everything actually has a cause.

It is easy to show that people with nicotine-stained fingers are more susceptible than others to lung cancer. It is also quite clear, however, that stained fingers do not cause lung cancer. It is well documented that smoking causes both nicotine-stained fingers and lung cancer. In this context, smoking is what statisticians call a *confounder*. Perhaps it could also be called a 'confusion factor'.

Otherwise, one problem facing statisticians (and smokers) is that there is no crystal clear causality between smoking and lung cancer. Not all smokers develop lung cancer, and it is certainly possible to get lung cancer without ever having smoked. However, there is incontrovertible evidence that smoking increases the risk of lung cancer. 'No wonder the percentage of smokers is less among statisticians than among the general population', comments Dr. Vanessa Didelez.

Correlations are not causes

The medical use of statistics revolves in large part around finding correlations between

causes and effects. Meanwhile, one of the first commandments of statistics is that correlations, e.g. between nicotine-stained fingers and lung cancer, are not evidence of causality. "All the same, we can use statistical methods to draw conclusions about causes and effects, although this area is still fraught with problems", relates Professor Odd Aalen.

One of the methods used to investigate more closely the correlation between cause and effect involves clinical trials. In a typical clinical trial, patients can, for example, be divided randomly into two groups. Only the one group receives treatment with the new medication to be tested. Statisticians can subsequently determine whether the medicine had a clear positive effect. Over time, this use of statistics has helped bring us new medicines that have saved countless human lives. The random division into groups makes confounding highly unlikely.

Yet it is not possible to divide entire populations in two like this, and to tell the one group to stop smoking and the other group

to keep smoking. "There are statistical techniques that make it possible to get closer to an answer about what is the cause and what is the effect in such epidemiological studies. However, it was not until quite recently that mathematical models were developed to deal with this problem", recounts Didelez.

Causes do not imply understanding

Didelez and Aalen belong to the research group *Statistical Analysis of Complex Event History Data* at CAS, and they are currently busy studying new statistical methods related to cause/effect and other important aspects of the medical use of statistics. "It is possible to show causal connections, i.e. causalities, without necessarily understanding the underlying mechanisms, for instance in clinical trials of medical treatments. One famous historical example was the British ship's physician James Lind who, in 1747-48, divided 12 members of the crew on board the man-o-war the *H.M.S. Salisbury* into six groups. The one group, consisting of two

mariners, had to eat two oranges and one lemon every day. In contrast to the others, they did not get scurvy. Thus the problem of scurvy was solved once the British fleet began serving citrus fruits or juice to seamen. In other words, the problem was solved despite the fact that no one at that time knew anything at all about vitamin C”, Aalen recounts.

In a manner of speaking, James Lind performed history’s first clinical trial, and he is still one of the great heroes of medicine. “While his sample may have been on the small side, limited testing can be sufficient if the results are very clear. But, normally one would only say that the causality has been understood if the causal mechanism has been understood”, adds Didelez.

The development of methods

The field of statistics is developing at a breakneck pace, and researchers at CAS are actively involved in this work. “For example, major advances were made recently with the development of what is known as counterfactual variables. This is a technique that can be used to describe two outcomes that can never be observed simultaneously. For instance, a person suffering from an illness can never both be treated and not be treated, so that is an example of counterfactual reasoning”, explains Didelez.

Although the subject of statistics has developed significantly in recent years, many unresolved problems remain. “Even though the difference between correlation and causation can be put into mathematical terms, this has not yet been adopted by many statisticians. Our group aims at developing approaches that are more widely acceptable”, she says.

CAS researchers are also working to develop tools that can make the all-important time perspective a more integral part of the methods. “Part of the point of this work is to develop more knowledge about causality by analysing events that unfold over time. For example, if you are a doctor examining a patient with cancer, the patient will come back

to you for treatment and check-ups several times. We need a statistical tool that can deal with multiple events spread out across several years, and based on interrelationships that can be highly complex”, observes Aalen.

In this context, the statisticians are savvy enough to adopt smart solutions from other disciplines. Aalen and Didelez have become very interested in a method that originated in economics. “The so-called Granger causality was developed by the American scientist Clive W.J. Granger, winner of the Nobel Prize in economics in 2003. His concept involves studying processes that develop over time, and we believe the technique has an even greater potential in our discipline than what we have seen thus far. We have also benefited greatly from working with the Norwegian statistician Tore Schweder, who developed a similar concept at roughly the same time as Granger”, continues Aalen.

A philosophical conundrum

Despite all the advances in methodology, we may always be left with a certain number of inexplicable events. “Causality is seemingly a simple phenomenon, where one event causes another event or triggers a sequence of causes and effects. But if we look at the decay of radioactive substances, for example, we encounter a phenomenon that takes place in a fundamentally random manner. According to quantum mechanics, it is pure coincidence when an unstable atom releases a radioactive particle, and this particle can theoretically strike a DNA molecule and cause cancer. This is an example of an event that did not have any cause at all, and there seem to be many such examples. It quite simply appears that there is a certain fundamental randomness in our very existence”, maintains Aalen.

Vanessa Didelez agrees completely: “I also shun the idea that everything takes place for a reason. That opinion does not tally with what we observe in our field. In my view, people have a tendency to be overly eager in their search for causalities”, she concludes.

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The Centre’s academic activities shall be known to satisfy the highest international standards and thereby contribute to raising the quality of basic and interdisciplinary research in Norway. The Centre’s

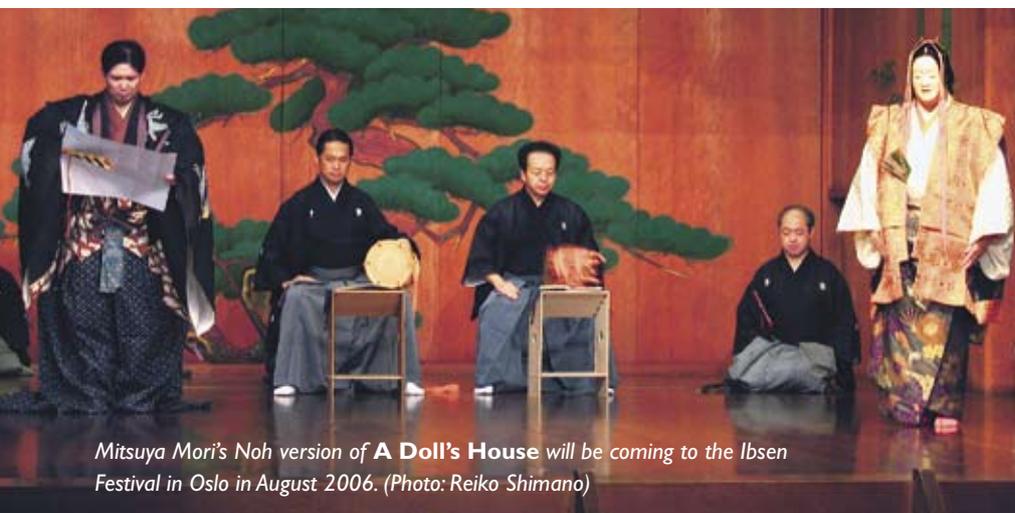
academic activities are to be of a long-term, independent, permanent nature as regards research policy, and political and financial influences.

Each year, the activities are organised into three research groups. The groups are chosen from the following three subject areas:

- Humanities/theology
- Social sciences/law
- Natural sciences/medicine/mathematics

Ibsen always comes back

“Henrik Ibsen has had a powerful influence on modern Japanese theatre, although he has not been staged often over the past 20 to 30 years. Today, however, Ibsen is on his way back to Japan”, says the Ibsen scholar, translator and stage director Mitsuya Mori, a guest researcher at CAS in 1993.



Mitsuya Mori's Noh version of *A Doll's House* will be coming to the Ibsen Festival in Oslo in August 2006. (Photo: Reiko Shimano)

The reason Ibsen has been staged less often in Japan in recent years is partly because his style of writing has been considered old-fashioned. “In that case, there has been a misunderstanding because Ibsen is still relevant. Otherwise, Ibsen is currently making a comeback in Japan, due not least to the publicity in connection with this year’s centenary celebration of the writer’s death in 1906”, adds Mitsuya Mori, a professor at the Department of Art Studies at Japan’s Seijo University’s College of Art and Literature.

Mori deserves a large part of the credit for the Japanese knowing their Ibsen. Mori has translated 11 of Ibsen’s contemporary dramas as well as *Peer Gynt* to Japanese, and he has directed several of the plays on Japanese and Norwegian stages. He is planning to stage *Ghosts* at Theater X in Tokyo this year. In August, he will be bringing a very special Noh

theatre production of *A Doll's House* to the Ibsen Festival in Oslo. A melange of masque, dance, song, costumes, music and poetry, Noh is one of the world’s oldest theatre forms, with roots dating all the way back to the 14th century. “It borders on the unthinkable to mix Ibsen with Noh, but it works splendidly!” promises Mori. The production has been staged earlier in Skien and in Bergen.

Cleaned his way to Norway

Mori’s fascination with Ibsen began already as a young student in California, where he wrote a dissertation on *The Master Builder* in 1966. Having decided to travel to Norway to experience the writer in the original language, Mori took a cleaning job on a Norwegian cargo carrier to pay for the trip. After a 50-day voyage, it was quite a blow to arrive in Norway only to discover that Norwegian

actors were on strike. Fortunately, the Ibsen scholar Daniel Håkonsen took pity on the young student and saw to it that he received a six-month grant to study in Norway. Since then, Mori has been in Norway a number of times, not least as a member of the Centre’s Ibsen group in 1993 led by Professor Vigdis Ystad.

“That was a fantastic experience, since it gave me an opportunity to meet Ibsen scholars such as Vigdis Ystad and John Northam, and to collaborate with them. I also spent the time writing my third book on Ibsen”, recounts Mori.

Highlighting quality

Vigdis Ystad, a professor of Nordic literature at the University of Oslo, also looks back on her stay at the Centre and her work on the project ‘Henrik Ibsen’s Writings’ with great joy. “At the time of his departure, one visiting scholar from the USA remarked that it was hard to leave Paradise. I think several of us felt that way. The opening of the Centre gave Norwegian humanities scholars a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in their special fields since they were relieved of routine teaching duties. At the time, working in groups was a relatively new phenomenon. We benefited tremendously from inviting prominent colleagues from other parts of the world for long-term visits”, relates Ystad.

“Personally, I benefited greatly from the project. In retrospect, I see that the work done at that time has had a significant impact on Ibsen research. For example, the project laid the foundation for making an historical-critical edition, with commentary, of Ibsen’s works. It was also discovered that many existing translations of Ibsen were of substandard quality, and several of the scholars have published theses on this since then”, observes Ystad.

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