



Norwegian University  
of Life Sciences

**Master's Thesis 2020 30 ECTS**

Faculty of Landscape and Society

# **Political science students' perspectives on the UN: Different universities, different perspectives?**

Ragnhild Gabrielsen

Master of Science in International Relations

## Abstract

This study maps how the UN as an organization is perceived by students of political science at universities in Norway. Through examination of students at different universities, we can achieve an understanding of students' knowledge and perspectives about the UN and aspects of the organization's work. The data was collected through in-depth interviews with nine students from three different universities in Norway who offer studies within political science. The interviews focused on getting data on the subjects' individual understanding and evaluation of the UN and how their perceptions have been influenced by their universities. The result can help create an understanding of the future of political science as a field in Norway. It will outline how students have come to possess their views, whether discussions as a teaching method affect their perspectives, and to which degree universities produce specific knowledge in their students that differ from other universities.

## Acknowledgements

To my parents, whom statistically are the reason why I have completed a master's degree. To my beloved partner, who have put up with my various moods and at times long hours. To my friends and colleagues, who have contributed with valuable discussions and company during this thesis project. And to my supervisor, who have dealt calmly with my powers of procrastination and sudden turnarounds.

## Table of contents

Abstract .....	1
Acknowledgements .....	2
1.0. Introduction .....	5
1.1. Research questions .....	6
1.2. Thesis outline.....	7
2.0. Literature review .....	8
2.1. The field of political science .....	8
2.2. National differences within the discipline of political science .....	9
2.3. Students and Teaching in political science.....	10
2.4. Discussions as a path to greater understanding .....	12
2.5. Limitations.....	14
3.0. Research design and methods .....	15
3.1. Research design and research strategy .....	15
3.2. Sampling.....	17
3.3. Data collection.....	19
3.4. Analysis.....	21
3.5. Reliability and validity .....	23
3.6. Ethical considerations .....	24
3.7. Limitations .....	25
4.0. Findings (and discussion?) .....	26
4.1. An overview .....	27
4.2. How do students of social sciences in Norway perceive the UN and their work?.....	27
4.2.1. General perceptions of the UN.....	28
4.2.2. Views on interventions.....	31
4.2.3. Views of the security council .....	33
4.2.4. Summary of main findings .....	37
4.3. How do discussions as a teaching method affect their perception of the UN? .....	39
4.3.1. Summary of main findings .....	48
4.4. To what degree are there differences between universities?.....	49
4.4.1. Summary of main findings .....	53
5.0. Conclusion.....	54
References .....	57
Annex 1 – Interview guide .....	62
Annex 2 – Codebook.....	63



## 1.0. Introduction

The overarching objective for this study is to map how the UN as an organization is perceived by students of political science at universities in Norway. Through examination of students at different universities in Norway, we can achieve an understanding of students' knowledge and perspectives about the UN and aspects of the organization's work. This can help create an understanding of the future of political science as a field in Norway. This thesis will explore how students come to possess their views, whether discussions as a teaching method affect their perspectives, and to which degree universities produce specific knowledge in their students that differ from other universities.

Within political science, lectures and seminars have been the dominant components of teaching. Lectures have persisted as a teaching method since the early days of the discipline and is still the most popular way to teach large groups of students (Goldsmith and Goldsmith, 2010), despite several authors calling for more student-centred teaching methods. New and innovative teaching methods that focus on active learning rather than passive listening are increasingly being recognized, but there is some ambivalence regarding the extent to which new teaching methods are actually being put into practice at institutes of higher education (Lea, Stephenson and Troy, 2003).

Political science classes are often undermining critical thinking and analysis skills in their students because of the popular lecturing structure (Damron and Mott, 2005), which leads to the university producing graduates who are not experienced in critical thinking. Discussions as a teaching method can help give students crucial experience to contribute in the great debates within political science, thereby lifting and developing the discipline throughout their careers. Each discipline and each university have its own culture, that may be reinforcing the structures leading to a lack of critical thinking skills in students. Comparative studies in higher education do not often focus on comparison between specific institutions or departments (Becher, 1994). This thesis, which is outlined as a case study, with a comparative element in the analysis, can fill some of this gap. It is located in an intersection between political science as a discipline, political science education, and university comparison.

This research project has a qualitative approach and is based on an interpretivist epistemological position. Based on what is known on the subject and theoretical considerations, three research questions are put forth. The data was collected through in-depth

interviews with nine students from three different universities in Norway who offer studies within political science. The interviews were conducted by telephone and were semi-structured, loosely following an interview guide which focuses on getting data on the subjects' individual understanding and evaluation of the ideology of the UN and how their perceptions have been influenced by their universities.

## 1.1. Research questions

There are three research questions guiding this thesis. The overarching objective for this study is to locate how the UN as an organization is understood and perceived by young people who are studying within the field of political science at universities in Norway. By identifying students' ideas and thoughts surrounding the UN and aspects of their work, this research can establish whether and how the ideology and moral framework inherent in the UN is understood and implemented into students' knowledge and perspective within their field of study. The findings on this topic can help outline the current status of the field in Norway, giving a sense of direction for the development of political science as an academic field.

Individual states will naturally have some variations in the way they do research and teaching, and these differences may influence students' approaches and ideas concerning the nature and ideology of the UN. Theoretical perspectives may not be equally taught and discussed in academic circles around the world. Teaching methods are also quite varied. As a result, graduate students at universities across Norway may have different views of both the ideology and the legitimacy of the UN than students in other states. The data collected can help gain a greater understanding of how Norwegian students' ideas and individual moral compasses are shaped by their professors and their universities.

Building on the previous objectives, this study will map how students' views on the topic are affected by their universities, and how they differ across universities in Norway. It is expected that there are variations from university to university within Norway with regards to teaching, syllabus, and the emphasis of different theoretical perspectives, and that these differences can affect how students view the ideology and legitimacy of the UN. As a result, students at different universities may also have different views on the subject. The data collected can help gain a greater understanding of how students' views on the topic are affected by their universities.

The following research questions are the foundation for gathering data on these topics.

- *How do students of social sciences in Norway perceive the UN and their work?*
- *How do discussions as a teaching method affect their perception of the UN?*
- *To what degree are there differences between universities?*

## 1.2. Thesis outline

This thesis is structured as follows. Chapter one, as you have already read, gives an introduction to this research. Chapter two presents the literature review and theoretical background for this thesis, outlining the development of political science as a field of study, the academic discourse on university teaching within political science and the importance of active learning methods like discussions to enhance students' learning. These topics are tied together to create an anchor for the research questions guiding this thesis. Chapter three presents the methodological choices that were made, discussing research design and strategy, sampling choices, data collection and analysis. Additionally, the chapter contains discussions on the quality, rigour and wider potential of this research, ethical considerations and the limitations of the study. Chapter four gives an overview of the findings, and discussion of these findings and how they correspond to the research questions presented above. Finally, chapter five summarizes the results of this thesis and ties it all together in the wider context of social research and proposes further research on the topic.



## 2.0. Literature review

“Ultimately, the task in all political science classes is to teach students to think critically about key concepts and ideas rather than just play the game of demonstrating that they can define those concepts and ideas.” (Damron and Mott, 2005, p. 368).

From the early beginnings of political science, the field has grown and developed numerous subfields of specialized areas of study and research. Despite the differences between sub-disciplines, they still share a discipline-specific culture and a certain way of understanding the world. This culture consists of research norms, practices, and graduate education that is specific to each discipline (Becher, 1994), and it exists and can be identified both within and across universities.

As long as the discipline has existed, there has been debate over what is being thought and how. This debate has experienced a surge in the last 20 years (Kehl and Clarke, 2002), and much focus has been given to the teaching methods that are used in political science classes, containing critique of the traditional lecture-style of teaching and a push towards more active learning.

This chapter will give an outline of these topics and debates within the field, argue for the choice of topic and research questions, and tie it together with the specific research carried out for this thesis.

### 2.1. The field of political science

The beginning of political science is often said to have emerged in ancient Greece with the teachings of great thinkers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle (Grigsby, 2012; Easton, 1971), whom studied and philosophized over justice, political virtue, varieties of politics, and democratic rule. Plato wrote about the ideal structure of governing, and Aristotle formed a teaching institute. However, political science as an academic field began in the late 1800's, as an alliance between historians, lawyers and philosophers (Almond, 1996). The first political science department in the US was established in 1880 at Columbia University, and the American Political Science Association (APSA) was formed in 1903. From its beginnings

more than a century ago, the discipline has grown and developed several subfields. APSA now has member in over 100 countries.

Some of the most prominent subfields of political science include Comparative Politics, which examines politics within countries and tries to establish generalizations and theories; Public Policy studies the intersection of politics and economics with the goal of developing effective programs; Political Theory focuses on defining good polity and is often focused on major thinkers; US (or American) politics examines institutions and processes, mostly at the federal level; and International Relations which studies the relationships between and among states, encompassing a range of topics that are of importance to the relationships between states (Grigsby, 2012; Roskin et.al., 2012). The largest departments will include more subfields, like political research methods, public administration, security studies, and constitutional law, just to mention a few. Even though the field of political science has diverged into so many specialized areas of study and research, there are some over-arching ‘tools’ that are shared by most of its subdisciplines. Alker points out that political science does not have its own methodological device, like many other disciplines do, but all the subfields are joined together by their shared interest in the way ‘politics’ exists (Almond, 1996). These shared interests have developed into a discipline-specific culture and a shared way of understanding the world. These cultures are apparent within and across universities. Even though each university has several different disciplines with their own cultures, universities as a whole also operate as ‘community cultures’, with aspects of a common culture (Becher, 1994).

## 2.2. National differences within the discipline of political science

Disciplines have their own culture, or structure, composed of research norms, practices, and graduate education that is specific to each discipline (Becher, 1994). Becher (1994) found that these cultures apply to both the separate disciplines and subdisciplines, explaining it as:

*... [universities] possess a common culture: their ways of construing the world and the people who live in it are sufficiently similar for them to be able to understand, more or less, each other's culture and even, when necessary, to communicate with members of other tribes (Bailey, 1997, p. 212, brackets inserted)*

This specific culture and way of understanding the world is not limited to each discipline. These cultures are also apparent within and across universities. Each university is composed of different disciplines with their own cultures, but universities as a whole also operate as ‘community cultures’, with aspects of a common culture (Becher, 1994). It does not seem so far-fetched to posit that this might also be the case with Norwegian universities, and that their university cultures may be transferred onto their students. As stated by an anthropologist, "to be a Shakespearean scholar, absorb oneself in black holes, or attempt to measure the effect of schooling on economic achievement--is not just to take up a technical task but to place oneself inside a cultural frame that defines and even determines a very great part of one's life" (Geerts, 1976, cited in: Becher, 1994, p. 153)

Becher points out that comparative studies in higher education rarely focus on comparison between specific institutions or departments, which can shed light on the contrasts that shape both research and graduate and undergraduate curricula (1994).

### 2.3. Students and Teaching in political science

Debate within political science over what and how is being taught, have existed since the beginning of the discipline. In 1911, the American Political Science Association (APSA) established a committee “to consider the methods of teaching and studying” and “to suggest means of enlarging and improving such instruction” (Haines, 1913, p. 249). After APSA’s head start, a number of similar committees emerged in the following decades. These committees focusing on the teaching of political science reflected the growing debate over teaching and learning issues (Ishiyama, Breuning, and Lopez, 2006). Around year 2000, there was another noticeable increase of scholarship within the discipline on the topic of innovation in teaching strategies (Kehl and Clarke, 2002). Whitman and Richlin (2007) has showed that this trend has continued gaining interest among researchers and publishers and noted that APSA had recently started promoting ‘Scholarship of Teaching and Learning’ (SoTL) within the political science, in collaboration with several educational associations and councils. This association has been at the forefront and are hosting annual conferences for teachers of political science to develop innovative practices (Goldsmith and Goldsmith, 2010). Several journals are now either focusing mainly on this topic, or regularly lifting the topic, like Political science & Politics; Journal of Political Science Education; and International Studies Perspectives.

Within political science and all its sub-disciplines, teaching has not had the same high status as research (Goldsmith and Goldsmith, 2010), despite teaching constituting a large portion of universities' reason for existence. Classically, the components of teaching have been lectures and seminars. Lectures have persisted as a teaching method since the days of Aristotle, they have been a main component of education since the fourteenth century and continues to be a popular way to teach large groups of students (Goldsmith and Goldsmith, 2010). Sloam (2008) argues that political science education suffers from a rigid top-down attitude towards students, calling for more student-centred teaching methods. Sloam is not alone in this view. Damron and Mott (2005) point out that educational psychology scholars have argued since the 60's that students "learn what they do and not what we tell them" (Dewey, 1963, as cited in Damron and Mott, 2005, p. 367). Indeed, lectures as a learning method does not pay off among most students (Gershkoff, 2005). Different students learn in different ways, which means that teaching in universities should provide a wide array of teaching methods in order to reach all, or most of, their students. After all, the field of political science will no doubt flourish and grow as a result of even better trained practitioners and researchers.

Damron and Mott (2005) hit the nail on the head with the statement "Ultimately, the task in all political science classes is to teach students to think critically about key concepts and ideas rather than just play the game of demonstrating that they can define those concepts and ideas." (p. 368). But despite the broad agreement within the discipline that teaching methods should be more varied in order to facilitate student success, some political science classes have features (like large classes) that make it difficult to stray from the classic lecturing structure. But these challenging features might not be the only issue for a more student-centred teaching method. Lectures seem to still be dominant in many universities, leading to a culture of learning that involves passively absorbing information and then regurgitating it in an exam, leaving students with only superficial knowledge and little training in critical thinking (McCarthy and Anderson, 2000).

Active learning, on the other hand, involves interaction with instructors and each other to experience deeper thinking about the issues at hand (McCarthy and Anderson, 2000). This lets students "develop a theoretically informed, innovative and research-oriented disposition" (Buckler, 2001, p. 75). Even if professors try teaching higher-level thinking skills like critical analysis, it can be challenging and time-consuming to give students the practice and feedback they need to develop these skills (Damron and Mott, 2005). Entwistle (1997) found that

lecturers' views about the main purpose of a university degree was for the students to achieve critical thinking skills. Entwistle's findings is backed up in more recent literature. Bates and Jenkins (2007) argues that critical thinking skills allows students to engage with and challenge different perspectives, both their own and others'.

Despite developments in teaching methods, greater use of peer assessment, student reviews, and more teaching training courses, Lea, Stephenson and Troy (2003) gravely question the extent to which new teaching methods are actually being put into practice at institutes of higher education, and they claim that in most cases it is more about rhetoric than actual implementation. When we combine this point with the fact that most students view their professors as having the 'right answers' (Roberts, 2002, p. 2), a somewhat disturbing thought emerges: If there are, at most universities, mainly student-passive lectures by professors who have the 'right answers', students may very well end up passively adopting their lecturer's views and perspectives. Especially if students are not given any guidance and experience in developing critical thinking and having the opportunity to discuss the new ideas and thoughts that are presented to them. Lea et.al. (2003) concluded from an overview of studies concerning active learning, that students who participated in 'traditional' teaching activities were less successful than those who had more activating courses.

## 2.4. Discussions as a path to greater understanding

There is an abundance of literature that focuses on learning and teaching within political science, and the importance of interaction, communication and discussion as a way to enhance learning. Research on youth participation has showed how critical two-way communication is in promoting knowledge (Sloam, 2007).

Damron and Mott (2005) state that for many students, "there is a strong disincentive to participate in class" (p. 370), because it does not yield dramatically better grades than through not participating. My argument is that this disincentive is created by universities and course structure, which is so rigid that students have little to no opportunity to 'participate' in class, even if they wish to. When students are not given the space to participate, the fault lies with those planning and teaching the courses. Active learning, engagement with the subject matter through interaction with each other and with the lecturer, is crucial in the fields of social sciences (McCarthy and Anderson, 2000). Even for those classes who are so large that

discussions of the subject matter do not seem feasible, it is important that lectures are balanced out with some type of interactive learning. Lecture-heavy courses with a lack of discussions to process and apply what they are being taught only serve to curtail student learning (Damron and Mott, 2005).

Active learning, like discussions, in the classroom create more motivated and engaged students, maximizes participation, and gives students a deeper understanding of the subject material, beyond just superficial facts (McCarthy and Anderson, 2000). It can also be directly beneficial in terms of final grades. A simple role-playing exercise among students in class can result in better results by almost a whole grade, compared to those who did not participate in the role-playing (McCarthy and Anderson, 2000). Marks (2008) states that the learning of political science will be enhanced by classroom discussions and goes on to give practical tips for how this can be planned and carried out in the classroom. On a broader scale, discussions can encourage students to express, confront, and justify their own views and perspectives, which gives them crucial experience to contribute in the great debates within political science, thereby lifting and developing the discipline throughout their careers.

Political science classrooms are often undermining critical thinking and analysis because of their tendency to reinforce student passivity through a lecture-dominant structure (Damron and Mott, 2005). When students experience that passively absorbing information and then regurgitating it on the exam is sufficient to get a decent, or even quite good grade, the university is undermining their intellectual capacities and producing graduates who are not experienced in critical thinking. It is not likely that students will not go out of their way to spend time connecting with the material and learning these skills when it does not pay off in form of a good grade, which is the measurement of success from university training. Or at least not a radically better grade than one would get from passively absorbing information through listening to lectures. This line of thought from Damron and Mott (2005) is easy to swallow, but there is one misjudgement in their argument. It seems they believe students pick the path of least resistance because it is easier. My belief is that they pick the only path available to them.

Young people doing their studies in political science often have some experience with politics and have some inner need to make the world a better place. At least that's the common understanding among such students, as I have experienced them from different universities during my own studies. It is also evident from the interviews I conducted for this thesis. They are ready to share their ideas, to discuss best policies, to agree and disagree. I

believe that they are not silent in class for a lack of wanting to speak up, they are silent because there is no space for them to speak up.

## 2.5. Limitations

This thesis dives into student's perceptions of their learning environment, seeking to explain how students are affected by their universities, their lecturers, and the different learning methods that they are exposed to. It does not consider professors'/lecturers' availability to do apply different classroom activities, like funds, physical space, time, etc (see Fox and Keeter, 1996, for such an assessment). This research also does focus on other learning activities other than discussions and lectures, though some were mentioned by interviewees, and are therefore included. In establishing students' perceptions and ideas within their study, they were asked about their views of the UN and some of their key components. This will give a sense of direction of where the field of political science is headed with this new generation of practitioners and scholars.

This thesis focuses on shedding light on the current status of political science as a discipline and the importance of political science education in forming students and seeks to compare what kinds of views and universities produce. When students experience lectures as the only teaching method, it gives great power to the lecturer and the university on how and what is talked about, which can affect both the quality of learning and the views students develop on various topics. As stated by Smith (2013), when talking about the importance of theory, "The choice, then, is one of whether you are aware of the assumptions you are bringing to your study of the world or not." (p. 8). The ideas and perceptions that students form throughout their studies may affect the future of the discipline in Norway, because students have an important part in bringing change and new ideas into the field, playing part in the continuous development of political science.

### 3.0. Research design and methods

“the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit” (Patton, 2002, p. 241)

The research for this thesis will have a qualitative approach. It is based on an interpretivist epistemological position, focusing on understanding the world through the participants’ understanding of their world, and a constructionist position which implies that the social world exists in the interactions between individuals (Wahyuni, 2012, p.70). Based on what is known on the subject and theoretical considerations, this thesis put forth a series of research questions. The collection and analysis of data will provide knowledge on the rather under-explored topic of how Norwegian students of political science perceive and relate to the ideology and values of the UN, and how their universities take part in shaping that perception. The use of deductive theory mixed with some inductive elements supports the choice of qualitative interviews as the research strategy. The data was collected through in-depth interviews with nine students from three different universities in Norway. The interviewees were sampled purposively and randomly, with the possibility of intensity sampling within the first selected sample. The interviews were conducted by telephone and recorded for transcribing. They were semi-structured, loosely following an interview guide which focuses on getting data on the subjects’ individual understanding and evaluation of the UN and how their perceptions have been influenced.

#### 3.1. Research design and research strategy

This study involved detailed and intensive analysis of a single case, namely undergraduate (bachelor’s degree) and postgraduate (master’s degree) students in Norway. Because this group was the unit of analysis, it supported the choice of conducting a case study of this group (Patton, p. 439, 2002). The goal was to discover the complexity and specific nature of this one case (Stake, 1995). Yin (2009) state that there are three ideal conditions for selecting a case study as research method (cited in Wahyuni, 2012). The first is that the research question is stated as a ‘why’ or ‘how’-question, the second is that control over behavioural events being studied is not required, and the third is that the study focus on



contemporary events as opposed to historical ones. The research conducted for this thesis fulfils all three of these conditions. Yin (2009) goes on to identify five different types of cases (cited in Bryman, 2012). The case selected for this study falls within the category Yin terms ‘the representative or typical case’, which Bryman calls ‘the exemplifying case’. The reason for choosing this case was to “capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation” (Yin 2009, as cited in Bryman, 2012, p. 70). This case was chosen because it is seen as average compared to the broader category of possible cases, and because it serves as a useful context to answer my research questions. This thesis has been inspired by various theories on learning and critical thinking, and as a result it seeks to answer questions that this case will provide a suitable context for.

One very prominent critique of the case study is that the findings cannot be generalized, but that is not the purpose of the case study. The findings will be used to discuss theoretical arguments and generate new theories, which Yin (2009) calls ‘analytic generalization’ (cited in Bryman, 2012, p. 64). Williams (2000) argue that case study findings can be generalized through similar cases that have been studied by other researchers. The validity and reliability of this research is examined in the end of this chapter, where alternative measures of validity and reliability is used to argue that this research is trustworthy and accurate.

Deductive theory is a common way of linking theory and social research, where data is collected to test a set theory or hypothesis. As pointed out by Bryman (2012, p. 25), the use of ‘theory’ in the deductive approach may be limited to a literature review on the topic. Based on what is known on the subject and theoretical considerations, this thesis put forth a series of research questions which embody my own assumptions on the topic. The collection and analysis of data will prove to either support or contradict these assumptions. Deduction can also involve strands of inductive theory, especially in the last steps of the research where the data and findings are used to alter or create a new theory, depending on the outcome of the hypothesis testing (Bryman, 2012, p. 26). The use of deductive theory mixed with some inductive elements supports the choice of qualitative interviews as the research strategy (Bryman, 2012, p. 70).

### 3.2. Sampling

The choice of sampling strategy was partially predetermined by the research questions, since they give a pointer to which cases and units are needed to answer them (Bryman, 2016, and Wahyuni, 2012). My research questions led to this being a case-study, in which the sampling population was students within social/political sciences at bachelor's and master's level, at Norwegian universities.

The sampling strategy I used was purposive sampling. According to Bryman, (2016, p. 408), this is the most logical sampling strategy to attain respondents within the subgroup who would be the most copious in order to answer the research questions. Purposive sampling allows me to select the most information-rich members of the population (Patton, 1990, p. 169). The sampling method can be interpreted as a combination between the categories Patton terms as 'intensity sampling' and 'purposeful random sampling', which are both baked into Bryman's more broad category of 'generic purposive sampling' (Patton, 1990, pp. 171-179; Bryman, 2016, pp. 412-415). 'Intensity sampling' is done by choosing samples that are information-rich and fully represents the topic of your study, while 'purposive random sampling' entails selecting samples within the population on a random basis.

For this thesis, sampling was done with both of these strategies. First, the sampling of universities was made by choosing 3 of the biggest universities who has several political science related studies. There are ten universities across Norway. The following were chosen for this study: NMBU, UiO, and UiA, based on the fact that they are the three universities that offer the most studies in political and social science in Norway. The University of Oslo offers 3 different bachelor's studies and four master's studies, the University of Agder offers three of each, while the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) offer one bachelor's and three master's studies (details in table 1).

Table 1. *Studies in political and social sciences offered at selected universities in Norway.*

	<b>Bachelor's degree(s)</b>	<b>Master's degree(s)</b>
<b>University of Oslo</b>	International studies Political science Development studies	Development, environment and cultural change Global-MINDS

		Peace and conflict studies Political science
<b>University of Agder</b>	Global development studies Political science Social planning and communication	Global development and planning Social communication Political science and management
<b>Norwegian University of Life Sciences</b>	International environment and development studies	International relations Global development studies International environmental studies

For selecting participants within each university, random sampling was done first, then the most information-rich cases within that random sample was chosen. This strategy provided both a randomly collected sample, while at the same time providing me with respondents who were the most useful to answer the questions posed in this thesis. This sampling strategy adds up to a non-probability sample, in which there is no basis for estimating the probability for each participant to be selected, which means that the results from the study cannot be generalized to the wider population, but generalization was improbable as soon as I decided to conduct qualitative interviewing as my research strategy (Bryman, 2012, p. 418). It is also noted by Kothari (2004, p. 59) that non-probability sampling is advantageous for small studies done by individuals because of the low cost of this method.

Deciding on a sample size was no easy task. For this study, the population was newly or nearly graduated students from one of the mentioned studies at the three listed universities. The literature is frustratingly vague about how to calculate what sample size you might need for your study. Opinions on how many respondents are needed for a qualitative interview-based study range from no less than 60 (Gerson and Horowitz, 2002), around 30 (Warren, 2001; Adler and Adler, 2012; Mason, 2010), not too few, but not too many (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007), to less than 20 (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006). Regardless, the consideration that was taken into account to make this decision was made mostly on the basis of time/resources. This single-author study spanning only a few months allowed me enough time to interview up to 10 subjects, though I would have preferred the number to be a bit higher for

the purpose of comparison between universities. The number of participants that were interviewed ended up being three students from each university, in order to gain an equal amount of data from each university. This quite small sample size is supported in literature by Crouch and McKenzie (2006), on the basis that a smaller number of respondents allows the researcher to get closer to each participant and get very detailed data.

### 3.3. Data collection

In this qualitative research, the emphasis was on the interview objects' own perspectives and point of view, with the goal being rich and detailed answers. The open setting of the qualitative interview gives the interviewees space to ramble, which gives the researcher insight into what is important and relevant for them within the topic of research. There is also room to depart from the set list of questions, to follow up on especially interesting ideas, answers, and details, or to change the order in which the questions are asked (Bryman, 2012; Heyink and Tymstra, 1993). The flexibility in qualitative interviewing to depart from or change the pre-decided list of questions give the researcher the possibility to discover significant issues that may emerge during the interviews. This flexibility is what makes this method so attractive, Bryman (2012) states. Heyink and Tymstra (1993) sees the varying degree of structure in qualitative interviewing as a continuum, in which the researcher must locate his or her research. For this study, the interview strategy fell somewhere in the middle of the spectrum.

The data for this research was collected through semi-structured interviews via telephone, that ranged from 30-45 minutes in length. The semi-structured method is well suited for research with a quite clear focus (Bryman, 2012). It gave me as the researcher a clear path to follow in order to find the specific answers to the research questions, while still allowing room to depart from the path if something unexpected and interesting comes up. One of the greatest benefits of conducting interviews via phone compared to face-to-face is the modest cost. My interview subjects were located in different cities across Norway, but since the onset of covid-19, many students have returned to their hometowns, which, combined with the official advice to not travel, made it challenging to meet them all in person. Additionally, respondents may be more comfortable answering probing questions over the phone, without the interviewer sitting in the same room. This decreased the possibility of

reactive effects (Bryman, 2012). Additionally, the fact that the interviewees were located in their own physical spaces, most often their homes, made them feel safe and comfortable, which encouraged them to answer questions openly. Interviews via telephone was also quite risk-free with regards to virus infections, since the data can be collected and analysed from a single location and is therefore the most logical choice for a researcher doing a project these days. An issue worth mentioning is that recording an interview may present some obstacles. The knowledge that you are being recorded can alter the conversation and make some respondents uncomfortable (Warren, 2001). All interviewees were presented with the choice not to be recorded, but none expressed any hesitation and gave their consent.

Patton (2002) sees the 'interview guide' as a specific interview approach, in which the interview guide lists the issues that will be explored in the interview and ensures that the same basic topics are covered with each of the interviewees. Within each of the topics on the interview guide, I had the leeway to explore and ask questions that gave me further insight into the subjects' perspectives. This ensured that the interview did not go too far off-topic, while at the same time keeping a conversational tone, which can serve to make respondents more comfortable than if the interview was more closed. Using this approach made the data collection somewhat systematic and similar for each interviewee (Patton, 2002). The 'interview guide' approach is comparable to Bryman's category 'semi-structured interviews' (2012, p. 471).

The semi-structured interviews were based on a list of questions on the specific topics of my research questions. This interview guide served as just that: a guide, where the respondents had flexibility in how they answer, and what else they felt was related and might like to bring up. It allowed me to follow up on interesting leads and dig deeper where especially interesting ideas come up (Bryman, 2012). The questions in the guide are sequenced in a way that seems logical for an interview but will ultimately depend on the individuals who are interviewed. The focus will in any case be the ways that the interviewees understand and view the topics, and what they themselves find important about the topic.

There is a general agreement that within qualitative research that the quality of the interviewer affects the quality of information that is being obtained (Bryman, 2012; Patton, 2002; Heyink and Tymstra, 1993). According to Patton (2002), quality data cannot be extracted from a subject without an attentive, skilful interviewer. There are some commonly listed criteria of what constitutes a quality interviewer, in regards to what questions are asked, how, and when, in addition to how the interview and research is introduced and how the

interviewer acts during the session (Berry, 1999; Bryman, 2016; Kvale, 1996). The first issue to be raised, before the interview even begins, is that of consent. The interviewees were presented with an overview on the topic and nature of the research, how long the interview was expected to take, how the information would be used and stored (including confidentiality), and insurance that they at any time, for whatever reason, could choose to not participate in the study. Eisner (2017) points out that in a study such as this, where the interview was a semi-structured one, the researcher cannot obtain perfectly informed consent because he or she does not know in which direction the interview may go, and how it may change the end result of the study. He sees informed consent as an ideal that researchers will never truly obtain. Still, it is important that we try our best.

The interview guide (see annex 1) was created by ordering questions by topic, in order to answer the research questions. The questions focus on the interviewees' individual perception of the UN and teaching practices at their universities, and how their views have been changed and influenced during the course of their studies. The sequencing of the questions presents the imagined outline of the interview, though it was kept open for restructuring as the interviews took different turns and were all unique. Patton (2002) lists six types of questions that can be asked during any interview, which helps the researcher carefully consider what question to ask to get the information that is wanted. The types that permeate my interview guide are 'opinion and values questions', which are aimed at understanding the interviewee's judgement and opinions, like the questions 'What is your view of the UN?' and 'How do you believe your opinions have been influenced?'

### 3.4. Analysis

Qualitative data often comes in large amounts of text or audio and requires dismantling and reassembling to become meaningful findings that can be understood as larger pieces of knowledge. This process of 'translating' the data into digestible and meaningful pieces is guided by the research questions and the aim of the study (Wahyuni, 2012, p.75). One way to examine qualitative data is by content analysis. Bryman states that content analysis is a very transparent method, because the clarity that can be achieved in the coding schedule and manual can easily be replicated by other researchers (2012, p. 304). It is also a flexible method that can be used for a variety of unstructured word-based information

(Bryman, p.304-305). But before the analysis properly began, I went through my recordings/interview notes and the transcriptions to make sure they were all clear, complete, and usable. This helped me get immersed in the data, to get a sense of the raw material and develop some preliminary thoughts on the recurring themes and connections.

Holsti defines content analysis as “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (1969: 14). Objectivity is an ideal that most researchers strive to obtain, but the research topic, hypotheses, and choice of methods are all the result of the researcher’s personal opinions and experiences, thereby making research in itself a subjective task. My argument is that objectivity should be seen as understanding and analysing the ‘messages’ as close as possible to how the messenger intended them. This requires some interpretation, but I will be careful not to draw inferences where it is unclear what meaning the message contains. However, systematic analysis, along with some level of objectivity, can be attained by giving a transparent account of the method of analysis, like pre-determining how pieces of information get assigned to a category (Bryman, p. 289, 2012).

The first step of analysis is developing a coding scheme (Patton, 2002, p. 463). When reading through all my transcripts, I began making notes on how pieces of the data can be organized and divided into topics. As I was sorting through the data, the emerging topics become clearer and developed into categories that are used for the coding. After this first pass through the raw material, the formal coding is done. This required several readings of each interview, both to code all the material and to make sure no important pieces were overlooked. The categories in the codebook was developed from both the questions used in the semi-structured interviews and a review of the interview transcripts, in addition to a few extra categories for pieces of data that did not fit into the already established categories. The categories were then strengthened by judging to what degree each category was consistent and fit into the larger picture, whether the categories were really clear and different from each other, and whether the categories were sufficient to cover the data (Patton, 2002, p. 466).

The primary tool that was used in this thesis is case analysis. First individual case analysis, then cross-pattern analysis. The term ‘case study’ is used by Patton as a process of analysis that “involves organizing the data by specific cases for in-depth study and comparison” (2002, p. 447). In my analysis, both different universities and level of opinion of the UN was applied as units of analysis. The individual case analysis revealed if there are overarching patterns between individuals. Patton suggests writing a case record to complete

this step. However, I chose using a codebook (see Annex 2). The purpose of a case record is to organize all the case data into one comprehensive package and is used for the analysis and writing of the study (Patton, 2002). The codebook provided a very similar level of sorting, editing, and overall organization of the data as a case record would. The next step was cross-pattern analysis, which involves grouping together answers to similar questions or themes, from the different interviewees. The answers may be located at different places in each interview because of the semi-structured nature of the interviews, but nevertheless, it gave me a good overview of the data and any patterns that emerge. And as Patton (2002, p. 440) points out, a well-thought out interview guide constitutes a ‘descriptive analytical framework’. Patton’s wording is the crystalized version of my own unexpressed thoughts while I was putting the guide together.

### 3.5. Reliability and validity

Validity “is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research” (Bryman, 2012, p. 47), which is always a grave concern for any scholarly study. Internal validity applies to the issue of causality. Making claims of the directions of cause and effect is challenging in a case study because of the small sample and the difficulty in knowing all the possible causes of effect (Bryman, 2012). In the context of this study, the question is not so much whether x causes y, but rather to capture the elements of y at this moment in time, and how the subjects of the study perceive y to have been affected and developed. LeCompte and Goetz (1982) write about how reliability and validity can be understood in relation to qualitative research, arguing that internal validity is measured by the correspondence between researchers’ observations and the theoretical ideas they develop. Because of the depth of the interviews carried out for this thesis, it can be expected that there will be a good match between the data and the theoretical conclusions.

External validity, or the possibility and strength of generalization, relates to whether the results of a study can be generalized beyond the immediacy of the study, to apply to other, similar cases. Since qualitative research is not very suitable to achieve generalization, the goal of external validity will be understood as giving thick descriptions with rich details about a setting (Bryman, 2012). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that thick descriptions make up a type of database, which other researchers can reference to make their own judgements on the transferability of the findings to other settings.



Reliability is concerned with whether the results of a study can be repeated and is often used to consider whether the measures that were used in a study are consistent (Bryman, 2012, p. 46). LeCompte and Goetz (1982) have suggested some strategies to make reliability more applicable in qualitative research. They posit that internal reliability can be measured by, when there is more than one researcher, whether they agree about what they see and hear. In my case, doing thesis research unaccompanied, do not have the possibility to achieve this goal. External reliability can be difficult to achieve, since a social setting and the circumstances surrounding the study are not rigid and locked in place. However, this methods chapter contains information about every choice that was made, and outlines the ways data was collected and analysed, which will provide a solid foundation for replication.

### 3.6. Ethical considerations

The topic of this thesis, and the topics of interest when conducting the interviews, did not warrant a thorough ethical examination. However, some ethical considerations are almost always applicable. When contacting possible interviewees, the objective of the study was explained, and follow-up questions were answered candidly. The possible interviewees were asked for their permission to be a part of the study, while keeping available their option to decline. After giving their permission, a time was agreed upon for the phone-interviews. All participants gave their consent to participate in the study, both written and orally. At the beginning of each interview, the objective and reason for the study was again relayed, their anonymity ensured, and their permission was obtained to record. Each participant had the opportunity to decline being recorded, but none felt so inclined. There has been no harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy, or deception (Bryman, 2012, p.235). None of the interviewees in this study will be referred to by name, and all identifying information has been edited out of this thesis, in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data. The participants have each been allocated a number that will separate the interviewees from each other and accompany their statements in the next chapter.

### 3.7. Limitations

There will always be limitations to social research. The scope of a thesis is limited, it does not have the opportunity to capture everything. Some limitations are conscious ones, decisions made to narrow the scope and focus attention on the most essential parts. Other limitations are the ones we have little to no control over. Like global pandemics. Some limitations regarding the scope of the research have been presented earlier in this work, so they will not be repeated here.

The first type of limitations covers the conscious decisions. Most of these decisions have been outlined in the theory chapter, but some are worth mentioning. The sample size is perhaps the greatest limitation of this thesis. Even though the size of a sample is greatly discussed and not agreed on, the preliminary wish for this work was to collect data from about 20 interviewees. But considering the resources and time available to finish this project, a larger sample than the one decided on, would not have been feasible. Therefore, this study cannot generalize, but instead describes in depth how students relate to the topic of the UN and how their universities influence their learning and perceptions. Another important limitation is that of language. Because the interviewees were Norwegian nationals, I chose to conduct the interviews in Norwegian, so to not stifle the flow of communication or to make the interviewees uncomfortable in presenting their views. This means that the interviews were transcribed in English. I have done my utmost to preserve the original intent and meaning through the translations. I am by no means a language expert, though my years of study has provided me with an intimate knowledge of the English language. However, I am accountable for any meaning that was lost or altered in translation.

The second type of limitations presented themselves much more than was expected at the beginning of this work. In hindsight, it is not surprising that a global pandemic and nationwide lockdown leaves their mark. The stress of a lockdown and social isolation, combined with home-office working conditions, has affected this thesis greatly. Libraries closing for an extended period of time has probably limited the width of sources that this thesis is built on. Nevertheless, I have strived to make up for these road bumps and make this research a respectable piece of work.

## 4.0. Findings and discussion

“the final destination remains unique for each inquirer, known only when -and if- arrived at” -Patton, (2002, p. 432).

This chapter contains the analysis and discussion of the findings and will be carried out in accord with the three research questions that were posed for this thesis. It includes an overview Norwegian students' perceptions and ideas on the topic of the UN, how they believe teaching methods have affected their knowledge, and their own thoughts on teaching and learning political science. The chapter starts off with a summary to give the reader an overview of the findings and will then be divided by research question. It will outline how Norwegian students perceive the UN and their work, followed by an analysis of the link between teaching methods and different views of the UN, and lastly, a comparison between the three universities to see what differences they produce. The analysis is based on information from interviews which were conducted as a result of the framework developed in chapter three.

Throughout the text there will be references to the opinions voiced by the students who were interviewed. In some parts of the chapter the findings will be incorporated into my own text, while in other parts they are used as direct quotations. Wherever there is a direct quote from one of the interviewees, it will appear in *italics* to make them stand out from the main body of text and make it easy for the reader to differentiate between the presentation of the data and the analysis. Where there is need for contextual information to understand the full meaning of the quote, it will be included in the text, and if necessary, there will be added information or clarification in square brackets within the quote. Whenever referencing to a statement from an interview, it will be made clear which interviewee made the statement. The identifying marks of each interview will be by number. Interviewee #1, #2, and #3 are the students from the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU), interviewee #4, #5, and #6 are students from the University of Oslo, and numbers #7, #8, and #9 are from the University of Agder.

## 4.1. An overview

The students who were interviewed come from three different universities in Norway: The University of Oslo, the University of Agder, and the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. Three students from each university were interviewed. They were between 20 and 27 years old and were students from their third year of a bachelor's degree, to their first year of a master's degree.

Overall, their general views on the UN as an organization were mixed. Five of the interviewees were mostly positive, two were mainly negative, while one presented an equal amount of praise and critique. All interviewees reported something in the lines of that they liked the idea of the UN, but also that they were aware of some issues. Like interviewee #9 put it: *"I believe it's a very good idea, at least on paper, but..."*. When asked about their views on UN interventions, the overall response was somewhat more negative. Only two interviewees were mostly positive, while four were mixed and three were mostly negative. The critical trend continues when it comes to the issue of the security council. Seven out of nine respondents were either divided or mostly negative, voicing great concern regarding the veto powers and western dominance. A line of thought that several interviewees voiced, is reflected in this statement from interviewee #1: *"I don't know if it's better to have established it [the UN] with veto rights or to not have established it at all."*

The students were very much divided in their opinion on the degree of which professors and lecturers had influenced their views. There were also differing levels of discussions as a part of teaching, with a very noticeable difference between universities. From an overview of the data, it seems that the students from one of the universities experienced a much higher degree of interactive teaching methods than students from the other two universities.

## 4.2. How do students of social sciences in Norway perceive the UN and their work?

This section of the chapter goes into the major findings of this study. It will give a thorough examination of the respondents' views of the UN as an international organization. This sub-chapter is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the data gathered on the

students' general opinion about the UN; the second part focuses on their opinions about UN-sanctioned interventions; and the third section analyses students' opinions on the security council.

#### 4.2.1. General perceptions of the UN

When respondents were asked about their general view of the UN as an organization, all the respondents except one, answered that they believed the intention, or the initiative was good.

*#2: yeah, it is a good initiative...*

*#4: It is sort of a very good ideal behind it...*

*#6: I think, at least through the cold war, that it was good that they sat at a round table...*

*#7: It's very good that the UN was established at the end of world war 2...*

All respondents also had some critique, but they agreed that the initial goal of the UN was a good one.

Another opinion that was broadly shared, was that the UN does, or have done, a lot of good in the world. This was mentioned by almost all the respondents. This shows that the students are generally positive to the formation and existence of the UN and positively acknowledge the underlying ideology of the organization, even though they all see some challenges as well. One respondent exhibited more positivity than the rest, putting it in these terms: "personally I think that you should aim for idealism, and then it's ok that you still end up in reality" (respondent #8). When looking at the amount of praise vs. critique offered by the students, they can be divided into two groups, one being mainly positive and one being mostly negative or divided. Among the students who were mainly positive, two stated that they believed that "we're better off for it" (respondent #8) and that "we couldn't manage without them" (respondent #4). These same two students expressed that they admired the fact that the UN do important work through their sub-bodies and tackle difficult issues. Two students expressed wishes that the UN should have more power in order to either reach their goals, or to be able to sanction countries who don't care about the rules. For another

respondent, the issue with power did not seem to be of great concern, because of the positive repercussions of trying to deal with complex issues. This respondent stated *“Kudos to the UN, generally. That they accomplish as much as they do, they do create, if not action, at least an extreme consciousness about things.”* (respondent #4).

All the respondents talked to some degree about issues with the UN that they were concerned with, and how there is room for improvement. Respondents #7, #8, and #9 did not mention any concerns about the UN as an organization, other than when the topics of the security council and interventions came up. In comparison, all the other respondents voiced their concerns quite early, each presenting what they saw as obstacles or issues with the organization at large.

Respondent #4 talked to some extent about her concern with career climbers being damaging to the organization:

*“Whether the UN are able to uphold their values in spite of these career climbers is a question worth considering. It’s clear that many who work in the UN makes it a worse organization, because they don’t have the same values.”*

Another respondent (#5) expressed feelings that the UN deserves some criticism for certain actions that has led to legitimacy and image issues, as well as having problems with transparency, though she did not seem to be concerned with that last problem.

*“but that’s a continuous debate in a body that deals with personal security for their forces and what comes out to the public. It’s not a bigger issue than in any other public body.”*

When talking about the issue of transparency, the respondent concluded with this moderating comment. This shows that her criticism of the UN is a mild one, and it seems that she does not see this issue as a big problem for the UN, rather a continuous challenge that everyone deals with.

Three students expressed some discomfort that the negative sides of the UN does not get more attention. Of these three, one stated that she believed that the UN is doing a lot of good, but that she still has the feeling that they’re not doing enough (respondent #2). She couldn’t quite put her finger on what exactly she meant by this, she just knew that she had a feeling, maybe accumulated through her study, that the UN should be doing more. The two other respondents seemed to have some of the same feelings about this. Respondent #1 talked

in some length about how the UN and human rights are ethnocentric, presenting a western view and western interests, and her hesitation to accept that there can be one moral order that is applicable to all. She wrapped up her line of thought with “*Why are no one really talking about this? About human rights and the UN in a critical light?*”, seeming to realize in that moment how absurd she thought it was.

Two students stated that their view of the UN has changed during their studies, moving them away from the more positive view.

*#3: I believe that before I started this master’s degree and had my internship, I thought that the UN was all good... But now I think that there is a lot of grey areas within the UN, that doesn’t come out into the light.*

*#6: I think I have gotten a much more... not negative view, but a more nuanced view of the UN through my studies. Before, when I went to high school, the big dream was to work for the UN, and it’s not anymore.*

This change in perception points to their higher education as having an effect on their beliefs. Some of this change is probably a natural effect of greater knowledge and insight into the organization, and exposure to some of the more problematic sides of the workings of an international organization. But it might also be a result of a specific university culture and knowledge. This possibility will be analysed later in this chapter.

So, to conclude, these students show the span of perceptions and opinions one can have of the UN. Despite the majority of the students still working on finishing their bachelor’s degrees, they showed great insight into the pros and cons of such a large international organization. They were equally divided between being mostly positive, being equally positive and critical, and mostly critical. Most students were positive towards the ideals and initial reason for establishing the UN and believed that they have done a lot of good, but several of them also had some objections or issues that concerned them about the organization. Three students talked exclusively about the positive sides of the UN in this portion of the interview, while three students were disconcerted and apprehensive over the fact that they felt like the dark sides of the UN are not discussed more often, or more openly. Two students shared that their perceptions of the UN had changed since they started their studies, from mostly positive, to a more nuanced view. There were noticeable differences between universities, which will be addressed later in this chapter. Now, we will examine the student’s views on interventions.

#### 4.2.2. Views on interventions

When asked about their views on UN-sanctioned interventions, there was a wider variety of opinions among the students who were sampled, compared to their general thoughts of the UN as a whole. Two students communicated that they were mainly positive towards such interventions, while three were mainly negative. The remaining four students were located somewhere in the middle. All the students grappled with the complexity of the issue, weaving back and forth between pros and cons.

All respondents from #1 through #9 expressed that they saw the issue as being very complex. Have a look at the following statements:

#1: *I think it's context dependant, but that it shouldn't be context dependant.*

#4: *the UN is guided by western interests ...*

#6: *When NATO bombed Libya, there were probably some [self-] interests there ...*

#9: *If you say that you will intervene in a country in the middle east that has a lot of oil, and then ask USA to do it, then you can see how that will play out.*

At this point in the interview, many of the students expressed that they thought this was a difficult issue to talk about, there were a lot of sighs and other small signs of frustration. Every single one of the students that were interviewed articulated some concern regarding the decision-making about where and when interventions are sanctioned, and the possible bias that might be baked into it.

Interviewee #2 went on to explain her resistance to accept interventions as a positive contribution to the world, stating that

*"I get that in the situation you want to stop war and want to look good on the international arena, like 'hey, we're coming here, and we're doing a lot of good, look at our peacekeeping troops', who also are carrying arms and using them. I get that it's hard to step into a situation like that and be like Ghandi, but in principle I'm very against interventions. It's a short-cut to a very complex problem."*

This student pointed out the issue of western bias and ethnocentrism several times throughout her interview, so this issue is clearly something that occupies her mind. Later, we



will see that there are several students who exhibit this view and sees western bias as an important issue on the international arena.

Of the two students who were more positive towards interventions, one student believed that interventions, despite some national interests, are also about wanting to spread democracy in order to bring a positive change in the lives of the people who live in those countries who experience interventions (respondent #6). The other student who exhibited mostly positive thoughts and perspectives concerning interventions, aired some frustration over the fact that she feels like the UN does not have great enough authority to complete their tasks (respondent #8).

The level of interference in interventions seems to be a main concern among the respondents who did not take a strong pro- or con stance on the issue. These students presented arguments both in the direction of supporting interventions, and critique of interventions. Four students were located in this category, while the rest of the interviewees were much clearer about favouring one side of the argument. Concern about the level of interference and how it affects the intervention and the people it affects, were found in three of their testimonies. But the nature of their concern differed. One student believed that the level of interference should be restricted to a minimum, while another student believed that the level of interference was too low because of a lack of resources.

*#1: Superficially ... interventions are well and good, we shouldn't have conflict, because, well, that's bad, sort of. But there are always two sides to a story, and if you manage not to interfere too much, like if it's only to protect civilians and that's what the focus is, then I think it's a good thing...*

*#4: ...interventions can maybe be interpreted as half-hearted. They don't always get the resources they need and stuff.*

One interviewee's statement really sums up a thought shared by many of the students.

*#9: It is a lot about how it's carried out, and who carries it out, and how it's organized.*

Three students presented mostly negative views towards UN-sanctioned interventions. Among these students there was an overwhelming amount of critique and wariness compared to praise and positive perspectives. One of the more optimistic statements from these students were "they're not the worst, but they're also not the best" (respondent #2), which can hardly

be considered praise. These students were overall critical of interventions, but for different reasons. Respondent #2 and #3 both showed some concern about the underlying morality of interventions, while respondent #5 had some more practical concerns. These practical concerns went in the direction of sovereignty. This student expressed some apprehension over the possible negative repercussions of breaking a country's sovereignty, in terms of future cooperation with Europe, and was therefore more willing to accept interventions as a good possibility if the receiving country invites the UN into their state. The issues of morality that were expressed by the other two students were quite similar. This passage from interviewee #3 goes along the same lines as the concerns expressed by interviewee #3:

*...to intervene in a situation as the western saviour, white angel, to promote their own ways to live and their own ways to govern and stuff, I don't like that, because you need to consider the country or the region you intervene in and how they live and want to live, and rather help them to help themselves, rather than to take over and try to lead. Because their culture and religion, and what governing they are used to, can be the complete opposite of what other's see as the blueprint.*

All the interviewees found this topic difficult, not in terms of voicing their opinion or talking about their perceptions, but in terms of giving an answer that seemed like an answer. Almost all the students talked about the issues of general self-interests or western interests influencing where interventions take place or how they are carried out. Their opinions spanned from practical issues, a belief that interventions bring democracy and positive change to people's lives and concern about bias in deciding where an intervention takes place, to more moral dilemmas like the degree of sovereignty and ethnocentrism.

#### 4.2.3. Views of the security council

When the interviewees were asked about their views on the security council as an authority in the UN, they were, as a whole, a bit more critical or negative than on the issue of interventions. Only one student was mainly positive towards the security council as an authority in the UN, while four students were mainly critical and three were located in the middle spectrum. All the students interviewed struggled with the complexity of it, and it seems they felt the challenge of balancing how they would like the structure to look in a perfect world, vs. how they believed it has to be in order for it to function as it does.

All the students talked to some lengths about the veto power in the security council being a challenge, but their opinions varied on whether they would rather have a security council without any veto powers. Respondents #2 and #4 agreed that something with the structure of the security council needs to change, but they did not offer any specific ideas of how they would like it to look. Respondent #2 shared a thought about changing the whole structure of the UN to make it more democratic, which is not very different than the line of thought from respondent #4, who wished for change in order to create “*representative and just relations*”. Many of the students voiced opinions concerning the amount of power that veto rights bring to those states who have it. Most of their arguments were practical in nature: without the veto powers the wealthy countries wouldn’t support the UN economically, which will stifle the UN’s work (respondent #2), the veto rights have the opportunity to block a lot of important decisions in the security council (respondents #6 and #7), and that the veto power act like a shield for the states who possess them, since they can ‘break the rules’ and avoid consequences for it (respondent #8). The last person who voiced an opinion on the issue of power, focused on the moral side of the issue, stating that when some have much more power than others, it is not very just (respondent #4).

Of the more positive opinions about the security council, only one respondent really fit into this category. The other interviewees were noticeably more critical and voiced their disagreement with both the structure of the council, and what they saw as the underlying ideology and moral of the structure and the way the veto powers work and affect the goals of the organization. The more positively angled opinions from respondent #5 voices understanding over the fact that to achieve international legitimacy, veto powers had to be given to the five states in order for them to join the organization. In her view, giving veto powers to these states ensured cooperation and agreement between the most powerful actors. She goes on to explain that non-democratic states having seats in the security council is ‘healthy’, because in her view, having the seat makes countries more aware of their responsibilities and makes sure that those countries are positively influenced by the democratic states, and that the connection from sitting in the security council together is beneficial for cooperation.

*#5: ...personally, I think that the fact that those countries [non-democratic] have a seat makes them more aware of their responsibilities and helps pull them in the right direction. They are pulled closer to the centre, rather than them moving out towards the periphery because they don’t have a seat in a body that makes them accountable to others*

*who have different views, so I think it's healthy ... It's a good system, that works for what it does.*

Among the three students who were more divided on the issue, two aired their opinions about whether they believed it would be better to not have any veto powers in the security council. Respondent #1 believed that the security council could be a positive addition to the world and the UN, and questioned whether it would be better to not have the veto rights, expressing uncertainty over whether it would.

*#1: I think the world can generally benefit from having the security council and that it can be a positive addition in the world society. But it's also scary if you don't acknowledge where this is coming from and what opinions are being heard and whose intentions are being reflected.*

She seems a bit hesitant over the idea of a UN without veto powers, but she goes on to voice uncertainty over whose opinions are being heard and which interests the states with veto power are reflecting, especially concerning less powerful countries whose interests conflict with the interests of the powerful veto states. Interviewee #9 also talked at some length about his opinions over the veto power.

*#9: Because of the veto powers in the security council, the UN is not as efficient as it could have been. There are good intentions, but it ends up with., uh, not having the effect it should have had.*

His belief is that the intentions of the council are good, but that the possibility of casting a veto vote gets in the way of the UN achieving their goals. This interviewee mentioned several times during his interview that he believed, and seemed very confident about his view, that the biggest threat against the UN as a whole, is the way the security council is structured. In his opinion, the 'key' to the success of the UN is to remove the possibility of casting veto votes. This is the only interviewee who arrived at this conclusion. Even though several of the students deliberated on it and discussed the possibility, none of the others believed, at least as firmly as respondent #9.

The last interviewee who landed somewhere on the middle of the opinion scale over the security council and seemed a bit unsure of what to say (respondent #3). She admitted that she did not have very much insight into the workings and structure of the security council, but

she believed that the more people who have a seat, and the more diverse their perspectives are, the better the chance of achieving a good decision.

*#3: The more people, the more diversity and perspectives, and then maybe you get closer to the best possible outcome. But then it depends...*

The most prominent issue for her was that of diversity in the security council. If they are all western countries, they might be biased and have ulterior motives, an idea she seemed quite concerned with.

When talking about the security council in the interviews, the critical opinions and views were the most common ones. Five out of nine students expressed heavy criticism opposing the structure and ideology of the security council. In most of the interviews, the topics ‘money’ and ‘power’ were discussed at some length. These are some statements from the part of the interviews that focused on the students’ thoughts of the decisions made in the security council:

*#2: It’s kind of stupid, but I get that it has to be that way [the existence of veto power], or else the great, wealthy countries wouldn’t put a lot of money into the UN so that they can do their work. So you’re in that type of situation, in our capitalistic society, that if you’re to do anything, you need money and you need resources, but if those who have the money and resources are not the ones who want the best possible world for everyone, what are you going to choose? To do nothing, or to do something half-way?*

*#6: I think that quite often decisions will be made because of money, not because of the things that I believe are important, like human rights and increased welfare.*

Both these students show some frustration over the fact that money controls the decisions that are made. They both express that they see money as quite large obstacle, and a wish that things were different. There is a similar kind of frustration detectable among the several students who see power dominance as both a structural impediment, and a problem of moral and fairness. Here are some quotes from these interviews that will be discussed below.

*#6: Some countries have a lot of power and can just veto each other all the time, so that they are not able to do a lot... I’m not sure what the alternative could be, but it’s really not effective.*

*#7: It gives a lot of power to some, even though it might be the most important and powerful states in the world, it gives them the opportunity to block a lot of things ...*

*#4: And especially the security council, and USA, they have much more power than the others and that's not very just.*

*#8: Like, several of those in the security council, like, the US, Russia and China don't follow their own rules, and they don't suffer any consequences for it. But smaller countries with less power, it's too bad for them if they don't follow the rules. ... Morally, I think it's a major problem, what I've been talking about with the security council, that the veto powers are allowed to run things the way they do, and that they don't, um, what should I say, walk their own talk.*

A veto vote undoubtedly gives a lot of power to the state who holds it, and this is not lost on the students. Four out of five students who were mostly critical towards the security council as an authority in the UN, brought the conversation into the topic of power relations. The two first quotes (respondents #6 and #7) talked about how the power that a veto entails, is being used by states to block both each other and to block any decision that they don't agree with, making the council less effective. The next two quotes (respondents #4 and #8) are more focused on the ethical side of power inequality. Both respondents voice dissatisfaction over the fact that the security council as a whole, and the individual states in it, have the upper hand over all the other members of the UN, and respondent #8 stresses that in her view, this is a major moral problem with the UN.

The topic of the security council was the one that students were the most unsure of and critical against. Over half of the students who were interviewed had almost exclusively criticism and negative views of the structure of the security council and the way it operates. Students were divided on what the most pressing issue was, but power inequality and veto powers were the most discussed topics. Most students had purely practical concerns, while a few dived into a discussion on moral and ethics.

#### 4.2.4. Summary of main findings

To sum up this sub-chapter, most of the students interviewed weaved back and forth, from pro's to cons and back again. Interviewee #4 said at one point in her interview: "Um, I think that maybe, it's such a hard question...". Several students expressed similar thoughts, but at the same time they thought the topic was really interesting and that they enjoyed discussing it.

On the first and most general topic of the UN as an international organization, students showed a wide span of perceptions and opinions. Some showed generally positive attitudes towards the UN, some were mainly critical, and some felt divided on the issue, presenting pro's and con's equally often. Three students had mainly positive connotations and attitudes towards the organization, while three students felt disconcerted that the dark sides of the UN are not discussed more often and more openly. Two students had experienced a noticeable shift in their perception during their education, from a positive view of the UN towards a more critical or nuanced perspective. Still, most students were positive towards the establishment of the UN and the underlying ideals and goals.

On the second topic, UN-sanctioned interventions, most respondents found it a bit difficult to voice a clear opinion. Most students had opinions that were both pro and con, but over half of them ended up presenting a view that was either mostly positive or mostly negative. National self-interest and western bias influencing interventions were the topics that were most often voiced in the interviews, but their opinions differed on whether interventions bring positive change to people's lives, or if they're mostly damaging and unpredictable. They were also focusing on different aspects of these issues, mostly they discussed practical issues and concerns, but a few students continually brought up moral dilemmas of respect for sovereignty and the possibility of ethnocentrism.

The topic of the security council was the one that students were the most unsure of and critical against. Over half of the students who were interviewed had almost exclusively criticism and negative views of the structure of the security council and the way it operates. The students were divided on what the most pressing issue was, but power inequality and veto powers were the most discussed topics, with some concerns about less powerful countries being stepped on and veto powers being used in self-interest. Most students had purely practical concerns, while a few dived into a discussion on moral and ethics.

There were noticeable differences between universities, which will be addressed in the upcoming sections of this chapter.

### 4.3. How do discussions as a teaching method affect their perception of the UN?

This part of the chapter includes the analysis of how teaching methods affect students' views of the UN. It will investigate whether there are noticeable differences between the views of students who have experienced discussions as a teaching method, compared to those who have experienced mainly lectures as a teaching style. Discussions can encourage students to express and justify their own views, and therefore also confront their own assumptions and biases. This type of active learning, through interaction between students and lecturers, is crucial in the field of social sciences (McCarthy and Anderson, 2000), and can help boost critical thinking skills (Damron and Mott, 2005). This analysis does not offer a causal relationship, as the data that was gathered is not suitable to support such a claim. However, the analysis and findings of this data will contribute to gathering knowledge on this relationship. The analysis takes a look at each student's view of the UN compared to their experiences with different teaching styles.

Respondent #1 presented both positive and critical opinions towards the UN and their work. She started many of her answers with statements like "*[it] sounds like a well and good thing, in theory, you know*", before diving into what she perceived as problematic issues on the topics. She expressed some discomfort that critique of the UN's underlying ideology and moral is not discussed more openly. She talked to some length about how the UN and human rights are ethnocentric, presenting a western view and western interests, and expressed hesitation to accept that there can be one moral order that is applicable to all. "*Why are no one really talking about this? About human rights and the UN in a critical light?*". Despite being very vary of ethnocentrism, mentioning it throughout her interview, she had some more divided opinions on the topic of intervention. "*Superficially ... interventions are well and good ... But there are always two sides to a story, and if you manage not to interfere too much, like if it's only to protect civilians and that's what the focus is, then I think it's a good thing...*". The respondent seems to believe that interventions can bring positive change, but she is still questioning the goal of interventions, and how it is carried out. On the security council, she believes it can be a positive addition to the world and to the UN and is unsure of whether the veto rights should be removed. Again, on this topic, she voices uncertainty over whose opinions are being heard and which interests the states with veto power are reflecting, especially concerning less powerful countries who might lose out.



This student states that she has not experienced any critical discussion of the UN in particular, but having class discussions in general is not unusual in her class. She says that in her study, there are so many things that are being discussed and evaluated in class, that they have all gotten a different way of thinking.

*#1: It's a very critical study, towards almost everything, everything that can be criticized shall be criticized, kind of. I think it's important to look at it with two glances, not just...yeah.*

She shares that for her, it all comes back to “whether there is one moral compass or several, whether there is right and wrong”. She has felt that people are in disagreement on this, on whether there is such a thing as right and wrong, or if it just reflects the culture you have grown up in. When the class have discussions, she would like more perspectives to be represented in order for her to get a ‘real’ view of the world. She expresses a wish that her lecturers would take more charge in representing the opposite sides of an argument so that the discussions will not become so one-sided. The class must have had quite some discussions for her to have developed this view on the general nature of the discussions. She is not shy about pointing out that the solicitation by the lecturers/professors to think critically, along with the discussions on the existence of universal morals, have developed her nuanced and critical view of the world.

Respondent #2 said about the UN: “*yeah, it is a good initiative... But it has developed to become not exactly what everyone hoped in the beginning*”. She sees the organization as initially good, but that there are some many crucial issues that makes it problematic today. This student mentioned quite early in her interview that the UN is being controlled by money and power, but she still sees the organization as important because of the wide respect they attain on the international arena. She believed that the UN is doing a lot of good, but that she still has the feeling that they’re not doing enough. She was also discomforted that that the negative sides of the UN are not brought up more often and a part of the public debate. This student pointed out the issue of western bias and ethnocentrism several times throughout her interview, so this issue is clearly something that occupies her mind. On the topic of international interventions, she said “*I get that it's hard to step into a situation like that and be like Ghandi, but in principle I'm very against interventions. It's a short-cut to a very complex problem.*”. In this part of the interview, she presented almost entirely critique and

issues. Her most positive statement about UN interventions was *“they’re not the worst, but they’re also not the best”*. Both moral considerations and practical ones were of relevance for this interviewee. On the topic of the security council she wished for a different structure, and for the UN to be more democratic in order to achieve *“representative and just relations”*. Her view of the veto powers showed an opinion that was both critical and realistic: *“It’s kind of stupid, but I get that it has to be that way ... what are you going to choose? To do nothing, or to do something half-way?”*.

Respondent #2 had experienced quite a bit of discussions as a teaching method in class, and is vocal about how it has shaped her understanding of different issues and her ability to look at issues from different perspectives and examine her own views in a critical light. She shares her experience with this teaching method, stating *“I think it’s a lot of fun when we have discussions, and we have quite a lot of it”*. During these discussions in class, there were a lot of different opinions being voiced, which she has found very interesting.

*“but I feel that my class has developed a safe space to voice your opinions, because everyone knows that these kinds of issues don’t have a right or wrong answer”*

In her opinion, everyone in class is aware that the issues they discuss do not have a clear answer, which has contributed to the class becoming comfortable in sharing their various opinions. She shares that these discussions have helped people to be more open to accept each other’s’ views and adjust your own opinion as a result. Or *“at least you have a greater understanding of what other people believe”*. It is clear that her critical view has been, at least in part, developed through class discussions. She communicated that she is very sure that this is a strength of her study, sharing that *“I think it’s very healthy to engage with people who have different views than your own, or else it would be very boring”*.

Respondent #3 believes the UN has a lot of good values and goal, but that the negative issues don’t come into the light. Quickly in her interview she expresses a concern that because of the powerful position of the UN, they are able to hide a lot of their mistakes and flaws. She states that during her study, she has become noticeably more critical towards the UN. This student articulated some concern regarding the decision-making about where and when interventions are sanctioned, and the possible bias that might be baked into it. *“...to intervene in a situation as the western saviour, white angel, to promote their own ways to live and their own ways to govern and stuff, I don’t like that, because you need to consider the country or*

*the region you intervene in and how they live and want to live*". She articulated much more critique and wariness compared to praise and positive perspectives. This interviewee landed somewhere on the middle of the opinion scale over the security council and seemed a bit unsure of what to say. She did not have very much insight into the workings and structure of the security council, but she believed that the more people who have a seat, and the more diverse their perspectives are, and the better the chance of achieving a good decision. The most important issue for this student was diversity in the security council. If they are all western countries, they might be biased and have ulterior motives, an idea she seemed quite concerned with.

Respondent #3 have experienced discussions as a part of the teaching in her study. she mentions several professor and lecturers that have kept the classroom an open and interactive space, and facilitated discussions among the students in class.

*"They're [lecturers] very open to hearing 'what do you think, what do you feel', take the discussion, talk about it, and then sum up the main discussion points. And they're like 'you might as well disagree, because there's no right answer'"*.

She tells about her experience with these discussions, saying that people in class have voiced a variety of different opinions, but that they all have agreed that the issues they are discussing needs to be examined from multiple perspectives, and that seeing western ideas and ways of life as a blueprint is the wrong way to do it. From the interview, it seems that this student's critical view is linked with discussions being a part of her learning in the classroom. She stated that they have learned that a critical view is a helpful tool. It is probably an effect of the types of courses and individual lecturers and professor's she has had throughout her study, but it might also have been affected in part by the discussions she has had on various topics that have made her develop critical thinking skills.

Respondent #4 believed that the ideals behind the UN was very good, and that we could not manage without the organization. She expressed that she admired the fact that the UN do important work through their sub-bodies and tackle difficult issues. Her positive view of the UN is reflected in her idea that even if they do not create action, they create awareness on different topics, which she sees as an important step in the right direction. This respondent did not share any critical views before later in the interview, compared with the other interviewees, who all voiced their concerns quite early. One of her major concerns was with

career climbers being damaging to the organization by not upholding the values of the UN. *“It’s clear that many who work in the UN makes it a worse organization, because they don’t have the same values.”* Another concern she voiced was that *“the UN is guided by western interests”*. This student did not take a strong pro- or con stance on the issue of interventions. She believed that interventions have some faults because of a lack of resources for carrying it out properly. Respondent #4 talked to some lengths about the veto power in the security council being a challenge. She believed that something with the structure of the security council needs to change, but they did not offer any specific ideas of how she thought it should look. Though she wished for change in order to create *“representative and just relations”*. This student voiced an opinion on the issue of power, focusing on the moral side of the issue, stating that when some have much more power than others, it is not very just. She voiced dissatisfaction over the fact that the security council as a whole, and the individual states in it, have an upper hand over all the other members of the UN, and this is a moral problem in the UN.

This student explained that the teaching in her study consisted of mostly lectures with large classes, *“so the professor is in front talking, and the rest of us are in the back just listening”*. Discussions have not been encouraged by the institute or the lecturers; she thinks because of the large size of the class. And she added that discussions in class did not happen spontaneously either, when it is not stimulated by the professors. But even if there were no class discussions, she thinks that students might discuss issues on their free time, but she did not seem sure of it. She added that she has picked up on differences when she talks about the UN and related issues with other students vs. people who have not studied much. She felt that those who have studied a bit more, are more critical. She stated that the common view when she discussed the topic with individuals, is that both herself and the ones she talks with, are more critical to how the UN operates, but still has a positive impression, and generally sees the organization as a very good initiative that just has more potential.

Respondent (#5) was generally positive towards the UN as an organization, believing it to be beneficial for Europe to cooperate with a great power like the US. She expressed feelings that the UN deserves some criticism for certain actions that has led to legitimacy and image issues, as well as having problems with transparency, though she did not seem to be concerned with that last problem.

*“but that’s a continuous debate in a body that deals with personal security for their forces and what comes out to the public. It’s not a bigger issue than in any other public body.”*

When talking about the issue of transparency, the respondent concluded with this moderating comment that shows that her criticism of the UN is quite mild, and she does not see this issue as a major problem for the UN, but rather a continuous challenge that all types of organizations deal with.

This interviewee presented a somewhat critical view of interventions, showing some apprehension over the uncertain long-term effects. She believed that the possible negative repercussions of breaking a country’s sovereignty, in terms of future cooperation with Europe, and was therefore more willing to accept interventions as a good possibility if the receiving country invites the UN into their state. The student said about breaking a country’s sovereignty that it is *“not necessarily peace promoting, because it creates conflict”*. On the topic of the security council, interviewee #5 was again more positive. The more positively angled opinions from respondent #5 voices understanding over the fact that to achieve international legitimacy, veto powers had to be given to the five states in order for them to join the organization in the first place. In her view, giving veto powers to the five states ensured cooperation and agreement between the most powerful actors, which is a good thing. She goes on to talk about how non-democratic states having seats in the security council is ‘healthy’, because having the seat makes countries more aware of their responsibilities and makes sure that *“they are pulled closer to the centre”*, and that the connection from sitting in the security council together is beneficial for cooperation.

When questioned about the existence of different teaching methods in her study, the answer from respondent #5 was a very short *“Uhm...No. Lectures.”* Other than the curriculum, she had not experienced any other way of learning than lectures at her university. In an attempt to prompt the interviewee to expand on her answer, the question about whether she had had the opportunity to discuss any of the topics related to the UN was asked again, with a different wording. The student’s response was *“No, no, no, [chuckle] not at all.”* It is unclear whether she was dissatisfied with this face, or if she did not mind the structure of her study and learning activities. What we do know, is that she experienced a lack of possibilities to discuss the topics with fellow students and professors, and has a general positive attitude towards the UN.

Respondent #6 believed the initiative of the UN was good. *“I think, at least through the cold war, that it was good that they sat at a round table”*. She talked to some degree about issues with the UN that she was concerned with, and how there is room for improvement. Her view of the UN changed during her studies, moving away from a purely positive view towards a more nuanced one. *“Before, when I went to high school, the big dream was to work for the UN, and it’s not anymore”*. Of the two students who were more positive towards interventions, respondent #6 believed that interventions, despite some concern about the impact of national interests, are also about wanting to spread democracy in order to bring a positive change in the lives of the people who live in those countries who experience interventions. She saw some issues with efficiency in the UN, because *“It takes time to get anything done when democracies and dictatorships have to come to an agreement. Countries have such different cultures, and so different traditions for leadership”*. This student talked to some lengths about the veto power in the security council being a challenge, since the veto rights have the opportunity to block a lot of important decisions in the security council. She voiced opinions concerning the amount of power that veto rights bring to those states who have it, and that decisions in the council are made because of money instead of human rights and increased welfare, as she would have wished. She expressed that they see money as quite large obstacle, and a wish that things were different.

This student has experienced mainly lectures as a teaching method. She talked about seminars being a more appropriate space to have discussions but added in a dry tone that *“We have not had very much seminars”*, implying that they have been quite scarce. The place where she has had the opportunity to discuss the subject is in her study group. In this group, of four to five students, they have tried having discussions of various topics from the curriculum, and when writing assignments. She talks to some extent about how they structure their discussions, with some trying to play the devils advocate to assure that the discussion is not stifled right away because they all have the same views and perspectives on the issues. In the lectures, she says, they can ask the professor questions, but it has never developed into a discussion. She adds that with the size of her class, of about 40-50 students, it’s hard to have a discussion where everybody gets included and has the space to share their views. In her opinion, her views have been developed through lectures.

Respondent #7 answered that he believed the initiative of the UN was good: *“It’s very good that the UN was established at the end of world war 2...”*, and he was of the opinion that they *“don’t have a lot of power, in general, when it comes down to it”*. The respondent did not mention any concerns about the UN as an organization, other than when the topics of the security council and interventions came up. He did not take a strong pro- or con stance on the issue of interventions. His testimony showed some concern about the amount of interventions that are sanctioned: *“I’m not against that they can do it [UN sanction it], but it might be that it’s been done too much.”*

The student talked to some lengths about the veto powers in the security council being a challenge, voicing concern over the amount of power that veto rights bring to those states who have it. *“It gives a lot of power to some, even though it might be the most important and powerful states in the world, it gives them the opportunity to block a lot of things”*. He was mostly critical towards the structure of the security council, voicing concerns about how the veto powers can stifle the democracy of the organization.

Respondent #7 shared that the biggest discussion they have had in class, happened when they did a role-playing game where the class was divided into different state delegations, and they tried to address the conflict in Syria. Other than on this one occasion, he cannot remember that they have had any other big discussions in class. He had the assumption that most people in his class shared his view of the UN, that they see the weaknesses, but are generally positive to what the UN do. He believed that he has the same view of the UN as he did before he began his studies. The class have had several minor discussions about the veto rights, which was the topic that this student was the most critical towards, which shows the link between discussions and critical thinking.

Respondent #8 had a very positive view of the UN, seeing it as a very important organization for international cooperation and development. In her view, the UN should have more power in order to uphold their values. She shared her concern about this in the following way: *“if you choose to not care about the rules, there is not necessarily anyone who can punish you for it”*. Other than this, she did not mention any concerns, other than when the topics of interventions and the security council was brought up. The student was generally very positive towards the UN and supported the underlying ideology of the organization. This respondent exhibited more positivity than the rest, putting it in these terms:

*“personally I think that you should aim for idealism, and then it’s ok that you still end up in reality”*. All the students articulated some concern regarding the decision-making about where and when interventions are sanctioned, but respondent #8 was the most positive one. She also recognized that there are some issues but was overall quite satisfied with UN interventions: *“the recognition that the UN peacekeeping forces have internationally is really good, that they can move freely, that’s important to preserve.”* She aired some frustration over the fact that she feels like the UN does not have great enough authority to complete their tasks. The respondent was mainly critical in her opinion towards the security council. She had some practical concerns that the veto power act like a shield for the states who possess them, since they can ‘break the rules’ and avoid consequences for it. She also aired some thoughts about the ethical side of power inequality, voicing dissatisfaction over the fact that the security council and the veto powers can get away with breaking the rules of the UN, while less powerful states cannot.

This respondent reported that there had been quite a lot of discussions in her classes, often organized as discussions in smaller groups and then sharing with the whole class the main points from the discussions. In one of her courses, the lecturers prepared lists of questions for the students, with both factual questions and discussion points. This student was vocal about her appreciation for this course, saying *“It’s been very encouraging, there’s been a lot of work, to make the class a space to talk and discuss.”* Additionally, in order to qualify to take the exam in this course, all the students had to participate in a UN role-playing exercise, where *“people got to practice arguing for views that they didn’t necessarily agree with ... there was [chuckle] of course, quite a bit of debate around that”*. This student is very aware that her position on the UN is an idealistic one, and she states that her view has not changed massively because of her study, though she believes that having all the discussions in class has helped to give her a more nuanced view.

Respondent #9 believed that the formation of the UN was a good idea, at least on paper. He felt in agreement with the values of the UN and saw them as a good facilitator and platform for cooperation. He was generally quite positive towards the UN as an organization, and the values they represent. His concerns and critique did not come up until the conversation steered into the topics of interventions and the security council. He saw interventions as a very complex issue, stating that *“If you say that you will intervene in a country in the middle east that has a lot of oil, and then ask USA to do it, then you can see*



*how that will play out*". This respondent saw the UN as a solution to such issues. His greatest concerns were about the practical organization of their work. He believed that the level of interference was too low because of a lack of resources, and that the success of interventions are dependant on the organization of it: *"It is a lot about how it's carried out, and who carries it out, and how it's organized."*

On the topic of the security council the student was divided in his opinions. He aired his opinions about whether he believed it would be better to not have any veto powers in the security council at all. *"Because of the veto powers in the security council, the UN is not as efficient as it could have been. There are good intentions, but it ends up with., uh, not having the effect it should have had."* His belief is that the intentions of the council are good, but that the possibility of casting a veto vote gets in the way of the UN achieving their goals. He believed that the solution to this problem is to remove the possibility of veto votes. This is the only interviewee who arrived at this conclusion.

This student shared that he has not experienced discussions as a part of teaching in his study. In his own words, there has been "More fact-listing than discussion". He had no doubt that the students in his class could have had long discussions every day, but he sees the class size and time restriction as obstacles for it. The discussions he has had, have been with smaller groups of students outside of class, but it did not seem that they were very frequent.

#### 4.3.1. Summary of main findings

Four of the students were mainly critical towards the UN and presented obstacles and concerns about the organization and its work, as much or more than they presented positive sides of the issue. Respondents #1, #2, and #3 were mainly critical towards the UN as an organization, while respondent #7 was quite positive. On the topic of interventions, respondents #2 and #3 were mostly critical while #1 and #7 were divided on the issue. When talking about the security council, students #2 and #7 showed a more negative view than the other two students. Two of these students voiced that they had experienced a change in their opinions through their studies, leaving them with a different view than they had before. All four of these students expressed that discussions were a common part of their classes. Some of this change in perception is probably a natural effect of greater knowledge and insight into

the organization, but it might also be a direct result of exposure to discussions as a learning method.

Of the five students who were less critical, four of them exhibited positive views and perceptions of the UN (respondents #4, #5, #8, and #9), while one student had a more equal distribution of positive and critical perspectives on the issue (respondent #6). They were somewhat more divided on the issue of interventions. When talking about interventions, respondent #5 was mainly critical, while respondents #6 and #8 were largely positive. The security council was the topic that the most students had a critical view of. Out of this section of students, respondents #4, #6, and #8 had a mainly negative perception, while respondent #9 was divided and respondent #5 was mostly idealistic. Of these students, none had experienced discussions as a common part of their teaching throughout their studies.

#### 4.4. To what degree are there differences between universities?

This part of the analysis focuses on mapping the differences between the students at the three universities to see if there are any overarching themes. It will look at the students from each of the three universities and see if their perceptions are similar enough to suggest that different universities produce different knowledge and perceptions in their students. This subchapter takes a look at the students' views of the UN university by university and uses their testimonies to see if they have the same opinions about their universities and how they have been influenced to develop their specific opinions and values.

Respondents #1, #2, and #3 were from the Norwegian university of Life Sciences (NMBU). These students were very critical towards the UN and their activities and structure, and they were all very quick to lift their concerns about the organization. Both respondent #1 and #2 were very concerned with the presence and negative effects of ethnocentrism in the UN, and both respondent #2 and #3 expressed concern that because of the powerful position of the UN, they are able to hide a lot of their mistakes and flaws, and that it is not discussed more openly. The students from NMBU were noticeably more critical than the students from the other universities. All three students had experienced discussions as a common part of their lectures. These discussions were in all three cases facilitated by their lecturers and professors. The students were very open about the fact that they had been influenced by their study to quite a large extent. The critical nature of their studies and the open class discussions

have played a big part in the development of their own opinions and ideas. Two of the students said that their opinion of the UN had completely changed because of their studies. Respondent #2 stated that *“They’re [lecturers] very open to hearing ‘what do you think, what do you feel’, take the discussion, talk about it, and then sum up the main discussion points. And they’re like ‘you might as well disagree, because there’s no right answer’”*. The other students agreed that lecturers played a big part in facilitating these discussions and creating a safe space for everyone to voice their opinions and being heard and respected. Respondent #3 saw her critical view as a result of the types of courses and individual lecturers and professor’s she has had throughout her study. She believed that it might also have been affected in part by the discussions she has had on various topics that have made her develop critical thinking skills. Respondent #1 believes that she has gotten a different way of thinking that is much more critical. This view is reflected in the testimonies of the other two students.

#2: *“Coming to NMBU and getting this foundation, I think that I will be critical to the world for the rest of my life. The first month of the study when we had our introduction course, we learned that everything you believe and everything you assume about the world, is fake. It’s been constructed from the time you learned to walk.”*

Respondent #3 adds to this opinion, stating that during her studies at another university in the south of Norway, things were very different from NMBU.

#3: *“they were more... we learned more... the classes were a lot bigger, and it was more like ‘here the theory, this is said, this is done, this is the way this is, and this is the way this is’, while at NMBU I feel like it’s more open for discussions and differing interpretations, and trying to see similarities and differences between various researchers, not just seeing it in black and white, but interpret more, and I think that’s really good.”*

The students from the University of Oslo (UiO) were noticeably more positive towards the UN than the students from NMBU. These students expressed more admiration and general positivity of the cooperation and important work that the UN does. They all presented some issues with the UN that they were concerned with, and how there is room for improvement. Respondent #4 saw some challenges with the UN being guided by western interests, respondent #6 was concerned with the impact of national interests, while the most pressing issue for respondent #5 was a lack of transparency. On the topic of interventions, the three students were divided between having a mainly positive view, a critical view, and somewhere

in-between. Respondent #5 showed some apprehension over the uncertain long-term effects of interventions and saw sovereignty as an important principle that should not be broken. For both respondent #4 and #6, the main issue of interventions was that of efficiency and the use of resources. Respondent #6 was the most positive one, she stated that she sees interventions as a tool to spread democracy and build better lives for the citizens. Two respondents expressed that a major challenge in the security council is the amount of power that the veto vote gives to those countries who have it, and that decisions are made on the basis of power rather than what is just and right. Respondent #5 diverged, being more positive of the legitimacy that the powerful states bring to the UN.

All three students from UiO agreed that lectures was close to the only teaching method that they had experienced during their studies. As respondent #4 put it, *“the professor is in front talking, and the rest of us are in the back just listening”*. The common opinion that was voiced, was that discussions were never promoted by their lecturers or professors. Neither did discussions happen spontaneously in class. They have had the opportunity to ask clarifying questions, but it never evolved into a discussion.

#4: *“We have a lot of lectures with large classes, so the professor is in front talking, and the rest of us are in the back just listening. And when it is like that, discussions are not really encouraged. It’s more like discussions on each other’s essays. So no, there haven’t been any large discussions, but maybe on our free time, it’s something else.”*

All three students believe this is because the sizes of their classes are so large that discussions are not feasible. However, they all had some experience in discussing various topics with fellow students or in small study groups, but respondent #6 was confronted with the fact that all the members in her study group had the same opinions, so they needed to be creative in order for their discussions not to get stranded right away. One student talked about how some professors have influenced her view of the UN.

#6: *I’ve had some very good professors that I think could challenge your perception and prejudices about how things are, they have challenged you to maybe think differently or see things from a different viewpoint. I think that’s been very exciting, and I think that’s affected that I have dared to view the UN in a different light than I’ve done before. I used to be quite a bit more positive, I think, before I started studying.*

Respondents #7, #8, and #9 were from the University of Agder (UiA). These students did not mention any concerns about the UN as an organization, other than when the topics of the security council and interventions came up. They were generally positive in their views of the UN, seeing it as a good initiative with good values, and an important platform for cooperation and development. Both respondent #7 and #8 had some concerns about the limited power of the UN, and the consequences it has for their ability to carry out their work. They both communicated that they would prefer that the UN had more power. On the issue of interventions, the students from UiA were divided between having mainly positive views and having mixed opinions. Both respondent #8 and #9 believed that interventions sanctioned by the UN were the best possibility, both because of the international consensus and because of the recognition the UN peacekeeping troops have internationally. Respondent #8 shared this thought: *“If you say that you will intervene in a country in the middle east that has a lot of oil, and then ask USA to do it, then you can see how that will play out”*. Respondent #7 agreed that the UN should be the ones to decide on interventions, but was more wary than the others, questioning whether interventions might happen too often. All three students were quite critical towards the structure of the security council. They all saw veto powers as a great obstacle to the efficiency of the UN.

The students from UiA were very divided on whether they had experienced discussions as part of their learning activities in class. One of the students cannot remember that they have had any big discussions in class, other than when they had a UN role-playing game once (respondent #7). However, there had been some small discussions about the veto rights, which might be the reason that he was more critical on that topic than on any of the other topics that were lifted in the interview. Another student reported that there had been quite a lot of discussions in her classes, often organized as discussions in smaller groups and then sharing with the whole class the main points from the discussions. This student is the only one, except from the students from NMBU, that reported that her views had noticeably shifted to a more nuanced view throughout her studies. The last student had not experienced discussions as a part of teaching in his study at all, but voiced that if given the opportunity, he believed the class could discuss for hours. The only discussions he had during his studies, were with smaller groups of students outside of class, but it did not seem that they were very frequent.

#### 4.4.1. Summary of main findings

The respondents from NMBU were very critical towards the UN and their activities and structure, and they were all very quick to lift their concerns about the organization. These students were noticeably more critical than the students from the other universities. All three students had experienced discussions as a common part of their lectures. These discussions were in all three cases facilitated by their lecturers and professors. The students were very open about the fact that they had been influenced by their study to quite a large extent. The critical nature of their studies and the open class discussions have played a big part in the development of their own opinions and ideas. For two of the students, their studies and opportunity to practice critical thinking had been crucial in developing their opinions. The students from UiO were noticeably more positive towards the UN than the students from NMBU. They showed a wider range of opinions than the students from NMBU, and there was generally less overlap between their individual opinions. These students expressed more admiration and general positivity of the cooperation and important work that the UN does, but they all presented some issues with the UN that they were concerned with, and how there is room for improvement. All three students from UiO agreed that lectures were close to the only teaching method that they had experienced during their studies. The common opinion that was voiced, was that discussions were never promoted by their lecturers or professors. Neither did discussions happen spontaneously in class. They have had the opportunity to ask clarifying questions, but it never evolved into a discussion. The students from UiA were generally positive in their views of the UN, seeing it as a good initiative with good values, and an important platform for cooperation and development. There was some overlap in opinions, with the students broadly agreeing that the UN does not have enough power to carry out their plans, and some concern regarding self-interest trumping the concern of what is best for all. All three students were quite critical towards the structure of the security council and saw veto powers as a great obstacle to the efficiency of the UN. Two of the three students had experienced discussions as a teaching method in their studies, although to different degrees. The students from NMBU had experienced discussions as a big part of their studies and were very critical towards the UN and their work. The students from UiO were both the most positive towards the organization, and had lectures as the only teaching method, while UiA, with their various acquaintance with discussions, had a slightly more critical views of the UN than the students from UiO.

## 5.0. Conclusion

The objectives for this study was to map how the UN as an organization is perceived by students of political science at universities in Norway, how students come to possess their views, whether discussions as a teaching method affect their perspectives, and to which degree universities produce specific knowledge in their students that differ from other universities. The following research questions were the foundation for gathering data on these topics.

- *How do students of social sciences in Norway perceive the UN and their work?*
- *How do discussions as a teaching method affect their perception of the UN?*
- *To what degree are there differences between universities?*

Most of the students interviewed weaved back and forth, from pro's to cons and back again. Several students expressed similar thoughts, but at the same time they thought the topic was really interesting and that they enjoyed discussing it in the interviews. On the general topic of the UN as an international organization, students showed a wide span of perceptions and opinions. Some showed generally positive attitudes towards the UN, some were mainly critical, and some felt divided on the issue, presenting pro's and con's equally often. Three students had mainly positive connotations and attitudes towards the organization, while three students felt disconcerted that the dark sides of the UN are not discussed more often and more openly. Still, most students were positive towards the establishment of the UN and the underlying ideals and goals. On the second topic, UN-sanctioned interventions, most respondents found it a bit difficult to voice a clear opinion. Over half of the students ended up presenting a view that was either mostly positive or mostly negative. National self-interest and western bias influencing interventions were the topics that were most often voiced in the interviews, but their opinions differed on whether interventions bring positive change to people's lives, or if they're mostly damaging and unpredictable. They focused on different aspects of these issues, mostly the practical concerns, though a few students continually brought up moral dilemmas as their main concerns. The topic of the security council was the one that students were the most unsure of and critical against. Over half of the students who were interviewed had almost exclusively criticism and negative views of the structure of the

security council and the way it operates. The students were divided on what the most pressing issue was, but power inequality and veto powers were the most discussed topics, with some concerns about less powerful countries being stepped on and veto powers being used in self-interest.

Five of the students had mainly positive connotations and perceptions of the UN. Of these students, none had experienced discussions as a common part of teaching throughout their studies, though some had small study groups that they discussed different topics with. Of the four students that were mainly critical towards the UN, presenting obstacles and concerns about the organization and its work, as much or more than they presented positive sides of the issue. Two of these students voiced that they had experienced a change in their opinions through their studies, leaving them with a different view than they had before. All four of these students expressed that discussions were a common part of their classes. Some of this change in perception is probably a natural effect of greater knowledge and insight into the organization, but it might also be a direct result of exposure to discussions as a learning method.

The students from NMBU were very critical towards the UN and their activities and structure, and they were all very quick to lift their concerns about the organization. These students were noticeably more critical than the students from the other universities. All three students had experienced discussions as a common part of their lectures, which were in all three cases facilitated by their lecturers and professors. The students were very open about the fact that they had been influenced by their study to quite a large extent. The critical nature of their studies and the open class discussions have played a big part in the development of their own opinions and ideas. The students from UiO were noticeably more positive towards the UN than the students from NMBU, showing a wider range of opinions, and there was generally less overlap between their individual opinions. These students expressed more admiration and general positivity of the cooperation and important work that the UN does, but they all presented some issues with the UN that they were concerned with. All three students from UiO agreed that lectures were close to the only teaching method that they had experienced during their studies. The common opinion that was voiced, was that discussions were never promoted by their lecturers or professors. The students from UiA were generally positive in their views of the UN, but with some overlap in opinions. The students broadly agreed that the UN does not have enough power to carry out their plans, and they were quite critical towards the structure of the security council and saw veto powers as a great obstacle to



the efficiency of the UN. Two of the three students had experienced discussions as a teaching method in their studies, although to different degrees. The students from NMBU had experienced discussions as a big part of their studies and were very critical towards the UN and their work. The students from UiO were both the most positive towards the organization, and had lectures as the only teaching method, while UiA, with their various acquaintance with discussions, had a slightly more critical views of the UN than the students from UiO.

This thesis has mapped how current students of political science at universities in Norway understand and perceive the UN as an international organization. Most students have an overarching positive understanding of the UN, though they have some major concerns as well, especially concerning power, money, and ideological issues, and view the structure of the security council as damaging to the organization. The nature of their views are closely linked to whether class discussions have been present as a part of their studies. There are noticeable differences in the views of students from the different universities. It can be argued that each university, with its own cultures of teaching, produce somewhat specific knowledge and opinions through their students. Because of the modest scale of this thesis, more research is needed to further understand these connections. Understanding the complexity of this topic is challenging, and this thesis has not been able to take all the possible effects into account. As this study was qualitative and not able to gather a larger amount of raw data, these findings cannot be generalized to the wider population. However, it can contribute to greater understanding of the sources of political science student's perspectives on their field of study.

## References

- Adler, P. A. and Adler, P. (2012). In Baker, S. E. and Edwards, R. (Eds.). *How many qualitative interviews is enough? Expert voices and early career reflections on sampling and cases in qualitative research*. National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper. Retrieved from:  
[http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/4/how\\_many\\_interviews.pdf](http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/4/how_many_interviews.pdf)
- Almond, G. A. (1996). *Political science: The history of the discipline*. In: Goodin, R. E. and Klingemann, H., (1996). *A new handbook of political science*, Oxford University Press.
- Bailey, F.G. (1977). *Morality and expediency*. Blackwell.
- Bates, S. R. and Jenkins, L. (2007). Teaching and learning ontology and epistemology in political science. *Politics*, 27(1), pp. 55–63. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9256.2007.00279.x
- Becher, T. (1994). The significance of disciplinary differences. *Studies in Higher Education*, 19(2), pp. 151-161, DOI: 10.1080/03075079412331382007
- Berry, R. S. Y. (1999). *Collecting data by in-depth interviewing*. Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, September 2.-5. 1999. Retrieved from: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000001172.htm>
- Buckler, S. (2001). Reflexivity and the discipline specific context: Learning and teaching politics. *European Political Science*, 1, pp. 70–77, DOI: 10.1057/eps.2001.15
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Crouch, M. and McKenzie, H. (2006). The logic of small samples in interview-based qualitative research. *Social Science Information*, 45(), 483-499. DOI: 10.1177/0539018406069584

- Damron, D. and Mott, J. (2005). Creating an interactive classroom: Enhancing student engagement and learning in political science courses. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 1(3), pp. 367-383, DOI: 10.1080/15512160500261228
- Dunne, T., Kurki, M., and Smith, S. (Eds.) (2013). *International relations theories: Discipline and diversity*, 3<sup>rd</sup>. ed. Oxford University Press.
- Easton, D. (1971). *The political system: An inquiry into the state of political science*. University of Chicago Press.
- Eisner, E. W. (2017). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. Teachers College Press. (chapter 10: Ethical Tensions, Controversies, and Dilemmas in Qualitative Research)
- Entwistle, N. J. (1997). *Contrasting perspectives on learning*, in: Marton, F., Hounsell, D. and Entwistle, N. J. (eds.), *The experience of learning*. Scottish Academic Press.
- Fox, J., & Keeter, S. (1996). Improving Teaching and Its Evaluation: A Survey of Political Science Departments. *Political Science & Politics*, 29(2), pp. 174-180. DOI: 10.2307/420696
- Gershkoff, A. R. (2005). Multiple methods, more success: How to help students of all learning styles succeed in quantitative political analysis courses. *Political Science*, 38(2), pp. 299–304. DOI: 10.1017/S1049096505056520
- Gerson, K. and Horowitz, R. (2002). Observation and interviewing: Options and choices, in May, T. (Ed.), *Qualitative research in action*. Sage Publications.
- Goldsmith, M. and Goldsmith, C. (2010). Teaching political science in Europe. *European Political Science*, 9, pp. S61–S71, DOI: 10.1057/eps.2010.38
- Grigsby, E. (2012). *Analyzing politics: An introduction to political science*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Cengage Learning.
- Haines, C. (1913). Report on instruction in political science in colleges and universities: Portion of preliminary report of committee of American Political Science Association on instruction in government. *Proceedings of the American Political Science Association*, 10, 249-270. DOI: 10.2307/3038432

- Heyink, J. W. and Tymstra, T. J. (1993). The function of qualitative research. *Social Indicators Research*, 29(3), 291-305, DOI: 10.1007/BF01079517
- Holsti, O.R. (1969). *Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Ishiyama, J., Breuning, M., and Lopez, L. (2006). A century of continuity and (little) change in the undergraduate political science curriculum. *American Political Science Review* 100(4), pp. 659–665. Retrieved August 6, 2020, from [www.jstor.org/stable/27644396](http://www.jstor.org/stable/27644396)
- Kehl, J. and Clarke, S. E. (2002). Indicators of the increase of political science scholarship on teaching and learning in political science. *Political Science and Politics*, 35(2), pp. 229-232. DOI: 10.1017/S1049096502000562
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: methods and techniques*. New Age International Publishers.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Sage Publications.
- Lea, S. J., Stephenson, D. and Troy, J. (2003). Higher education students' attitudes to student-centred learning: Beyond 'educational bulimia'?. *Studies in Higher Education*, 28(3), pp. 321-334, DOI: 10.1080/03075070309293
- LeCompte, M. D. and Goetz, J. P. (1982). Problems of reliability and validity in ethnographic research, *Review of Educational Research*, 52(1) pp. 31– 60. DOI: 10.3102/00346543052001031
- Lincoln, Y. S., and Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.
- Marks, M. P. (2008). Fostering scholarly discussion and critical thinking in the political science classroom, *Journal of Political Science Education*, 4(2), pp. 205-224, DOI: 10.1080/15512160801998080
- Mason, M. (2010). Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. *Qualitative social research*, 11(3), DOI: 10.17169/fqs-11.3.1428
- McCarthy, J. P. and Anderson, L. (2000). Active learning techniques versus traditional teaching styles: Two experiments from history and political science. *Innovative Higher Education*, 24(4), pp. 279–294, DOI: 10.1023/B:IHIE.0000047415.48495.05

- Merton, R. K. (1945). Sociological theory. *American Journal of Sociology*, 50(6), pp. 462-473, DOI: 10.1086/219686
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J. and Collins, K. M. T. (2007). A typology of mixed methods sampling designs in social sciences research. *The Qualitative Report*, 12(2), 281-316, Retrieved from: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol12/iss2/9>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Sage Publications.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Sage Publications.
- Roberts, K.A. (2002). Ironies of effective teaching: Deep structure learning and constructions of the classroom. *Teaching Sociology*, 30(1), pp. 1–25. Retrieved August 6, 2020, from [www.jstor.org/stable/3211517](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3211517)
- Roskin, M. G., Cord, R. L., Medeiros, J. A., and Jones, W. S. (2012). *Political science: An introduction*, 12<sup>th</sup> ed., Pearson Education, Inc.
- Sloam, J. (2007). Rebooting democracy: Youth participation in politics in the UK, *Parliamentary Affairs*, 60(4), pp. 548–567, DOI: 10.1093/pa/gsm035
- Sloam, J. (2008). Teaching democracy: The role of political science education. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 10(3), pp. 509–524. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-856x.2008.00332.x
- Smith, S. (2013). *Introduction: Diversity and disciplinarity in international relations theory*. In: Dunne, T., Kurki, M., and Smith, S. (Eds.), *International relations theories: Discipline and diversity*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford University Press.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage Publications.
- Wahyuni, D. (2012). The research design maze: understanding paradigms, cases, methods and methodologies, *Journal of applied management accounting research*, 10(1), 69-80. Retrieved from: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2103082](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2103082)
- Warren, C. A. B. (2001). Qualitative interviewing. In Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method*. Sage Publications.

Whitman, P. D. and Richlin, L. (2007). The status of the scholarship of teaching and learning in the discipline. *International Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* 1(1), pp. 1–17. DOI: 10.20429/ijstl.2007.010114

Williams, M. (2000). Interpretivism and generalisation, *Sociology*, 34(2), pp. 209-224. DOI: 10.1177/S0038038500000146

## Annex 1 – Interview guide

- Introduction (goal of research, consent to participate, consent to record)
- General information (age, gender, study programme, university)
- How have you encountered the UN as a topic during your studies?
- What do you think about the UN?
  - Good/bad?
  - Important?
  - In your opinion, what are the values of the UN?
  - Level of agreement with said values, and the role of the UN
- UN interventions in foreign countries
  - What do you think about the UN sanctioning interventions?
  - Good/bad, right/wrong
  - Important that it is done?
  - Do you think there are any big issues
- The UN security council who sanctioned interventions
  - Opinions on the organization of the council
  - Issues?
  - Do you think there are any big issues
- Do you have any discussions in class?
  - Facilitated by professors?
  - Level of agreement in class
- Where have you picked up these opinions? Fellow students, discussions, professors, syllabus, other reading?
  - Who or how do you think this has influenced your own perception of the UN?
- Revisit any topics for more depth or clarity?
- That's all my questions. Do you have anything else you want to add?

## Annex 2 – Codebook

University		
Age		
Level of study		
View of the UN		
	Positive	
	Negative	
	Both	
View on interventions		
	Positive	
	Negative	
	Both	
View on the security council		
	Positive	
	Negative	
	Both	
Level of influence by professor		
	More	
	Less	
Amount of discussions		
	More	
	Less	
Agreement within discussions		
	More	
	Less	





**Norges miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet**  
Noregs miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet  
Norwegian University of Life Sciences

Postboks 5003  
NO-1432 Ås  
Norway