



Utvalgt bibliografi Kjetil Selvik

1973-2024





Norwegian Institute
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Forord

Kjetil Selvik har etterlatt seg et imponerende forfatterskap med stor bredde og dybde. I så måte speiler forfatterskapet personen. Kjetil var allsidig og talentfull, klok og grundig. Å gjøre et utvalg av hans produksjon er derfor risikabelt, men vi har likevel våget oss på å velge ut et knippe av hans tekster for å illustrere nettopp Kjetils faglige kvaliteter.

Den utvalgte bibliografien i dette heftet speiler hovedpillarene i Kjetils Midtøstenforskning: 1. Næringspolitikk og virkningene av økonomisk liberalisering 2. Autoritære regimer i Midtøsten 3. Religion og politikk, og 4. Media og politikk. Publikasjonene berører blant annet Syria, Kuwait, Dubai, Tunisia, Libanon, Iran og Irak, og omfatter artikler, artikkelsamlinger, og bøker.

Om forfatteren

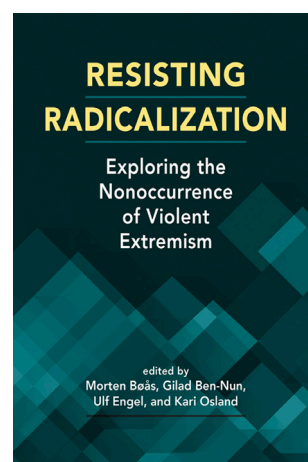


Kjetil Selvik

Kjetil Selvik var forsker 1 og leder for Forskningsgruppen for fred, konflikt og utvikling på NUPI frem til 2024.

Utvalgt bibliografi

Selvik, Kjetil, Ala'Aldeen, Dlawer, Mhidi, Ahmad, Mishkova, Diana, & Palani, Kamaran. (2025). Traditional authority and local community resilience: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, and Syria. In Bøås, Morten, Ben-Nun, Gilad, Engel, Ulf, & Osland, Kari (Eds.), *Resisting radicalization: exploring the nonoccurrence of violent extremism* (pp. 161–178). Lynne Rienner. <https://www.rienner.com/data/fe/file/9781962551557.pdf>



In a global context where violent extremists exploit the vulnerabilities of weak and divided states to extend their reach across different regions, specific communities have demonstrated notable resilience in comparison to others. Despite the presence of enabling environments, violent extremism does not take root (EU Research 2023). This observation has sparked the interest of policymakers and scholars in understanding the role of local agents of resilience. In particular, there is a keen focus on uncovering the potential contributions of traditional community leaders in fostering these favorable outcomes. It is assumed that conventional authorities can play a constructive role in preventing the rise of violent extremism by leveraging their moral weight, influence, and community connections. In this chapter, we compare empirical evidence from the Western Balkans, Iraqi Kurdistan, and northeastern Syria to evaluate to what extent this assumption holds. Then, we discuss the conditions under which interventions from traditional authorities are likely to be effective.

Rolandsen, Ø. H., & Selvik, K. (2024). Disposable rebels: US military assistance to insurgents in the Syrian war. *Mediterranean Politics*, 29(4), 528–549. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2023.2183664>

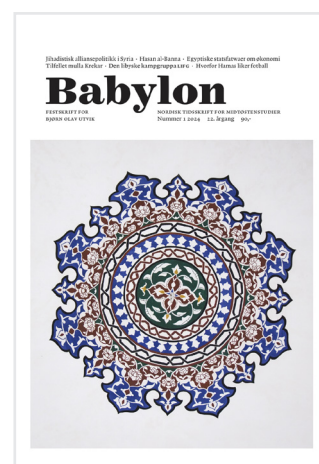


During the Syrian War, the US and other Western countries trained, equipped and paid Syrian rebels to fight the government and, later, root out the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). When states use armed groups to attain foreign policy objectives, control is a key concern. The US sought to enforce such control over providers and recipients of lethal military assistance in the period from 2013-18. We investigate the parallel CIA and Department of Defence assistance programmes. We challenge theoretical assumptions related to the application of the principal-agent model to explain the dynamics of foreign assistance to rebels. We argue that, in the US strategy to control rebels, co-ordinating the providers and dividing the recipients of security assistance were essential conditions. Meanwhile, the delays in recruitment, the limitations on the number of soldiers trained, the short supply of weapons and the strict regulation of the actions

carried out by the rebels all reduced the efficacy of the assistance. This way of instrumentalising security assistance helped the US and its Western allies to crush ISIL while avoiding a collapse in Damascus. However, this happened at the expense of rebel cohesion, autonomy, and legitimacy.

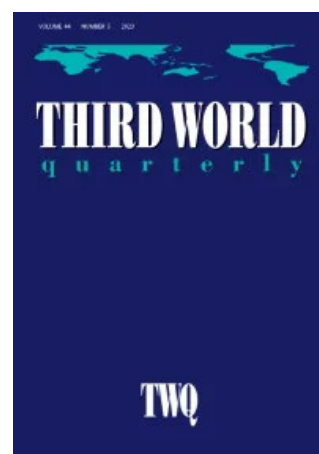
Selvik, K. (2024). «Må Gud forbanne dine mordere»: Regimeretorikk om protestene for kvinne, liv, frihet. *Babylon Nordisk Tidsskrift for Midtøstenstudier*, 1, 76–87. <https://doi.org/10.5617/ba.11821>

Mens landsomfattende opprør raste og verden var rystet av overgrepet mot Jina Amini, dyrket den regimeløjale pressen i Iran sine egne offerhistorier.



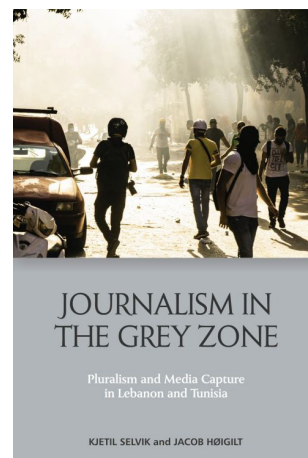
Selvik, K., & Groves, T. (2023). ‘The generation that will inherit Syria’: education as citizen aid and political opportunity. *Third World Quarterly*, 44(5), 930–945. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2023.2167705>

Grassroots initiatives to provide education were an integral part of efforts to stem the humanitarian disaster unleashed by the armed conflict in Syria. This article studies activists who organised informal schooling for children amid the devastating war. Building on life story interviews, we highlight the versatility of initiatives in the field of education for citizens who simultaneously engage in humanitarian action and mobilise for political change. There is a natural concern to detach humanitarian work from politics in order to gain and maintain a space for action. This has distanced the study of humanitarian aid from social movements research, which focuses on long-term struggles over power and political structures. We maintain, however, that the social movement literature generally, and studies on structural and cognitive political opportunity specifically, can help refine our understanding of the illusive nature of citizen aid. Our findings indicate that Syrians involved in humanitarian educational activities constructed their own structure of opportunities by monitoring shifting political and humanitarian conditions. Opening schools was a technical and pragmatic solution to the educational disaster caused by war. At the same time, it was motivated by a long-lasting desire to free Syria from its political plight and to offer an alternative.



Selvik, K. and Høigilt, J. (2023). *Journalism in the Grey Zone: Pluralism and Media Capture in Lebanon and Tunisia*. Edinburgh University Press Ltd. <https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/book-journalism-in-the-grey-zone.html>

Explains the political role of journalism in Arab countries marked by pluralist and manipulated media
Offers a fine-grained analysis of political journalism in Tunisia and Lebanon
Brings together political science and media studies based on cases from the Arab region, drawing on literature in English, Arabic and French
Includes a ground-breaking account of the 2019-2020 Lebanese protests
Utilises nearly 100 face-to-face interviews with journalists, politicians and activists
Offers stimulating insights for students of Middle Eastern media and politics, built on a framework that invites comparison with other regions around the world
Lebanon and Tunisia are two of the freest countries in the Middle East and North Africa, but elites in both countries seek to manipulate media organisations and individual journalists to shore up support for themselves and attack opponents. This book explores the political role of journalism in these hybrid situations where democratic and nondemocratic elements coexist – a growing trend all over the world. Through interviews with journalists in different positions and analyses of key events in recent years, *Journalism in the Grey Zone* explains the tensions that media instrumentalisation creates in the news media and how journalists navigate conflicting pressures from powerholders and a marginalised populace. Despite ‘capture’ of the media by political and economic actors, journalism remains a powerful and occasionally disruptive force.



Selvik, K., & Ranji, B. (2023). *Messaging Soleimani's killing: the communication vulnerabilities of authoritarian states*. *International Affairs*, 99(6), 2465–2484. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iad223>

The capacity of authoritarian states to manipulate narratives and undermine the authority of western democracies is increasingly emphasized in International Relations research. Far less scrutiny has been paid to the ways in which the media environment creates communication vulnerabilities for these same repressive states. We address this research gap through a case-study of Persian-language commentary on the targeted assassination of Qasem Soleimani—a crescendo in the conflict between Iran and the United States. We examine how commentators on the two popular satellite channels interpreted Soleimani's killing and subsequent developments, and specifically, whether they rallied around the Iranian flag. The research method employed is qualitative media content analysis. The investigation reveals that the Islamic Republic did not benefit from a significant surge in patriotism among Iranian commentators; in fact, some openly applauded the attack. It was only when President Trump threatened to bomb Iranian cultural sites that the commentators rallied around the flag. The Islamic Republic faced a two-front narrative battle as communication attacks from within the national community intensified the information war with the US. The article concludes that authoritarian states are at a disadvantage when they require communication strategies beyond disinformation and distortion.



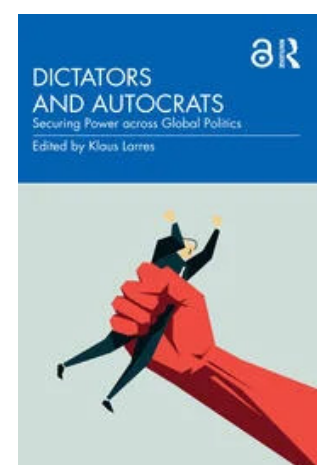
Selvik, K., & Høigilt, J. (2021). Journalism under instrumentalized political parallelism. *Journalism Studies*, 22(5), 653–669. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670x.2021.1897476>

Media systems where political parallelism co-exists with political clientelism have contradictory influences on journalistic practices. Journalists are encouraged to actively defend a cause and influence public opinion while expected to remain subservient to their political masters. The media studies literature has analyzed the impact of political parallelism and clientelism separately, without reflecting on the tensions that emerge when they operate together. The article examines journalism under instrumentalized political parallelism and argues that it plays out in a field defined by both horizontal and vertical conflicts. We add an elite-grassroots analytical perspective to the inter-elite tensions associated with a polarized public sphere. Political parallelism in non-democratic contexts seemingly leaves little room for journalistic agency, as the politically powerful tend to instrumentalize media outlets. However, by looking closely at the case of Lebanon, we argue that journalists are still able to act independently of and contrary to the elite's intentions. The empirical analysis shows how journalists navigate vis-a-vis the politicians by playing the relations game, exploiting internal contradictions in the system and connecting with popular grievances. The article contributes new knowledge about journalists' resilience to instrumentalization in a context of media/politics connections that is commonly found outside the West.



Selvik, K. (2021). Ali Hosseini Khamenei: Routinizing revolution in Iran (born 1939). In K. Larres (Ed.), *Dictators and autocrats: Securing power across global politics* (pp. 235–248). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003100508>

This chapter analyzes how Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei consolidated his rule and the political consequences of his survival strategy. The author argues that Iran's long-serving leader capitalized on the institutional and ideological legacies of his predecessor, Ayatollah Khomeini, as well as on the high potential for repression in revolutionary regimes. Khamenei has invested in nonelected and parallel revolutionary bodies, maintained strong emphasis on the Islamic Revolution's ideology and recruited a new generation of followers to the ruling coalition. This essay outlines the tensions arising from Khamenei's reliance on the organizational structures, aims, and elite selection mechanisms of the revolution and the wish of the Iranian population to change the political course of this important Middle Eastern country.



Selvik, K. (2021). Education activism in the Syrian civil war: Resisting by persisting. *Comparative Education Review*, 65(3), 399–418. <https://doi.org/10.1086/714606>

This article analyzes education activists' resilience in emergencies, building on life story interviews with Syrians who engaged in civil society initiatives for schooling in the aftermath of the 2011 uprising. It investigates the meaning that education acquires under extreme adversity and how it inspires individuals to act. Finding that these activists think of education as a means to resist authoritarianism and transform society, the article brings the change agendas of local education actors to the fore. It concludes that resilience can be the extension of political purpose. The article conceptualizes education as a vehicle of resistance, foregrounding how temporal projections enable individuals to maintain belief in their capability to enact changes. The activists make connections between their own experiences in school, thoughts about the future, and the reasons they mobilize for education. Working with time is a potent enabler when, objectively, the situation is deteriorating.



Selvik, Kjetil (2021). *On digital media in Lebanon's political crisis*. (NUPI Policy Brief 2021:08). Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. <https://hdl.handle.net/11250/3025204>

The technology-driven transformation of the media environment is changing politics worldwide. Yet everywhere is not the same. The digital revolution yields different results in different political contexts. This policy brief analyses digital media's role in the political crisis unfolding in Lebanon – a weak, divided and contested state. It discusses the implications for Norwegian development aid to the country.



Voltmer, K., Selvik, K., & Høigilt, J. (2021). Hybrid media and hybrid politics: Contesting informational uncertainty in Lebanon and Tunisia. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 26(4): 842-860. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161221999266>

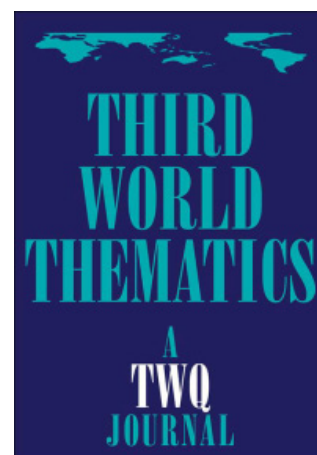
This paper investigates the dynamic relationship between hybrid media and hybrid politics in Lebanon and Tunisia. While previous research on the media in hybrid regimes has mainly focused on regime strategies of restricting and manipulating public debate, our analysis moves beyond repression. We argue that the ambiguities of hybrid politics, which combines democratic and authoritarian elements, not only constrain independent and critical reporting but also open up opportunities for journalistic agencies. We draw on Schedler's concept of informational uncertainty to capture the



epistemological instability of hybrid regimes and the strategies of political actors to control public knowledge. Distinguishing between three dimensions of media hybridity - economic, cultural and technological - we show how the new hybrid media environment significantly increases the volatility of hybrid politics and informational uncertainty for political actors. Our empirical analysis is based on seventy-one semistructured interviews with journalists in Lebanon and Tunisia conducted between 2016 and 2019. The material reveals a broad range of strategies used by journalists who employ the internal contradictions of hybrid politics to pursue their own agenda. The comparison between Lebanon and Tunisia also highlights contextual conditions that enable, or limit, journalistic agency, such as clientelistic dependencies, economic resources, and civil society alliances.

Selvik, K., & Amirteimour, I. (2020). The big man muqtada al-Sadr: Leading the Street in Iraq under limited statehood. *Third World Thematics A TWQ Journal*, 5(3-6), 242-259. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23802014.2021.1956367>

The article conceptualises the Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr as a big man to explain his proven capability for navigating the hazardous terrain of Iraqi politics. Introduced in Sahlins' anthropology on Melanesia and refined in African studies, the notion of the big man has been underexploited in accounts of the Arab region. This article defends its relevance for sociopolitical analyses of Iraq and for the study of religious actors. Personal authority is the defining characteristic of a big man, and the mobilisation of followers is the key to his renown. In situations of limited statehood, the ability to build support upon extra-institutional foundations can yield longlasting political results. Muqtada al-Sadr has relied on an exceptional combination of resources to establish himself as a kingmaker on the political scene. We trace the roots of his ascent and foreground the strategies he has used to accumulate authority in his person. The article analyses Muqtada's response to the wave of popular protests that swept Southern Iraq in 2019, observing a shift from initial support to open confrontation with the demonstrators. We argue that this shift threatens his status because it undermines his most important power resource: the ability to lead the street.



Høigilt, J., & Selvik, K. (2020). Debating terrorism in a political transition: Journalism and democracy in Tunisia. *International Communication Gazette*, 82(7), 664-681. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048519897519>

In March 2015, in the midst of a political transition, Tunisia was rocked by a terrorist attack at the Bardo Museum in downtown Tunis in which 21 people were killed. How did Tunisian journalists manage the tension between a heightened sense of insecurity and the country's uncertain democratic development? This article analyses journalistic commentary on the causes and implications of terrorism four years into the transition sparked by the Arab uprisings. It provides an empirically nuanced perspective on the role of journalism in political transitions, focusing on



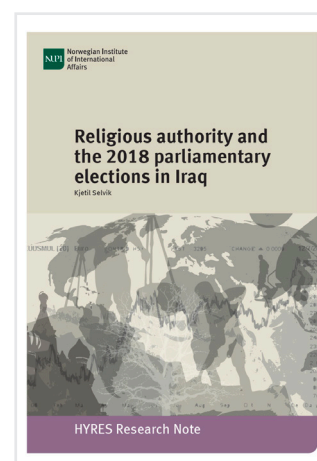
journalists as arbitrators in public debate. We argue that influential Tunisian journalists fell back on interpretive schema from the Ben Ali era when they tried to make sense of the Bardo attack, thus facilitating the authoritarian drift of the Tunisian government at the time. They actively contributed to the non-linearity of a political transition, despite enjoying real freedom of speech.

Høigilt, J., & Selvik, K. (2020). Introduction. *International Communication Gazette*, 82(7), 591–593. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048519897486>

Political transitions open a time window during which the media system is in flux and actors try to influence it per their interests. What role does journalism play in such processes, and how do they in turn affect journalists? This special issue addresses those two questions, building on insights gained during an academic workshop at the University of Oslo in May 2018.

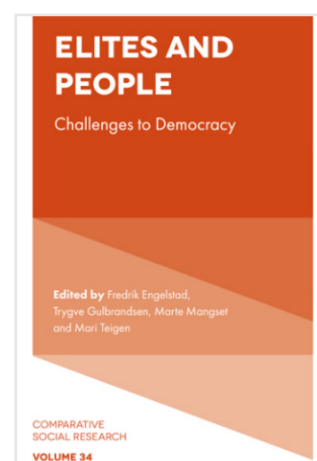
Selvik, K. (2019). *Religious authority and the 2018 parliamentary elections in Iraq*. (HYRES Research Note). Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. <https://hdl.handle.net/11250/2651945>

This research brief analyzes the discursive production of, and political struggle over, religious authority in Shia Iraq. It examines Friday sermons held in the run-up to the May 2018 parliamentary elections.



Stenslie, S., & Selvik, K. (2019). Elite survival and the Arab spring: The cases of Tunisia and Egypt. In Engelstad, F., Gulbrandsen, T., Mangset, M. and Teigen, M. (Eds.) *Elites and People: Challenges to Democracy (Comparative Social Research, Vol. 34)* (pp. 17–34). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S0195-631020190000034002>

The chapter compares the survival of old regime elites in Tunisia and Egypt after the 2011 uprisings and analyses its enabling factors. Although democracy progressed in Tunisia and collapsed in Egypt, the countries show similarities in the old elite's ability to survive the Arab Spring. In both cases, the popular uprisings resulted in the type of elite circulation that John Higley and György Lengyel refer to as 'quasi-replacement circulation', which is sudden and coerced, but narrow and shallow. To account for this converging outcome, the chapter foregrounds the instability, economic decline and information uncertainty in the countries post-uprising and the navigating resources, which the old elites possessed. The roots of the quasi-replacement circulation are traced to the old elites' privileged access to money, network, the media and, for Egypt, external support. Only parts of the structures of authority in a



political regime are formal. The findings show the importance of evaluating regime change in a broader view than the formal institutional set-up. In Tunisia and Egypt, the informal structures of the anciens régimes survived – so did the old regime elites.

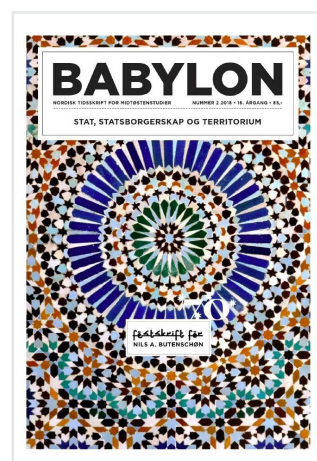
Selvik, K. (2018). Autocratic legitimation in Iran: Ali Khamenei's discourse on regime "insiders" and "outsiders." *Democratization*, 25(7), 1114–1131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2018.1446947>

The article analyses Ali Khamenei's discourse on insiders and outsiders in the Islamic Republic of Iran, arguing that it shows the leader of an electoral revolutionary regime striving to counter elite fragmentation and growing democratic demands. It studies identity demarcation as a tool of autocratic legitimation. In a political system where the possibility to access political positions depends on supporting a belief-system, all cadres share a basic identity, which rulers can exploit to draw boundaries between us and them. The analysis reveals how Iran's leader capitalizes on the existence of an insider-outsider divide to promote ideas about an imagined we of the regime. The we is portrayed as an Islamic we, fully committed to his rule. The article maintains that Khamenei developed this discourse in response to the challenge of the Iranian reform movement. It analyses, first, the context in which the discourse emerged and, second, the discursive strategy itself, to substantiate the claim. It concludes that the discourse had two essential aims in the containment (1997-2003) and crushing (2009-2010) of the pro-democracy reformist and Green movements: to de-legitimate Khamenei's opponents through othering and to legitimate the counter-mobilization of repressive agents.



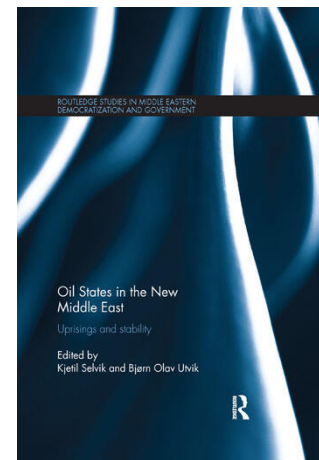
Selvik, K. (2018). Religiøs autoritet og tynnslett stat. Valgkamp i sjia-Irak. *Babylon Nordisk Tidsskrift for Midtøstenstudier*, 2, 56–67. <https://doi.org/10.5617/ba.6726>

Artikkelen diskuterer sjia-muslimske religiøse lærdes relasjon til statsmakt og analyserer hvordan religiøs autoritet tas i bruk som politisk valuta i Irak. Den tar utgangspunkt i fredagsprekener holdt i forkant av parlamentsvalget 12. mai 2018. Religiøse ledere har måter å generere autoritet på som politikere i svak tilstand mangler. Fremfor alt har Storayatollah 'Ali al-Sistani enorm prestisje, som var tydelig i valget. Artikkelen gjør opp status for Sistanis holdning til irakisk politikk og sammenstiller budskapet med posisjonene til systemkritiske Muqtada al-Sadr samt Jalal al-Din 'Ali al-Saghir, som målbar interessene til den Iran-vennlige valgalliansen al-Fatah. Den viser hvordan Sadr og Saghir tøyser Sistanis autoritet for å tjene konkurrerende agendaer og setter storayatollahen i en vanskelig situasjon.



Selvik, K., & Utvik, B. O. (Eds.). (2017). *Oil States in the New Middle East: Uprisings and stability*. Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Oil-States-in-the-New-Middle-East-Uprisings-and-stability/Selvik-Olav-Utvik/p/book/9781138888340>

Oil States in the New Middle East brings together leading experts to critically assess the centrality of oil and the relevance of Rentier State Theory in light of the post-2011 upheaval across the Middle East and North Africa. It combines overall reflections on the political dynamics in oil states with focused case investigations of individual countries. Taking as its starting point the centrality of oil in explanations of regime survival, the book analyses how the oil states have responded to and fared throughout the Arab popular upheavals, resulting in a critical assessment of the continued relevance of Rentier State Theory. While observers have asked how the uprisings varied between oil and non-oil states, this book turns the comparative focus inward, arguing for a more fine-grained understanding of the political effects of oil in different oil producing countries.



Alnajjar, G. & Selvik, K. (2016). Kuwait: the politics of crisis. In Selvik, K., and Utvik, B. O. (Eds.) *Oil States in the New Middle East* (pp. 93-112). Routledge.

This chapter provides a background to state-society relations in Kuwait and princely struggles as they have marked the country's modern history before proceeding to explain the internal weakening of the ruling family's cohesion under Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's rule. It traces the changes at the social level that complicate the Al Sabah domination before deciphering the evolution of Kuwait's political crisis. The specificity of the Kuwaiti configuration is that it invites princes to play out their differences in the National Assembly and in the public domain more broadly. Compared to other Gulf cooperation council (GCC) countries Kuwait has been blessed with a far more open political atmosphere and a politically active society. The Iraqi ruler, Abd al-Karim Qasim declared in 1961 that Kuwait was part of Iraq, and claimed its territory.

Selvik, K. (2015). *The War in Yemen: The view from Iran*. (NOREF, Expert Analysis October 2015). Chr. Michelsen Institute. <https://www.cmi.no/publications/5654-war-in-yemen-the-view-from-iran>

In the regional backdrop to the war in Yemen Iran is a pivotal actor. Saudi Arabia has made clear that it sees the conflict in Yemen as the extension of its struggle with the Islamic Republic. This paper analyses the view from Iran as found in Iranian news and political analysis websites. It argues that different political and ideological orientations converge in opposition to the Saudi-led military operation in Yemen, deepening the regional logjam. The study also shows that revolutionary-ideological interpretation frames coexist with legal-democratic suggestions to end



the crisis. Overall, the Iranian debate runs contrary to Saudi Arabia's understanding of the crisis. Saudi Arabia argues that the Huthi takeover in Sanaa represents a 'disruption of normalcy' and a dangerous usurpation of power. From Iran's vantage point, it is the natural consequence of the Yemeni government's repression and external relations. Saudi Arabia justifies its military operation by deposed President 'Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi's call for protection of Yemen and its people. Iran contests Mansur Hadi's legitimacy and considers the military intervention arbitrary and illegal. Saudi Arabia sees the Huthis as a proxy of Iran, united by a common Shia identity. Iran perceives the Huthis' Zaydi creed as religiously different but associates their cause with its own political agenda.

Selvik, K., Nordenson, J., & Kebede, T. A. (2015). Print media liberalization and electoral coverage bias in Kuwait. *The Middle East Journal*, 69(2), 255–276. <https://doi.org/10.3751/69.2.15>

As the Middle East moves past the stage of state media monopolies, the question of media and democratization takes on new salience. Media liberalization is expected to strengthen the opposition in authoritarian political contexts. Free and independent media support freedom of expression and allow for informed decisions by giving citizens access to a variety of opinions and ideas. However, there are dangers to media freedom and independence, ranging from predatory state intervention to the "tyranny of the market" and the hegemony of social and cultural groups. When authoritarian regimes liberalize media, those in power often find ways to extend their influence to the nominally private sector. The article discusses the political effect of print media liberalization in Kuwait based on content analysis of Arabic language newspapers in the 2009 parliamentary election. The analysis found no systematic favoring of pro-government candidates in electoral coverage, but did find a statistically significant bias for candidates from the ruling, non-Bedouin hadari class, at the expense of the Bedouin tribal population. This article points to there being structural obstacles to democracy in Kuwait that cannot be overcome only by the liberalization of the press through legislation.



Knudsen, A. J. and Selvik, K. (2014). Review report: *Al-Miftah* (CMI Commissioned Report). Chr. Michelsen Institute. <https://www.cmi.no/publications/6235-review-report-al-miftah>

This report reviews the organisational performance of the Palestinian NGO Al-Miftah over a three period (2011–13). The report is based on field interviews in Ramallah with staff, stakeholders and beneficiaries and includes main findings, recommendations and annexes. The report was commissioned by Norad under CMI's general framework agreement on human rights.



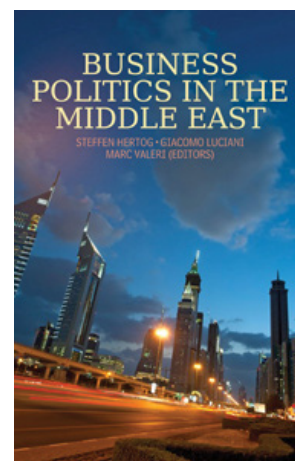
Selvik, K. and Knudsen, A. J. (2014). *Review report: Al-Haq* (CMI Commissioned Report). Chr. Michelsen Institute. <https://www.cmi.no/publications/6234-review-report-al-haq>

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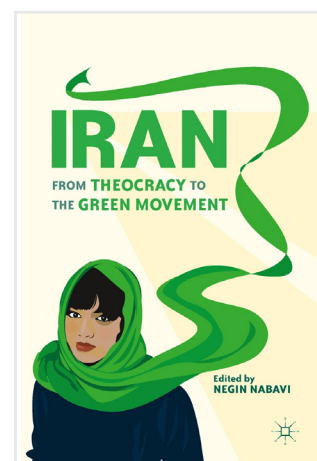
Selvik, K. (2013). *CSR and reputation building in Syria: Contextualizing “the business case”*. In: Hertog, S., Luciani, G., & Valeri, M. (Eds.) *Business Politics in the Middle East* (pp. 133-158) Hurst. <https://www.hurstpublishers.com/book/business-politics-in-the-middle-east/>

Interest in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is on the rise in the Arab world. The concept was largely unheard of as late as the 1990s, but it has rapidly gained prominence and is now an integral part of the development discourse in most countries in the region. The fundamental cause of this spread is the international campaign for CSR to contain the negative effects of globalization. International organizations, such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), actively promote CSR as a way to fill the gap between global markets and national regulations. But there are also local driving forces and dispositions for the CSR wave in Arab countries. In a context where state funds have been stretched by population growth and public sector inefficiencies, Middle East governments are looking for alternatives to state-led growth and welfare. Reformers turn their eyes to the economically thriving private sector in the hope that it can play a more active social role.



Selvik, K. (2012). *From “enemies of the revolution” to unfulfilled ideal: Private industrial entrepreneurs in the Islamic republic of Iran*. In *Iran: From Theocracy to the Green Movement* (pp. 101–119). Palgrave Macmillan US. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137112163_6

The 1979 Islamic Revolution dealt a heavy blow to Iran's private sector manufacturing industry. The leading entrepreneurs of the Pahlavi era fled the country, and a great number of factories were nationalized. Formerly thriving companies suffered mismanagement at the hands of young and inexperienced managers selected on political and ideological grounds. During the 1980s, the Islamic Republic entered a development



course characterized by central planning and state-led growth. All major industries were to belong to the public sector, as required by the article 44 of the Constitution. The revolution also created an unfavorable ideological climate for industrial entrepreneurs. In the view of the leftists who dominated the revolutionary movement, private factories were a sign of “capitalism” and a remnant of the ancien régime. Entrepreneurs were perceived as opportunists who pursued their personal interest at a time when everybody ought to strive for the well-being of society. The ultimate goal, for the activists, was the establishment of a classless society. Judged by the standards of this Utopia, private entrepreneurs were counterrevolutionaries who undermined the movement’s zeal.

Selvik, K. (2012). Ideologisk forløper for den grønne bevegelsen. *Babylon Nordisk Tidsskrift for Midtøstenstudier*, 1, 28-41. <https://doi.org/10.5617/ba.4239>

En tankesmie assosiert med Mir Hossein Musavi skisserte rammen for «muslimsk levemodus» i forkant av 2009-valget i Iran. Hva var dens visjon for den islamske republikken?



Selvik, K. (2012). Iran og den nye kampen om Syria. *Internasjonal Politikk*, 70(04), 504–512. <https://doi.org/10.18261/issn1891-1757-2012-04-06>

Opprøret i Syria utfordrer ikke bare en autoritær statsleder som utgangs-punktet ellers har vært for de arabiske opprørene; det utfordrer også den regionale maktbalansen. Heri ligger en viktig årsak til at det har gått så galt. Det står langt mer på spill enn et folk som vil kaste en diktator. Den største snublesteinen for det syriske demokratiet er at landet ligger midtmellom Israel og Iran. Ved inngangen til det arabiske opprøret bar Midtøsten mange tegn på en ideologisk og sikkerhetspolitisk stillingskrig. På den ene siden sto en mot-standsfront bestående av Iran, Syria, Hizballah og Hamas med brodd mot Israel og vestlig imperialism. På den andre siden sto vestlig-orienterte regi-mer, med Egypt, Jordan og Saudi-Arabia i spissen, som så Iran som en større trussel enn Israel. I svake stater preget av maktvakuum som Libanon og Irak promoterte de to fløyene konkurrerende ideologi og rivaliserende interesser. Innblanding bidro til å sementere nasjonale politiske konflikter. I Syria har frontene brakt sammen igjen med en kompliserende dimensjon i den internasjonale maktkampen mellom USA/EU og Kina/Russland. Denne artikkelen analyserer bakgrunnen for den regionale kollisjonen i Syria med særlig vekt på Irans posisjon. Den reflekterer vidererundt Syria-krisens betydning for regionens konfliktdynamikk. Analyse-rammen er en kombinasjon av ideologi og sikkerhetspolitikk. De to faktorene henger tett sammen i spenningen mellom Iran og Saudi-Arabia som fanger regionen i en uløst, fundamental konflikt.



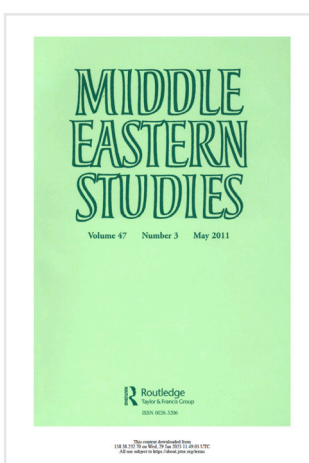
Selvik, K., & Stenslie, S. (2011). *Stability and change in the Modern Middle East*. I.B. Tauris. Distributed in the U.S. exclusively by Palgrave Macmillan. <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/stability-and-change-in-the-modern-middle-east-9781848855892/>

In this ground-breaking book, aimed at new generation of students, Stig Stenslie and Kjetil Selvik provide a new introduction to the contemporary Middle East, using topical questions about stability and change as a way of interrogating the politics, economics and history of the region. How have regimes from North Africa to the Gulf perpetuated themselves in spite of the weakness of the Western-style state, the Islamist trend, and the destabilising effects of war and terrorism? What strategies have states used to control their societies, and how have both states and societies adapted over time? Both an accessible reference resource and a thought-provoking analysis, *Stability and Change in the Modern Middle East* introduces the key theoretical concepts for understanding the region and the freshest thinking on debates surrounding them, and brings the empirical material in to sharp focus through its unique thematic approach.



Selvik, K. (2011). *Elite rivalry in a semi-democracy: The Kuwaiti press scene*. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 47(3), 477–496. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2011.565143>

Kuwait's liberalization of the press and publication law in 2006 sparked a threefold increase in the number of Arabic language newspapers that defied conventional wisdom about print media decline and also survived the world financial crisis. The article provides a political explanation for this puzzle, arguing that newspapers serve as political instruments in elite rivalries in Kuwait's semi-democratic setting. It qualifies the idea of newspapers as civil society institutions and shows how political control is reproduced in a liberal context. It thereby contributes to our understanding of the role of the press in hybrid regimes.



Selvik, K. (2011). *Mediemakt og politisk krise i Kuwait*. *Babylon Nordisk Tidsskrift for Midtøstenstudier*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.5617/ba.4249>

Private aviser og tv-kanaler er ettertraktede maktmidler, og brer hurtig om seg i Kuwait. I hvilken grad utfordrer de nye eierstrukturene det politiske systemet?



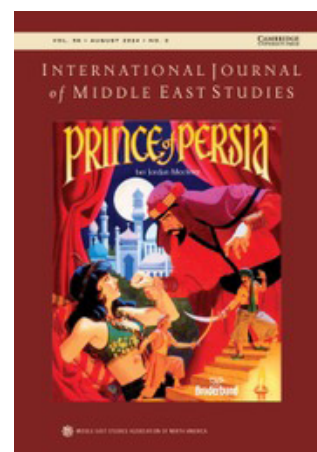
Selvik, K. (2010). Golfmonarkiene: Mer variasjon enn olje kan forklare. *Babylon Nordisk Tidsskrift for Midtøstenstudier*, 2. <https://doi.org/10.5617/ba.4258>

Teorien om renteniststaten tegner et statisk og endimensjonalt bilde av politikk i oljestater. Det er behov for et nytt blikk på Golfen som ser forbi det stiliserte bildet av oljesjeikers dominans av innbyggere gjennom ritualiserte bestiktelser.



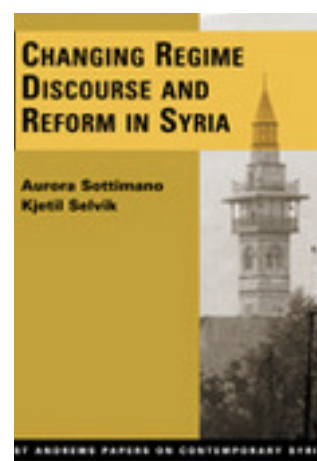
Pierret, T., & Selvik, K. (2009). Limits of “authoritarian upgrading” in Syria: Private welfare, Islamic charities, and the rise of the Zayd movement. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 41(4), 595–614. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020743809990377>

The growth of private welfare in Syria since the 1990s and a parallel detente between the Ba’th regime and the Islamic trend have allowed an Islamic movement called Jamaat Zayd to gain an impressive hold on Damascus’s charitable sector. Through a detailed, fieldwork-based analysis of this process, this article argues that the movement’s success as a private welfare provider is the product rather than the cause of its large religious following. We also propose an empirically nuanced contribution to the debate on the current transformations of Arab authoritarian systems, questioning the regime’s ability to effectively co-opt the Zayd movement. Whereas the development of private welfare is politically risk free when authoritarian leaders control the financial and symbolic resources needed to maintain it, it can also strengthen independent-minded groups when, as in Zayd’s case, its funding stems from a large popular base that limits the possibilities of instrumentalization by the regime.



Sottimano, A., & Selvik, K. (Eds.) (2008). *Changing regime discourse and reform in Syria*. Centre for Syrian Studies. <https://ojs.st-andrews.ac.uk/index.php/syria/article/view/705>

Syria is in the course of becoming a “social market economy”. Like other socialist republics before it and especially those of a populist-authoritarian nature¹¹⁰, this process confronts the Ba ‘th regime with a triple, economic, political and ideological, challenge. Economically, it exposes long-protected actors and institutions to market forces and international competition. Politically, it puts strains on the rulers’ alliance with peasants and workers as the latter tend to be negatively affected



by economic liberalization (at least in the short term). Ideologically, it compromises the legitimisation formula of those in power as the original claim to serve the popular classes is undermined by increasing support for the private sector.

Selvik, K. (2008). It's the mentality, stupid: Syria's turn to the private sector. In: Sottimano, A., & Selvik, K. (Eds.) *Changing regime discourse and reform in Syria* (pp. 33-54). Centre for Syrian Studies.

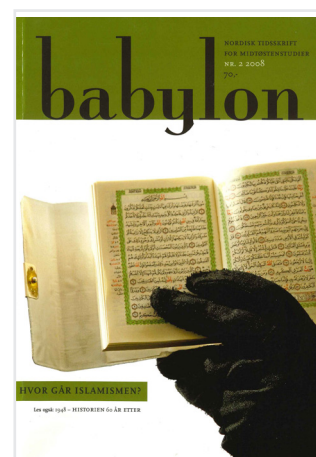
Kjetil Selvik analyses the subsequent change in discourse accompanying Bashar alAsad's economic liberalization after 2000. The old populist social contract is to be replaced with a new one that allows the bourgeoisie access and activism while the workers and peasants are being de-mobilized; the state no longer claims to represent them but they are not to be allowed greater freedom to strike, lobby etc. The discourse of the new liberalizing Five Year Plan talks about changes in mentality needed for development, targeting the regimes old constituencies of civil servants and workers as the problem. On the other hand entrepreneurship is to be fostered. These changes opened the door for the emerging bourgeoisie to promote a similar discourse: the main obstacle to development is bureaucrats who, being poor students, were trained in the East bloc and just want an easy job. Or it is laziness of workers.

Høigilt, J., & Selvik, K. (2008). Hva er islamisme? *Babylon Nordisk Tidsskrift for Midtøstenstudier*, 2. <https://doi.org/10.5617/ba.4215>

Islamisme behandles i forskningslitteraturen oftest som et politisk fenomen. Selv om en slik analyse ikke er feil, gir den ikke et fullstendig og sammenhengende bilde av islamismen. Her vil vi foreslå en fortolkningsramme som tar høyde for islamismens kulturelle aspekter for å favne bredere enn det tradisjonelle, politisk-orienterte paradigmet.

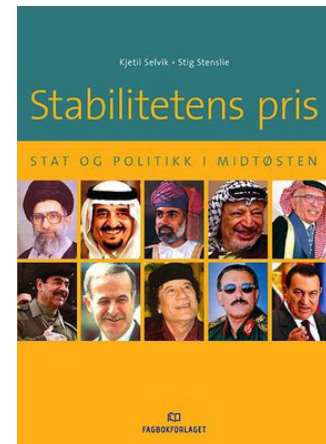
Bjorvatn, K., & Selvik, K. (2008). Destructive competition: Factionalism and rent-seeking in Iran. *World Development*, 36(11), 2314–2324. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2007.11.002>

The literature on the "resource curse" suggests that the quality of institutions determines a country's ability to transform resource wealth into economic development. This article explores the link between resource rents, institutions, and economic performance by focusing on the case of Iran. A key feature of Iran's institutional environment is its factionalized political system. We give an introduction to the main actors vying for control over the country's resources and analyze the effect of their destructive competition. Using it theoretical model, we study how Oil revenues and the relative strength of interest groups affect private investment and economic efficiency.



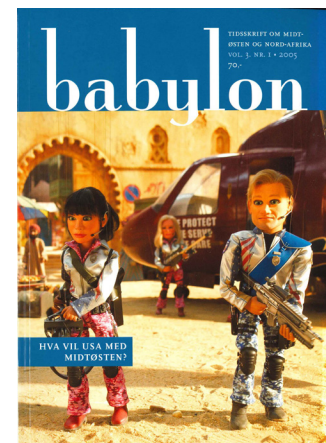
Selvik, K., & Stenslie, S. (2007). *Stabilitetens pris: stat og politikk i Midtøsten*. Fagbokforlaget. https://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digibok_2015021106116

Mediene skaper et bilde av Midtøsten preget av krig, religiøs ekstremisme, terror, uforutsigbarhet og raske omveltninger. I boken spør forfatterne om dette virkelig stemmer og om regionen virkelig er så ustabil. De viser at stabilitet faktisk er et fremtredende trekk ved Midtøsten-politikk: Med stabilitet menes regimestabilitet som har preget regionen siden 1970. De stiller videre tre viktige spørsmål: Hvordan har regimene i Midtøsten festet sitt grep om makten? Hvilke følger har regimenes maktstrategier for den politiske og sosioøkonomiske utviklingen? Og hvilke krefter truer regimene i dag? De belyser dette gjennom en rekke temaer: relasjonene mellom samfunn og stat, ideologi og legitimitet, statsmaktens organisering, og perspektiver for fremtiden i form av demokratisering eller sammenbrudd. Temaene er illustrert med eksempler hentet fra Jemen, Iran, Marokko, Egypt, Oman, Syria, Irak og Saudi-Arabia.



Shahibzadeh, Y., & Selvik, K. (2005). *Khatamis nederlag. Babylon Nordisk Tidsskrift for Midtøstenstudier*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.5617/ba.4158>

Løftene fra 1997-valget er ikke innfridd. Hvor gikk det galt for den iranske reformpresidenten? Etter åtte år med regjeringsmakt erklærer president Muhammad Khatami at hans reformprosjekt har mislykkes. Demokratiet han hadde håpet å etablere, har ikke materialisert seg, og de konservative har befestet sin stilling i maktapparatet. I et brev til folket i desember 2004 forklarer Khatami nederlaget med en blanding av de konservatives maktmisbruk og reformtilhengernes utålmodighet: "To, bittere historiske faktorer har hindret folkets bevegelse i å lykkes," hevder han, "sneversynte, organiserte metoder for å ødelegge folkemeningen på den ene siden, og ekstreme handlinger i reformens navn på den andre." Med ekstreme handlinger mener han provokasjoner mot styresmaktene, i form av voldelige demonstrasjoner, skjellsord, anklager og så videre, som har fått de konservative til å reagere. Men har ikke Khatami selv noe av skylden for nederlaget? Denne artikkelen retter søkelyset mot problemer i reform-presidentens tilnærming til demokratiseringsspørsmålet. Når reformbevegelsen ikke har fått gjennomslag for sine ønsker, skyldes det også mangler i strategi og lederegenskaper hos Khatami selv.



Selvik, K., & Shahibzadeh, Y. (2003). Menneskerettigheter og Sharia: Mojtaled Shabestaris post-islamsisme. *Babylon Nordisk Tidsskrift for Midtøstenstudier*, 2, 42-54. <https://doi.org/10.5617/ba.4327>

Er islam forenlig med FNs internasjonale menneskerettighetserklæring? I følge Mojtaled Shabestaris tolkning av sharia er svaret ja.



Selvik, K. (2003). Økonomi og demokrati. *Babylon Nordisk Tidsskrift for Midtøstenstudier*, 1, 14-24. <https://doi.org/10.5617/ba.4118>

En historisk analyse av de arabiske landene, Iran og Tyrkia, med vekt på hvilken innvirkning den økonomiske utviklingen har hatt på demokratiseringen.



Minneord

Kjære familie, venner og kolleger,

Først og fremst vil jeg på vegne av NUPI kondolere og uttrykke vår dypeste medfølelse til Sabreen, Serin, Elma og Adam, og resten av familien i denne tunge tiden. Når Kjetil fortalte om familien, så lyste øynene av stolthet og kjærlighet.

Så vil jeg gjerne si noen ord på vegne av kolleger. Med Kjetils bortgang så har vi på NUPI, innen norsk og internasjonal akademia, og offentligheten, mista en skarp observatør, en fremragende forsker, en inspirerende formidler, og en svært kjær kollega og venn.

Kjetil ble ansatt ved NUPI i 2016 og kvalifiserte seg til forskningsprofessor i 2021. Før han ble syk, ledet han vår forskningsgruppe for fred, konflikt og utvikling.

Kjetil disputerte for doktorgraden i statsvitenskap på Sciences Po i Paris i 2004. Før han kom til NUPI arbeidet han som forsker ved Fafo og Chr. Michelsens Institutt, og var også tilknyttet Institutt for sammenliknende politikk, Universitetet i Bergen, Institutt for kulturstudier og orientalsk språk, Universitetet i Oslo, og Institutt for Fredsforskning, Oslo.

Selvik har undervist ved Universitetet i Stockholm om politisk økonomi i Midtøsten. Han grunnla og var sjefredaktør for Nordic Journal of Middle East Studies Babylon. Kjetil har koordinert og ledet flere store forskningsprosjekt finansiert av Norges forskningsråd og av Utenriksdepartementet. Han har publisert i høythengende tidsskrifter, blei jevnlig brukt av NRK og alle de store kanalene, UD og andre stakeholders inviterte også jevnlig Kjetil inn i ulike sammenhenger.

Hans Midt-Østen forskning har fokusert på fire hovedpilarer 1. Næringspolitikk og virkningene av økonomisk liberalisering 2. Autoritær regimopolitikk 3. Religion og politikk, og 4. Media og politikk. Komiteen som skulle vurdere Kjetils professorkompetanse uttrykte følgende i sin redegjørelse: "Kort tid etter at Kjetil tok sin doktorgrad, etablerte han seg som en av Norges mest respekterte forskere på dagens Midtøsten. Hans publikasjoner gir ny empirisk innsikt i politikken i Syria, Kuwait, Dubai, Tunisia, Libanon, Iran og Irak. Når det gjelder Midtøsten innenfor statsvitenskapen, er han uten tvil den ledende forskeren i landet, så vel som en internasjonalt etablert akademiker."

Verden står i brann, og sannheten er under press. Vi må være grundige i våre analyser, vi må kunne forenkle og vi må kunne formidle. Kjetil tok det på største alvor. Han var en fremragende ambassadør for forskningens grundighet, for kunsten å formidle det kompliserte og for å nå frem med budskapet, med en stor dose klokskap.

Som kollega og venn vil vi minnes Kjetil som empatisk, reflektert og klok; lyttende, nysgjerrig og med en lun humor. En inspirator og mentor for mange. En høyt respektert, og høyt verdsatt kollega. Hans språkkunnskap imponerte, likeledes hans musikalske ferdigheter, som vi var heldige å få oppleve, på sommerfester og ved andre anledninger.

Kjære Kjetil, takk for alle gode samtaler. Takk for din visdom, din vennlighet og din utrettelige innsats. NUPI, akademia og offentlighetene har blitt fattigere uten deg men din arv vil leve videre gjennom de mange du har inspirert og vært et forbilde for. Vi vil ære ditt minne ved å fortsette det arbeidet du var så engasjert i—ved å være nysgjerrige, ved å ha mot til å forske på utfordrende tema, ved å være omsorgsfulle for andre og åpne for verden rundt oss.

Du vil bli dypt savnet, men aldri glemt. Hvil i fred.

Kari Osland, Direktør

