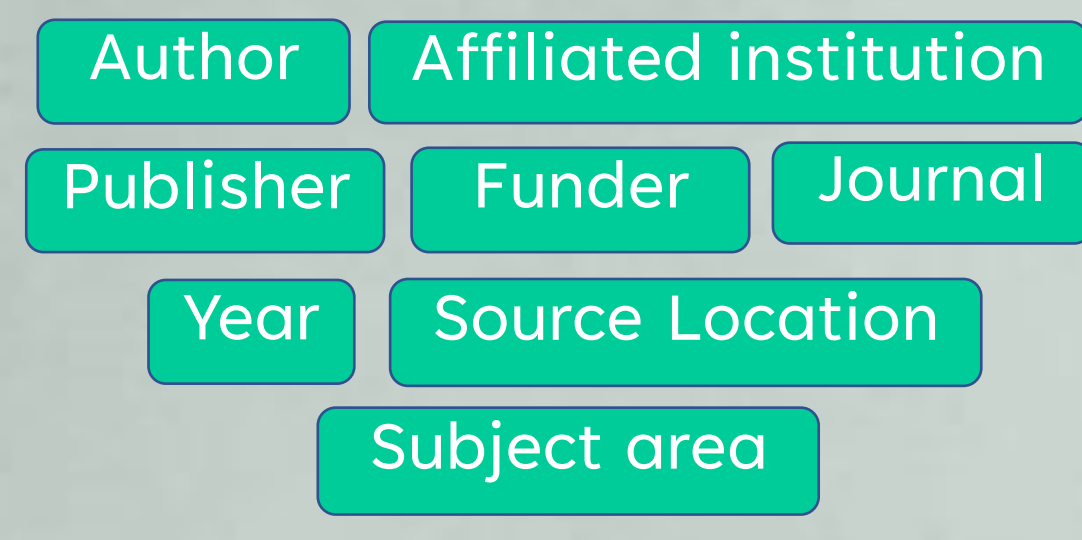# Bridging The Policy Gap
Tracking the research-policy interface

Overton

What indicators might we use to look at academic-policy engagement and its subsequent impact on the policy ecosystem?

Here we explore the potential of newly available policy citation network data using the Nordic region, and Finland in particular, as a case study.
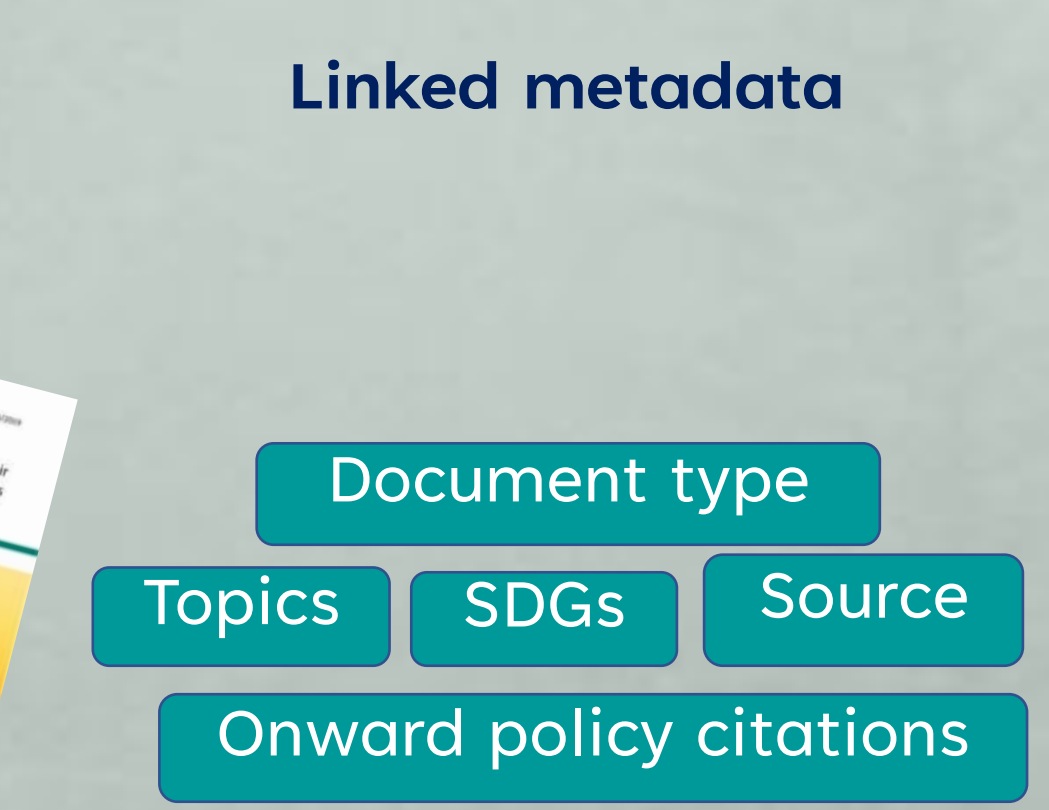
Policy citation networks: a new source of bibliometric data

Author | Affiliated institution
Publisher | Funder | Journal
Year | Source Location
Subject area

Linked metadata

Document type
Topics | SDGs | Source
Onward policy citations

Policy documents citing the article

We have developed a new database of > 6.5M policy documents and their citation network capturing links to both the scholarly and policy literature. It is freely available for use by academic research groups.
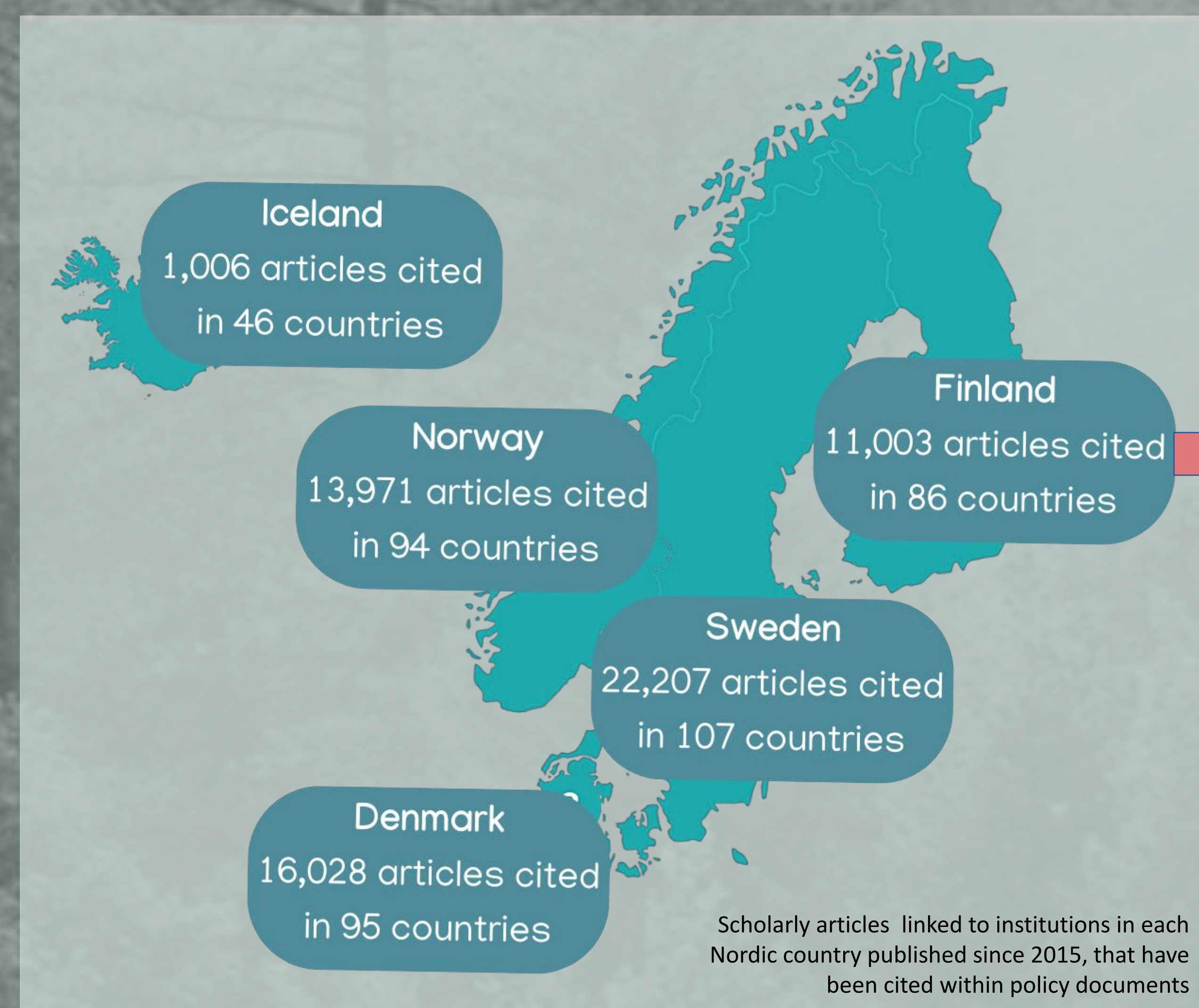
Policy engagement is not always centered around traditional outputs so we also look for mentions of researchers in free text, finding expert panel memberships, witness statements to parliaments, acknowledgements in policy documents and more. This enhances visibility of a broader range of engagement routes not captured with just citations.

Excitingly, the citation network leans heavily towards the social sciences, perhaps offsetting biases faced by researchers in those disciplines in scholarly citations.

Using policy citation data to explore the Nordic research landscape

The reach of Nordic research in global policy

Iceland
1,006 articles cited in 46 countries

Norway
13,971 articles cited in 94 countries

Finland
11,003 articles cited in 86 countries

Sweden
22,207 articles cited in 107 countries

Denmark
16,028 articles cited in 95 countries

Scholarly articles linked to institutions in each Nordic country published since 2015, that have been cited within policy documents

Focus on Finland

Which policy sources cite Finnish research? *[no of policy citations]*
1. Government of Finland (10k)
2. Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos (3,272)
3. Bank of Finland (1,725)
4. ETLA (799)
5. Luke (663)

Which institutions' research is most cited in policy? *[no of policy citations]*
1. University of Helsinki (3,527)
2. Tampere University (1,263)
3. University of Eastern Finland (1,262)
4. University of Turku (1,050)
5. Natural Resources Institute Finland (857)

Where is Finnish research most cited in policy? *[no of policy citations, by HQ of policy organisation]*
1. Finland (3,364)
2. IGO (2,762)
3. USA (1926)
4. EU (1,527)
5. UK (1,304)

Which funders are associated with Finnish research that is cited in policy? *[no of cited articles linked to funder]*
1. Academy of Finland (1,263)
2. European Commission (525)
3. MRC (256)
4. H2020_REST (225)
5. NERC (207)

How this data could be used

- Understanding the role of knowledge brokers in the policy process, eg think tanks, IGOs & NGOs

- Understanding where policymakers look for evidence – countries, institutions, etc.

- Understanding policy impact at different scales, eg individual, team, institutional, national and global

- Exploring the relationship between others in the academic ecosystem and policy impact, eg funders & publishers

Limitations
It's important to note that there is a caveat to all policy engagement studies: most of it goes unreported. Phone calls, for example are not routinely recorded. There is no formal citation culture inside government departments and some records e.g. working documents may be politically sensitive or otherwise not suitable for public consumption.

Possibilities for the future

Quantitative potential

If carefully used and framed appropriately and used in conjunction with qualitative approaches, we believe there is there's a lot of value in **exploring policymaking using quantitative data**.

Data-backed policy engagement

Policy data is already being used **to plan for and track research impact** and **enhance academic engagement with policymakers**, and we think we can go further.

Further research

Several studies have already been published using Overton's policy data but we're only at the beginning of **exploring the possibilities of this novel dataset within bibliometrics** and related fields..

We'd love to hear from you!
Visit **www.overton.io** or email **support@overton.io** to explore the data for yourself