



Northern
Notes 57



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To the field, and beyond

From the editors

Amidst global insecurity and unrest, Arctic researchers continues to deliver timely and highly relevant work on a broad range of issues, and this Northern Notes is reflective of that fact. We are glad to be able to continue to present examples of young researcher's work such as Irmelin Gram-Hanssen's excellent field report, and can present pieces on both Covid-19 in the Arctic from Sweta Tiwari and Andrey N. Petrov at the University of Northern Iowa and on EU Arctic policy, presented by Annika Nilsson at Nordland Research Institute. We also continue our portrait series, with an interview with Andrew Chater at Brescia University College.

This newsletter depends on the contributions you send in, and we hope to receive many more in the months and years to come.

We wish you all the best for the holiday season, and a happy new year! Let's all strive to do better in 2023.

A letter from the president

Grete Hovelsrud

Dear members

As the days grow visibly shorter here in Northern Norway and outdoor activities slow down, we turn on the lights and spend more time indoors. Usually, we would be grappling with winter conditions come November, but this year is different. It is warm, even balmy and the snow is absent here in Bodø. It is pleasant but also alarming. Climate change is increasingly visible in all seasons, all over the world. The final outcome of the COP 27 in Egypt shows that there is an increased understanding that we have set in motion irreversible changes on our planet. To reach an agreement on loss and damages for those who have no other option than costly adaptation measures is a small but important step. But as the consequences of climate change is increasingly relentless, this step is too small.

While we wait for winter and snow, we are busy planning the ICASS XI in May/June 2024. The ICASS XI will be different from the ten that went before, however. This time we have joined forces with the University of Arctic and High North Dialogue to organize a major Arctic conference - The Arctic Congress Bodø 2024. This joint effort illustrates how important collaboration is among scientists, educators, and others with love for and interest in the Arctic. Bodø will be the host city and we are planning for a congress that is both true to the spirit of our own International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences - ICASS and to the spirit of Arctic collaboration. While we plan the Congress, we must be cognizant of the local and regional context, in particular the fact that the city of Bodø is located on Sámi land. We must also be cognizant of the many Arctic voices and perspectives when we represent the Arctic.

The Arctic Congress Bodø 2024, with even broader participation than we have grown used at ICASS will likely create new discussions. While we plan the Arctic Congress Bodø 2024, we will have to be well prepared to welcome our Russian colleagues. The pause in our collaboration with Russian colleagues is cause for concern along many dimensions including data sharing and access, and open scientific discussions and interactions. Peer-to-peer relations and the exchange of data and information are so valuable in our efforts to generate knowledge and understanding about the world we live in. Because of the war in Ukraine the main arenas where IASSA is involved – the Arctic Council and its Working Groups have also been paused and silent. I can only hope that when Norway takes over the Chairmanship in 2023 a certain level of activity will resume. There is an underlying

worry in my heart that the deadlock in Arctic collaboration may continue after the war and set us back decades. In my capacity as IASSA President I will work with our closest collaborators, IASC and University of the Arctic to be prepared for when we again can push the play button. With the best wishes for a healthy and peaceful winter.

Save the Date

We are pleased to announce that the **Arctic Congress Bodø 2024** will take place from May 30th to June 3rd, 2024 in Bodø, Norway, hosted by Nord University and Nordland Research Institute.

Arctic Congress Bodø 2024 will be a joint event between ICASS XI, UArctic Congress 2024, and High North Dialogue 2024.

The congress will include high-level plenary and parallel sessions, as well as networking and social events. Bringing these events together in Bodø - a 2024 European Cultural Capital - will be a showcase of Arctic cooperation, and provide excellent opportunities to meet and exchange knowledge.



Connect with IASSA on Twitter

IASSA has its own Twitter account [@IASSA_SocSci](https://twitter.com/IASSA_SocSci) and will reach out to anyone interested in Arctic social sciences. Follow us for news and job announcements within the field of arctic social science.

Use the following hashtags:

#IASSA for news within and about the association

#ICASSXI for news about the next Congress in Bodø 2024



Also on Twitter:

IASSA president

[@GreteKaare](https://twitter.com/GreteKaare)

News from The IASSA Secretariat

The IASSA secretariat 2021-2024

Grete K. Hovelsrud, President
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Nordland Research Institute

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Tadeu Nogueira
PhD Business Economics
Senior advisor in the Research
and Development Division at
Nord

New Secretariat Members, Fall 2022

The IASSA Secretariate is ever evolving and expanding, and we have recently added two very skilled colleagues to the team:



Helena Gonzales Lindberg (PhD Political Science, Lund University) is a Senior Researcher at Nordland Research Institute. She has a background in human geography, environmental studies, and international relations, having studied at the universities of Lund, Oslo and Reykjavik. In her dissertation *The Constitutive Power of Maps in the Arctic*, Helena contended that maps perform the political by shaping generally held assumptions about the 'reality' and the future of the Arctic region. Among the research projects that she currently is involved

in is one that looks at overshoot adaptation in Fennoscandia and one about sustainable cruise tourism in the Arctic.



Tadeu Fernando Nogueira (PhD Business Economics, Nord University) is a Senior Advisor at the Research and Development Division at Nord University. Tadeu's work includes participation in the project "Research data" in collaboration with the University Library and the IT department. The goal of the "Research data" project is to facilitate that

researchers at Nord meet the increasing requirements regarding research data management and the open publication of research data.

The EU and the Arctic – in for a change?

By **Annika E. Nilsson** ‡

‡ Nordland Research Institute, Bodø, Norway

In October 2021, the European Commission launched a new Arctic strategy.¹ Many of the themes were familiar from earlier Arctic policy statements from the European Union (EU): climate change, peaceful cooperation with respect for existing multilateral collaborations, sustainable and inclusive development, and an emphasis on research. However, this time the tone was different. Already in the first paragraph, the policy described the EU as a geopolitical power with “strategic and day-to-day interests in both the European Arctic and the broader Arctic region.” Another new priority in the policy was that the EU’s approach to the Arctic should be guided by the European Green Deal. This was accompanied by an objective to keep oil, gas, and coal in the ground. Furthermore, the emphasis on the Arctic was underlined by a statement that the EU Commission shall work towards a “multilateral legal obligation not to allow any further hydrocarbon reserve development in the Arctic or contiguous regions, nor to purchase such hydrocarbons if they were to be produced.” The reactions came quickly from the Arctic Economic Council, who stressed that the EU should not intervene in Arctic business. In addition, voices in Norway highlighted the paradox that the EU continues to be dependent on oil and to emit of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.² Regarding the commitments represented in the EU’s new Arctic policy; what then are the implications for the social sciences and humanities? First, it is worth noting that the EU invested around 200 million Euros in Arctic related research during 2014-2020, and that the EU views Arctic research as a “diplomatic tool.” As researchers we often regard ourselves as being guided by scientific ideals and/or ethical or personal priorities. Nonetheless, there is no escaping the fact that

¹ European Commission and High Representative, “A Stronger EU Engagement for a Peaceful, Sustainable and Prosperous Arctic (JOIN(2021) 27 Final), Brussels, 13.10.2021.” (European Commission, 2021), https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/105481/joint-communication-stronger-eu-engagement-peaceful-sustainable-and-prosperous-arctic_en.

² Trine Jonassen, “The AEC on the EU Arctic Policy: ‘Leave Arctic Business to the People Who Live Here,’” *High North News*, October 15, 2021, <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/aec-eu-arctic-policy-leave-arctic-business-people-who-live-here>; Arne O. Holm, “The Arctic Is Still One, Big Happy Family – but Three of the Children Are Put to Shame,” *High North News*, October 15, 2021, <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/arctic-still-one-big-happy-family-three-children-are-put-shame>; Andreas Østhagen, “EUs forslag om å stanse all olje- og gassvirksomhet i Arktis har truffet en nerve,” *Aftenposten*, October 21, 2021.

our research many times is funded by the EU, and therefore our work is shaped by and intertwined with EU's political priorities for the Arctic.³ It is hardly a new situation that Arctic research is entangled in geopolitics. However, the explicit language used in the EU's new Arctic policy is a somber reminder of how knowledge production about the Arctic often is guided by political priorities that emanate from people and places removed from the region itself.

Moreover, one of the EU's current priorities is the transition away from fossil fuels. Access to other raw materials besides hydrocarbons is becoming increasingly important, including critical minerals. According to the new EU policy, "[b]uilding resilient EU value chains through sustainable raw materials extraction and processing will help the Arctic region to develop sustainably through innovation and circularity, ensuring health and safety at work and the creation of future-oriented decent jobs." One might ask from whose perspective the value chains are resilient, given that value chains that appear resilient from an EU perspective do not necessarily contribute to local, Arctic resilience. Examples include the increasing conflicts over land use in the Nordic Arctic, where the land required for reindeer herding clashes with the space required for installing wind power parks and expanding mining activities. It is in these cases, where conflicting interests emerge from the efforts made to reduce fossil fuel dependency, that research in the social sciences and humanities are essential. Moreover, within such areas of research it will be increasingly important to reflect on how our work is influenced by research funding, including the demands on us to produce policy relevant knowledge.

Another feature in the new Arctic strategy is an explicit recognition of the EU's environmental footprint on the Arctic. In the policy text, the discussion is primarily linked to the need to limit the pollution stemming from the EU, which includes mercury, soot, and plastics, and to ensure best practices when the Arctic supplies the EU with raw materials. However, from a social science and humanities perspective, a much broader set of issues are relevant, including those related to power. It is not only pollutants that move beyond borders, but also money, people, norms, and ideas. What do these movements entail and what consequences do the power within them have on the development of various local Arctic futures? Furthermore, the EU calls itself a geopolitical power that already resides in the Arctic. We need to step up the analysis of the EU in the Arctic region and examine how the EU's roles and impacts might change with the increasing emphasis on phasing out the fossil-fueled energy era.



³ Disclaimer. The author currently has funding from two projects funded by EU's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme: FACE-IT (grant agreement No 869154) and PROVIDE (grant agreement No. 101003687)

From the Field



Indigenous relationality can inform sustainability transformations

By **Irmelin Gram-Hanssen**[‡]

[‡] Western Norway Research Institute, Sogndal, Norway

How we understand relations and how we relate to each other, ourselves, and to 'Nature' matter for what kinds of changes we can create, both individually and collectively. This is one of the main conclusions from my doctoral thesis entitled "How Relations Come to Matter: A Study of the Role of Relations for Deliberate Transformations in an Alaska Native Community", which I successfully defended on June 21st, 2022, at the Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo in Norway.

The research project was guided by the growing concern within sustainability science that while the need for transformative change is evident, it is less clear how to move society towards sustainability in ways that are both just and equitable. This is especially concerning in the context of Indigenous communities, where their colonial experiences make such calls for 'transformative change' sound all too familiar. Who is to be the driver of transformative change? If transformations are inherently unruly and disruptive, how can we ensure that the transformative processes and outcomes support a future where both people and the planet can

thrive? More importantly, I wanted to examine these questions within the communities concerned.

The research for my thesis was based on a collaboration with the Yup'ik community of Igiugig in southwest Alaska. Igiugig is a small Alaska Native village of 70 people, located where Lake Iliamna is swallowed by the Kvichak River, at the intersection of Yup'ik, Dena'ina and Alutiiq homelands (www.igiugig.com). Previously, as a master's student at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (2010-2012), I had collaborated with people in Igiugig. Thus, returning to the village in 2017, this time as a PhD student, felt very meaningful to me as it enabled me to honor my commitment to the relationships initiated five years earlier.



Smoking of salmon in traditional vessel. Photo by I. Gram Hanssen.

In the context of the challenging socio-economic, political, and environmental conditions of rural Alaska, the village of Igiugig is remarkable in its efforts to enhance its political autonomy, cultural integrity, and environmental stewardship for the benefit of current and future generations. My fieldwork aimed at identifying the logics and values underpinning the community's sustainability efforts. Moreover, I wanted to understand how equitable and just transformative change can be ensured. I used Q-methodology and qualitative interviews to engage with community members' perceptions of what drives transformative change in Igiugig. In addition, I explored the importance of interpersonal relations and human-environment 'entanglements' for transformative change to manifest in the village and beyond.

Informed by my Yup'ik collaborators and grounded in 'the relational turn' within human geography and related fields, I took a 'deep' relational approach to the study of relations for deliberate transformations. I engaged with both Indigenous and post humanist ontologies that center on the potentials and responsibilities inherent in a world of relations. When engaging this approach, I distinguished between the ones that view relations as important attributes in an ultimately dualistic system and others that view relations as forming the very foundations of reality.

In the five articles included the dissertation, I offer insights into how deliberate transformations, that are both equitable and just, are enabled within local communities. My main conclusion is that relations matter for enabling deliberate transformations toward sustainability, including relation to places and people. However, relations in and of themselves are not enough to ensure that transformations are equitable and just. Specific relations, such as colonial relations, sometimes tend to fracture rather than build potential for sustainability transformations.

Therefore, I find that good quality relations are essential to unleash the full potential of transformations, both in research and practice. My research suggests that this can be acquired by employing a 'deep' relational approach to relations, grounded in values of reciprocity and responsibility, what I refer to as 'right relations'. I stress the need to turn to 'deep' relational ontologies and perspectives, and to build bridges between ontologies and knowledge-systems. This is crucial to co-create knowledge that can inform both the theory and the practice of deliberate sustainability transformation. Furthermore, the bridge-building must respect different worlding practices and acknowledge the entangled co-becoming of humans and nonhumans as inhabitants of planet Earth.



The author preparing fish for preservation.

“Humanity is at a critical point where we need to practice our ability to hold complexity”

The insights from this research have important implications for the fields of adaptation, transformation, and sustainability in the Arctic and beyond. Rather than only focusing on *what* needs changing, my research speaks to *the way* we must engage with transformative change to

Affiliated project:

AdaptationCONNECTS
(Connecting Old and New
kNowledge to Enable Conscious
Transformation to Sustainability),
funded by the Norwegian
Research Council (grant number
250434), led by Professor Karen
O'Brien;
[https://www.sv.uio.no/iss/english/
research/projects/adaptation/](https://www.sv.uio.no/iss/english/research/projects/adaptation/).

Supervisors: Professor Karen
O'Brien (University of Oslo) and
Grete Hovelsrud (Nord
University/ Nordland Research
Institute)

Access Irmelin's dissertation:
[http://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-
96997](http://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-96997)

ensure just, equitable, and enduring outcomes. A 'deep' relational approach implies that we and our relations matter in our attempts to understand and build transformative change. Equitable and just transformations in part depend on how we, as sustainability researchers and practitioners, understand and honor our responsibilities within as well as outside the research context.

Humanity is at a critical point in a time when we need to work on our ability to deal with complexity; to reflect and refine our understandings while simultaneously move ahead with our engagements for transformative change. Based on a 'deep' relational approach to deliberate transformations in Igiugig, Alaska, the dissertation supports this ongoing work.



The COVID-19 Pandemic in the Arctic: An update from the COVITA-ARCTICCOVID project

By **Sweta Tiwari and Andrey N. Petrov**[‡]

[‡]ARCTICenter, University of Northern Iowa, USA

The COVITA-ARCTICCOVID project at the ARCTICenter, University of Northern Iowa, has continuously monitored the COVID-19 dynamics and outcomes. In addition, they have monitored the vaccination uptake across 52 Arctic regions via web-based dashboards, namely the Arctic COVID-19 tracker and ArcticVAX: The Arctic COVID-19 tracker reports real-time data on key COVID-19 epidemiological indicators such as cumulative cases, deaths, incidence per 100,000, and Case Fatality Ratio (CFR), while the ArcticVAX tracks the real-time vaccination coverage. Both dashboards are managed by an interdisciplinary team of experts in data science, geoinformatics, epidemiology, and geography.

The first case of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Arctic was reported on February 20, 2020. The pandemic further advanced gradually across the Arctic regions in several distinct waves defined by cumulative and daily dynamics of confirmed cases (see Figure 1 below). The first Arctic-wide wave emerged between May and August of 2020 followed by the second wave between September 2020 and January 2021, the third wave between May 2021 and early December 2021, and the fourth wave between mid-December 2021 and May 2022. The third wave was dominated by the Delta variant while the fourth wave was dominated by the Omicron variant. As of

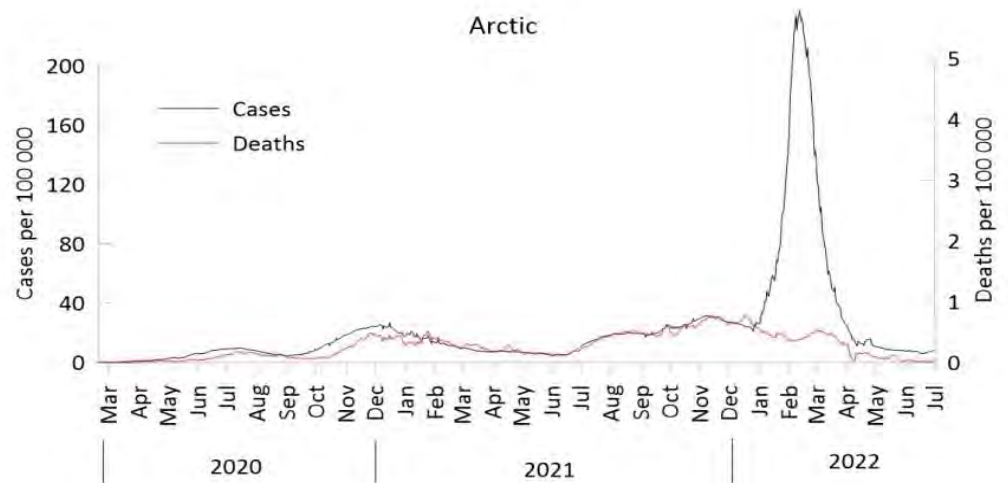


Figure 1. The Arctic overall daily confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths, March 2020 to July 2022 (7-day moving average). Source: Arctic COVID-19 tracker, 2022

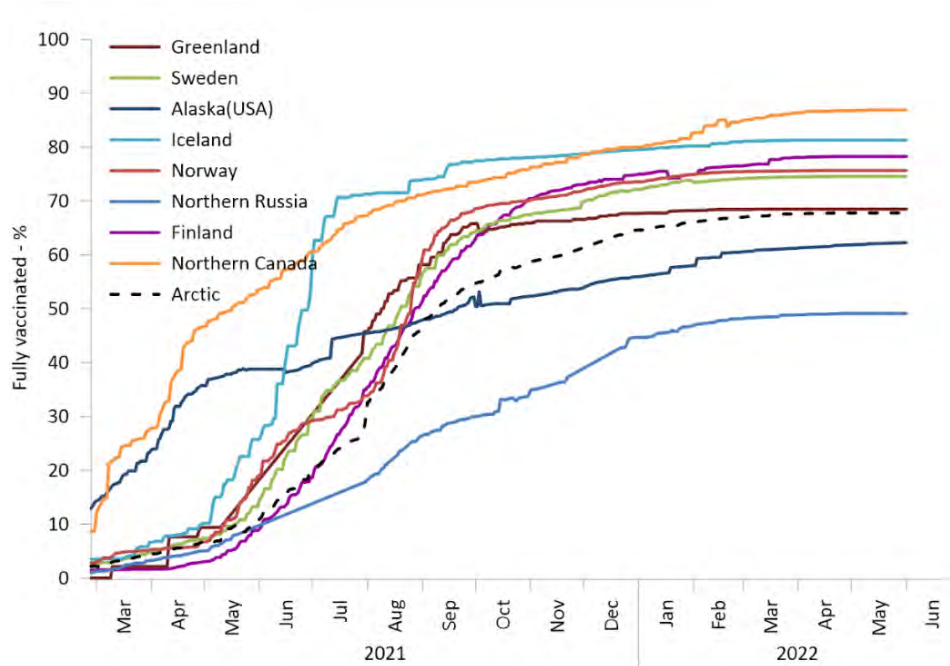


Figure 2. Percentage of fully vaccinated individuals in the Arctic. March 2021 to June 2022

October 1, 2022, 2,608,158 confirmed cases and 28,951 deaths have been reported in the Arctic.

During the Omicron wave, the dramatic increase in new cases in the Arctic was observed, however, the rise in the number of new deaths was not significant compared to the Delta wave. This signals that even remote regions are not spared by the severe impact of the pandemic. Given the considerable size of the population, Northern Russia has generally defined the overall Arctic COVID-19 trend in each wave.

One of the main reasons for low deaths per 100,000 is the high vaccination rate in some Arctic regions (see Figure 2 above). The first vaccines were administered in the Arctic in December 2020. The remoteness and limited access to healthcare services in many communities could have become a barrier to the rapid COVID-19 vaccine rollout in the Arctic. However, Alaskans and Arctic Canadians were among the first individuals in the world to receive COVID-19 vaccines. After May 2021, other Arctic regions, including the Nordic countries, increased their coverage of vaccinations. By October 2021, over 50 percent of all adults living in the Arctic were fully vaccinated with two dosages. Moreover, the fewer deaths per 100,000 and the vaccination success in the Arctic can be attributed to the high degree of self-determination among the Indigenous Peoples and their institutions in the decision-making about how to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In other words, Indigenous control and co-management in the area of healthcare provision have been key factors in the Arctic resilience to the pandemic. Furthermore, it is reasonable to expect that this will play an important role also in future health crises.

Funding and further info:

This project is supported by NSF Award #2034886. Further information is available at: <https://arcticcovid.uni.edu/>

Literature:

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Petrov, A. N., Welford, M., Golosov, N., DeGroot, J., Devlin, M., Degai, T., & Savelyev, A. (2021). Lessons on COVID-19 from Indigenous and remote communities of the Arctic. *Nature Medicine*, 27(9), 1491-1492.

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Petrov, A. N., Welford, M., Golosov, N., DeGroot, J., Degai, T., & Savelyev, A. (2020). Spatiotemporal dynamics of the COVID-19 pandemic in the arctic: early data and emerging trends. *International Journal of Circumpolar Health*, 79(1), 1835251.

Petrov, A. N., Hinzman, L. D., Kullerud, L., Degai, T. S., Holmberg, L., Pope, A., & Yefimenko, A. (2020). Building resilient Arctic science amid the COVID-19 pandemic. *Nature Communications*, 11(1), 1-4.

Portrait



Andrew Chater:

Observing the observers

By Thoralf Fagertun, Communications Advisor, Nordland Research Institute

Andrew Chater is an assistant professor at Brescia University College, an affiliate of the University of Western Ontario, Canada. Originally from London, Ontario, Canada, he got his doctorate degree in Political Science from the University of Western Ontario. In addition to his contract at Brescia, Chater is a lecturer at King's University College, Canada, a research fellow at the Polar Research and Policy Initiative, and a member of the North American and Arctic Defence Security Network. In 2019, he was the Fulbright Canada Visiting Chair in Arctic Studies at the University of Washington in Seattle.

What are you currently working on related to Arctic issues?

- I have a couple of ongoing projects about the Arctic Council, although I am in the process of reformulating them due to the situation with Russia. In one of those projects, I look at the role of observers in the Arctic Council. In a nutshell, there has been a lot of discussion about how these actors will impact the Council, but my

research has shown that their roles are fairly contained, constructive and at all that special compared to other international institutions. Recently, I also gave a presentation at the Arctic Circle Assembly where I discussed the opportunities for co-operation between Canada and Greenland as well as the basis of this relationship. Moreover, I examine the role of Indigenous peoples within Arctic governance, comparing the Arctic region to other regions.

In your opinion, what is important for sustainable development in the Arctic?

- In my opinion, the most important thing is the voice of the people who live in the region. This, of course, includes Indigenous peoples and all Arctic residents. A lot of decision-making in institutions such as the Arctic Council is done by people from outside the region. Hence, dominant political narratives might be very different from the visions that Arctic peoples have for their homeland. In addition, peoples in the Arctic will most likely have differences among themselves about how the future should look like.

What role can the social sciences play in this development?

- I think the social sciences can lend perspectives and solutions from around the world that apply to pressing Arctic issues such as human development and climate change adaptation. Often we tend to discuss the Arctic region as exceptional, but I think that the issues and solutions are a lot less exceptional than people think. Social science can contribute to this perspective.

How do you envision the Arctic 30 years from now?

- I am optimistic that there will be progress on issues like economic development and green economies. I hope for a future where the standard of living in the Arctic has risen, access to things like food is affordable and stable, the rights of Indigenous peoples are respected, and Arctic residents are empowered to make their own decisions for their region. However, I fear that the future will include persistent disruptions from climate change.

How can IASSA best contribute to Arctic research in the years to come?

- Researchers in all disciplines often work in silos. I think cross-disciplinary research will lead to more holistic answers to the questions we research. IASSA can help facilitate such collaborations across disciplines.



Your publication in Northern Notes?

Suggest new publications within the field of Arctic social science for Northern Notes!

We are always eager to disseminate interesting reads and publications within our research field to our members. Give us a hint about your latest reading interests at IASSASecretariat@nord.no or on Twitter ([@IASSA_SocSci](https://twitter.com/IASSA_SocSci)).

Announcements

Northern Kinship Care partnership in Greenland, The Faroe Islands and Denmark

The Northern Kinship care project aim to set a new agenda for research, development, and education in the social and pedagogical areas of all three countries within the Danish Realm. The partnership participants are the University of Greenland, PI/SPS, The University of the Faroe Islands, University College Syd, and VIA University College. The cooperation will establish a solid collaborative framework for developing joint research and development projects. Within this framework, we will create and implement the best social and pedagogical knowledge in research, education, and practice to benefit children and families in all three countries. Moreover, the partners will initiate joint research regarding out-of-home care, with the primary focus on kin and private network placements. This is an area where all three countries require knowledge and development.

Within the three countries, there is a lot of knowledge about how we work to support families and children, but there is still much to learn and we have many common challenges. In our cooperation, where equal partners create and exchange knowledge for solving everyday social and pedagogical challenges, we can make a difference for the most vulnerable children and their families.

Many things bind us together in the Danish Realm, but we are also different, with unique cultures, conditions, and interests. However, this is also one of the greatest strengths of our research and development cooperation. All the partners believe that we can learn more about our practices together as we, through comparative and individual analyses, study how the social and pedagogical fields are expressed and can be developed. In other words, we will become more knowledgeable about ourselves and each other through cross-disciplinary research and development cooperation.

The partnership project is two years in the making, from the initial idea to where we are today, with a robust and resourceful collaboration between specialists in kinship care. The collaboration is agreed to be in place until the end of 2024, while there are potentials for continuing beyond this timeline.

In August 2022, we finally had the chance to meet in Ilulissat, Greenland, for a rewarding three-day session, where we, amongst other things, set the stage for the next part of the project. Besides acquiring further funding, the focus will be on gathering quantitative data regarding the phenomenon of children staying with relatives for an extended period arranged within the family network, without the intervention of any public authority. The first data from Denmark is remarkable, and we are excited to see the statistics from Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

In addition, we will establish working groups to discuss our findings. We are considering setting up two groups, one with participants from the broad practice field of social work and one with experts in kinship care.

If you are interested in participating in one of the working groups or if you would like to learn more about our project, you are welcome to contact Bonnie Jensen at boje@uni.gl

New IASSA Working group

The IASSA Council has formally approved the establishment of a Working Group on Justice in the Arctic (JAWG). An invitation to join the group was announced in the last issue of Northern Notes (NN56). The call was answered by 26 researchers who recognize the need for a research agenda on justice in and for the Arctic region.

Currently, the working group includes both early career and established scholars, as well as researchers from around the circumpolar Arctic. It includes scholars from across the domain of social science including political science, ethics, sociology, geography and law; it also includes government-employed practitioner-scholars. Membership of the group is open to all IASSA members.

The purpose of the Justice in the Arctic Working Group is to promote research in and on the Arctic using theories of justice and to collaborate on research activities (i.e. publications, research proposals) related to the Arctic Justice agenda. While issues of justice are not new to the Arctic, scholarship on justice and the Arctic is a growing area of interest and represents a significant gap in scholarly literature and practice. In particular, the working group will work towards framing a critical research agenda for justice in and for the Arctic. Moreover, the group will promote the significance of justice in political decision-making and economic development of the Arctic.

The group is led by Dr Corine Wood-Donnelly, Associate Professor of International Relations and the High North at Nord University and the Scientific Coordinator for the EU funded Horizon 2020 climate action project, JUSTNORTH.

Capacity Building with the 'Street Team' at the Municipality of Nuuk (Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq)

Contact the author:
perry@uni.gl

By Kevin Perry[‡], PhD

[‡] Centre for Arctic Welfare, Ilisimatusarfik (University of Greenland)

The following note reports on an ongoing participatory action research (PAR) collaboration between Kommuneqarfik Sermersooqs' 'Street Team' and the Centre for Arctic Welfare (CAR) in Nuuk, Greenland. The primary task of the street team is to undertake outreach social work in areas and institutions in Nuuk where marginalised and vulnerable adults frequent. The main aim of this outreach work is to establish contacts, build relationships, and unravel the underlying issues faced by the adults in focus. Subsequently, we build bridges between the individual needing help and the appropriate municipal agency

Participatory action research (PAR) is about doing research alongside insiders of an organisation or a community, but never research to or on them (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Alternatively, it is the insiders who carry out the research. In PAR, reflexivity is crucial, and researchers must continually examine and take stock of the beneficiaries of the action undertaken in the research process. For example, the immediate 'beneficiaries' in the outreach social work mentioned above are the Street Team members and the municipality. The secondary beneficiaries are the marginalised adults, who finally get targeted help, which in turn benefits the whole community. Throughout the research process, the municipality employees gain new perspectives and tools for working in the local community. Furthermore, reflexivity requires researchers to be transparent about their research while simultaneously be self-critical about their role in the research process and what led to their involvement (Bradbury, 2015).

In the research project, the collaborative initiative is bottom-up, involving one researcher from the Centre for Arctic Welfare, a team coordinator, the street team members from Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, and a professional outreach worker from Copenhagen Municipality. Follow-up meetings with the team leader made it clear that the Street Team employees would benefit from relevant professional skills and competencies. This would make them better equipped for helping the vulnerable adults in their municipality. Capacity building was suggested as a suitable way of

training the team. This is a multi-dimensional dynamic process that improves the ability of the individual, group, organisation, or community to achieve their objectives and contribute to long-term sustainability (Brown et., al, 2001).

Moreover, our PAR collaboration aims to improve the individual team members' capacity and the team as a unit. Strengthening the Street Team's skills and competencies helps improve the services they provide to vulnerable adults in the community. However, the Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq lacks the capacity to undertake the needed capacity building. Therefore, the Centre for Arctic Welfare (CAR) has agreed to undertake an ongoing collaboration to assist in improving the Street Team's skills and performance. In what follows, I sketch out the first three phases of the collaboration.

In phase one and two, I utilised ethnographic methods to generate data (i.e., shadowing, participant observation, field notes, and recording a research diary using "thick description" (Geertz,1973)). One method is shadowing, described by MacDonald (2005), which is to closely follow/accompany a member of an organisation or community throughout their working day. This can be done during one particular day, a single work shift or over several days or a month. Throughout this activity, the researcher asks questions to clarify what is happening or probe working practices. In addition, I recorded detailed field notes about my observations, noting, for example, the mood and body language of the person under observation This provides a direct, multi-dimensional picture of the person's role, approach, views, and tasks, along with comprehensive data collection.

During phase one, which began in October 2021, I shadowed and observed three Street Team workers during three weeks in their outreach social work in the streets, local institutions, and the Container Town (shipping containers where people reside) in Nuuk. I also attended meetings between the team coordinator and the team members. Additionally, I had many conversations with the Street Team's coordinator during this period. Most of the conversations focused on their learning and training needs. Hence, in phase one, I gathered a lot of data concerning the practices of the Street Team and inputs from the team about training wishes.

In early December 2021, phase two started, were shadowed a qualified social worker in Copenhagen for two weeks. The employee works for the Municipality of Copenhagen and undertakes outreach social work with homeless, marginalised, and vulnerable Greenlanders on the streets of Copenhagen. The particular social worker had been doing this job for over a decade. Similarly to phase one, I generated valuable information concerning outreach social work practices and ideas for how to strengthen the skills of the Street Team in Nuuk.

Phase three involved fundraising to finance flying the Danish social worker whom I had shadowed in Copenhagen to Nuuk. Fortunately, the director of CAR was successful in raising funds, which resulted in a three-day collaborative training session in March 2022, with the social worker from Denmark and the Street Team, as well as

two homeless shelter staff members. The feedback from the session's participants has been very positive and they found the training to be helpful for their ongoing work on the streets of Nuuk. For example, one Steet Team worker responded that she and her closest colleague found the training to be thoroughly hands-on, transferable, and empowering when working with their target group:

"The training we received was much needed and something we can use in our work. I have not had much training whatsoever. Before the training, when on the job, I usually used my intuition. But now I feel better prepared for the job and have some tools to use while working with our citizens."

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A Hello from the Fellow: Meet Silja Zimmermann

Excerpt from CCSS Utrecht Newsletter

In February 2021, Silja Zimmermann started her PhD studies at the Centre for Complex Systems Studies (CCSS). She is working with Ine Dorresteijn, Bert Theunissen, Brian Dermody and Martin Wassen on leveraging a sustainable transition of the food system for indigenous communities in the Bering Sea. Here is her

From Geography in Germany to Arctic socio-ecological systems in the Netherlands

I am originally from Germany, where I studied for my bachelor in Geography and Master in Conservation and Landscape Ecology in Bonn. In addition, I did a second, more research-oriented Master degree in Global Change Geography in Berlin. While on an exchange to Iceland during my bachelor studies in Geography I fell deeply in love with the Arctic, so I did two more exchange semesters in Finland and on Svalbard during my studies. My Master's thesis contributed to a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) project, using a multidisciplinary approach to study changes in habitat use in Arctic marine mammals due to climate change. After finishing my studies, I started working

on Arctic marine conservation for the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) in Potsdam. Later I joined Greenpeace International as a volunteer deckhand on board the MY Arctic Sunrise before applying for PhD positions and luckily ending up at Utrecht University.

Arctic systems are complex systems

Over the years, I have studied various components of Arctic socio-ecological systems: Vegetation dynamics in Iceland, reindeer husbandry and their effects on lichen cover in Norway, and habitat selection of marine mammals in the circumpolar Arctic. However, what has always fascinated me the most is how all these components play together and create dynamic systems. Arctic socio-ecological systems are complex, highly interlinked, and spread across large temporal and spatial scales. They can seem so distant to our lives in central Europe, yet what happens in the Arctic significantly affects us here as well – and vice versa. That is why I think studying complex system offers valuable tools for working towards a holistic system understanding.

Decolonize our foods!

The overall goal of my PhD project is to show how complexity methods can be used within transdisciplinary research, which actively involves other stakeholders outside the academia. More specifically, I adopt a complex systems perspective to identify leverage points in the marine-based Arctic indigenous food system on the Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea.

By establishing a Transformation Lab, I aim to involve and empower community members to identify transformation pathways towards a more desirable future. I use network analysis to look at interdependencies between key actors and prevailing sustainability issues. Furthermore, I will explore how the food system is influenced by changes in people's values and paradigms from the past until today. In close collaboration with the local community, I aim to develop positive scenarios of the future food system and pathways towards a more just and sustainable system state.

These pathways will then be tested using agent-based modelling to capture the system's dynamics and inform the community's possible interventions. By using

“Arctic ecological systems can seem so distant to our lives in central Europe, yet what happens in the Arctic significantly affects us here as well – and vice versa.”

methodologies from both the natural and social sciences, I hope to gain a holistic and systemic understanding of the local food system to find key leverage points for a sustainability transformation.

