



Issue 59

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## Features

A letter from the president..	2
From the editors.....	2
Just Transitions at COP 28 ..	5
Portrait: Magali Vullierme ...	8
The Global Arctic .....	10
New publications.....	13

# The Global Arctic

## From the editor

Into a new year, with a new COP under our joint global belt and a global geopolitical situation more tense than for decades, a regional focus on Arctic issues may be as important as ever. All over the world, anthropologists have always asserted, people live in villages (be they large or small, neighborhoods in cities or de facto small places in the outskirts). In turbulent times, it is even more important perhaps to focus on what makes lives feel secure, on what the everyday provides us during times of transformation and distress. The world is about to become another kind of place, and what that might look like we of course do not know. As the realisation that the excessive mistreatment of nature and burning of carbon now manifests in devastating effects of climate change and imminent shortage of much needed resources, transformation seems inevitable, how and when it will happen the concerning uncertainty. This uncertainty also manifests in the Arctic, and I believe it is our role as researchers to continue to facilitate for processes of interaction, co-production and analysis of the multiple ways social life manifests in the region, how we continue to adapt (in new ways and in old) to our surroundings and how the Arctic can be a place where transformation can be just, equitable and truly sustainable.

Bright Dale (PhD), ed.

# Letter from the president

Grete Hovelsrud

## Dear members

In about four months' time, IASSA will welcome its members to the Arctic Congress Bodø 2024 and the ICASS XI, 29 May – 3 June. As I have mentioned a few times over the past two years, IASSA is collaborating with University of the Arctic and the High North Center for Business and Governance at Nord University here in Bodø in organizing this joint congress. We will therefore welcome a broader set of participants than we usually do in IASSA. Our respective congresses ICASS XI, UArctic 2024 and High north Dialogue 2024 merge into one. We have been cognizant throughout the planning that we also have to maintain our identities and cultures. We have responsibilities towards our members and partners, and the planning is therefore a continuous exercise in diplomacy and acrobatics. IASSA is the oldest partner of the three and I am very proud of the engagement of our members, our past presidents and council members to ensure that we are true to our IASSA objectives, research principles and bylaws. They stand the test of time and are critical guiding lights for me, the IASSA Council and the Secretariat as we navigate our way towards what is quite possibly the largest Arctic social science congress ever. One of the IASSA objectives is to promote and stimulate international cooperation and increase the participation of social scientists in national and international Arctic research. The upcoming congress will facilitate just that, and it will also promote communication and coordination with other research organizations. In fact, the congress speaks to all IASSA's objectives.

At the congress IASSA will carry out our General Assembly as we always do at the ICASSs, and this is the time to renew memberships – which is needed to vote. We therefore urge you to tick the IASSA box when you register for the congress and renew or become a new member of IASSA. It is also time to think about whether you would like to run for president or to be elected to the IASSA Council. We will publish a call for nominations mid

to late February, so please stay tuned. The IASSA Council has an important job in running IASSA and we need dedicated council members to maintain the visibility and relevance of IASSA. With an Arctic Council on pause one of IASSA's main arenas is not available to us. This galvanizes our relevance. We have for decades talked about a changing Arctic – it is the only constant, and as social scientists we are aware that society is always dynamic, and that change is the norm. When we study the relationships between society and nature, we see the same dynamic. From my own work on Svalbard, I also find that change is constant, but that some of these changes are increasing in rate and magnitude, such as climate change, even though a changing climate is not the main concern. But looking deeper into major dilemmas connected to climate change emerge including changing environmental regulations, demographic policies, geopolitics and the potential for new and different explorations towards a green energy transformation. This requires both interdisciplinary research between social and natural sciences, and a transdisciplinary approach if we are to understand the linked and nested ongoing changes. These and many other interdisciplinary conundrums will be addressed at the Arctic Congress Bodø 2024, and not only in scientific sessions, but in panels, pubinars, creative spaces and over the dinner table. I am so much looking forward to welcoming IASSA members and others to our congress.

## Connect with IASSA on Twitter

IASSA has its own Twitter account [@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](#)

IASSA Twitter admin  
[@helenagonz](#)

# Abstract call: LAST CHANCE!

Deadline is the 19th of January 2024, 17:00 CET.



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The Arctic Congress Bodø 2024, including ICASS XI, from the 29 May to 3 June 2024, welcomes abstract contributions.  
Deadline is the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2024.

We welcome abstracts for 118 sessions under four main themes: 1. Oceans; 2. Climate and environment; 3. Sustainable economic developments; 4. People of the North; and 5. Other. The duration and format of the presentation (oral or poster) will be decided individually by the session convener(s) and is subject to the accepted number of abstracts. The sessions run either 60 or 90 minutes. Note that this is a completely onsite event in Bodø, Norway, and no hybrid options will be made available by the conference conveners.

## Guidelines

- Abstracts must be submitted through the [submission portal](#).
- Abstracts must be submitted in English.
- Notification of acceptance/rejection will be given in early February.
- If accepted, presenting authors also need to register and pay the conference fee in order to be included in the final programme.

For more information about the Arctic Congress Bodø 2024 & ICASS XI see:  
<https://www.arcticcongress.com/>

# COP28 in Dubai: A just Arctic energy transition

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Berit Kristoffersen, UiT Arctic University of Norway and Roman Sidortsov, Michigan Technological University (MtU)

During the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) held in Dubai from November 30 to December 12, 2023, over 200 pavilions offered extensive programs. However, only two pavilions specifically concentrated on Arctic research: the Cryosphere pavilion and the Just North and Beyond: A Pop-up University pavilion. The latter was organized and coordinated by social scientists from the University of Sussex, Michigan Technological University, and UiT - the Arctic University of Norway, in partnership with the JUSTNORTH Horizon 2020 project funded by the EU. Pavilion organizers received support from faculty and students from several British, Australian, American, Middle-Eastern, and European universities, NGOs, Indigenous groups, and Business. COP28 attracted delegations from 199 countries and more than 100,000 participants. The Pop-up University pavilion nearly 100 events, exploring diverse dimensions of the Arctic's energy transition among other cross-cutting themes. These events covered topics such as equitable transition for indigenous communities, sustainable aviation, collaborative energy future planning with local communities, and the essential role of renewable energy and minerals in moving away from fossil fuels in the Arctic.



November 30<sup>th</sup> was the JUSTNORTH Day, where Mark Rouleau (to the right) together with Roman Sidortsov (second from the left) organized a full-day workshop simulating negotiations over offshore wind parks in the Norwegian Arctic. This final JUSTNORTH workshop carried the notion on which the project was premised -an economic activity or a project cannot be sustainable if it's deemed

ethically deficient by key stakeholders in rightsholders. The participants were able to reach a solution in this highly in this complex and contested case via applying the Value Equity Assessment tool, which represents an evolution of one of the main deliverable of the project. To the left in the picture is Abdulrafiu Abbas (Sussex) and in the middle Berit Kristoffersen (UiT).



Ragnhild Batseba Ødegaard Skaugen (UiT) (above) organized a two hour workshop related to the NFR-project Drivkraft (driving force) that engages youth and local industries in Senja and Lofoten, Northern Norway on climate action and planning.



Maria Maria Madalena Das Neves (above) and Nikolaos Gkikas (UiT) gave a Pop-up university lecture on blue justice in the Arctic, focusing on offshore energy production.



MtU master students organized daily debriefings on the COP28 negotiations every afternoon.

# Arctic Portrait

## Magali Vullierme



*Magali was born in France and currently lives in Montréal, Québec. She has been studying and working on Arctic sub-regions for the past ten years.*

### What are you working on related to Arctic issues?

My research aims to better understand the (inter)relationships between, on the one hand, the Indigenous and local populations of the Arctic regions, and, on the other hand, multi-scalar security issues. From collaboration with the Canadian Armed Forces to assessment of health security in Canada, through perception of climate change risks in Siberia, my research projects are built around field research to understand the reality of Arctic peoples and to collect their voices, their opinions. My current research projects are centered on the impacts of climate change on Arctic infrastructures, more specifically the acceleration of permafrost melting and erosion that will impact airports, ports and housings in the coming years.

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

Still too often, political decisions are made without considering Arctic cultural or environmental specificities and without consulting Arctic inhabitants - who know what is working or not on the ground. Ultimately, these decisions are not adapted to Arctic realities. Let's take the Health sector as an example. The Inuit Nunangat healthcare sector is currently going through a major crisis. One of the main issues is staff recruitment and turnover. One solution would be to train and recruit Inuit healthcare workers, persons who were born there and who live up there. However, certain certifications require academic levels that are too high for a population that does not have access to the same level of education as youth in the South. Political will, combined to regulatory flexibility, would be therefore needed to adapt the system to Northern realities - and not the other way around.

### And what part can the social sciences play in this development?

The social sciences are, in my opinion, a cornerstone to truly support populations no matter the research subjects. Going back to humans, as

individuals, to understand how to better help a group of individuals, a community, is essential. And the best way to do that, in my opinion, is to always combine social sciences with environmental sciences or other "hard sciences".

In my last research project, for example, we were able to demonstrate the real benefits of a transdisciplinary project, which combined radiology and sociology, quantitative and qualitative. Thanks to qualitative interviews, we were able to identify issues that did not emerge from the quantitative survey. Even more important, adding a sociological angle to a project focused on radiology highlighted the specificities of the IQI Inuit model of health and well-being - and explain why a Southern way of approaching Health could not work in the long run in the North.

### **How do you envision the Arctic 30 years from now?**

In 30 years, I hope that Arctic inhabitants will have access to all the basic needs that every human being is entitled to: a home, healthy (country) food, an education adapted to Northern needs and realities, a feeling of health and well-being, and a sense of individual worth, recognition and agency.

### **What can an organization like IASSA contribute in the years to come?**

In the future, an organization like IASSA should continue to promote the addition of social sciences and bottom-up approaches in all (multidisciplinary) research projects. It is only by having a holistic vision that we can find innovative solutions, adapted to Arctic realities and accepted by local populations – because developed by these local populations.

# The global Arctic of the future calls for new ideas



Photo: Ragnhild Utne, NVP

Bjørn P. Kaltenborn

Senior research scientist at the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA) and Vice President at the Norwegian Scientific Academy for Polar Research

The Arctic has always been changing and always will be. But what if the future in the Arctic is not some variant of the past, but something quite different from what we know today? Do we have ideas, ideas and institutions that can provide the knowledge we need to keep up with the future? The global interest in resources in the North is probably without parallel in polar history. The questions are many and complicated related to how climate change will affect the polar regions. There is great uncertainty about and how war and geopolitical tensions will play out in the northern regions. How dependent will the world be on the resources in the Arctic Ocean in the future and who will set frameworks and management mechanisms for resource utilization? The only thing we can say with some degree of certainty is that many more nations than the traditional 'Arctic states'; The USA, are now knocking on the door and want access to resources and a place in decision-making processes. The future in the Arctic is global. We can also state with certainty that the relatively peaceful and friendly tone of cooperation that has long functioned between the states in the circumpolar Arctic is under pressure, and we must expect that stable institutions and governance systems such as the Arctic Council, the Law of the Sea and various other international conventions will be challenged beyond what we would have thought a few years ago.

## The world's largest social network

The international research community is probably the world's largest social network. It spans across nations, cultures, interests and disciplines, and very different ways of seeing the world - but it is linked together by a common

belief in the importance of knowledge itself. However, much of today's polar research is characterized by a strong disciplinary orientation and little exchange and interaction across subject boundaries. Now we need an army of young, motivated, critical, and curious researchers who are able to see the global Arctic as a different place from what we are used to. We must accept that the polar regions can go from being peripheral to becoming central locations for resource exploitation and settlement, that new transport routes will emerge, that the balance of great powers in the world can change from an east-west axis to become multipolar, administrative institutions can be dissolved, and that the security policy in the polar regions may have to be radically revised. The polar research of the future must solve complex problems and unite different ways of thinking and professional approaches.

**Polar research will need to deal with new questions.**

Polar bears, ocean currents and indigenous people will continue to be topics needing attention. But the polar researchers of the future must also deal with completely different tasks such as how can melting ice in the Arctic be used as a fresh water supply in southern areas affected by drought due to climate change? How will changes in the Arctic climate affect agriculture at southern latitudes, how should fisheries in the Arctic Ocean be regulated when this becomes an accessible international commons, how can we avoid that the Arctic becomes a military theater and the subject of active superpower rivalry? And which countries and on what basis should be legitimate actors in the game about the future Arctic?

**Research can produce 'soft power'.**

Perhaps it is the younger generations of researchers with their background and outlook on the future who are best able to think new thoughts about



Photo: Bjørn Kaltenborn

the Arctic and how interdisciplinary knowledge can contribute to sustainable development in the northern regions. Geopolitical tensions in the Arctic and Antarctic are growing. Research and science

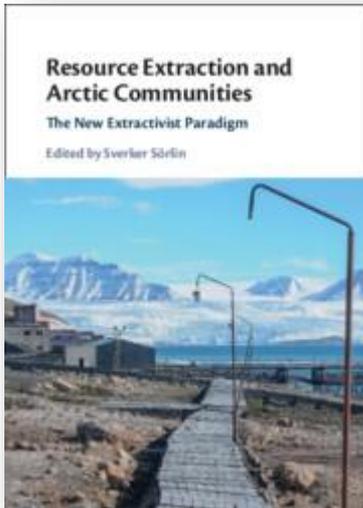
produce 'soft power'. Unlike bullets and gunpowder, the results of research must be studied, interpreted, and used once they have been 'fired', which takes time and always leaves a certain margin of leeway. Geopolitics in the Arctic is a game about power, positions, and access to relevant information. New scientific knowledge can decide intricate questions about rights on the seabed, how resources can be utilized to support critical infrastructure, how to avoid irreversible environmental damage, and not least how to facilitate cooperation instead of conflict between states with interests in the north.

**Young researchers are needed in the 'science diplomacy' of the future.**

No one knows as of today what the climate for cooperation in the Arctic will be when the war in Ukraine ends at some point. We don't know which states will trust or be able to talk to each other. The international social network of researchers has many times in history proven to be an important voice in troubled times. It was Norwegian researchers who fifty years ago thought creatively and unconventionally and got the major powers to help protect the polar bear throughout the Arctic. Whether the tension decreases or rises in the northern regions, the international network of young, innovative polar researchers from various parts of the world can become an important player in the future of 'science diplomacy'. The challenge for universities, research institutions, science academies and the political environment is to make it possible for future polar researchers to get into position. The new global Arctic will need new thinking

# New Publications

Fresh reads from arctic social science and related fields



## Resource Extraction and Arctic Communities. The New Extractivist paradigm.

Sverker Sjölin (ed)

For decades, a post-Cold War narrative heralded a 'new Arctic', with melting ice and snow and accessible resources that would build sustainable communities. Today, large parts of the Arctic are still trapped in the path dependencies of past resource extraction. At the same time, the impetus for green transitions and a 'new industrialism' spell opportunities to shift the development model and build new futures for Arctic residents and Indigenous peoples. This book examines the growing Arctic resource dilemma. It explores the 'new extractivist paradigm' that posits transitioning the region's long-standing role of delivering minerals, fossil energy, and marine resources to one providing rare earth elements, renewable power, wilderness tourism, and scientific knowledge about climate change. With chapters from a global, interdisciplinary team of researchers, new opportunities and their implications for Arctic communities and landscapes are discussed, alongside the pressures and uncertainties in a region under geopolitical and environmental stress.

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](mailto:IASSASecretariat@nord.no) or on Twitter ([@IASSA\\_SocSci](https://twitter.com/IASSA_SocSci)).