



International Arctic Social Sciences association
Northern Notes

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IASSA in Nuuk



Source: Maria Ackrén (private photo), Ilisimatusarfik/University of Greenland

Letter from the President

Maria Ackrén

Dear members

At the ICASS XI Congress in Bodø, 29 May - 3 June 2024, the move to Greenland and Ilisimatusarfik/University of Greenland in Nuuk has become established. Due to the Summer holiday in between, the transfer has been a little bit delayed. The President's busy schedule during the Autumn of 2024 has not helped the issue. From Spring 2025, we hope that we will come in motion with establishing a new secretariat. However, during the meantime the President will have help from the IASSA Council with its competent, knowledgeable and dedicated members and colleagues from Ilisimatusarfik. The IASSA Council consists of experts in various fields of research and some of them have been working with IASSA matters before.

This issue of Northern Notes will include a calendar with dates for relevant upcoming Arctic conferences and congresses. Not all of them will be in conjunction with IASSA, but members from diverse networks and organizations might seem this list helpful. We invite you to take a specific look at the 18th Polar Law Symposium, 22-24 October 2025, which will be held in Nuuk, Greenland as a small test for the upcoming ICASS XII Congress of 2027. We will therefore give you a longer presentation of this conference in this particular issue. We hope that some members will be able to attend this conference. With the new international airport opened on the 28th of November 2024 with the first direct flight from Nuuk to Copenhagen, we expect that travelling to and from Greenland will become easier and cheaper in the future. SAS, Icelandair and United Airlines have all plans for opening routes directly to Nuuk in Summer of 2025 from various cities. Air Greenland and Canadian North have also a cooperation for flights between Nuuk and Iqaluit. We are therefore living in interesting times with better connections and infrastructure to and from the largest island in the World.

This issue also contains an interview with one of the MA scholars from Brazil, who participated in ICASS XI in Bodø, Norway. We also present a new report of our Second Opinion Poll around Foreign- and Security Policy in Greenland, which has recently been published through Nasiffik – Center for Foreign- and Security Policy at Ilisimatusarfik/University of Greenland.

Have a good reading!



Source: Maria Ackrén (private photo), Nuuk Winter 2021

Calendar of Arctic Conferences and Congresses 2025-2027

Conference/Congress	Dates	Webpage
Arctic Youth Conference	January 24-26, 2025	https://arctic-council.org/about/norway-chair-2/arctic-youth-conference/
Arctic Frontiers	January 27-30, 2025	https://arcticfrontiers.com/
ICARP IV Summit	March 20-28, 2025	https://icarp.iasc.info/
Polar Early Career World Summit	March 22-24, 2025	https://polar-early-career-world-summit.org/
High North Dialogue	March 26-27, 2025	https://www.highnorthdialogue.no/
Arctic Encounter Symposium	April 2-5, 2025	https://www.arcticencounter.com/#index
Rovaniemi Arctic Spirit Conference	May 5-7, 2025	https://www.rovaniemiarcticspirit.fi/EN
Arctic Circle Assembly	October 16-18, 2025	https://www.arcticcircle.org/assemblies
The 18th Polar Law Symposium	October 22-24, 2025	https://uk.uni.gl/events/indigenous-rights-autonomy-empowerment-environment/
UArctic Congress and Assembly	May 25-31, 2026	https://www.uarctic.org/about-us/calendar/uarctic-congress-and-assembly-2026/
ICASS XII Congress	TBA 2027	Ilisimatusarfik/University of Greenland, TBA

The 18th Polar Law Symposium, 22-24 October 2025 in Nuuk, Greenland



18TH POLAR LAW SYMPOSIUM 2025

**Indigenous Rights, Autonomy,
Empowerment & Environment**

| 22 - 24, October 2025, 08:00 - 18:00

About the Polar Law Symposium

The 18th Polar Law Symposium will be held in Nuuk, Greenland, on 22nd – 24th October 2025. It is jointly organized by [Ilisimatusarfik \(the University of Greenland\)](#) and the [University of Akureyri](#), Iceland. The [Arctic Centre](#) at the University of Lapland, Finland, the University of Akureyri, Iceland, and the University of Arctic and its [Arctic Law Thematic Network](#) are supporting organizations of the Polar Law Symposia.

This is the second time that the Polar Law Symposium is held in Greenland, following the successful [4th Polar Law Symposium](#) in 2011. Participants will see many changes in Nuuk since their last visit, including a new international airport with direct flights to Europe and the US, many new hotels, a shopping center, and a rapidly growing university.

The Polar Law Symposium has been held annually since 2008. Interested contributors are encouraged to review the details and program of the [17th Polar Law Symposium](#), held in Östersund, Sápmi, in September 2024. Participants at all the symposia are encouraged to submit their work for blind peer review and publication in the [Yearbook of Polar Law](#).

Save the Dates:

Mid-January 2025: Call for Papers

30 April 2025: Abstract submission deadline

30 June 2025: Acceptance of papers

May 2025 – 20 October 2025: Registration Open

22-24 October 2025: 18th Polar Law Symposium, Nuuk

30 November 2025: Submissions to Yearbook of Polar Law

More information can be found here:

<https://uk.uni.gl/events/indigenous-rights-autonomy-empowerment-environment/>



Interview with Raphaella da Silva Dias Costa



Can you tell us about your background?

I am a Brazilian Master's student in International Relations, born and raised in Rio de Janeiro, with deep personal ties to Brazil's rich cultural diversity. My grandmother, originally from Belém do Pará—a vibrant city in the heart of the Amazon Rainforest—introduced me early on to the richness of Indigenous Brazilian traditions, which have profoundly shaped my upbringing. I hold degrees in Geography and International Relations, and I am passionate about exploring the world and understanding the complexities of its people, cultures, and environments.

How did you become interested in Arctic-related research?

My journey into Arctic studies began in 2018 during my time at the International Summer School (ISS) at the University of Oslo (UiO), Norway. While there, I took a course on International Politics that sparked my fascination with the region's unique geopolitics. I was determined to deepen my understanding, so I sought out opportunities to engage further and discovered the *Boletim Geocorrente*, a research group at the Brazilian Naval War College. As a member, I published biweekly articles exploring the Arctic's geopolitical dynamics and its many complexities.

What are you working on now?

I am preparing to graduate with my MA in International Relations in February 2025. The dissertation investigates the Saami Parliament, the Saami Council, and the Arctic Council as mechanisms of governance and identity self-affirmation for the Saami in Norway and the Arctic, through an analysis of documents produced by these institutions. By exploring the Saami identity mobilized in regional and global political contexts, in light of the theory of the “struggle for recognition” developed by Axel Honneth, the text questions the limits of the nation-state in representing Indigenous peoples. Thus, it highlights how the creation of these Indigenous political institutions was crucial for Saami self-affirmation at both the national and international levels, challenging not only the homogeneity imposed by the Norwegian state but also the capacity of traditional nation-state structures to politically represent Indigenous peoples.

You attended the ICASS conference in Bodø. Why? And how was your experience?

As part of my MA research, I had the privilege of attending the Arctic Congress Bodø 2024, where I delivered an oral presentation titled *“Nation-state and the Homogeneity of National Identity: The Saami People in Norway and the Reimagination of Identity Paradigms”*. This was my first experience presenting at an international conference. What fascinated me most was the opportunity to explore Indigenous research methodologies and the emphasis on ethical research practices. It was inspiring to engage with Indigenous researchers conducting impactful fieldwork tailored to the needs of their communities. As a Brazilian researcher from outside the Arctic region and one of the few South American representatives at the conference, it was incredibly rewarding to connect with people from diverse cultural and academic backgrounds. By bringing these perspectives to Brazil, I aim to bridge the gap in understanding, raising awareness about Indigenous struggles in the Arctic and fostering greater solidarity across regions. This exchange is essential for cultivating a more comprehensive view of global Indigenous issues and strengthening connections between Indigenous communities worldwide.

What’s next for you?

I will embark on a PhD in International Relations at the University of São Paulo (USP), Brazil. My research will examine the strengths and limitations of international law in addressing the rights of Indigenous peoples, with a particular focus on the Arctic and other regions worldwide. It will also explore the political strategies employed by Indigenous communities to amplify their voices and influence decision-making on the global stage. In 2025, I will contribute to the *Cátedra José Bonifácio*, a prestigious research group at USP led by Christiane Taubira, former Minister of Justice of France. The group's theme for the year, "*Sociétés amazoniennes, diverses et plurielles: un espace partagé; un destin commun?*" (Amazonian societies, diverse and plural: a shared space; a common destiny?), aligns closely with my studies. Drawing on my knowledge of Indigenous governance in the Arctic, particularly the experiences of the Sami in Norway, I will contribute to discussions on the governance of Indigenous peoples in the Amazon region. My work will focus on analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of their political representation both regionally and globally, offering comparative insights to inform and enrich these critical conversations.

How do you hope that your work will benefit others in the Arctic or the wider world?

The outcomes of my research aim to deliver practical benefits to Indigenous communities by shedding light on the complex interplay of law and morality in their conflicts with states. Focusing on Indigenous peoples in the Arctic and beyond, my research aspires to foster a deeper understanding of these challenges, ensuring that their rights and perspectives are acknowledged and upheld. Ultimately, it will provide decision-makers with tools and insights to analyze and address such conflicts within existing frameworks, with a focus on addressing the specific needs of Indigenous peoples in multilevel arenas.

What, for you, has been the most surprising aspect of your research work?

The most surprising aspect of my research has been uncovering the strategies employed by the Sami to affirm their identity and achieve

political representation in Norway and the broader Arctic region. While there is still significant progress to be made in advancing Indigenous rights, the Sami's regional organization through the Sami Council and their active participation in international platforms like the Arctic Council offer valuable insights. These strategies demonstrate not only what has been effective in the Arctic but also hold potential as inspiration for Indigenous political representation in other regions, such as the Amazon or the Pacific Islands. The resilience and adaptability of these approaches continue to inspire my work, emphasizing the importance of context-specific yet globally informed governance solutions.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

In 10 years, I see myself as a Brazilian diplomat committed to advocating for Indigenous and marginalized communities on the international stage. Drawing from my recent experience with the Amazon 30/30 Project, where I supported the professional development of Indigenous women from the *Asociación de Mujeres Empresarias Asháninkas Iroperanto Koya* (AMEAIK) in Puerto Bermúdez, Peru, I witnessed the lack of representation and the pressing needs of these often-forgotten communities. My focus will be on working within multilateral institutions to champion their rights, amplify their voices, and ensure their active participation in global decision-making. I believe diplomacy is a powerful tool for fostering a more just and inclusive world, and I am determined to lead efforts that promote respectful dialogue and advance the protection of these communities' rights.

New Publications



The Second Foreign and Security Policy Opinion Poll in Greenland (2024)

By Maria Ackrén

The Second Foreign and Security Policy Opinion Poll in Greenland is a survey amongst a representative sample (N=702) of adult Greenlanders from 18 years of age and upwards. My colleague Rasmus Leander Nielsen and I have conducted the survey in collaboration with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) in Stockholm, Sweden, Epinion in Denmark, and Nasiffik at Ilisimatusarfik/University of Greenland. We have also received funding from Greenland Research Council.

The main findings in the report are:

- The main challenges that Greenlanders face are higher living costs (24.4%), economic situation (16.7%), and unemployment (11.5%).
- More international cooperation are directed towards Iceland (80.6%), Canada (79.9%) and the Arctic Council (79%).
- NATO is seen as a positive alliance (65.1%), 31.1% see it as neither a positive or negative alliance, while only 3.8% see it as a negative alliance.
- If Greenland would have a referendum about rejoining the EU, 60% of the Greenlanders would vote yes, while 40% would vote no.
- Greenlanders would not like an own army: 63% say no, while 37% say yes.

The whole report can be read here:

https://da.uni.gl/media/4bwb5ict/survey-report-leander_ackre-n_final.pdf

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR 2025



Source: <https://www.shutterstock.com/da/image-vector/white-bear-her-cub-walks-through-1192407859> (visited 05.12.2024).