

Calotte Academy 2016

Building Arctic Resilience through Open Communication

Gerald Zojer & Laura Olsén

The Calotte Academy is an annual traveling symposium which was first organized in the early 1990s. The Academy inherited its name from the North Calotte region (Cap of the North), which comprises the northern parts of Finland, Norway, Sweden, as well as the very northwest of the Russian Federation. This region has left its footprint not only in the name of this academic happening, but traveling within this region is one of the core characteristics of the Calotte Academy. The aim of this multidisciplinary event is to bring together senior researchers, PhD candidates, as well as various local stakeholders, in order to have a broad and open dialogue on an annually changing theme.

This year's Calotte Academy ran under the overarching topic: "[Resilience related to Sustainable Development in Globalization](#)". In order to achieve a meaningful and thorough dialogue between all the participants, the Calotte Academy is designed in a way to provide more time for joint discussions than for the presentation of each individuals' work. Spending time together while traveling through the [North Calotte region](#) furthermore provides space for additional and informal debates, and also offers a possibility to experience this region and to visit some of the interesting locations and sights along the way. Moreover, traveling within the region also allows to get in touch with the local inhabitants and some of the various stakeholders that are involved in the development of this area. Altogether, this traveling symposium is not just a place for young and experienced researchers to present their work and results, but much more it offers a venue for active and lively discussions, for getting to know the region, and for meeting and brainstorming with people that share overlapping interests.

Gerald Zojer and Laura Olsén are researchers at the Northern Institute for Environmental and Minority Law, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland, and PhD candidates at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lapland.

In the past years the different sessions of the Calotte Academy have been organized in various places within three of the North Calotte countries, and like in the past two years, also the 2016 edition of the Academy was planned to take place in Finland, Norway, and the Russian Federation. While the original intention was to make a round trip crossing the Finnish-Norwegian border in Neiden, the Norwegian-Russian border at Storskog, and eventually the Russian-Finnish border in Salla, due to a bilateral Finnish-Russian agreement on closing the two northernmost border stations between these two countries for the duration of six month for third country citizen, the original route turned out to be impossible to follow this year. Due to the international background of the Calotte Academy's attendees, the bilateral agreement disallowed many of the participants to cross the last border along the originally planned route, which essentially also shows how this agreement makes it more difficult to carry out scientific cross-border cooperation in the European North. As a consequence the organizers of the 2016 Calotte Academy had to put their plan C into action, which was shortening the route of the Academy and taking the same way back instead of making a round trip.

The Academy began in Rovaniemi like in the past few years, and the first stop along the way was in Inari, both in Finland. The sessions in Norway were held in Kirkenes, before continuing to Murmansk, in the Russian Federation, where the final sessions were held. While the original plan was to continue the travel to Apatitij to have the final sessions at the Kola Science Centre, the group instead had to turn around already in Murmansk. Recent migratory activities apparently not only affected the border regime between Finland and the Russian Federation: To our surprise – also for the frequent travelers – even on the usually open Finnish-Norwegian border the participants had to present their passports for a thorough border check. Consequently, border crossing issues and international migration remained a reoccurring side-theme for the whole duration of this year's Academy.

Theoretical discussions on resilience and sustainable development

The official start of the 2016 Calotte Academy took place in the evening of Sunday, 29th of May, when the mayor of Rovaniemi, Esko Lotvonen, invited the participants for a reception at the town hall, and where the group got the first chance to get to know one another. During the reception the participants also learned more about the first host city, as well as about some recent developments in Finnish Lapland.

The first sessions then were held at the University of Lapland on Monday 30th of May, starting with a theoretical discussion connected to the main theme “About Resilience and Sustainable Development”. The first speakers reminded us about the reasons why we need to discuss these concepts, namely that global and local developments of the past decades led to severe environmental degradation and were insufficient to reduce hunger in parts of the world, or more generally speaking, they led to numerous global and local inequalities. The group discussed how and when the concepts of sustainable development and resilience have been introduced, how they have been used, and how suitable they are for analyzing or tackling the source problems. Some argued that a common challenge for many political concepts is that they may get hijacked by groups which use them for different intentions than for which such concepts have been introduced. For example, the group discussion suggested that the concept of resilience only got introduced after the sustainable development discourse has been rendered meaningless by not understanding that it calls for a fundamental change, but instead by utilizing it in order to

promote *business as usual* policies. However, simply replacing concepts that got hijacked may not be fruitful, as this process could be repeated with any newly introduced concept. Thus it was discussed if it is necessary to establish new discourses, or if rather established concepts should be continued to be used in an attempt to keep their original intention alive or to revitalize them if necessary.

The second session, in which also a member of the Finnish parliament, Katri Kulmuni, joined our group, focused on the implementation and adaptation of the concepts of sustainable development and resilience on regional and sub-national governmental levels. The discussions centered on interplays between economic and demographic developments and how they are related to environmental challenges. Based on the discussion on how to introduce more “resource fairness” regarding the local population, one of the conclusions was that the implementation of sustainable development in an Arctic context is still driven by mass scale development of the region’s natural resources in order to satisfy international markets.

Visiting northern communities



Calotte Academy session in the plenary hall of the Sámi parliament in Inari. Credit: Gerald Zojer.

After the Monday sessions at the University of Lapland the group members entered the bus which would be the main means of transportation for the upcoming week, and started to head towards the North. Inari, which became a constant in the Calotte Academy’s tradition, is a municipality where three different Sámi languages are actively spoken. Also the Sámi parliament of Finland is located in Inari, and became the host venue for our next sessions. In the Sájos building we got introduced to some local perspectives, also thanks to the presentations by the director of the Sámi education institute as well as the mayor of the Inari municipality.

Furthermore, the theoretical discussions from the first day continued, but also got deepened by more intensively discussing aspects from the social sphere of the sustainable development and resilience concepts. The debates focused on issues such as language preservation; on the impacts of national and international developments on local communities; how tourism and mining affect northern communities, and how local residents can take part in such developments in a way to be able to maintain and preserve their traditions; or how local inhabitants – and in particular indigenous people(s) – can or may participate in decision making processes.

From theory to practice

The warm temperatures and the midnight sun invited the participants to continue their discussions on the lake shore long after the official sessions where over, while enjoying some local food jointly prepared over an open fire. After some socializing in the evening, the travel

continued early next morning, by soon crossing the Norwegian border where the participants got the chance to stretch their legs during a short visit to the Skoltefossen waterfalls near Neiden.

The next actual session took place in Kirkenes, where our partners from the Barents Institute and the International Barents Secretariat enriched the group discussions. Kirkenes' unique location next to the border of the Russian Federation in a relatively remote area which is rich in minerals, provoked a lot of questions concerning for example the economics and industries of the city and its co-operation with different Russian stakeholders. Our first day in Kirkenes, on Wednesday 1st of June, centered on best practices of resilience and sustainable development implementations. Among the topics discussed were renewable energy production in both North-American and Russian Arctics. The presentations addressed the great challenges which the governments face when promoting sustainable development and renewable energy production in Arctic regions, due to remoteness, national legislations, and economic and political developments.

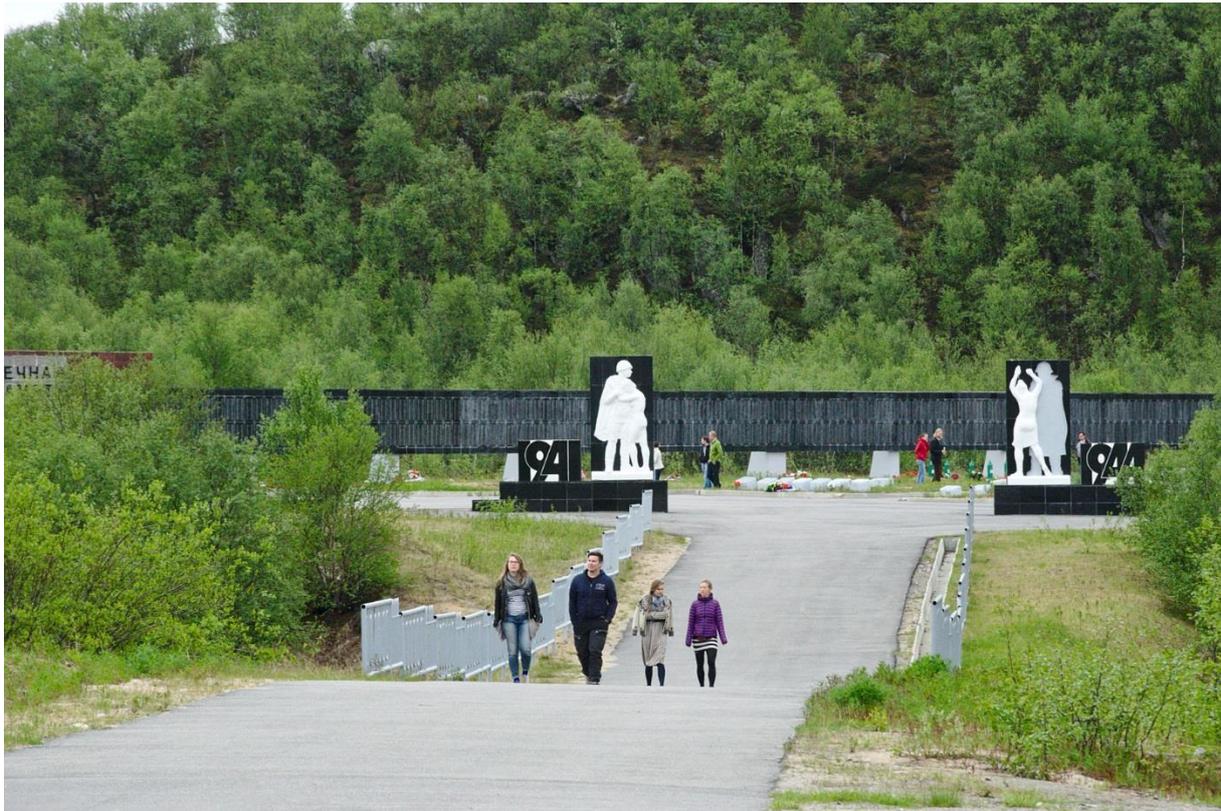
The morning session on Thursday 2nd of June, in Kirkenes was dedicated to "Freedom of Expression and Media", where journalists from the Kingdom of Denmark, Norway, and the Russian Federation analyzed the northern media landscape. Main topics were the representation of climate change as well as the Arctic and its regions in international media, but also pressure on investigative journalists both in Norway and in the Russian Federation. Presentations introduced fresh and valuable perspectives to the critical issues mentioned above, while the discussions raised up the need for a continuation of this kind of open dialogue between academia and different stakeholders in the Arctic region. After the thought-provoking sessions in Kirkenes it was time to exit Norway and continue eastwards towards Russia via the Storskog border crossing station.



Devastated landscape around smelter in Nickel. Picture by Gerald Zojer.

We next drove to the city of Murmansk, traveling through the northernmost parts of the Kola Peninsula. On the way the bus passed the towns of Nickel, Zapolyarna and Pechenga. Heavily polluted landscape near Nickel triggered strong reactions, and visualized the devastating consequences that industrial pollution can cause for the environment. Also passing by military bases and memorials of the Second

World War set the frames for the conversations that dominated those few hours spent in the bus on the way to Murmansk.



Visit to war memorial in Litsa valley. Picture by Gerald Zojer.

Varying discourses of security in the Arctic

On Friday 3rd of June, the sessions took place on the premises of a new host, the Murmansk Arctic State University. In the morning session under the theme “Urbanization and regional development of the Arctic” the presentations covered topics such as economic and technological development on the regional level in the Russian Arctic, and the change of the Arctic Council’s agenda from an environmental to an economy-centered focus. Moreover the theoretical and practical approaches to energy security in the Arctic were touched upon in several presentations, and also the usage of the Internet as a space to make politics was discussed. Despite the rainy weather in Murmansk, after the session the participants visited the Alyosha Monument in Cape Green and had a chance to admire the view over the city, which spreads along the coastline of the Kola Bay. In the evening participants enjoyed a varietal dinner in a Georgian restaurant in the heart of the city, which was accompanied by several speeches from the Academy’s participants.

The last session was held on Saturday 4th of June, under the theme “Resilience and sustainable development, and oil and gas drilling in the Arctic”. The presentations concentrated on changing discourses among the stakeholders in the oil and gas sector in the Arctic, and on Norwegian-Russian cooperation in this sector. Additionally the discussions touched on the changing geopolitical situation in the Arctic and a shift of the security discourse from traditional military security to environmental security.



Group photo in Murmansk Arctic State University. Picture by Gerald Zojer.

The last presentation dealing with tourism development in the Barents region well demonstrated the multidisciplinary and versatility of the discussions and topics dealt within the sessions of the Calotte Academy. After having had 35 presentations during 8 sessions it was time to turn the bus around towards the Norwegian border and straight forward towards the Finnish border, to our last overnight stop in Neiden. Early on Sunday morning the group continued its way back to Rovaniemi, via Sevetijärvi and Inari.

The Calotte Academy 2016 once again brought together senior and early-career researchers from different parts of Europe, Russia and North-America, and from different fields of sciences. Additionally there were also journalists and professionals from numerous other fields among the speakers. This year's Calotte Academy demonstrated very well how it is possible with a strong will and innovative thinking to cross boundaries and borders and to bring together people despite of a changing geopolitical situation and other challenges faced. It also gave an excellent example of the importance and benefits gained from the open dialogue between academia and other stakeholders from different fields of profession. The need for this kind of open communication between academia, politics, and journalism – also for the future – got highlighted, and the Calotte Academy once again proved that it offers a very suitable and well established forum for such an exercise.