

Briefing Note

31st Year of The Calotte Academy

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Calotte Academy is an unusual event in Arctic research, and one which boasts the distinction of being the longest-running traveling Arctic symposium. Researchers – often, but by no means exclusively PhD students – crowd onto a bus and are taken through the Arctic itself. Developing this sense of place and bringing together subject and researchers is a central pillar of the Academy. Another is the diversity of the participants. Anyone studying Arctic issues is welcome, and thus the list of countries of origin is often nearly as long as the participant list itself. But what makes the Calotte Academy truly unique is the dedication to discussion. Dialogue is woven into every presentation, and both participants and guest lecturers are required to allow time for questions, to engage in dialogue, and to allow their ideas to be challenged. Finally, ‘helicopter research’ is very much discouraged, and participants are put face to face with community members to discuss local issues, keeping them grounded in the places that they are studying. Putting these themes together, 2022 followed the tradition of the Calotte Academy stretching back to its founding in 1991.

However, the Calotte Academy of 2022 took place under very unique circumstances. Never in recent history have the political tensions in the Arctic been so acute, and these tensions affected the Calotte Academy just as they affected the entire Arctic region and beyond. Such unprecedented circumstances also meant that the Calotte Academy dealt with issues from a new perspective – that of a fragmented and uncertain future for Arctic research and cooperation. Throughout the



(Photo: Tatiana Petrova)

symposium, the issue of Arctic division and geopolitical tension colored nearly every presentation and excursion. The constant themes of the Calotte Academy – interdisciplinary studies, forging connections, and promoting dialogue – were tested in this new atmosphere. Despite the challenges,

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the symposium proved that even when dialogue is frozen at the topmost levels, there are still avenues to promote understanding and learn from one another.

Similar to years before, the Calotte Academy took place between 10-18 June 2022 (except in 2021 where it was organized in wintertime due to the Covid situation). Beginning in Rovaniemi, it traveled through Kiruna, Abisko, Tromsø, Alta, Kautokeino and finished in Inari. This year's theme was "The global Arctic today: cooperation & power politics, fossil economy & climate catastrophe, science & Indigenous knowledge". The Academy's 24 traveling participants met with guest lecturers at every stop, bringing the total number of presentations to 40. Major and minor excursions were conducted every day. Normally the Academy would stop in Russia, but the border situation made such plans untenable; Russian researchers, however, were fully included.



(Photo: Marja Helena Sivonen)

In Rovaniemi, participants met for the first session at the University of Lapland campus, the 'home base' of the Academy. The theme was "New Great Power Rivalry vs International Cooperation on Environmental Protection". Discussion concentrated on what Arctic knowledge means, and to see if the experiences of the Arctic, related to climate change, climate and peace mitigation, as well as knowledge transfers, could be utilised outside of the Arctic. Tiina Seppälä presented on entangling global South/Arctic on inequalities, responsibilities, subjectivities. Then, Heather Nicol presented the work of the University of the Arctic and its contribution to Arctic cooperation. Egill Þór Niélsson presented the role of Science Diplomacy in China-Nordic Arctic relations and gave insights on China's Nordic research centre. Trym Eiterjord presented the securitisation of Arctic research within the case of China and the Arctic.

The second session followed the same theme. Yue Wang presented on the unintended consequences on collaboration from China's Polar Silk Road. Gleb Iarovoy talked about his research on university cooperation between Russia and Europe on Arctic studies – and its recent cessation. Then, Professor Emeritus Lassi Heininen highlighted functional cooperation and its role in cultivating trust and security. In international relations, he stated, cooperation is understood as leading to integration and coalitions which, in turn, lead to interdependence and peaceful change. That is why, Professor Heininen believes, in the "will" - especially the political one - to resume the cooperation in the Arctic. With the first two rounds of presentations done, the Calotte Academy got on the road and headed for Kiruna, Sweden.

The second day of the Calotte Academy started in Kiruna, at the location of STF Malmfältens Folkhögskola, a folk high school designed to democratize educational access for the community. Session three's theme was "Arcticness, Identity & Sustainability". This session started with the definitions of the Arctic as there are multiple conceptions of the Arctic, including Spatial, Temporal, and Relational. Emil Ísleifur Sumarliðason focused on imagining an Arctic state: an analysis of the performance of Icelandic state's Arctic identity. In Iceland, for example, the Arctic Circle Assembly is one way to forge and advertise an Arctic identity. Daria Mishina discussed the contribution of major and minor conferences to Arctic regional development, and how stakeholders engage in such events. Next, Seira Duncan presented on the poverty, wellbeing, and climate change triangle in the case of the Inuit community, focusing on music as a method of healing and communication. Griffith Couser presented research he had conducted on Arctic businesses, which touched on themes of Arctic identity (or lack thereof), sustainability discourse and definitions, and objectivity and ethics in data gathering. Following these presentations, the Academy drove past the vast, sprawling LKAB mines and briefly saw the New Town – houses built to relocate those who are in the areas of Kiruna which are in danger of collapsing into the mining tunnels below.

The Academy arrived that evening in Abisko, next to one of the northernmost national parks in Europe. Some participants ventured into the beginnings of the park, visiting a man-made waterfall and a display Sámi village. Even an area as sparsely populated as the Arctic holds history everywhere you look. Early the next day the trusty red bus of the Calotte Academy departed for Norway.

The relative flatness of Lapland soon gave way to high fells and snow blanketing the ground - even in June. And then, in the space of under an hour, the bus plunged down the twisting highway to the sea, and the Academy found itself in Narvik, the terminus of the railway that has formed the economic lifeline of northern Sweden and Norway for over 100 years. There the Academy visited the Krigsmuseum, dedicated to the Nazi occupation of the city from 1942 – 1945. It was a stark reminder that the history of the Arctic was not always one of peace. That evening, the Academy arrived in Tromsø, Norway. A group ascended Storsteinen to get a view of the third-largest city above the Arctic Circle.

In Tromsø the Calotte researchers had the chance to meet researchers from the Arctic University of Norway and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. The presentations took place in the Fram Center, where many Arctic organizations are based. In the current climate, however, activity in these organizations had largely ceased. The presentations that day about geopolitics were particularly poignant in the building hosting the silent headquarters of the Arctic Council Secretariat. The first presentation was given by Rasmus G. Bertelsen regarding great power politics and the future of the Arctic political order. Three more speakers presented on different issues of Russian-Norwegian relations in the current turbulent setting, including scientific cooperation and critical infrastructure. Finally, as underlined by one Sámi scholar, the current tensions have already been affecting the Sámi people, including disrupted cooperation between Nordic Sámi parliaments and the Russian Sámi Council. During this session, an important question arose: "Arctic states managed to cooperate for years, but did they really manage to build trust through this cooperation?" That evening, participants and lecturers sat together for reindeer steak and a tribute to Professor Heininen to celebrate his 31 years at the helm of the Calotte Academy.

On June 14th, the Calotte Academy travelled to Alta, Norway, and visited the Alta Museum, where exhibits demonstrate Sámi history both recent and long in the past. The director of the Alta Museum underlined the struggles that Sámi had undergone because of historical challenges in dealing with national authorities and settler populations. It also explained the history of the Alta Hydroelectric Dam, and the consequent movement that reignited Sámi identity and began legal and cultural movements in response. The rock carvings outside of the museum were a clear demonstration of the Sámi connection to that place, and that people had lived in the area long before the current political, economic, or cultural context. Later, the Academy reached its northernmost point just outside of Alta, Norway.

Session 6 took place at the Arctic University of Norway's (UiT) campus in Alta. The program was a mix of Calotte Academy participants, UiT professors, and local officials. Despite the specificity of the topic, the views presented were broad and covered a variety of subjects, from Indigenous identity to local demographics. Like all Calotte Academy sessions, much of the time was used for questions and discussion. The theme of the session was "Regional change & evolving issues of ethnicity in the West of Finnmark county". Anna Varfolomeeva, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Helsinki, presented on "The Effect of Paused Arctic Cooperation on Russian Indigenous Communities" comparing the Karelia and Buryatia communities' responses to the current War in Ukraine and the effects of resource extraction on their sense of "indigeneity." Oddvar Kristian Konst, an official of the Alta municipality, presented on "Knowledge-based Development in Finnmark: The Case of Alta Municipality". Jan Olli, Director of the Finnmark Estate, presented on "The Finnmark Act: The Organization and our Role". He described how the Finnmark Estate was established after the legal recognition of the Sámi people's land rights. Sveinung Eikeland presented the Smart Specialization Strategies (S3) for Sustainable development in the Arctic region. The presenter gave an overview of the S3 on a regional level in order to state how the development of regional paths is central to the EU policy and to strengthen European economies. As the final presentation for this session, Laura Junka-Aikio spoke about colonialism and ethnic identities in Northern Finland. The settler colonial theory was illustrated, but the main aim of the presentation was to shed light on the evolutionary trajectory of the Nordic States' economies, government rationalities and consideration of the space when it comes to the relations between states, locals and Indigenous populations. The discussions in Alta also reached back to the goal of engaging with the local community and helping to ground researchers in the place they're actually studying.

After the session, Calotte participants took a guided tour of the Alta Hydroelectric Dam, seeing the places where Sámi resistance had ignited the current debate over identity and rights in Norway. The engineering, economic significance, and impact on the environment was also discussed. Shortly after, the Academy headed towards Kautokeino, one of the most significant Sámi settlements in Norway. While never explicitly stated, it was obvious over the course of the trip that Sámi issues permeated any local or regional discussion. The history of the Sámi people, their struggles for recognition, their attachment to the land, and their legal battles all colour the landscape, and are an inescapable part of the Arctic where the Academy travelled.

On the 16th of June, the day started in Kautokeino and the seventh session focused on climate change, sovereignty, and security in the Arctic at the Sámi University College. Here, the participants met Anders Oskal, the Secretary General of the Association of World Reindeer Husbandry. Mr.

Oskal listed the challenges that Sámi reindeer herder community faces in the context of climate change: increased human activities such as extracting industries, fishing, tourism, green industry, and shipping, all made more acute as the Arctic increasingly becomes part of the global economy. In addition, he discussed governance issues especially in the context of the war in Ukraine and the pause in cooperation with Russia. Then, the Sámi scholar and reindeer herder Ravdna Biret Marja Eira Sara presented her work on Sámi knowledge on food in the context of climate change. The second part of the session was dedicated to sovereignty and security issues. The presentation by Eda Ayaydin and following discussion focused on the evolving concept of sovereignty and the way it is reconstructed by different actors in the Arctic, challenging the classical idea of strictly territorial and legal sovereignty in the Arctic. The presentation by Salla Kalliojärvi discussed climate change and security relations within the World Economic Forum framework and how this shapes solutions to mitigate climate change, especially in the Arctic. Marja Sivonen exposed the relations between security and energy transition in the Nordic countries. She highlighted the discrepancies between defence/security and sustainability forces in the Arctic from a Nordic (state) perspective.

Later that day, an online session with Russian colleagues Alina Cherepovitsyna, Ekaterina Kuznetsova, Luiza Brodt and Elena Adasheva concentrated on Russian perspectives on the global Arctic and advances in sustainable technologies. These researchers had been prevented from traveling with the rest of the Academy due to the political situation, but their participation once again underlined the importance of dialogue and collaboration that the Calotte Academy was founded on. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, such a video call wasn't entirely out of place, but it was perhaps the most obvious instance of political impasse affecting the ability of researchers to work together, and of geopolitics impeding cross-border collaboration.

On the 17th of June, the Calotte travelled to Inari, Finland, for our last sessions. Session 9 concentrated on Logistics & Infrastructure & Education. Juho Kähkönen examined Finland's plans for the Arctic Ocean rail line. Kähkönen had been researching this topic as part of the EU Horizon 2020-funded JustNorth project. Tatiana Petrova presented the Northern Axis – Barents Link project funded by Kolarctic CBC, which aims to identify main bottlenecks of the east-west transport corridor and contribute to its harmonization and cross-border mobility in the Barents region. Zhanna Anshukova introduced her doctoral research on “Student's varying attitudes towards sexuality – analysis of Finnish and international students' aspects in Lapland”. This was a preliminary introduction of her research with the aim of introducing the topic while gathering feedback and ideas on the methodology and approach to the research.

Inari occupies a special place in Arctic teleology as being the center for the Sámi parliament in Finland, a recognized center of Sámi culture, as well as a sacred place for local Sámi communities. Indeed, during the Academy's visit, the Prime Minister of Finland was visiting the Sámi Parliament during one of their holidays – an important gesture to the local community, but a bit of a disruption to the Academy. Here, several different linguistic groups come together, and the Siida museum and Sajos cultural center both explore what it is to be Sámi, both past and present. It is also a place of exceptional beauty, with Lake Inari serving as a sort of poster child for the vast, beautiful, spartan landscapes that have supported Arctic residents for millennia. The Academy participants stayed at Jeera asuntola, a school for the local Sámi community. Inside, the classroom was designed to have an interior structure similar to that of a traditional Sámi Laavu. Outside, a wood-fired sauna near the lake and a fire pit afforded a perfect place to participate in the culture and environment of

Lapland. Once more, researchers were placed very much in the local context and encouraged to engage with the community.

Session 10 concentrated on Non-Arctic States and Actors. Drawing on the paradoxical situation, Emilie Canova proposed the research questions of her PhD project, which aims to co-construct the Arctic/Europe regional systems through geopolitical and region-building perspectives. Then, Eleni Kavvatha presented her up-to-date report to the Sámi Council. Her research intended to promote effective communication between state and non-state actors in the European Arctic. Following Eleni's presentation, Pigga Keskitalo introduced and discussed Sámi education and sustainability in her presentation. Pigga clarified what 'Sámi education', 'Sámi pedagogy', and 'sustainability of Sámi education' were. Professor Heininen highlighted the gap between the Sámi and the Swedish-speaking people in Finland, the latter of which have well-protected rights and even have privileges in some circumstances, as compared to the Sámi.

In the afternoon, the Calotte participants had the chance to visit UTAC Ivalo and to discuss their sustainability approach. It was the first visit to an Arctic business but shed light on a way to utilize the Arctic's unique attributes for economic gain without resorting to resource extraction. The UTAC complex featured indoor snow and ice tracks for vehicle testing, and the staff explained the company's community involvement and plans for further environmental testing for vehicles in the future. One of the interesting revelations was that nearly all vehicles tested at the range are now electric, signaling a massive shift in consumer vehicles.

On the 18th of June, the 11th and final session continued with Non-Arctic States and Actors. The session was opened by Alma Karabeg, who talked about Asian countries' interests in the Arctic. Her research focused on the difficulties and prospects of potential future scenarios as they relate to the Arctic region itself and their effects on Asian states. The next speaker was Marco Volpe giving a highly anticipated presentation about China shaping its Arctic policy: a global perspective and role of non-traditional actors. In his presentation, he sought to increase understanding of the growing influence of nontraditional actors in determining China's foreign policy in the Arctic region. Following this, the participants went to the Siida museum a short drive away, touring a traditional Sámi village and learning about the local history. This was followed by a hike to Pielpajärvi Wilderness Church, a place deep in the woods still used by the Skolt Sámi community. Back at the Jeera asuntola, participants were treated to traditionally butchered and prepared reindeer, the wood-fired sauna - vihta beatings and all - and some very brisk dips in the lake.

There we concluded the 31st Calotte Academy with some choice words by Professor Heininen. While the high-politics of the Arctic have changed significantly with Russia's war in Ukraine and the consequent Western response, the major themes of Arctic research - whether they be human rights, environmental changes, or sustainable development - have remained largely the same. The issues facing the region have not abated, and the only way to solve them is through the slow, messy process of dialogue and collaboration. Participants in the Calotte Academy were given a short, intense burst of this philosophy, able to question, to discuss, and to forge personal connections to the places and the people. The experience was as much internal as it was external: participants learned from each other but were also challenged on their own research.

Such an extraordinary trip was only possible through the experience, passion, and leadership of Professor Heininen, and through the monumental efforts of the trip's organizers, Daria Mishina and Salla Kalliojärvi. Goodbyes were difficult, to say the least.

We would be remiss if we didn't mention one other activity which made the 2022 trip quite unique in the history of the Calotte Academy. For the first time, a roleplaying game was incorporated into the trip. Every few days, for one or two hours, participants would gather together and adopt the



identities of a number of Arctic political actors: national governments, NGOs, Indigenous organizations, and others. We were called together as part of a special UN-mediated ad-hoc group of Arctic stakeholders to try and find a solution to the current political impasse. The tensions in Arctic politics were laid bare, but participants remained remarkably cordial despite trading accusations. Compromise was sought, and agreements were forged slowly but surely. The path forward that we charted was cautious but inclusive, though it remains to be seen whether the governments of the respective Arctic states would approve of such a course of action. But everything – whether it's human rights, economic development, or environmental conservation – hinges on working together and on building trust, and to do that, communication and collaboration is essential. In our meetings across the northern reaches of Europe, we simply saw no alternative.