P236 / Tourism in Greenland and the Arctic: who decides, who benefits?

Topic : Multilevel Governance and Local Policy

Chair : Anne CHOQUET (Sciences po Rennes (in progress))

Second Chair : Drissia Thestrup (Université Panthéon-Sorbonne (Paris I))

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Tourism is increasingly promoted as a means of economic diversification and regional development in Greenland and across the Arctic.

Tourism development is not simply a market-driven process. It is shaped by public policies, institutional decisions, investment strategies and visions of territorial development.

As Arctic destinations seek to attract visitors, investment and international attention, tourism development raises fundamental questions about governance, infrastructure and logistics, economic and social benefits distribution, public authorities capacity to organise development, local communities influence over decisions affecting their territories.

In Greenland, these questions are closely connected to economic diversification, political autonomy, Inuit rights and knowledge, environmental vulnerability, local resources and aspirations. The growing involvement of external investors and international tourism operators creates opportunities for economic development. It challenges also the capacity of public institutions and local communities to define and implement their own priorities.

The panel connects research and community participation with public debates on policy instruments, implementation, and institutional capacity. Its analytical focus is how ownership structures and decision-making authority interact to shape the tourism landscape and the distribution of cost and benefit outcomes.

This panel aims to examine tourism as a field of public policy through which competing interests and development priorities are discussed. It brings together scholars and practitioners to discuss the political, economic and social dimensions of tourism development in Greenland and more generally the Arctic. Under what conditions do local authorities create tourism policies that enable Greenlandic and other Arctic communities to shape development priorities and retain benefits locally?

While Greenland provides a central point of reference, contributions addressing other Arctic and comparable peripheral regions are also welcome.

The panel will address different research questions, such as:

how do public authorities, private investors and international operators shape tourism policies?
how do tourism policies distribute economic opportunities, costs and risks across territories, and how do they reinforce or reduce existing inequalities?
how can public institutions and local communities influence tourism development and strengthen their capacity to organise territorial development?
The panel will explore the hypothesis that tourism outcomes depend not only on economic dynamics but also on institutional arrangements and the decision-making power distribution.

By connecting tourism studies with public policy analysis, political geography and regional development, the panel will contribute to debates on policy implementation, multilevel governance and state capacity. It will provide a space to examine how public policies can limitate tensions between economic development, external investment and local priorities. It will also provide a space to examine under what conditions tourism can support a more inclusive development in the Arctic.

This panel is organised within the ANNORAAQ project (towards regenerative tourism in Greenland: sharing social, environmental and spatial qualities, led by Nicolas Escach (Sciences po Rennes). Funded by the French National Research Agency (ANR) through its France-Greenland Scientific Cooperation call, the ANNORAAQ project explores how regenerative tourism in Greenland can support more locally driven, socially acceptable and environmentally responsible tourism development in Greenland.

CALL FOR PAPERS

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This panel invites contributions that examine how public policies, institutional arrangements and governance practices shape tourism development in Greenland and across the Arctic.

The panel welcomes contributions (theoretical, empirical and comparative) examining decision-making authority and accountability, governance arrangements, policy instruments, implementation capacity and the distribution of tourism benefits and costs. Contributions may address, but are not limited, to the following questions:

- How are decision-making powers distributed across national, regional and local levels of governance?
- How can public policies enable Arctic communities to exercise greater influence over tourism development?
- How do public authorities organise tourism development through regulatory frameworks and planning instruments?
- Under what conditions can local communities meaningfully influence tourism planning and development decisions?
- How do public-private partnerships and international tourism operators shape governance arrangement and the distribution of benefits and costs?
- Which policy instruments can support local economic development and ensure that tourism benefits are retained locally?
- How do public authorities and local actors negotiate the representation of Greenlandic culture and heritage?
- How do tourism policies face environmental pressures and inequalities between communities and regions?
- How does tourism reshape urban environments, housing, public spaces and architectural landscapes?
- Whose visions of development shape public decision-making and how are the benefits and costs of tourism distributed across territories and social groups?

While Greenland provides a central point of reference, contributions addressing other Arctic and comparable peripheral regions are strongly encouraged, particularly those offering comparative perspectives on governance, policy implementation and local development.