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ABSTRACT

TOURISM IMPLANTATION PATTERNS IN FINNISH LAPLAND

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The Arctic is getting an area with several new issues that few decades ago were associated with other geographic regions, especially concerning globalized human activities. Indeed, these vast and sparsely populated regions are today integrated to the complex globalisation, receiving harsh mutations and impacting environmental and cultural dimensions. As a globalised economic activity, tourism participates to those changes that are disturbing local ecosystems and local native populations.

In Europe, the Lapland region could be considered as the gate of the Arctic. Even if the definitions given to Arctic boundaries are different according to the field of study, from a tourist point of view, crossing the Polar Arctic Circle is meaningful. The desire to discover remote European places have led to the increase of tourists amount in Finnish Lapland. Thus, this northern Finnish region knows for a couple of decades, a great tourism development. Being aware of tourism windfalls, the Finnish State on the first hand, and some locals on the other hand decided to develop tourism activities in Lapland, which led to different tourism development ways.

Thus in Finnish Lapland, there is an opposition between Rovaniemi, the main city with a real tourism industry, and the rest of the vast Lapland region, composed of small villages where tourism is organised by local micro network. In Rovaniemi, tourism is exogenous to the territory because the implantation of activities is mainly decided by politicians. Whereas, in Lapland villages tourism decisions are made by local inhabitants, entrepreneur and professionals.

Tourism in the Arctic is definitely a driving force for local territorial development. It is also synonym of both challenges and opportunities for local communities. Thus, this is why tourism should be taken into consideration in interdisciplinary discussions.