

Marta Bystrowska

5th International Polar Tourism Conference

28 August – 2 September 2016, Akureyri & Raufarhöfn, Iceland

Between 28 August and 2 September 2016 I took part in the 5th International Polar Tourism Research Network Conference, dedicated to tourism industry development in the Polar regions, which was held in Akureyri and Raufarhöfn on Iceland. The conference was attended by researchers gathered around IPTRN network, as well as other academics studying topics related to tourism and polar regions.



Raufarhöfn (source: icephotos.com)

The conference program covered both whole spectrum of interesting thematic sessions, as well as included more practical part consisting of meetings and workshop with local community of Raufarhöfn. Work with local community was aimed at elaboration of common action proposals and local strategy for tourism development.

Raufarhöfn is located in the north-east Iceland, and it is the most northerly settlement on this island, so that is also closest located to the Arctic Circle. For many years, this settlement, with population of 150 inhabitants, was one of the main fishing centers in the region, famous mostly for herring fisheries. However, due to sold herring quotas and smaller incomes from other fish exploitation, the local community warmly welcomes tourism development as a source of income and diversification of local economy. The ideas for development include finishing the project of Arctic Hedge site, art center or village museum, all being in rather initial or conceptual stage. These initiatives were discussed during the workshop, but also other ideas for tourism development and necessary steps were topics of the debate. Workshop participants were brainstorming in smaller groups focused on particular topics and projects and final outcomes were gathered and summarized by local tourism initiative leader. The work with local community was the platform for discussion between the conference participants and Raufarhöfn residents and produced concrete plans and new ideas that might be implemented.

The scientific part of the conference consisted of diversified sessions covering issues related to legal, economic and social aspects of tourism as well as in the Arctic and the Antarctic. The list of presentations is enclosed in the attachment 1.

During my own speech, entitled *Making Places: the role of Arctic cruise tourism operators in 'creating' tourism destinations and spaces*, I presented preliminary outcomes of qualitative research on the role of perceived values of Arctic cruise operators in shaping tourism space through the itinerary-making.

The study was focused on the exploring the values that operators attach to the Arctic space and cruising itself, which values influence their business decision making and thus the factors influencing itinerary-making and spatial distribution of cruising. This qualitative analysis enabled to explain better spatial differences in cruise traffic around the Arctic, but also contributed to develop academic discourses on social construction of places. The study was based on semi-structured interviews with the representatives of cruise firms operating in the Arctic, working on the decisive level and being responsible for planning and making itineraries.



Presentation of M Bystrowska (fot. T. Leu)

Additionally I was also, together with Karin Wigger from Nord University Business School, an author of the presentation *Natural resource ecosystem and inter-organizational arrangements – the case of the Arctic expedition cruise*. This speech discussed the role of factors related to features of local socio-ecological system on diversifying firm's business tactics and various arrangements the firm which it establishes with local communities in order to access local natural resources for non-consumptive use. The research was based on the case study of the firm which organizes cruises in different locations in the Arctic and has different arrangements with visited communities.



Arctic Henge in Raufarhöfn and conference participants (source: IPTRN facebook fanpage)

Attachment. 1

List of presentations 5th IPTRN Conference

1. The application of the wilderness concept in Antarctica and Svalbard: A comparison of the respective regulatory systems *Antje Neumann*
2. Comparative analysis of tourists', field scientists' and undergraduate students' perceptions of Antarctic landscapes *Javier Benayas, Ana Justel, Pablo Tejedo, Tina Tin and Luis Pertierra*
3. The construction of the Antarctic landscape from the perspective of tourism. Images issued by tour operators and tourists' perceptions *Marisol Vereda*
4. Perceptions of wilderness and aesthetic value in Antarctica – a comparison of tourists, national Antarctic Program staff and non-visitors to Antarctica *Rupert Summerson*
5. How satellite-based AIS can support search and rescue operations in the Southern Ocean *Johnny Grøneng Aase*
6. Science and tourism practices: A cool combination? *Machiel Lamers and Linde van Bets*
7. Improving Environmental Education Outcomes Through Feelings of Connectedness to Nature *Michelle Harnett*
8. Research on the Fly: Insights from a field-based research course on the development of Varanger, Norway as a sustainable bird watching destination *Patrick Maher, Suzanne de la Barre and Outi Rantala*
9. Exploring the role of nature-based tourism and free-choice learning at ecologically sensitive destinations and replicated interpretive sites: Encouraging sustainable tourism and behaviour *Jill N.H. Bueddefeld*
10. The Role of Marketing in Sustainable Development of Polar Tourism *Eran Ketter*
11. The maturing of Polar Tourism as a 'field of study' *Emma J. Stewart, Daniela Liggett and Jackie Dawson*
12. Planning Tourism in the Wild: Fantasy or Reality? *Anna Dóra Sæþórsdóttir and Rannveig Ólafsdóttir*
13. Impact of experimental trampling in Icelandic ecosystems *Rannveig Ólafsdóttir and Micael Runnström*
14. Temporary closures of Antarctic tourist sites as a possible management tool to address the impacts on vegetation by trampling *Javier Benayas, Pablo Tejedo, Belén Albertos, Daniela Cajiao, Laura Muñoz, Francisco Lara and Luis R. Pertierra*
15. Words, more words, and ... no action? Addressing Antarctic tourism issues within the Antarctic Treaty System *Daniela Liggett, Neil Gilbert and Emma J. Stewart*

16. Environmental impacts of tourism and the attractiveness of tourist destinations in arctic polar wilderness - A systemic approach *Rannveig Ólafsdóttir and Hörður V. Haraldsson*
17. Natural resource ecosystem and inter-organizational arrangements – the case of the Arctic expedition cruise *Karin Wigger and Marta Bystrowska*
18. Expedition cruise tourism at Svalbard: self-regulation as driver for change *Linde van Bets*
19. Making Places: the role of Arctic cruise tourism operators in ‘creating’ tourism destinations and spaces *Marta Bystrowska and Jackie Dawson*
20. The role of climate-related information in Arctic expedition cruising: practices, needs and implications *Machiel Lamers, Paula Duske and Linde van Bets*
21. Exploring the management of tourism impacts on the New Zealand Sub-Antarctic Islands *Emma J. Stewart, Stephen Espiner, Daniela Liggett and Zac Taylor*
22. Preserving Ocean and Coastal Wilderness in the Arctic: Moving beyond Planning to Action *Bradley W. Barr*
23. Performing darkness and light: Guides, tourists and the Northern lights *Gunnar Þór Jóhannesson and Katrín Anna Lund*
24. #tourism: The Influence of Social Media on Visitor Experiences in Churchill, Canada *Katie Fowler*
25. “Can you tell me when the Northern Lights take place?” – Expectations and experiences of winter tourists in Southeast Iceland *Johannes T. Welling*
26. Place meanings as complex, contingent, and political. How dogs and mushers make Finnmark a Polar tourist destination *Brynhild Granås*
27. Tourism or Extractive Industries? Some Remarks on Recent Struggle in the Swedish Pleasure Periphery *Dieter K. Müller*
28. Seeking Resilience through Tourism in Greenland: A Cautious Outlook in the Risky Era of Climate Change *Dimitri Ioannides, Pär Olausson and Evangelia Petridou*
29. What influences have there been historically on tourism to the subantarctic islands, and what affects visits today? *Bernadette Hince*
30. Managing Tourism for Sustainable Local Development in Jokkmokk, Sweden *Patrick Brouder and Sandra Wall-Reinius*
31. Creative Yukon: Shifting Economies and Celebrating Cultures *Suzanne de la Barre*
32. Local perceptions towards a proposed polar bear viewing project in the indigenous Cree community of Wemindji, northern Québec *Tariq Hossein*
33. Polar bears, climate change and cross-sector partnerships: a governance study *Jeremy Pearce*

34. Tourism as a complementary occupation: reindeer herder families and involvement in tourism? *Traian C Leu*
35. Not everything that counts can be counted *Magnús Haukur Ásgeirsson*