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Representations of the Indigenous Space in Tourism Practices in the Russian Arctic: Towards Better Futures or Business as Usual?

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Title: Representations of the Indigenous Space in Tourism Practices in the Russian Arctic: Towards Better Futures or Business as Usual?

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Abstract:

This presentation is concerned with the question of whether the newly established institutional arrangements are allowing for a creation of a new set of experiences diverging from the previously established norm of making Indigenous tourism in the territory of the Russian Arctic. A review of the existing institutional arrangements is made, including the public sector (regional and local levels), private entrepreneurship, local communities, and the ways the participatory decision-making process is promoted. The evaluation of the outcomes connected to the establishment of institutional frameworks proves to be unable to facilitate a new set of conditions regarding the emergence of new stakeholder groups and to promote private indigenous entrepreneurship. The unclear institutional setting hinders the creation of an integrative system of tourism distribution channels for Arctic experiences. Despite the obvious shortcomings of the recent period of development, the emergence of innovative practices can be observed to parallel this process on the local level. The ability of regional and local stakeholders to continue to diverge from the previously created practices in developing tourism is dependent on the success of the overall institutional frameworks supporting them.