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A Greenlandic example

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Collaborative configurations of tourism development: a Greenlandic example

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Abstract

Purpose – *While tourism scholars have increasingly recognized the significance of collaboration as an essential element in tourism development, there is a lack of theoretical and empirical research centering on (trans)local collaboration as a central means for future tourism development in Greenland. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the conceptual and analytic potentials and challenges of collaboration in an explorative case study.*

Design/methodology/approach – *The paper applies a case study approach to scrutinize collaboration in the setting of a tourism workshop in South Greenland. This research approach is exploratory in nature and focuses on collaborative activities among participants from different research institutions and countries, from Campus Kujalleq in Qaqortoq, from small-scale enterprises and businesses, managers of destination marketing organizations and local fishermen.*

Findings – *Four "collaborative configurations" emerged during the workshop. These inspire and challenge ways of (re)conceptualizing collaborative tourism development in South Greenland and call for the reconsideration of the present approach toward tourism development for shaping new possible future(s) of tourism in the Greenlandic context.*

Originality/value – *The relevance of this paper emerges from the crucial significance that tourism actors in Greenland credit collaboration. Moreover, by approaching development issues from within and mutually developing possible practice solutions through collaboration with local tourism actors, the paper aims to give voice to the local community, which currently is lacking in the debate on tourism development in Greenland.*

Keywords *Collaboration, Tourism development, Collaborative configurations, Explorative study, Greenland*

Paper type *Research paper*

1. Introduction

The Arctic is challenged by major social, cultural, environmental and economic change (Maher, 2017). Arctic communities are affected by climate change, by social shifts within the indigenous societies and by the emerging tourism-related economic opportunities resulting from increased cruise-ship visits and air traffic (Hall and Saarinen, 2010). Given the diversity of Arctic communities and how they are impacted differently by these changing conditions, the work with standardized solutions seems unfounded. Hence, the need to explore local paths of opportunity and to create new opportunities for tourism planning and the development of the respective Arctic populations are becoming increasingly important (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2015).

On this background, the paper explores collaborative practices in a workshop setting, which took place as part of a research project on sustainable small-scale business development and demography in South Greenland (see AAU Arctic, 2017). The aim is to theoretically and conceptually discuss how emerging collaborative practices come in different shapes. The paper also unfolds how these diverse and yet interconnected practices simultaneously inspire and challenge new possible futures of tourism planning and development in the Greenlandic context and how they potentially form diverse tools providing multiple options for developing a destination.

From a theoretical standpoint, tourism scholars have long recognized the significance of collaboration in the context of planning and development. In much of this literature, collaboration offers opportunity for dialogue and negotiation, creating the basis for cooperation on the drafting

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of widely acceptable proposals for future development (Bramwell and Lane, 2000b). In this view, collaboration is generally considered a positive tool for tourism development, such as planning and implementing concrete actions, especially in challenging tourism landscapes (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Reed, 1999; Waayers *et al*., 2012) such as in the Arctic communities right now.

However, collaboration on tourism development also requires complex and strenuous organization, such as tourism actors working together despite their diverse interests and goals in the tourism development process (Ladkin and Bertramini, 2002). Due to the fragmented nature of tourism, individual tourism actors are seldom able to act in isolation. It is unlikely that any of the individual tourism actors possess or control all of the relevant components needed to offer a tourism product (Bramwell and Lane, 2000a). Hence, when working on their own, tourism actors are seldom in the position to influence decision-making processes in a favorable way. The establishment of a beneficial political and operational frame for producing, creating and ultimately delivering the tourism product therefore depends on collaborative efforts. In that sense, tourism is not only a business-related activity in need of stable and favorable conditions, but also a complex system of practices depending on and influenced by an array of largely uncontrollable factors.

While an extensive body of academic literature discusses the conceptual underpinnings of collaboration in tourism development (Bramwell and Lane, 2000b; Ladkin and Bertramini, 2002; Morris and Miller-Stevens, 2016), there is a lack of research challenging the inherent idea of collaboration constituting a smooth device for the planning and implementation of actions and the further nuancing of these theories with empirical applications (Waayers *et al*., 2012). Moreover, there is little academic research in the field of tourism development focused on Greenland (Ren and Chimirri, 2017, 2018), and even less centered on (local and translocal) collaboration as central means for future tourism development in this particular Arctic destination.

In this regard, this paper introduces the term "collaborative configuration" to further nuance the emerging collaborative practices occurring in the workshop. These collaborative configurations are considered specifications of how collaboration unfolds in different ways. Four examples of collaborative configuration illustrate the complex and rather heterogeneous practices and activities in the workshop: positioning, coordination, networking and cooperation. Despite being uncontrolled and unintended by the organizers, the emerging practices interconnect and form collaborative configurations that can be specified as positioning, coordination, networking and cooperation. They exemplify how collaboration often results from different intentions and carries different meanings for different actors.

To introduce the reader to the context of the workshop, the following section sketches out some of the particularities of the current, relatively fragmented Greenlandic tourism landscape, thereby situating the collaborative practices that emerged from within this gathering.

2. The fragmented tourism landscape in Greenland

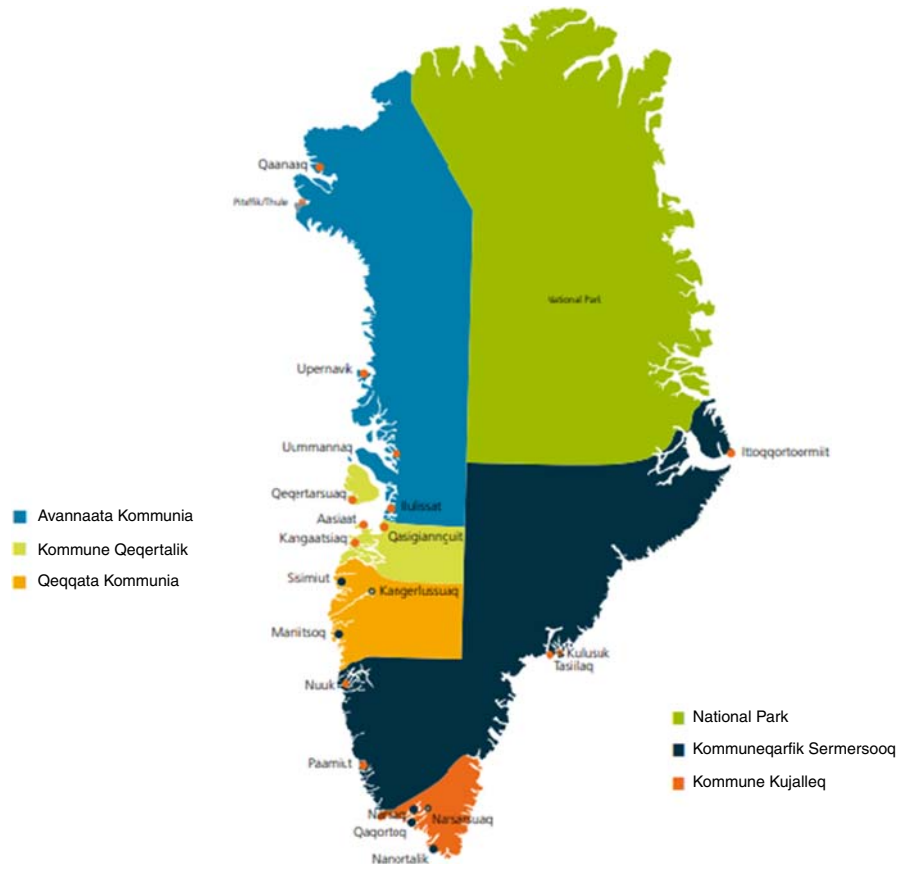
Tourism remains a relatively young industry in Greenland, despite having been carried out in an organized manner since the early 1960s (Christensen, 1992; Johnston and Viken, 1997; Kaae, 2002, 2006) and the potential of this sector having been acknowledged in 1973 by the Committee of Tourism under the Ministry of Greenland (Ministeriet for Grønland, 1973). Compared to long-established Greenlandic industries such as fisheries and mining, which account for the majority of the GNP, tourism is a relatively new economic sector in Greenland. Tourism figures have increased in recent years (VisitGreenland, 2016; Statistics Greenland, 2017, 2018); however, which is contributing to the growth of the tourism portfolio and the offering of diversified products and services. From outdoor and nature activities (e.g. hiking, kayaking, climbing, dogsled tours, boat tours and sailing, hunting and fishing, photography tours) to cultural experiences (e.g. Greenlandic food, meeting the locals, experiencing the traditional Kaffemik, guided tours to historical sites), the tourism landscape offers a wide range of products and services. The development in the years to come is expected to move toward higher quality activities rather than dramatic increases in the numbers of visitors. High-end products such as heli-skiing and exclusive accommodations are already enriching the market. Despite the recent and continuing positive development in visitor numbers and activities, however, Greenland

struggles with a challenging organizational tourism structure and the evolving complexity of the political and public discourse around tourism planning and development.

On the one hand, the tourism landscape is characterized by a few major players, such as the government of Greenland (Naalakkersuisut), Visit Greenland, Air Greenland and large foreign tour operators operating from overseas. On the other hand, numerous small-scale businesses and entrepreneurs located across the five municipalities (see Figure 1) and operating mainly locally shape the tourism picture. Due to the highly varying access to resources and the locations of the tourism actors, both actor groups focus on different issues within tourism and have diverse plans for how to develop tourism in their region and subsequently in Greenland.

Naalakkersuisut, for instance, focuses on fostering tourism growth by "developing areas, cities and towns through spatial and urban planning" (field interview, TJ, January 20, 2017). Additionally, laws and guidelines aim to regulate and manage the arrival of tourists while simultaneously enabling tourism actors to operate their businesses through activities such as fishing and hunting licenses and cruise-ship passenger fees (Naalakkersuisut, 2015). Greenland's destination marketing organization (DMO), Visit Greenland, focuses on the marketing and global promotion of the country as a tourist destination (VisitGreenland, 2016). Lastly, small-scale actors are primarily occupied with tackling day-to-day challenges that are related to changing regulatory frameworks, unreliable and high-maintenance technical infrastructure, complex logistics due to geographic dispersal and high seasonality (Ren and Chimirri, 2017). There is a need for a stable "framework […] The government keeps changing […] direction. There is no steady framework and uncertainty increases […] We're very concerned. We see that tourism has major potential,

Figure 1 Greenland's municipalities and the national park



Source: Statistic Greenland (2018)

but we don't see the necessary decisions being made" (field interview, TM, January 25, 2017). Hence, actors continuously work in favor of establishing the most stable conditions possible for successfully operating in the field.

While such circumstances and subsequent conflicting viewpoints and arguments in the political and public discourse risk further fragmenting and challenging future tourism development in Greenland, collaboration might be key to embracing opportunities and mitigating challenges.

While Ren and Chimirri (2017) already argued this and practitioners acknowledge the significance of collaboration, they also tend to underestimate the complexity of the landscape in which they operate as well as the diverse shapes in which collaboration can emerge. In turn, their understanding of collaboration affects the opportunities for developing the destination. It therefore becomes crucial to start by unfolding the theoretical concept of collaboration and what it brings to tourism research and practice in order to later explore the concept empirically in the field.

3. The collaboration concept and tourism research

Collaboration is a complex concept, as the phenomenon it seeks to capture theoretically – the collaborative process – is manifold, and no single theoretical framework can fully grasp it. As shaped by Gray (1985, 1989; Wood and Gray, 1991); however, the collaboration theory provides a basis for understanding how and why actors meet and act jointly (Morris and Miller-Stevens, 2016), namely, to "constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible" (Gray, 1989, p. 5).

In line with this definition, consensus seems to exist on the increasingly important role of collaboration between and across the public-private and nonprofit-profit divides in tourism planning (Timothy, 1998; Reed, 1999; Ladkin and Bertramini, 2002; Waayers *et al*., 2012) and policy making (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Parker, 1999; Vernon *et al*., 2005). Here, collaboration is widely considered to offer a positive, significant tool. Collaborative efforts enable actors to overcome challenges and limitations and to resolve issues emerging from the fragmented nature of tourism products, the challenging tourism environment (dependent on factors such as policy making, infrastructure and seasonality) and an increasingly competitive global market (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Bramwell and Lane, 2000a, b).

However, collaboration is regarded as emerging process that does not often take place in a linear and systematic way (Hall, 1999). While the collaboration theory does help to create an understanding of how and why actors collaborate, the various actors enact collaboration to different ends constituting "collaboration as a practical issue" (Waayers *et al*., 2012, p. 673).

Given that multiple individuals with different experiential backgrounds and perspectives come together, the emerging practices and the collaboration process are by definition rather unorganized, chaotic, fractal and partial, largely uncontrollable, continuously changing and can be highly controversial.

Accordingly, "while there is a wealth of literature that explores the theory and conceptual ideas of collaboration […] there is a need to explore these theories in applied situations" (Waayers *et al*., 2012, p. 673). This paper aims to meet this need by exploring how collaboration unfolds in the present case study.

Based on the above, it can be considered conducive to this paper's conceptual discussion that the empirical case discussed here was also grounded in a collaborative methodology.

4. An explorative methodology: developing collaborative configurations in practice

This paper is based on data from a workshop entitled "Sustainable business development and demography: Exploring critical links between gender, youth and small-scale business development in fishery and tourism in South Greenland" (SBD project) (AAU Arctic, 2017). The project was funded by the Arctic Cooperation Program 2015–2017 under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2015). A team consisting of 10

researchers from the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities employed by research institutions in Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands carried out the project (Aalborg University, 2018). The main aim of the SBD project was to promote sustainable business and demographic development in and for South Greenland by focusing on locally anchored, small-scale business entrepreneurs and their role in shaping and influencing the business landscape in their community (AAU Arctic, 2017).

In order to explore new concrete paths and possibilities for sustainable and demographic development in this community, a workshop was conducted at the Campus Kujalleq (Campus Kujalleq, 2014) in Qaqortoq, South Greenland, April 10–11, 2018.

4.1 Organization and implementation of the workshop

Although the workshop was initially planned to facilitate knowledge collaboration and dialogue between all of the relevant local and regional stakeholders in South Greenland (AAU Arctic, 2017), the organizers soon faced challenges regarding the identification of the stakeholders and how to reach them. The process according to which participants were invited to the workshop was rather pragmatic. The involved researchers contacted partners and informants of their previous research stays in Greenland, asking if they wanted to participate and/or if they knew of others who might be interested in participating in the workshop. The only criterion for participation was that the interested parties needed to live and/or work in South Greenland with tourism and/or fisheries. While this might seem unsystematic, this sampling approach enabled the team of eight organizers from Aalborg University, the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources and the University of the Faroe Islands to conduct the workshop with 28 participants (see Table I).

The broad composition of stakeholders provided the organizers with a diverse group of participants as regards age, gender and field of employment, and this diversity rendered it possible to obtain insights into the complexity of practices owing to the diversity of interrelated stakeholders.

4.2 The workshop setting: an action research-inspired environment

The workshop was divided into thematic slots, offering presentations from the different researchers (covering different research fields, e.g. demography, fisheries, tourism) and by the South Greenlandic actors (presentations made by DMO Destination South Greenland, Greenland Business, etc.), group work and other activities (e.g. walk and talks, speed dating), as well as discussion sessions (see Figure 2). In so doing, the organizers sought to achieve a dynamic yet intimate workshop process and flow.

Table I Participant list

Participants	*Location*	*Amount*
Food College Greenland – Inuili	Narsaq	1
Campus Kujalleq	Qaqortoq	16
Ministry of Business, Labor, Trade and Energy	Nuuk	1
Greenland Business	Nuuk	1
Aalborg University	Aalborg and Copenhagen	6
Illunnguujuk Hostel	Qassiarsuk	1
University of the Faroe Islands	Tórshavn	1
Greenland Institute of Natural Resources	Nuuk	1
Destination South Greenland	Qaqortoq	2
Visit Greenland	Nuuk	1
SHAPE	Nuuk	1
Narsaq Hostel/Qajak bryggeri	Narsaq	1
Ulu Care	Narsaq	1
Trawlerrederiet “Bingo 3” – Fisherman	Qaqortoq	1
Qaqortoq Museum	Qaqortoq	1
Total		36

Figure 2 Workshop program

Program for the workshop "Sustainable development of small-scale business in South Greenland"

10-11 April 2018, Qaqortoq.
Campus Kujalleq, Aulaen, NI-Bygningen

9.00	Arrival and coffee
9.05	Welcome by Lill Bjørst, Aalborg University
9.20	Presentation of previous fieldwork by Rikke Becker Jacobsen,
Aalborg	Universitet
9.40	Gender and location: What does it mean when men and women choose where they want to live?' Proposal by Helene Pristed Nielsen, Aalborg University
10.00	Break
10.15	Proposal by Erika Hayfield, University of the Faroe Islands: "I love the Faroe Islands, but I always wanted to live abroard": Young people, mobility and the periphere areas
10.35	Proposal by Ida Kragstrup, Municipality Kujalleq: Presentation of the SHAPE project
10.50	Mingling activity – "Speeddating"
11.20	Introduction to the group work: Survey of small-scale businesses in South Greenland and tourism activities
11.40	Group work
12.30	Lunch

Program for the workshop "Sustainable development of small-scale busines in South Greenland"

10-11 April 2018, Qaqortoq.
Sted: Campus Kujalleq, Aulaen, NI-Bygningen

13.10	Proceeding with group work
13.45	Presentation of the group work findings and discussion
14.45	Walk and talk
15.15	Coffee break
15.30	Evaluation of the "Walk and talk" with participants
16:00	Presentation by Henrk Ebbe Nielsen, Destination South Greenland: The DMO Destination South Greenland
16:30	Presentation by Christian Wennecke, Greenland Business: "Innovation og entrepreneurship in Greenland"
17.00	Ending of day one

Dag 2

8.30	Welcome & presentation of the program by Lill Rastad Bjørst
8.35	Proposal on fishery by Helle Torp Christensen, Grønlands Naturinstitut: "Resourses in fishery in South Greenland"
9.00	Proposal on tourism by Daniela Chimirri & Laura James, Aalborg University: Tourism development in Greenland – What could it be?
9.30	Break
9.50	Group work based on given cases
12.00	Lunch
12.45	Presentation of group work findings and discussion
14.30	Good by and thank you

The workshop aimed to create an atmosphere of knowledge sharing and exchange and to function as a platform, offering participants space to contribute to the exploration and development of proposals for how to combine sustainability with the changing and challenging environment in South Greenland in relation to tourism and fisheries.

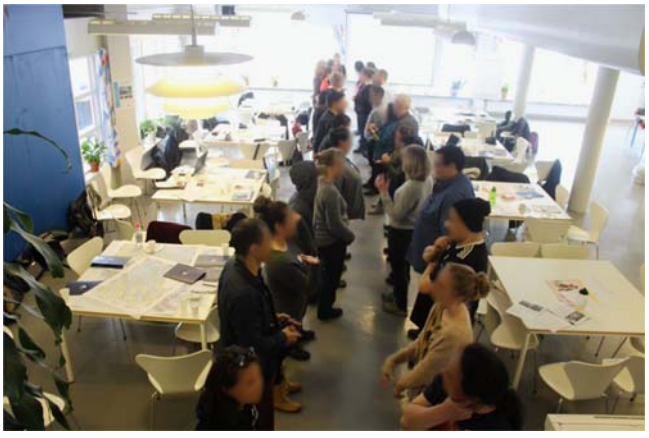
Considering the widely reproduced image of the Greenlandic society being extremely small (given its population relative to its size), it would have been reasonable to assume that the actors in such a delimited region as South Greenland, working in the same or interrelated professional fields, already knew each other or at least have heard of each other before the workshop took place. The organizers did not know the extent to which this would be the case, however, and therefore decided to include activities aimed at fostering interpersonal contact between the participants. These activities included:

- starting the workshop with a speed-dating activity for the participants to get to know each other;
- coffee breaks between sessions intended to facilitate space for dialogue;
- lunch funded by the project and intended to create a relaxed atmosphere for more informal exchange; and
- a walk and talk outside the workshop venue in the Greenlandic nature and the town of Qaqortoq, inspiring new perspectives and becoming familiar with the local area as the center of the workshop.

The organizers planned a speed-dating activity for the first day (see Plate 1). The participants were asked to present themselves in 2 min to the person in front of them. That way, the organizers hoped to create grounds and starting points for further conversations amongst the participants.

Arranging the workshop in this particular manner arguably created space for networking, exchanging ideas and knowledge, and for initiating further cooperation between all of the participants, rejecting "conventional research approaches where an external expert enters a setting to record and represent what is happening" (Kemmis *et al*., 2013, p. 4). In addition to presenting their own work, the involved researchers (including this paper's author) also actively participated in the group work, activities and discussions. The organizers also invited all of the

Plate 1 Speed-dating activity in the SBD workshop, April 10, 2018, Campus Kujalleq, Qaqortoq



Source: Picture: Daniela Chimirri

participants (before, during and after) to contribute to the workshop. Contributions ranged from presentations and talks (see Plate 4) to feedback and involvement in discussions and group work (see Plate 5). Accordingly, this approach recognizes and acknowledges the capacity of all of the participants living and/or working in/with tourism and fisheries in South Greenland to conduct research themselves through active participation throughout all of the aspects of the research process (Kemmis *et al*., 2013).

Such a process aims to transcend the "usual distinctions between the researcher and the researched and invites participants ideally to take part in a mutual process of learning and change, which might enable new modes of thinking and acting" (Egmose, 2016, p. 6). According to Kemmis (2009), it inspires changes in the "practitioners' practices, their understandings of their practices, and the conditions in which they practice" (p. 463). In the case of the SBD project, it meant to develop proposals for South Greenland entrepreneurs in terms of how to cope with the changing and challenging environment of this Arctic community in sustainable ways. This stands in line with the argument regarding the need to create a more nuanced understanding of the concept of collaboration in tourism research acknowledging the notion of multiplicity in how the actors think and act (see chapter 3).

In conjunction with the material from the workshop, consisting of recordings of group discussions, field diary notes, photographic images and flipchart sheets from group work as well as an earlier research project (Ren and Chimirri, 2017), I also draw on previous fieldwork data in form of interviews from my current PhD project. This supplemented my explorative participation during the workshop, where I could observe and become part of collaboration in action.

5. Collaborative practices forming collaborative configurations

Applying a bottom-up approach, this paper presents four examples of collaborative configurations. All four forms are modes of acting and conducting collaboration. They differ in terms of how and to what ends collaboration takes place and are characterized by the different perspectives that actors bring to the table, resulting in multiple forms of collaborating.

Agreeing with Waayers *et al*. (2012), who describe collaboration as a practical issue, the analysis in this paper takes the emerging practices of the workshop as the departure point and basis for analyzing collaboration in this specific setting. By using the word "practices," however, this paper refers to the assemblage of a broader set of activities, discourses and the physical setting, and it does not limit its analytical scope to the behavioral aspect of practice. The analysis shows how we need to create a more nuanced understanding of collaboration theory in tourism research.

5.1 "Through differences you have the possibility of positioning yourself" – positioning: working together to stand out

As argued in theoretical terms in chapter three, this example shows how collaboration also offers a tool for situating and therefore positioning oneself as unique. It creates a competitive advantage for the actors enabling them to overcome challenges and limitations and to resolve issues emerging from the fragmented nature of tourism products and the challenging tourism environment (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Bramwell and Lane, 2000a, b).

Depending on how individualized competition is conceived, competition and collaboration do not have to be regarded as natural antagonists. As one DMO staffer commented in the context of an earlier study (cf. Ren and Chimirri, 2017): "There are a lot of values in the regions […] but you have to look a little deeper to see the differences. The differences offer the possibility of positioning each region and the stakeholders in the regions […] That doesn't necessarily mean competing; it can also mean supplementing each other […] that's a huge benefit. Just trying to sell the same products as everyone else would mean cannibalism. Then it's just about prices and where the tourist can get the same experience cheaper" (field interview LY, December 13, 2016). In this case, the purpose of working together lies in the identification of differences across actors, which make each and everyone stand out as special, thus leading to the potential creation of unique selling proposition.

This is partly also reflected in the following example from the SBD workshop. One of the workshop participants runs a small business in South Greenland selling specialized products based on local Greenlandic herbs. She used the workshop to promote her own business by displaying, introducing and selling her products (Plates 2 and 3), which further positioned her as unique and special in this market niche.

As this participant explained during a coffee break, "we need to make others aware of our existence and to connect for resource delivery and the selling of our products" (workshop participant TH, April 11, 2018). In relation to the delivery of goods for her production, she needs to coordinate with locals. And in order to create the needed awareness for promotion and sales, she needs to network.

Even though the purpose of collaborating in this case appears to be solely geared toward individual economic benefit, it also demonstrates how positioning is also a collaborative configuration incorporating other configurations, such as coordinating and networking.

5.2 "Everyone can contribute with something" – coordination

A session on tourism development in Greenland was held on the second day of the workshop. After a presentation by the author of this paper and a colleague on the tourism

Plate 2 Presentation of products, SBD workshop, April 11, 2018, Campus Kujalleq, Qaqortoq

Source: Picture: Daniela Chimirri

Plate 3 Sale of products, SBD workshop, April 11, 2018, Campus Kujalleq, Qaqortoq

Source: Picture: Daniela Chimirri

landscape in Greenland and presented to the other participants by each group (Plate 4), participants discussed the topic in groups (Plate 5), which was summarized afterwards (Plate 6).

During these summaries, it became apparent that all of the groups had discussed one specific topic in particular: the structure of the DMOs in Greenland and their responsibilities and effectiveness in relation to tourism development. "It's different from region to region how tourism is organized. We have actors such as boat owners, transport companies, accommodation, farms and many more. Then we have actors who offer packages […] They sell them to larger travel agencies, which have partners in different countries […] Then, we have the DMOs – here in the South, it's Destination South Greenland – which mainly does […] marketing, promotion and product development together with actors in the region. Then there's Visit Greenland, whose main tasks are branding and visibility, expanding the season, improving framework conditions, statistics and documentation. We asked ourselves: what are we missing in this value chain?" (workshop participant JP, April 11, 2018).

Participant JP underlines how the regions are organized differently. In the case of South Greenland, it has been done "in a way with […] Destination South Greenland […] others are running it by the municipality. There are different ways to do it. What's important is who takes care

Plate 4 Academic presentation, tourism session, SBD workshop, April 11, 2018, Campus Kujalleq, Qaqortoq

Source: Picture: Naja Carina Steenholdt

Plate 5 Group work, tourism session, SBD workshop, April 11, 2018, Campus Kujalleq, Qaqortoq

Source: Picture: Daniela Chimirri

Plate 6 Presentation of notes from group work, tourism session, SBD workshop, April 11, 2018, Campus Kujalleq, Qaqortoq

Source: Picture: Daniela Chimirri

of the development […] Who makes the most out of the potential and the ideas that we have developed – also here today? Who coordinates and launches it? How do we want to work together on this?" (workshop participant JP, April 11, 2018).

A student from Campus Kujalleq contributed to the discussion with personal experiences from an internship at a local tourism business in South Greenland: "I'm a coordinator and coordinate things. There isn't actually any tourism office on site, and because of that, the city itself thinks about how tourism could take place. It's important for us that everyone in the area – the people making souvenirs, elderly, associations, everyone – is part of it. Everyone is able to contribute with something. We contacted everyone, asked what they are able to do and what they want to contribute with. Whether it's road or harbor workers, the elderly, associations – our vision is that everyone can contribute with something" (workshop participant TM, April 11, 2018).

These examples illustrate coordination as another form of collaborative configuration, demonstrating how the lack of a formalized local tourism organization (e.g. a DMC or DMO) does not automatically mean that no collaboration takes place. Participants recognize the absence of a formal tourism organization in many regions and question "what are we missing?" and "who will make the most of the potential and the ideas that we have worked on here today" (workshop participant JP, April 11, 2018). From an outside perspective, it might therefore appear as though there is an untapped and unused potential for development. However, Mulford and Rogers (1982) state that coordination is characterized by a situation of informal trade-offs and by the attempt to absorb the absence of rules. The examples of the workshop exemplify such an informal setting. As the student expressed (despite the absence of a formal body): everyone is able to contribute to the development of the area according to their personal knowledge and capabilities.

Nevertheless, coordination alone does not solve problems; it neither challenges nor creates proposals for tourism development (Ladkin and Bertramini, 2002). It can be argued that an actor is required to initiate and coordinate such a largely informal or minimally formalized platform, where local actors can meet, exchange and share knowledge, thereby motivating actors to "contribute with something" (workshop participant TM, April 11, 2018). This "contribute with something" constitutes the essential element that makes the difference in the development process.

As these examples illustrate, every region is organized differently in relation to tourism. The regional structure depends on the location of the region, its accessibility, its landmarks and tourism opportunities, the popularity of the destination, and the access to resources in relation to marketing and promotion. Accordingly, the most important aspect of tourism development seems not to be the physical structure of the place, but rather the collaborative activities involving the many actors in the area. Coordination of and amongst actors is also an element of networking as the second collaborative configuration and will be illustrated in the following.

5.3 "People think that we automatically know" – networking during and after the workshop

Tourism actors expect to be known by fellow tourism actors. This became apparent in the workshop discussions on the second day about the challenges of tourism development in South Greenland. For example, participant IV stated: "When I hear people complaining that nothing happens and asking why their products are not being bought by tourists, I ask: When did you tell me that you have these offers and products? That's the biggest challenge right now. People think that we automatically know about their products. They don't even tell us that they exist. We're going out and getting information on products and services" (workshop participant IV, April 11, 2018). Here, the participant IV described how other tourism actors in the area continuously confront her with such expectations on a daily basis. For her, the primary purpose of attending the workshop was therefore to establish networks with fellow tourism actors. As the organization for which the participant works was still in the startup phase, getting in touch with others and becoming familiar with the tourism actors in the area is deemed essential to fulfilling the organization's objectives.

Apart from this explicit objective of attending the workshop to establish and broaden one's own network, other participants indicated in informal communications that there was also another reason for their workshop participation.

The workshop initiated the planning and realization of a general assembly of the regional DMO Destination South Greenland with its members and Visit Greenland. The workshop participation was financially supported by the SBD project, including the reimbursement of travel and accommodation expenses to/in Qaqortoq for many of the invited participants. Realizing that its members would be assembled at the same place and time, the DMO exploited the opportunity to hold its annual general assembly. Transportation is expensive in Greenland, and neither regional DMOs nor Visit Greenland have unlimited financial resources to finance transportation to meetings. This re-purposing of the workshop also ties in to the aspect of networking: the meeting between members served the purpose of talking about the present status of the DMO and discussing the future of South Greenland tourism development.

Both examples illustrate networking as another collaborative configuration. On the one hand, the collaborative activity appears in the form of expanding one's network and, thus, as reason for

attending the workshop in its own right. On the other hand, pragmatically exploiting this opportunity to meet with people outside the workshop setting constitutes another purpose and provides an additional reason for collaborating.

In both cases, the establishment and fostering of relations between actors is central. This aspect constitutes the central element in the networking theory (Iorio and Corsale, 2014) and requires commitment from the involved parties. As Cumbers *et al*. (2003) argue, commitment leads to connectedness and potential opportunities for sharing knowledge and experiences, which are, in turn, important attributes for development.

In both cases, networking also requires the coordination of actors. Here, the two "collaborative configurations" of coordination and networking cannot be empirically separated, as they determine each other.

5.4 "We try to meet people to cooperate, because we want to do something" – cooperation as enabling practices

Cooperation as a form of collaborative configuration is different to positioning, coordination and networking. This form of collaboration implies actions that are more precise in order to achieve certain goals. It includes efforts aimed to tackle challenges and solve mutual problems (Jamal and Getz, 1995). As the following example shows, cooperation in this case represents a goal-oriented tool for dealing with concrete tourism-related challenges facing the town of Qaqortoq.

"We're trying to meet people to cooperate, because we want to do something" (workshop participant VA, April 10, 2018), so explained participant VA during a workshop coffee break. We talked about Qaqortoq as a popular cruise-ship destination and how the local museum is challenged to motivate cruise tourists to come and learn about the area and its history. In a follow-up interview with the same person the day after the workshop, she explained how she wanted to do more than just display objects and hope for locals and tourists to "drop by": "When I came, the museum was neglected […] There was no cooperation, but I try to make it work" (field interview VA, April 11, 2018). To this date, VA's cooperation remains very limited and is mainly linked to work-specific tasks, such as displaying objects and supplying facilities for educational purposes to Campus Kujalleq. As VA also mentioned, all of these activities are rather sporadic. More collaborative activities, also on a regular basis, would be a major step toward achieving specific objectives in this area.

Similar challenges have also been expressed in previous research (Ren and Chimirri, 2017). During an interview for this project, PB stated that "in Greenland, we are not standing united when we want to develop the landscape. Everybody works for their own business," while it would be crucial to "find ways to get key stakeholders at one table and say: 'Good, now it doesn't matter how my business runs; now what matters is how can we develop this for the benefit of Greenland'" (field interview PB, February 8, 2017). This example illustrates the significance that cooperation as collaborative configuration could play when considering it as a practice of establishing an interactive process of shaping the tourism landscape together.

The previous examples illustrate the four collaborative configurations of positioning, coordination, networking and cooperation as practices in which stakeholders benefit from each other by acting both individually and in harmony.

6. Discussion

The empirical data from the SBD workshop, previous fieldwork from my PhD project as well as a previous research project (Ren and Chimirri, 2017) all suggest that the collaboration concept is not differentiated enough in the tourism literature. There is a need to connect "collaboration in theory" to "collaboration in practice" more closely and to deepen our understanding of the collaboration concept as being varied with practical substance from the field.

Due to its fragmented nature, the tourism landscape is characterized by diverse stakeholders and practices that create a complex environment involving numerous uncertainties and conflict

potentials. The array of tourism actors involved in the planning and development process of the tourism landscape creates a complex social system of individuals and organizations. As the illustrated examples of this explorative study show, the participants attend the workshop with very different expectations, diverse interests and aims; sometimes connecting with others, and sometimes colliding with them. Involved actors use and shape collaboration to different ends.

Collaboration does not take place in a coherent form, but rather in the shape of multiple collaborative activities that simultaneously and continuously affect each other. They complement and contradict at the same time. Having said that, positioning is the central configuration upon which the other three – coordination, networking and cooperation – are based (see Figure 3).

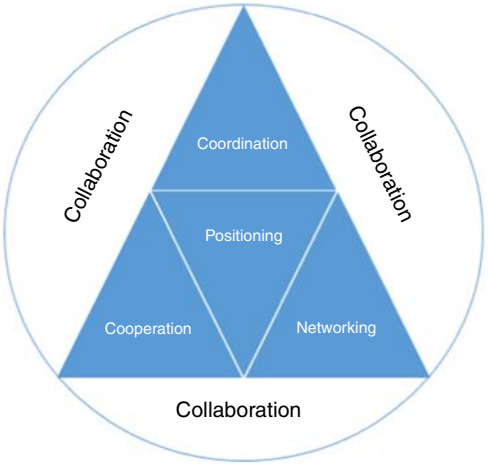
By thinking in terms of such multiplicity, we open up for diverse realities and futures of the tourism landscape in Greenland. Such an approach supports the need for Arctic communities to locally explore paths and create possibilities for development in order to face emerging challenges, as articulated by the Nordic Council of Ministers (2015).

In contrast, the collaboration theory argues in favor of a certain commonality. Diverse parties gather and agree on a problem and then constructively explore the possibilities for finding a solution to change the existing circumstances (Gray, 1989). Such a postulated inherent commonality stands in contrast to the empirical data presented and leaves us with the question as to what this then means in practice.

Following the argumentation of the case study, the attempt to organize collaboration and to coordinate the emerging complex collaborative practices across diverse stakeholder interests to a specific end appears debatable – possibly even unrealistic. This might also lead to the assumption that collaboration is an open-ended endeavor, rendering it impossible to organize any collaborative activities in favor of future tourism development and needed change.

However, even though collaboration does not necessarily require agreement on a problem that appears relevant to every party involved, the empirical data show that every party can benefit from collaborative activities, albeit in different ways. Even though differently and not as planned by the organizers of workshop, they find or make room to inspire and influence the actual processes that are in place as well as creating the basis for future collaborations.

Figure 3 Collaborative configurations based on empirical data



Source: Own illustration

7. Conclusion

This case study has revealed collaboration for tourism development as a highly intertwined ecology of practices and activities grounded in individual motivations and reasons for acting. Challenges and resources influence and shape the motives of actors to participate in a workshop, just as much as the evolving practices amongst workshop participants did. The workshop's complex, heterogeneous practices and the emerging four collaborative configurations – positioning, coordination, networking and cooperation – displayed the necessity to nuance the concept of collaboration.

Although this study was limited to unfolding and analyzing the collaborative practices of participants in South Greenland during a workshop, the case study exemplarily provides knowledge for creating an understanding of how practices form diverse, ambiguous and yet interrelated collaborative configurations, which influence how tourism is being and could be developed in Greenland and other Artic destinations. Collaboration is neither easy, trouble-free nor an unambiguously positive tool. Nevertheless, it lies at the core of establishing more pluralistic-democratic, bottom-up approaches to future tourism development and therefore requires further empirical exploration and conceptual specification.

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