



Research article

Perceptions of climate change in a tourism governance context

Romano Wyss^{a,b,*}, Bruno Abegg^{c,d,1}, Tobias Luthe^{a,2}^a Institute for Tourism and Leisure Research, University of Applied Sciences HTW Chur, Comercialstrasse 22, Chur 7000, Switzerland^b Chair of Cultural Geography, Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Ostenstrasse 18, Eichstätt 85072, Germany^c Institute of Geography, University of Innsbruck, Innrain 52, Innsbruck 6020, Austria^d alpS-Centre for Climate Change Adaptation, Grabenweg 68, Innsbruck 6020, Austria

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 26 December 2013

Accepted 26 April 2014

Keywords:

Climate change
Destination governance
Perception
Adaptation
Mountain tourism
Cooperation
Resilience
Alps

ABSTRACT

Climate change is projected to be a major change factor for many tourism-dependent communities around the world. While this fact is broadly acknowledged in the academic community, there is still lacking evidence of how local tourism actors in different geographical settings perceive climate change, and how climate change impacts are projected to affect the respective tourism governance systems in the future. Based on empirical evidence from a mountain-tourism community in the Alps, the perceived vulnerabilities are laid open in a participatory focus group research approach, and future development paths as well as their effect upon local destination governance are discussed. Special attention is given to existing and future cooperation patterns, with the overarching goal to understand how perceptions of climate change influence future adaptation paths, and what role cooperation plays in implementing climate change adaptation measures on a local and regional level.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Climate change is considered a pressing issue as well as a threat to many mountain tourism destinations in the Alps (Abegg, Agrawala, Crick, & de Montfalcon, 2007; Elsasser & Bürki, 2002; Matasci, 2012; Rixen et al., 2011) and beyond (Becken & Hay, 2012; Scott, Hall, & Gossling, 2012; Simpson, Gössling, Scott, Hall, & Gladin, 2008). Yet when looking at present and future effects of climate change on a regional or local scale, there are still major uncertainties on what impacts global change processes will have, taking into account geographical singularities and specific characteristics of local communities (Brace & Geoghegan, 2011; O'Brien, 2011). In order to assess vulnerabilities of tourism destinations and strengthen the resilience of local tourism systems to climate change, both structural aspects of destination governance systems as well as individual climate change perceptions have to be taken into account (Wyss, 2013). Most adaptation measures in an alpine tourism context can only be successfully planned and implemented with actors along the tourism supply chain teaming up

resources and actively cooperating (see Luthe, Wyss, & Schuckert, 2012; Wyss, Luthe, & Abegg, 2014). It is therefore important to understand how climate change impacts are perceived by tourism stakeholders in a specific geographical context, and what influence these perceived impacts will have on the cooperation pattern between the various actors along the tourism supply chain (see Biggs, 2011; Strickland-Munro, Allison, & Moore, 2010; Wyss, 2013).

Climate change as an external impact factor influencing the possible future development paths of tourism systems in mountain regions and beyond is characterized by a high level of uncertainty, especially in terms of the effects on a regional or local scale (Jopp, DeLacy, & Mair, 2010; Scott, Jones, & Konopek, 2007; Scott et al., 2012). In this context of uncertainty, the resilience of a regional socio-economic system can be defined as the capacity to recover from disturbances as well as the capacity to rebound from adversity in a strengthened and more resourceful way (Adger et al., 2009; Folke, 2006). In order to strengthen resilience of tourism systems on a regional or local scale, it is important to identify present and future vulnerability factors, spread risks across the system and strengthen cooperation by building new and deepen existing partnerships (Adger, Hughes, Folke, Carpenter, & Rockström, 2005; Becken, 2013; Luthe et al., 2012). A possibility to uncover these vulnerability factors is to draw on the knowledge of local actors, which have built up place-specific knowledge and understanding over many years in direct contact with the local socio-economic and ecological environment (Brace & Geoghegan, 2011; Jaeger, Kasemir, Stoll-Kleemann, Schibli, & Dahinden, 2000).

* Corresponding author at: Institute for Tourism and Leisure Research, University of Applied Sciences HTW Chur, Switzerland. Tel.: +41 795112319.

E-mail addresses: romano.wyss@gmx.ch (R. Wyss), abegg@alps-gmbh.com, bruno.abegg@uibk.ac.at (B. Abegg), tobias.luthe@htwchur.ch (T. Luthe).

¹ Tel.: +43 5125075447.

² Tel.: +41 765686442.

Within a participatory research approach, the main narratives, dominant perceptions and common approaches to problem solving with regard to local climate change impacts can be laid open (Behringer, Buerki, & Fuhrer, 2000). Focus group methodology allows to assess the relative importance and system relevance of individual impact factors within moderated discussions, while taking into account both individual perceptions and social knowledge canons (Liamputtong, 2011). Besides providing valuable information on the perception of specific issues by members of local communities and specific stakeholder groups, participatory research such as focus groups also serves as a stimulation to encourage regional adaptation through the direct involvement of local actors within the research process (Behringer et al., 2000; Jaeger et al., 2000).

After a review of the most important strands of literature in Section 2, the integrative methodological framework of the paper is discussed in Section 3. Section 4 introduces the main characteristics of the case-study area and provides details on the focus group sessions in the context of the local tourism governance system. Section 5 presents the main results. These are discussed and reflected in the broader context of tourism governance and resilience building in Section 6. Section 7 concludes with general insights and future research pathways.

2. Literature review

2.1. Climate change and mountain tourism

Climate change impacts on tourism systems, and actors in mountain regions have been at the center of interest of the scholarly community from a relatively early stage on. Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, authors have been dealing with the effects climate change might have on certain regional tourism systems and how this could affect local supply-side tourism actors (Abegg & Froesch, 1994; McBoyle & Wall, 1987; Wall, Harrison, Kinnaird, McBoyle, & Quinlan, 1986). With regard to mountain tourism, there are a number of possible impacts climate change will presumably have on touristic activities, which include but are not restricted to impacts on infrastructures through melting permafrost and an increase in extreme events (Beniston, 2003; Hoffmann, Sprengel, Ziegler, Kolb, & Abegg, 2009; Müller & Lehmann Friedli, 2011), effects on the snow-conditions in which snow-based activities can be pursued and the related technical infrastructure that is required (Abegg et al., 2007; Landauer, Pröbstl, & Haider, 2012; Soboll & Dingeldey, 2012; Steiger, 2012; Steiger & Abegg, 2013) as well as effects on the overall attractiveness of the alpine landscape for tourists (Bürki, 2000; Loibl & Walz, 2010; Pütz et al., 2011; Richardson & Loomis, 2004).

2.2. Tourism governance in times of climate change

In most alpine regions, the tourism industry is built up of a vast number of small-scale tourism businesses, which provide a very restricted number of services (Pechlaner & Tschurtschenthaler, 2003; Strobl & Peters, 2013). Tourists, on the other hand, often do not distinguish between tourism businesses that offer an individual tourism service in a local context but experience the whole portfolio of services and goods within a destination as one integral offer (Bieger, 2008). Therefore, it is important to understand the provision of “the” alpine tourism product as a joint offer of different actors cooperating along the tourism supply chain (Flagestad & Hope, 2001; Luthé et al., 2012; Michel, 2001). In order to coordinate these activities along the tourism supply chain, different forms of governance systems have evolved (Beaumont & Dredge, 2010; Hall, 2011). Broadly, we can distinguish between the cooperatively organized “community model of governance” and the hierarchical “corporate model,” with a clear lead firm (Flagestad & Hope, 2001). In practice, various intermediate forms can be identified (Beritelli, Bieger, & Laesser, 2007; Strobl & Peters, 2013). The structure and functioning of these destination governance systems can be conceptually grasped as a network of tourism actors and analyzed with

the help of social network analysis (Baggio, Scott, & Cooper, 2010; Presenza & Cipollina, 2010).

2.3. Perceptions of climate change in tourism

Within the tourism-related literature, a number of studies have dealt with the demand-side perception of climate change and climate-induced changes by tourists (e.g. Becken, 2007; Gössling et al., 2006; Moreno, 2010; Tervo-Kankare, Hall, & Saarinen, 2013) and link these to the possible future evolution of international tourism flows (Amelung, Nicholls, & Viner, 2007; Bigano, Hamilton, Maddison, & Tol, 2006; Gössling & Hall, 2006). While demand-side-oriented papers give an interesting insight on how sensitive tourists might react to climate-related changes, a major uncertainty remains in terms of whether or not ad hoc interpretations and stated preferences of tourists can predict future decision-making and tourism-related behavior in a sufficient way (see Gössling & Hall, 2006; Gössling et al., 2012). Supply-side studies on perceptions of climate change and its effects upon the industry might be more reliable in terms of predictive power since many tourism actors are already dealing with climate-related changes in their business environment today. They have knowingly or not implemented certain adaptation measures and are forced to think about future investments and infrastructure developments. An impressive number of studies regarding the perception of climate change effects on tourism activities in many different settings have been published over the past decade, as for example, Stewart, Tivy, Howell, Dawson, and Draper (2010) focusing on climate change perceptions of tourism actors in the Canadian North, Saarinen and Tervo (2006) and Tervo-Kankare (2011) studying perceptions of nature-based tourism entrepreneurs in Finland, Brouder and Lundmark (2011) on perceptions of winter-oriented tourism entrepreneurs in Northern Sweden, Hall (2006) for climate change perceptions of entrepreneurs in New Zealand, Belle and Bramwell (2005) on climate change perceptions by the tourism industry in Barbados, and Marshall, Marshall, Abdulla, Rouphael, and Ali (2011) for the perception of climate change related impacts on dive tourism in the Red Sea. With regard to mountain tourism, early studies regarding the supply-side perception of climate-induced changes have been published by Abegg (1996), König (1998) and Bürki (2000). More recently, perceptions of climate-related change by mountain-based tourism actors have been published for Australia and New Zealand with a focus on snow-based activities (Bicknell & McManus, 2006; Hopkins, 2013; Hopkins, Higham, & Becken, 2013; Morrison & Pickering, 2013; Roman, Lynch, & Dominey-Howes, 2010), for Austria with a focus on entrepreneurship (Helgenberger, 2011; Steiger & Trawöger, 2011; Trawöger, 2013), as well as with a specific cable car industry focus for Switzerland (Abegg, Kolb, Sprengel, & Hoffmann, 2008; Hoffmann et al., 2009).

3. Methodology

3.1. Network analysis

Social network analysis (SNA) is a well-established method to analyze the degree of interdependence between individual actors in a systemic context, based on quantitative and/or qualitative information (Scott, Baggio, & Cooper, 2008). Specific parameters, which describe the distribution-pattern of links between actors, allow us to gain insights into the functioning of the system(s) at stake (see e.g. Wasserman & Faust, 1994). In the context of tourism governance, SNA allows us to find out which actors work together, how strong the cooperation between the actors is as well as which sectors of the tourism supply chain are most strongly intertwined within the local tourism system (see Luthé et al., 2012). In addition, a number of additional parameters specifying the concentration of links in certain parts of the network or the number of connections between specific actor groups can be measured (for a comprehensive overview in the context of tourism, see

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1013691>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1013691>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)