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Mitigation strategies of endangered destinations: A research project to identify barriers and levers that can be activated

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Keywords: Carbon risk, Mitigation, Climate change, Tourism, GHG emissions

Background

Tourism is a sector that is currently impacted by climate change, but is also responsible for a significant share of GHG emissions (Lenzen et al., 2018). Mountain areas, especially in the Alps, can be considered as examples and amplifiers of these dynamics, especially regarding the intensity of the consequences of climate change (IPCC, 2021). As a result, there is a large body of literature related to the impacts of climate change on mountain tourism, including for example snow industry (Abegg et al., 2020) glacier tourism (Salim et al., 2021) or mountaineering (Mourey et al., 2020). However, only few studies have investigated the mitigation strategies that are implemented in order to reach emission reduction goals (Scott & Gössling, 2021). With the aim to fill this gap, this proposal present and opens for discussion a research project that aims to identify the mitigation strategies developed at the destination scale, identify the barriers to their implementation and develop participatory planning to engage and sustain mitigation strategies.

Approach

The research project will rely on two case studies in France and Switzerland. As an example, in France, the Chamonix-Mont-Blanc valley has been selected as it represents a tourism destination with a large number of international tourists, important tourism sites (especially glacier and ski areas) and an equal balance between summer and winter tourism. Furthermore, a recent article by Clivaz & Savioz (2020) shows that 80% of this destination's GHG emissions are related to tourists travelling to the destination.

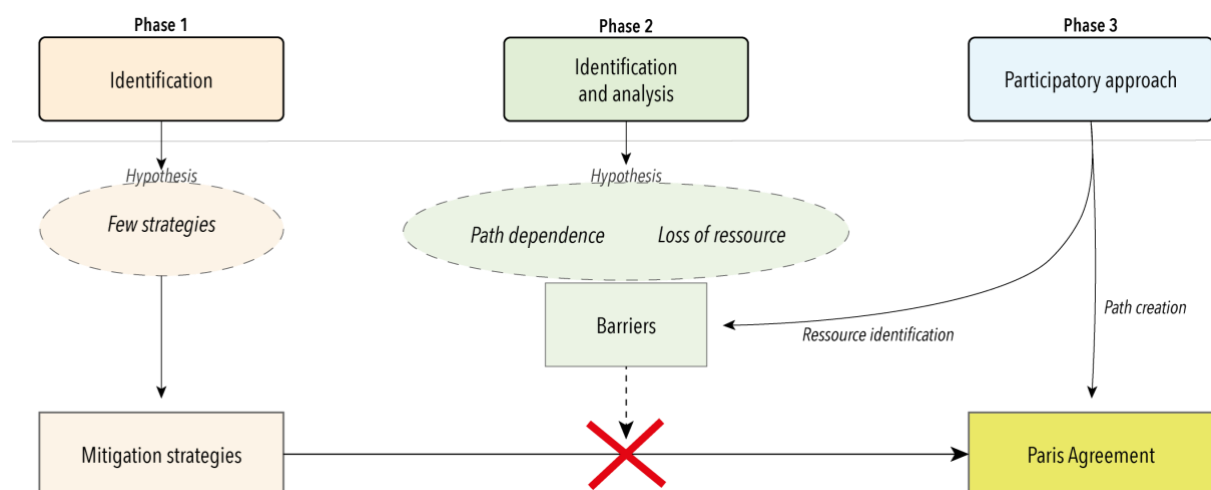


Figure 1. Research approach

The work will be carried out in three phases (Figure 1): By conducting semi-structured interviews with tourism stakeholders, phase 1 aims at identifying the strategies that are already thought and implemented to reduce the destination's GHG emissions. The main hypothesis underlying this work is that few mitigation strategies are implemented due to various barriers. As a result, Phase 2 aims at identifying the barriers that lead to climatic inaction. This part of the research project will be based on

the path dependence framework (Martin, 2010). One of the main hypotheses is that to implement mitigation strategies means for tourism stakeholders to voluntarily disconnect from now fruitful territorial resources. To go further, Phase 3 aims to identify the way that new territorial resources (Gumuchian & Pecqueur, 2007) can be activated to sustain mitigation strategies. Based on a path creation perspective (Taylor et al., 2019), this phase will be developed around participatory workshops with local stakeholders.

Expected Results

Through the three phases proposed, this research project aims to better understand the barriers that inhibit the emergence and implementation of GHG emission reduction strategies at the scale of a tourist destination. Furthermore, this project aims to engage with stakeholders by adopting a participatory approach to generate solutions and new paths, in a transdisciplinary manner. In addition to contributing to the literature on climate change mitigation, this research seeks to support public and private operators in their efforts to reduce emissions and meet the targets set by the Paris Agreement.

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