

## Submitted Abstract

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## Abstract

Many mountainous regions in Europe show a high degree of economic specialisation, including the tourism sector. The ski tourism industry is a part of the long-standing economic success of Alpine regions. However, these regions remain dependent on snow availability and have to deal with the long-term decrease in snow cover reliability because of climate change. Alpine regions have to consider both the evolution of tourism practices and the increasing requirements of their local communities. Tourism mountainous areas are a fork in the road. They gear towards two strategies that indicate the ongoing transformations in ski tourism-dependent regions, between reinforcement of existing path development or transition.

One noticeable trend is the enforcement of the prevailing ski industry. Increasing ski industry-related investments points out a path dependence process. Recurring investments have led to a structural lock-in while the highly specific knowledge accumulated has contributed to a cognitive lock-in.

The other strategy is to embark on a transition process to reduce ski tourism dependency. Public policies increasingly support the diversification of tourism activities. Beyond the development of other types of tourism, diversification raises the question of reorientation of the mountain economies. More and more, local initiatives are emerging in these territories to develop crafts, agriculture or services. However, these initiatives are not yet fully integrated into the dominant model.

To understand how diversification policies and local initiatives may engage a new path development, we apply the conceptual framework of transition to ski tourism. It contributes to highlighting both the factors in initiating transition as well as the drivers of path-dependence processes that could impede changing in tourism mountainous environments.