Social Network Governance
Measures of Climate Resilience in the Alps and the Arctic

Research Question and Objectives

Isolated mountain and Arctic (island) communities and ecosystems are suggested as being some of the most sensitive to climate change, while historically suffering from economic, cultural and political neglect, leading to challenges in adaptive capacity.

This project identifies social network patterns together with key socio-cultural, relational and behavioural factors that increase or inhibit adaptation and resilience in the two case study regions, the Norwegian Arctic island of Svalbard and the Surselva-Andermatt Region in Switzerland.

The focus is on context-specific characteristics of communities’ adaptive capacity and the link to community-specific characteristics within the existing local social networks and their embeddedness within the broader political and natural environment.

The results of this transdisciplinary project will provide insights into the barriers and mechanisms supporting or preventing adaptive capacity to climate change from a governance angle.

Methodology

SNA (Social Network Analysis) of the business community networks in both study regions with a sample of all actors by written questionnaires, and a systematic identification of social network patterns.

Additional SNA snowball sampling and qualitative personal expert interviews to validate and evaluate the initial SNA results in both sites. Comparing the case studies to identify contextual aspects, especially cultural, and socio-graphic aspects of internationalization, and how these relate to more quantitative degrees of centrality.

Workshops for resilience scenario building and elaboration of socio-ecological network effects.

"Communication and collaboration are the key ingredients to building resilience to climate and socio-economic change"

Current State of Work

In both case study sites, full sample SNA, snowball sampling, and qualitative personal expert interviews have been completed. That followed a literature survey of the disciplines and locations involved in this study, along with compiling lists of tourism and tourism-related businesses in each area.

The data are in the process of being analysed quantitatively and qualitatively, in order to compare the results for evaluating the methods. Once each case study has been thoroughly analysed, then a case study comparison will be made in order to extract the differences and similarities, while matching up those findings with contextual community characteristics.

Part of that process will be running the workshops in each location in order to supplement the data collected so far and to deepen the suggestions available for policy analysis.

A first paper on the social network measures in the Swiss study site and their implications for regional resilience to climate change has been published in the journal Regional Environmental Change.

With the full results and policy understanding available, five more peer-reviewed papers have been mapped out and structured in order to publish the work across disciplines. The first from a series of short movie clips has been produced, alongside with profession photographs designed to communicate the scientific objectives and results through a modern medium to the general public.