Escaping the summer heat – revival potential and challenge of near-metropolitan tourism areas

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PANTA RHEI
A World in Constant Motion

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The effects of Climate Change in Austria

- Retreat of glaciers
- Lack of snow
- Altered plant development
- Local heavy precipitation
- Flood
- Heat
Consequences for the Alpine area and tourism

Temperature changes

Temperature changes in Austria

Heat days in Vienna:
- 9.6 days per year (1957-1976)
- 11.25 days per year (1977 – 1996)
- 19.45 days per year (1997 – 2016)
- Forecast 2040: every 4th day a heat day (Kromp-Kolb et al. 2007).

Abbildung 1: Temperaturveränderung von Dekade 1990 bis 2000 zur Dekade 2040 bis 2050 (Klimamodell MM5).
The „old“ Sommerfrische

> A move of some weeks or months away from the heat of the town to the recreating countryside in summertime.

> A longer stationary stay in a close circle of family, relatives and friends rather at a regularly visited places than alternating places during the summer month“ (Schmidt-Lauber 2014, 21)
The historic concept of “Sommerfrische” means relocation for several weeks or months from the hot city to cooler rural areas.

Summer destinations were:
• Reachable by railway
• Neither too steep nor too flat
• Availability of “domesticized” nature & culture
• Activities: focus on “slowing down” & relaxation: swimming, short walks, concerts, socialising.
Research questions

- The role of urban heat waves for tourism?
- Adaptation towards a „new“ Sommerfrische?
- Potential for Sommerfrische destinations?
- Possible adaptation strategies for destinations?
A strategy of „new“ Sommerfrische?

Supply Side:
- Sommerfrische already a strategy?
- Possible/necessary actions to tap the potential of Sommerfrische?
- Development of strategies for resilient sustainable and climate friendly tourism?

Demand Side
- Adaptation on heat waves?
- Sommerfrische as an adaptation strategy?
- To what extension?
- Preferences in transportation, travel and activity demand?
- Visitor segments?
Methods applied

- Literature Analysis
- Focus Groups (Experts & Citizens)
- Telephonic Pre-Screening (n=100)
- Main Survey in Vienna (n=800)
- Qualitative Analysis of Focus Group results (Mayring)
- Survey results: descriptive Analysis, structural equation models on Sommerfrische intension, Factor & Cluster Analyses
- Future Workshops with 2 Case Study Destinations
Results I - Associations with Sommerfrische

- Focus Groups: “outdated” versus “very positive image”
- Picture Analysis: Positively associated pictures displayed mainly landscapes & activities (accommodation, mobility, food etc. less strongly associated)
- Pre-test open associations: rather “conservative” word associations towards “nature”, “relaxation” and “water”
## Results II – Drivers & Obstacles

### Experts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Generally: rather low potential, outdated concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trend towards active vacations close to nature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Citizens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Heat is perceived as a burden by many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Better short trip options and more positive marketing of the latter desirable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Obstacles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Many attractions are only attractive with good weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The desire for more pleasant temperatures are not a travel motive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Accessibility by public transport could be better, especially for short trips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Desire for diverse types of vacations, not only in Austria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

> "You get out and from one moment to the next, the air is so much cooler, the air is totally different..."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>„old“ Sommerfrische</th>
<th>„new“ Sommerfrische</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Usually several weeks</td>
<td>Also short trips, day trips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Normally always the same place</td>
<td>Different destinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomodation</td>
<td>Mostly private properties</td>
<td>Hotels, holiday homes, second homes, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Long travel distances</td>
<td>Much shorter travel durations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Mainly relaxation</td>
<td>Outdoor activities, sport, hiking, cycling, biking etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Whole family including domestic</td>
<td>Families, couples, single travellers, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results IV - Interest in SF destinations

Intention to visit Sommerfrische destinations this summer

- No intention
- Rather no intention
- Partly
- Rather positive intention
- Positive intention
Results V – Development Paths

- Explicitly highlight options for short-term visits in advertising
- Prompt placement of ads: appeal to the spontaneous travellers
- Mobility needs in destinations might be less complex than assumed
- Explicit staging of cooler places (Caves, waterfalls, ravines)
- Combination with other travel motives (i.e. music, culinary art, sports, handcraft)
> Attitudes towards car-free tourism travel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I find this basically useful.</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
<td>45%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is an option for myself.</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This should be promoted through appropriate measures.</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have already done that.</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Applies not at all
- Applies rather not
- Applies rather
- Applies very much
Innovative climate friendly solutions

> Serfaus & Saas-Fee: car-free Ski Destinations and Dorfbahn (underground driverless cable railway)
> Alpmobil – sustainable and exciting mobility in tourism (esp. E-mobility)
> Gesäuse: „Gseisspur“ demand driven Taxi-Services
> „Alpine Pearls“ – Holidays in Eco-Motion
> Weissensee – playground of nature
> „So schmecken die Berge“ (The tast of mountains) – local Gastronomy
> „KlimaTour Eifel“ – Promotion of Bicycle and walking tourism
Conclusions

> All pre-survey methods, the Pre-test and the first survey results indicate an interest in these destinations & a positive intention to visit them in the foreseeable future

> The role of climate change / weather for destination choice is still unclear so far

> Different visitor segments with their expectations have to be a main focus of the analysis

> There is a potential for car-free tourism development that need to be addressed by destination management
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