

# The Dynamics of Destinations and Tourism Development

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*All tourism takes place on land; and yet how little attention is paid to how that land is protected, planned, developed, and managed for tourism—that land through which all visitors flow. (Gunn 1997, p. IX)*

**Abstract** In the last decades, tourist destinations have been conceived as a geographic area in which tourism takes place and which is supposed to be organized, coordinated, be made competitive. Experiences from mature destinations such as in Switzerland show that the territorial concept of the destination fails in practice, limiting the actors in a self-made mental corset. Our lately applied approach that sees the destination as a space in which several dynamic visitor flows, each one in a different maturity stage, take place, allows a more relaxed view on the complex situation of the destination's context. The corresponding techniques help entrepreneurs, tourist organizations, and public authorities to jointly (1) understand the past development and the current state of the destination, (2) articulate challenges and identify possible solutions, and (3) prioritize on feasible and useful projects and initiatives, including investments. In the first part of the article we explain the different perspectives and how the alternative viewpoint helps identify better the needs of the demand and consequently the requirements for (re-)designing infrastructure and services. The second part builds on experiences made in the tourist region of Heidiland, Switzerland. With the help of the new techniques: (1) actors focused specifically and unmistakably on the relevant areas of intervention, (2) rapidly agreed upon key projects in the region, and (3) found how these projects contributed to current and new visitor flows in the destination. The case presents four different projects in different maturity stages and highlights the linkages between market needs, supply-sided collaboration, and the role of the organizations. In the end, the approach argues for a shift away from 'one (rather stable) functional space' to 'spaces with multiple dynamic functions'. Consequently, and relating to investments, we build a case to move from a land-related towards a flow-based approach.

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## 1 Introduction

What Clare A. Gunn stated in his seminal book “Vacationscape” is an insight that too often remains uncared in destination management initiatives. Planning, developing, and managing tourist destinations implies understanding the local and regional context of the place as well as the dynamics of tourism demand (i.e. the flows), under which it is exposed to. In a recently developed approach called the St. Gallen Model for Destination Management (SGDM), we have proposed a six step heuristic that allows for a better understanding, planning, and for a more effective management of tourist destinations (Beritelli et al. 2015). Its practical application has changed our way of conceiving destination marketing and management. In the past 4 years, we have recognized that even for a country like Switzerland, one of the cradles of modern tourism in Europe, there is still much left to learn.

In fact, with regard to land use planning and development, the case of Switzerland presents a very tight, fine-meshed and strictly pursued regulatory environment. Federal, state (i.e. cantonal), and municipal legislation provides the cornerstones for structure and land-use plans, all being coordinated with water, landscape, and nature protection, with homeland preservation, and several other domains that have to be considered in such a small, diverse, and densely populated country. Finally, the power of veto against development plans, allows not only adjacent neighbors but also associations of different kinds to block, delay, and even prevent rezoning or new constructions (e.g. buildings, leisure areas, attractions).

In sharp contrast to the above, tourism demand in Switzerland faces a high dynamism and dramatic change. The predominantly domestic visitors that fueled until the 1990s the engine of rural and mountain tourism, particularly in the alpine areas, has shifted in terms of generations, motives for leisure travel, activities, and mobility (for an overview see Laesser and Riegler 2012). What—in terms of tourist attractions, bed capacities, ski areas, and the like—has been developed and built in the post-war decades (i.e. 1960–1980s) must be replaced or renewed according to new needs and standards of the markets. However, relatively high investment and supply provision costs (e.g. materials, food, salaries) compared to neighboring countries further aggravate the turmoil of change. In the end, potential investors may consider different, more attractive alternatives, because

- the regulatory environment is complex, appears lengthy and tedious, and suggests uncertain outcomes,
- the market risks are considerable (e.g. dynamic demand, seasonality, site-related context, local and regional history and prospects),
- other investments yield a higher profitability.

In short, Switzerland is a country with mature or declining tourism forms that faces a difficult, historically grown planning framework. Just as Gunn stated: “. . . Working with less land and greater restriction of sprawl, European designers

and planners have had to use sites over and over again” (Gunn 1997, p. 111). We believe that other regions of the world are increasingly facing this occurrence. Hence, and for effective planning and development, the following exemplary questions are key not only today but especially in the future:

- How can new tourist sites and attractions be planned and developed in a complex, regulated, and dynamic environment?
- How can ideas and visions be shared and collaboratively realized, in coordination with existing resources, with a given history of a place, fitting to or even matching with an incumbent constellation of organizations, businesses, and actors?

The abovementioned heuristic of the SGDM (Beritelli et al. 2015) has helped in answering these and more questions derived from the needs of tourist place development and management.

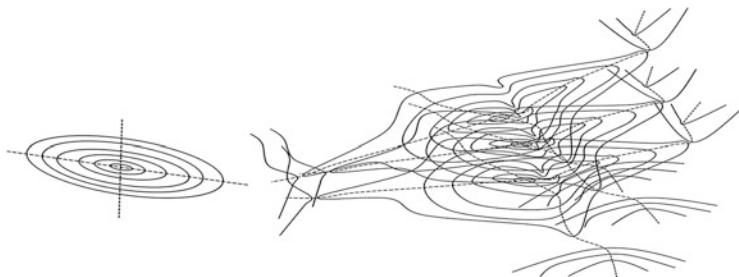
In this chapter we present some guiding principles that were helpful in applying the model, and a focus on one case (Heidiland). In so doing, we aim to explain that

1. developing and designing tourism places and destinations requires a detailed understanding of the mechanisms driving tourist flows,
2. achieving consensus about plans, projects, initiatives is founded on an objective and specific way of analyzing and evaluating the current world and future options,
3. realizing the above builds on shared but also divided, temporally staggered responsibility of the actors in a tourist destination.

Some guiding principles

Gunn proposed in his book eleven design principles/topics (Gunn 1997, p. 106 ff):

1. functional design (considering structural, physical, and cultural/aesthetic functionalism)
2. sites, buildings, and spaces (integrating building and landscape architecture, engineering, interior design, etc.)
3. clustering (grouping of attractions, facilities, and services)
4. suitability (taking care of visitor’s and local’s interests)
5. exposed functionality (supporting the peculiarity of the experience)
6. efficiency in the experience (balancing the travel effort and costs with the received value of experience)
7. sequence and satiety (requiring variety and dramaturgies)
8. order and relativity (causing cooperation among stakeholders)
9. reuse (granting more durability and resilience of the investments)
10. wholeness of human use (leading visitors to meaningful, pleasurable experiences)
11. innovation and creativity (allowing “the fresh, the sparkling, the new” (Gunn 1997, p. 112).



**Fig. 1** Clean, new, static, controllable (*left*) versus exploited, complex, dynamic, fluid (*right*) environment. *Source:* own illustration

These design principles particularly fit in with the development and the creation of a new site or of a new attraction, possibly a new tourist resort or village. They perfectly serve planners when they consider the main aspects relating to the specifications of tourism. Since new sites and resorts may be embedded in a macro environment of an existing society, a culture with its own history and a given economic mix of several different activities, actors, and organizations, we add three precursory ideas pertaining to the latter condition:

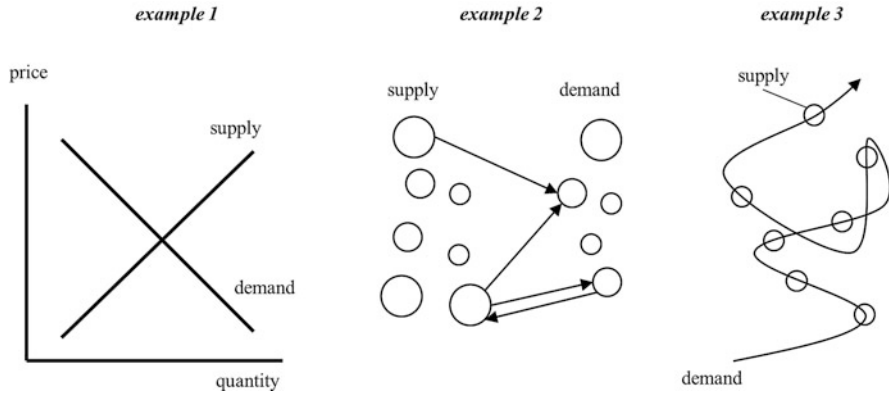
1. coincident demand and supply (tourist production)
2. polyvalence and variable geometry
3. flow-based planning and management

It is with the help of these three additional principles that we have gained, together with different institutions and organizations, a better understanding of the tourist destination and how it can be further developed. Figure 1 illustrates our argument. On the left, a planner faces a pure, clean space on which an attraction with services is supposed to be developed. Applying the 11 principles presented in “Vacationscape” (Gunn 1997) is a matter of technical performance in accordance to legislation, local stakeholders’ expectations and, of course, the current and prospected visitor needs. The complexity of the local and regional environment, the dynamics of demand, the history of the community, and many more ‘disturbing’ variables such as gravitational effects from other sites, attractions, and destinations produce a situation that looks more like the one on the right side of the figure: varied, multiple, volatile and hence blurred, fuzzy, chaotic.

The following paragraphs present the three principles, supported by various practical cases.

## 2 Coincident Demand and Supply: Tourist Production

Demand and supply form together a productive process that results in tourist experiences. The first conceptual approaches on this claim were presented 40 years ago (e.g. Gunn 1972; Leiper 1979; Miossec 1977; Pearce 1979). Later,



**Fig. 2** Three different pictures, three different mental models, three different worlds of implications. *Source:* own illustration

related thoughts hypothesized a tourist as a producer (Smith 1994), the conditional presence of the visitor that generates tourism (Kaspar 1995), or the incorporation of the tourist factor in (tourist)-economic production (Maggi 2014). Yet, what today in practice and research is commonly understood as tourist co-production does not seem to be consequently applied. We think that prevalent mental models (Gentner and Stevens 1983), thus forms of presenting and visualizing how demand and supply meet or how tourist production occurs, do not really get to the heart of the matter and lead to problematic interpretations. Figure 2 illustrates three different examples of mental models.

- The first one originates from micro-economics and serves as an explanation of quantitative demand and supply side properties, eventually producing a point of encounter with a specific price. The underlying aspects of demand preferences and the utility (value) provided by the supply remain a generic, undifferentiated domain.
- The second one reflects a marketer-based view. Here, products or services are created, assembled, or formed in advance. The supplier then seeks finding a matching market or segment; ideally at a profit generating price, through an effective distribution, and with a convincing communication strategy. Obviously, matching works both ways, i.e. when a supplier recognizes a need from potential customers and then develops a new product or service responding to those needs. Anyway, in this conception, supply and demand constitute two parts of the market, two sides of the coin.

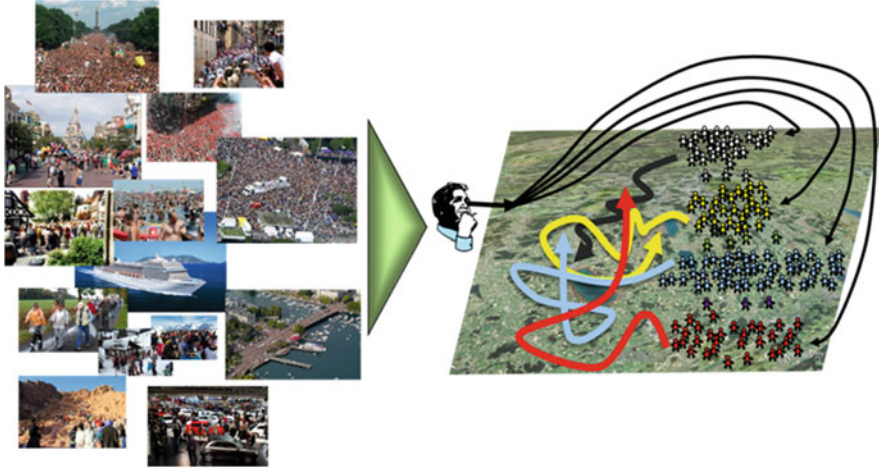
We think that these mental models suggest two false implications; namely, (1) that supply and demand could be seen separately and (2) that matching supply with demand is a matter of best-fitting management and marketing on the supply side.

Yet, tourism experiences only occur when the visitor is at his destination, generating ‘his product’ and when consumption takes place, causing transactions and other side effects such as social and environmental impacts. The foundation of when and where consumption takes place lies essentially in individual spatial behavior (Hyde and Laesser 2009). Tourist co-production requires a representation that directly visualizes the coincidence between supply and demand, and—since travel experiences assemble a fragmented service and value chain—on an inter-organizational scale. The example at the right side of Fig. 2 fits better to what really happens in tourism. Visitors activate a chain of services and experiences, causing flows (Reinhold et al. 2015) that connect networks of traveler activities, for instance, with sales and distribution (economic transactions), partnership and coordination (local supply), and marketing and promotion (communication) networks (Stienmetz and Fesenmaier 2015). Figure 2 illustrates three different mental models that lead to three completely different ways of understanding how supply and demand are supposed to relate to each other.

Particularly, the example at the right side differs fundamentally, because it implies in a dynamic and complex environment that:

- Demand is the source of production—Supply responds accordingly and ideally as a perfect stage for production.
- Demand (repeatedly) configures supply chains—Supply chains are the result of effective and efficient collaboration in response to the visitors.
- Demand and supply cannot really be seen as given, fixed constructs. Neither can they be intentionally matched with each other. In contrast, supply flourishes as demand evolves and stabilizes for a particular time (Cohen 1972; Plog 1973)—Visitor flows are temporary in nature.
- Supply survives and generates profit thanks to the flows of demand—The more numerous and diverse are the flows, the broader is the income generation portfolio (segments) for the suppliers.
- Demand can be influenced by supply only indirectly—Flows and destinations are difficult to manage (Pearce and Schänzel 2013). It is more appropriate to speak of creating, shaping, and adjusting experience stages and of stimulating demand.

Recent empirical research supports this view by localizing visitor flows and experiences on maps (Espelt and Benito 2006; Leask 2010; Shoval and Raveh 2004; Van der Ark and Richards 2006). GPS-tracking aided research in tourism allows further analyses of visitor profiles and activities (Shoval and Isaacson 2007, 2010). Every visitor flow is to a certain degree homogeneous, in the sense that it describes activities and profiles of visitors (Hwang et al. 2006; Shih 2006) for a given time, in a particular space (Bowden 2003; Wu and Carson 2008). Figure 3 illustrates how different kinds of visitor flows (left side) constitute the lion’s share of tourism across the world. Tourists visit places and attractions; they activate services and spend their time and money in (more or less) tourist places; and they do this in significant numbers, otherwise suppliers would not have the opportunity to accordingly plan their capacities, to collaborate with other partners along the supply



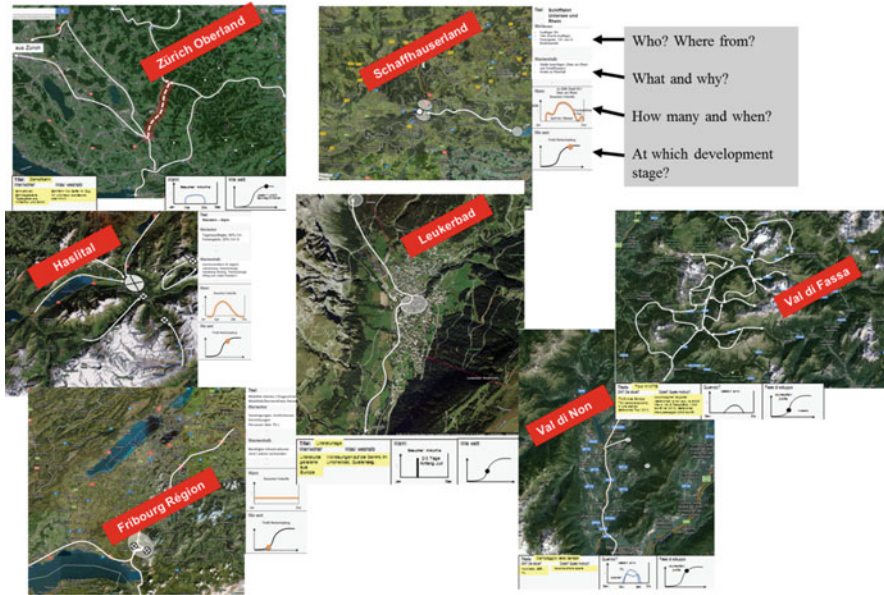
**Fig. 3** Significant, repetitive, and hence strategic visitor flows (SVF). *Source:* Beritelli et al. (2013), 2013 Kanton Solothurn; Cnes/Spot Image; GeoContent; Google

chain, and to foresee seasonal and segment-related demand requirements. As long as numerous and different flows of tourists comprising a significant number of individuals visit a place, an attraction, a resort, or else, the suppliers can plan, develop, adapt, (re-)create, or retreat. Hence, putting oneself in the visitor’s shoes and understanding the underlying social forces of visitor flows, is the first and foremost task to do, in order to understand the current situation (actual visitor flows) and to envision a realistic future (new visitor flows). While the resulting picture may look chaotic and uncontrollable (right side), it allows a more specific understanding of each flow and of how it forms, multiplies, and eventually will die.

The SGDM heuristic asks five questions with the aim of distinguishing visitor flows and thus tourism forms in a particular space and time so that purposeful actions by the actors and organizations can be derived.

- Who? Which visitors?
- Why? What motivates them? What stimulates them?
- What? What do they do?
- Where? Where do they come from? Where do they stay? Where do they continue to?
- When? When does the flow occur? How does it distribute, e.g. in a year?

A further relevant aspect is the stage of development of each flow. In fact, every flow has its own dynamics of development and an own life-span. For instance, in one place there may be tourists (even together with locals) who walk the same hiking route or have visited the same festival for decades while in the same time of the year there may be a niche of sport adventure tourists (e.g. bungee jumping, canyoning) who appeared recently and seems to have quickly reached its maturity stage in terms of visitor numbers and expenditures. Figure 4 presents some



**Fig. 4** Examples of strategic visitor flows (SVF). *Source:* own illustrations; graphics ©2013, 2014 TerraMetrics, maps ©2013, 2014 Google

examples of reconstructed and validated flows by local informants (i.e. front-line employees in tourist enterprises and other organizations who intuitively know about the visitors). The flows visualize movements and tourist spaces, in some cases with highlighted attractions or trails. The legends describe the flows' profiles. Starting from this tool, actors can (1) discuss and evaluate the different forms of tourism objectively and specifically, (2) derive implications for specific actions thanks to a fine-grained analysis, and (3) identify mechanisms that influence the demand flows. This last aspect is further detailed in Chap. 4.

### 3 Polyvalence and Variable Geometry

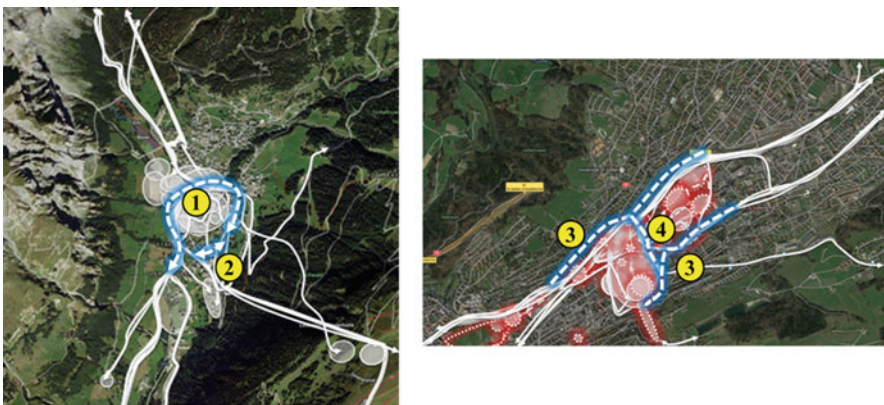
Often, visitor flows occur simultaneously and (sometimes partly, sometimes fully) in the same places. “A simple activity such as camping has myriad offshoots, including wilderness camping, backpack camping, boat camping, tent camping, and RV camping” (Gunn 1997, p. 45). Other scholars have made similar observations quite early (Dredge 1999; Miossec 1977; Tremblay 1998). Visualizing simultaneity, co-occurrence, and overlaps poses, more than a technical problem, a challenge for the reader and his interpreting and envisioning capacity. Or in other words, actors, including planners and developers, must be receptive to multiplicity, diversity, and a great amount of variability for any given project. This somehow



contradicts a traditional planning philosophy that prefers to work in a clearly delimited and static framework. Constructing the variable geometry (i.e. overlapping some purposefully selected or even all the flows for a given place or destination) and using it as a further tool for strategic discussions, has proven to be helpful (Beritelli et al. 2014). It allows

- highlighting polyvalent areas and spaces (e.g. attractions that serve different flows with different means),
- recognizing strategically less tourist areas (i.e. where no significant flows appear),
- connecting the examined area with adjacent areas and destinations and therefore taking into consideration the conditions of a wider environment.

Producing variable geometries and strategizing is the second step in the SGDM-heuristic. Figure 5 presents two examples of variable geometry with rather numerous visitor flows on the same map in a more top-down approach, Fig. 6 builds on one new project connecting two major attractions and affecting the flows of those attractions (bottom-up approach). Points 1–4 in Fig. 5 present selected topics discussed by the stakeholders in two Swiss destinations. In the mountain destination of Leukerbad, for instance, the variable geometry of the current flows in the village pointed to an inconvenient routing of flows around the village center caused by a scant utilization of the land areas and a slow depletion of the shopping zone in the village center (see dotted line, point 1). Another challenge is presented by point 2, where the quick access to the base terminal of the cable car was not possible, due to a missing elevator from the parking lots to the base terminal. Instead, many skiers used other routes to reach the terminal, including the one around the village. In the city center of St. Gallen, the medieval town presents a multitude of flows and permanent and temporary attractions (major polyvalent area, southwest of point 4).



**Fig. 5** Two examples of comprehensive variable geometry, Leukerbad village (*left*), St. Gallen city center (*right*). *Source:* own illustrations; graphics ©2014, 2015 TerraMetrics, maps ©2014, 2015 Google



**Fig. 6** Comparison between comprehensive (*left*) and selected variable geometry (*right*), mountain railway connection between Juckerfarm and Dino Museum Aathal with affected visitor flows (Region Zürich Oberland, CH). *Source:* own illustrations; graphics ©2014 TerraMetrics, maps ©2014 Google

The variable geometry with current flows of various forms of culture tourism points to a strict separation between the medieval town and the museum district (see area around point 4), due to a major road with frequent traffic. Also, the two areas are even more contained because two major routes with heavy traffic cut the center with the northern and with the southern hill areas (upper and lower dotted lines, points 3). The necessary land use and intervention measures, the development of sites and possible new attractions, purposeful information and visitor guidance, are specific implications drawn from analyzing the variable geometry and consulting the single maps with the visitor flows.

To understand better the place-related contingencies affecting projects and development plans, analyzing existing visitor flows and their synergies is a useful task. Figure 6 illustrates on the left side a more comprehensive view of current visitor flows and how a hypothesized cable-car connection between the Dinosaur Museum Aathal ([www.sauriermuseum.ch](http://www.sauriermuseum.ch)) and Juckerfarm ([www.juckerfarm.ch](http://www.juckerfarm.ch)). Selecting only the flows that concern either one or both attractions and producing the variable geometry (right side), highlights the connections, roads, and further sites and attractions, and consequently the value chains, that could indirectly profit or be affected from the project.

While the discussions and decisions arising from working with the variable geometry often point to well-known problems and issues, stakeholders have (1) an objective and more precisely appraisable tool, and (2) a picture that includes the local and regional context. Particularly thanks to the latter aspect, planners and developers lean on a more realistic embedding of the projects at hand. Finally, polyvalent areas and zones intuitively point to nuclei for further development. In fact, it is easier from these areas to derive or deduce diversifications of new visitor flows, since it is more likely to create something new from something existing than something completely new out of nothing.

### 4 Flow-Based Planning and Management

Visualizing and describing visitor flows reveals only little information on how the flows function (i.e. the inherent demand and supply mechanisms) and on which organization and actor holds which roles and tasks to make those flows happen (steps three and four in the SGDM-heuristic). Figure 7 presents a scheme that lists per strategic visitor flow (SVF) the mechanisms of influence on the supply side (identifying system heads) and on the demand side (identifying market mavens). System heads are the main attractors for the flows. Other attractions, sites, service providers depend on the system head. Market mavens (Clark and Goldsmith 2005) influence and—in some cases—‘possess’ a great number of the individuals constituting the visitor flows. They can vary considerably and could range from tour operators, travel agents, and influential media to opinion leaders, influential role models in communities or neighborhoods. The right side of the table (see processes) relates to aspects pertaining to the marketing and management processes (analysis, product development and cultivation, information and communication, distribution and sales, system minder). Stakeholders are required (1) to complete the lists with their partial knowledge, (2) pose questions and address challenges, and (3) suggest solutions, projects, actions. In order to do so, they read the table horizontally (see arrow 1), i.e. along the single flow and vertically (see arrow 2), i.e. across the flows. Challenges/problems and actions/initiatives/projects are seen from two different viewpoints: a specific, flow-based view (horizontal) and a development and planning perspective on a higher, superordinate level (vertical).

The practical applications to date have produced the following insights:

- Actors and organizations easily spot their area of interest and focus first on what is in their direct domain of influence. Individual projects and actions are

SVF	Networks and interdependencies (Who/what influences how?)		Processes (Who does what? What must be done?)				
	System heads	Market mavens	Analysis	Product development and cultivation	AID (attention-interest-desire), information	A (action)	SVF system minder
Title, or even better simply a number or a fancy name. SVFs are best described by flows on a map. Individual terms as titles create a new potential for misunderstandings and misinterpretations.	Attractions and/or organizations/institutions that keep the supply network together. They lead the SVF's supply system. Are directly interested in the continuation of the SVF.	Influence, "own" the travelers. Control decision-making processes and are opinion leaders. May be directly interested in the continuation of the SVF.	What do we know about the travelers in this SVF? What information data do we know/have? What must be done here?	Services and infrastructures for the SVF, networks, standards, coordination. Who does what here? What must be done?	Information, promotion, communication through all possible channels. Who does what here? What must be done?	Distribution and sale (direct and indirect). Who does what here? What must be done?	This is ideally the name of one person (not necessarily a full-time job) and the name of the organization for which he/she works. It may only be one single person.
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Fig. 7 Structure table with networks and interdependencies and marketing and management processes per visitor flow. Source: own illustration, adapted from Beritelli et al. (2015, p. 54)

established quickly. What was unknown or uncertain becomes now clearly visible and readable.

- Joint projects and collective actions, for instance, between private firms and public institutions but also between several private firms are the second working area. The actors pick the relevant flows, return to the maps, work with specific variable geometries and discuss conditions and implications of major initiatives, regarding infrastructure, attractions, events, services, etc.
- Particularly for joint actions and projects the actors further evaluate who or which organization is capable of leading the initiative and—if costs will arise—how it could be funded.

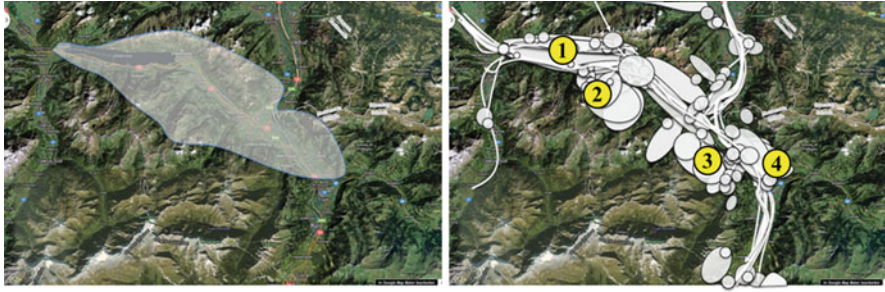
In the end, the process allows integrating different stakeholder logics (Beritelli 2011a; Tkaczynski et al. 2009) under one intuitive and universally understandable meta-framework that transcends explicit formal restrictions, local peculiarities, or implicit norms and rules (Beritelli 2011b). This produces a (1) local, not central, (2) distributed, not shared, and (3) time-staggered, not simultaneous leadership (Beritelli and Bieger 2014).

## 5 Case Heidiland

Heidiland is a tourist region, comprising a major area of nineteen municipalities, located in two state territories (cantons of St. Gallen and Graubünden). The region is represented by a destination marketing and management organization (DMO) ([www.heidiland.com](http://www.heidiland.com)). While there are tourist spots and attractions with communities depending on tourism (e.g. Bad Ragaz, Flumserberg), many other areas of the destination's territory are characterized by agriculture (e.g. vineyards in the area of Bündner Herrschaft) or various manufacturing industries. In 2013 the DMO started a process based on the SGDM-heuristic, in order to identify the future areas of priorities and actions, for the organization and for the stakeholders in the region. The process has initiated several new initiatives, single and joint actions, new partnerships and arrangements, and is still supporting various actors and organizations. What is presented in the following paragraphs is one selected aspect.

### 5.1 *Understanding the Situation*

Through a series of workshops with informants and decision-makers more than 35 strategic visitor flows were identified. In Fig. 8, we see at a first glance the difference between a more static and delimited territory (left side) and the variable geometry of selected existing SVFs (right side). Even though the method was previously based on rather large circles and ellipses, pointing more generally to tourist zones, the picture allows identifying four major polyvalent areas (with according attractions):



**Fig. 8** Territorial boundaries (*left*) versus variable geometry (*right*). *Source:* own illustration. Maps © 2013 GeoBasis-De/BKG, Google

1. Walensee (Lake Walen), including picturesque villages like Quinten and Weesen, served by a lake navigation company,
2. Flumserberg, a winter and summer mountain destination, accessed by two feeder cable-cars, one of them directly from the Swiss Federal Railway station at Unterterzen (connecting with the metropolitan area of Zürich, via urban mass transit trains), at the lakeside of Walensee,
3. Pizol area, hosting a second mountain accessed by other two feeder cable-cars; the heart of Pizol area is constituted by the village of Bad Ragaz, a thermal spa destination close to the historic Tamina Gorge; Bad Ragaz is also home of the largest 5\* resort structure in Switzerland, the Grand Resort Bad Ragaz, including three major hotels, two golf courses, a medical health center with clinic, an own spa, and one casino,
4. Bündner Herrschaft, comprising four rural communities located in the canton of Graubünden; one of them is the little city of Maienfeld, according to the novel, the setting of the story of Heidi.

While the region is marketed under the umbrella brand of Heidiland, the stakeholders are as varied as the tourism flows are. In fact, locals and overnight tourists from various establishments (from campsites to 5\* hotels) enjoy skiing in the ski areas, hiking and biking at different altitudes and with different means. Tourists visit the region’s historic sites, enjoy wine tasting in the Bündner Herrschaft, or undertake excursions to neighboring regions. Planning and developing tourism in such an environment is particularly challenging because

- the region is cut by two important freeway and railway routes (north to south, along the Rhine Valley and north-west to south forming the Linth plain-Walensee-Sarganserland-Chur axis),
- tourism spots alternate with agricultural and industrial zones,
- day tourism and short trips increase because intermodal transport and visitor mobility improve.

As a consequence, the region’s stakeholders are investing in visitor management and information strategies so that quick and convenient access to the various

tourism activities and attractions is granted. A second strategy derived from this situation is to focus on some selected areas that are already visited by tourists and to improve their value by investing in infrastructure and site development so that flows further diversify.

## 5.2 *Focusing on Priority Areas*

By the beginning of 2014, the stakeholders have identified, among others, four major areas of joint intervention with strategic importance. Table 1 summarizes them and how the underlying dynamics resulting from the supportive process described beforehand led the stakeholders to recognizing the relevant challenges and eventually deciding upon the actions and initiatives (Figure 9 locates the initiatives/interventions on the map).

## 6 **Shifting Perspectives and Changing Procedures**

The initiatives presented in the previous paragraph are at different stages of implementation. While the first two ones are being currently implemented and will take 2 more years to complete, the concept around Flumserberg has just started its first realization stage (i.e. re-zoning, trails, alp cottages), and the master plan supposed to re-launch Heididorf is still in its conception phase. They all have benefitted from the SGDM heuristic because the main stakeholders and actors could gain an objective and easily understandable view of the current situation and of future scenarios. Yet, more than this, actors have shifted their perspectives

- from an organizational/institutional and therefore supply-sided to a demand-driven, flow-based reality
- from tourism as a generable/homogenizable (because too chaotic) situation to a co-existence of various, diverse tourism flows,
- from the contained view of overnight tourists to a more relaxed approach that includes day tourists and visitors from the region as well as locals,
- from assuming that tourism as known would persist for decades (tourism as a stable, enduring industry) to realizing the dynamics of visitor flows that reflect the changes in society (tourism as a social phenomenon).

The shift of perspectives has led the actors to adapt their way of planning. On one side they have revised the sequence of how to proceed in development plans. In fact, the traditional approach often offers a perimeter or a parcel of land that may be well-located and therefore potentially interesting for various forms of development and use (including tourism). Then, ideally after a necessary re-zoning, the land-owner looks for an interesting investor who proposes a concept, suitable enough for the region and the stakeholders in the area. Yet, the project will be successful only if

**Table 1** Dynamics causing challenges legitimizing initiatives carried by stakeholders. *Source:* own illustration

Underlying dynamics	Challenges	Initiatives (1–4) <sup>a</sup>	Main stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase of various flows of biking and hiking in the region</li> <li>• Numerous developing visitor flows including families with children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lake Walen is not easily accessible at every place/village</li> <li>• Railway and freeway keep (physically and mentally) the visitors away from the south lakeside</li> </ul>	Restructuring lakeside paths and trails with the aim of creating a continuous trail of leisure activities for all generations (including playgrounds) around the Walensee (viability concept for pedestrians, strollers, wheelchairs, bikes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality of Quarten, in accordance with neighboring municipalities around the lake</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase of various flows of biking in the region</li> <li>• Increasing number of up- and downhill bikers around Flumserberg (specific requests for a network of routes, particularly between peak and lake)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flumserberg is already a popular day-trip destination for up-/downhill biking but well-prepared and specific routes are missing</li> </ul>	Developing a bike route network for Flumserberg (5 tracks on slopes, one on mountain top, one at lakeside) separate from hiking trails, connecting the network to the main transportation (cable-car, railway, lake navigation) and further services (hotels, restaurants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cable-car company Flumserberg</li> <li>• Municipalities of Flumserberg and Quarten and various land owners</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase of various flows of biking and hiking in the region</li> <li>• Decrease of traditional stationary (overnight) visitors for skiing and winter sports</li> <li>• First successful travel packages for groups combining overnight, traditional mountain experience, trips around the lake, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The alps around Flumserberg and the mountain top areas developed in the past decades have been developed piecemeal</li> <li>• Old but still neat alp cottages are scattered</li> <li>• Buildings and services in more densely built zones (e.g. Tannenheim and Tannenboden) lack in an overall picture an inviting atmosphere and hospitality</li> </ul>	Launching a tourist development plan, considering revival of alp cottages, rural/agricultural alp experiences, new hiking trails and signalizations, dismantling restructuring, or expanding existing buildings, rezoning for a major holiday resort (hotel and wellness) on either one of the main zones, identifying and developing points of encounters, building the main point of encounter at Tannenboden, revising road and traffic concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canton of St. Gallen (departments of economics and of constructions/cantonal works)</li> <li>• Municipalities of Flumserberg and Quarten and various land owners</li> <li>• Cable-car company Flumserberg</li> <li>• Heidiland Tourismus (DMO)</li> </ul>

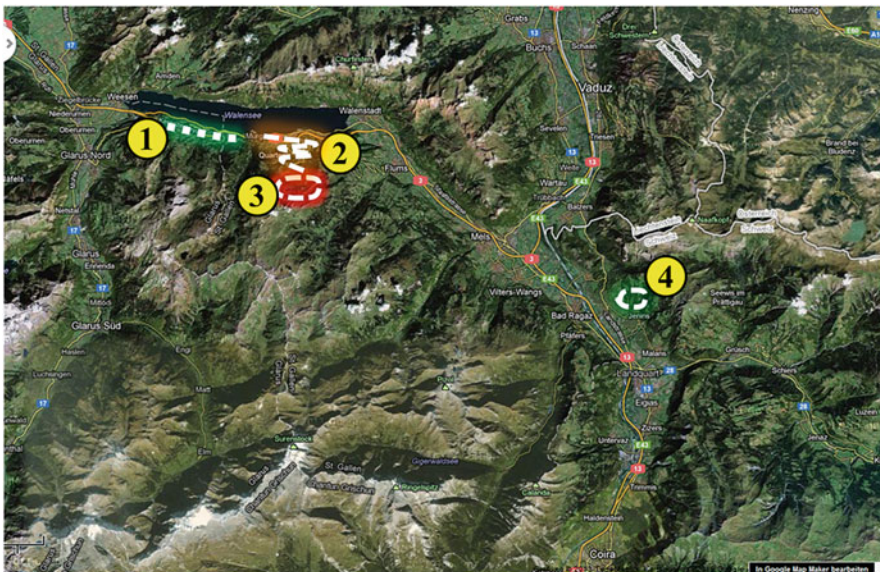
(continued)

**Table 1** (continued)

Underlying dynamics	Challenges	Initiatives (1–4) <sup>a</sup>	Main stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase of visitor flows to Heididorf (Heidi village, <a href="http://www.heididorf.ch">www.heididorf.ch</a>) from day visitors (tour operators by bus) and overnight visitors, mainly from Bad Ragaz</li> <li>• Increase of flows hikers and motorized visitors combining culinary experiences and/or wine tasting with a visit to Heididorf</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heididorf offers only few attractions and experiences for only a short stay</li> <li>• Access to Heididorf is problematic (lack of parking spaces)</li> <li>• To live the full experience, visitors must take more time particularly to hike up the hill (Heidialp)</li> </ul>	<p>Extending the Heidi village with additional stations and historic buildings (still keeping the experience true to the novel), developing an access for greater number of visitors, in respect with the given transit conditions through or around the little city of Maienfeld, general rezoning of the perimeter of and around Heididorf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heididorf AG (Heididorf Inc.)</li> <li>• canton of Graubünden (departments of economics and of constructions/cantonal works)</li> </ul>

Source: own illustration

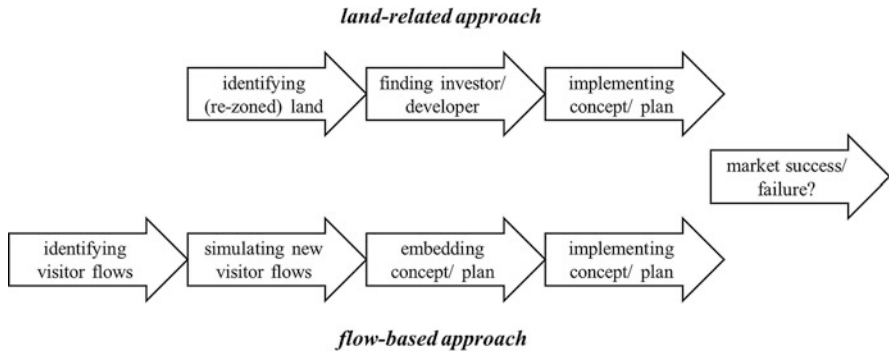
<sup>a</sup>Read 1–4 top down, correspond to 1–4 in Fig. 9



**Fig. 9** Selected initiatives/interventions in the Heidiland region. Source: own illustration, maps © 2013 GeoBasis-De/BKG, Google

there is a demand (i.e. tourist flows) that appreciates and values the new site/ attraction/resort. Working with the SGDM-heuristic requires first to understand the existing visitor flows and their evolution and to derive consequences for new visitor flows. A development plan based on this precursor is embedded in the





**Fig. 10** Land-related versus flow-based approach. *Source:* own illustration

existing portfolio of demand and hence of the specific regional resources and capacities. This is likely to yield a higher probability of success. Figure 10 illustrates the more land-related (above) against the flow-based (below) planning and development approach.

Obviously, there are many new attractions and resorts created out of the green, even in isolated areas and with no relation or connection to existing visitor flows. However, the underlying entrepreneurial risk and the number of unknown factors and uncertainties are actually greater. Also, in environments like the ones of Heidiland, of Switzerland, and of many other places and regions across the world, developing tourist sites and attractions out of the green becomes an increasingly difficult task because of environmental, social, regulatory, and finally and foremost economic reasons. We think that evolutionary flow-based tourism development must at least be a valid option. In the end, it builds on a historically grown tourism portfolio with an according context, contingencies, and local culture (cf. Polanyi 1957). Figure 11 schematically illustrates two alternative historical paths with six timeframes. The paths (above and below) represent the development and direction of one or a group of related visitor flows, the dots major changes, for instance a creation or extension of a site or an attraction. The evolutionary development (above) builds on existing flows and continuously diversifies into similar, related areas. Some flows eventually cease to exist, some other are successfully renewed/lead into a next generation of visitors. The revolutionary development (below) faces a similar path until t3. Yet, from then, for instance due to a lack of earlier diversification of visitor flows, it performs a leap, creating in t4 a completely new branch (i.e. set of visitor flows). While in the end, this path may be a viable option for a region, it is associated with more dramatic changes, turmoil, and conflicts. Often this scenario occurs when a region has built for decades on the success of existing visitor flows without considering changes in the demand side and without proactively adapting its portfolio of attractions, infrastructure, and services.

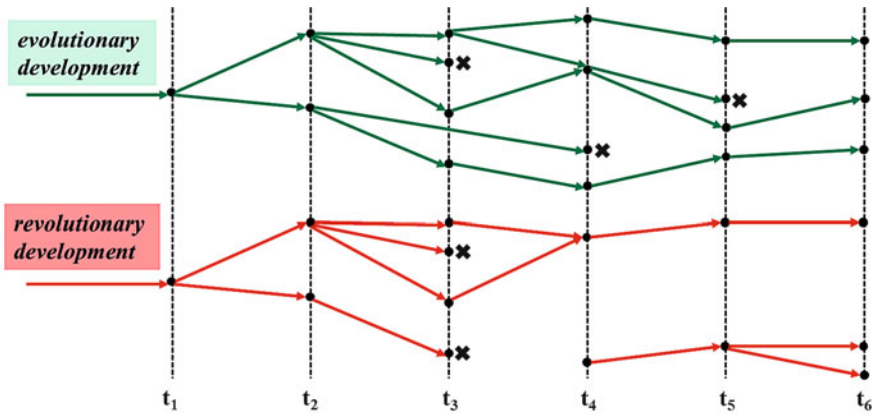


Fig. 11 Evolutionary versus revolutionary development. *Source*: own illustration

## 7 Concluding Remarks

The aim of this chapter was to explain that tourism is not only a generic, rather stable construct but a multi-faceted, highly dynamic social phenomenon. If planners want to deal with such a reality, they must consider that what they build today is not only exposed to future changes but to great variability of what it means today, depending on who is visiting the place. This requires them to look at tourism not only as one function in space. In fact, in the past decades we have primarily looked at the conditions of the functional space—for instance, Gunn speaks of ‘resource factors’ or ‘foundation factors’ (1997, p. 59), such as transportation, water, wildlife, city—and we have added tourism as one more function. However, tourism is diverse and dynamic, so that we must consider multiple tourism functions in the same given space. Also, planners are well advised to recognize that most cases of today’s tourism development are less an exercise of isolated conception and implementation, but resemble more systemic intervention. In fact, we must understand tourism planning and development as a form of intervention in complex and dynamic systems: the conditions and the framework are complex and dynamic, so are the implications and consequences. While complexity is easy to visualize (variable geometry), the dynamics are considered in the SGDM-heuristic but they still need a more realistic technique of representation (e.g. video-supported 3D simulations). As computer aided planning and design are quickly progressing, we trust that soon there will be method and means to carry out such processes even with a greater number of actors in a more precise and realistic stage. Finally, turning away from the land-related approach (normally preferred from an investor/developer perspective) towards a flow-based approach will result in a more considerate evaluation of investment and thus decrease the risks associated to such a type of development. Moreover, the herein presented alternative planning process forces all involved parties to explicitly account for the most important foundation for any

such projects, which is to source from an existing or create a durable, sufficient flow of demand.

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