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ACADEMIC WEEKLY DIGEST

YOUR WEEKLY DIGEST OF KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

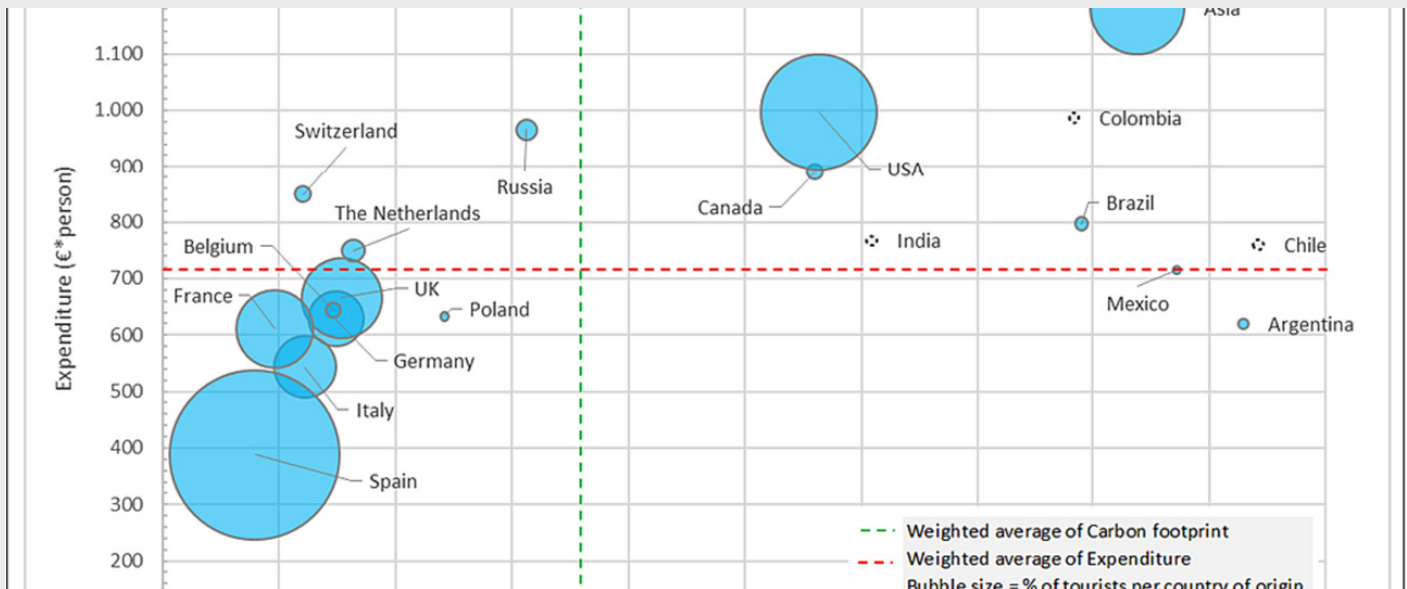


THE THREAT OF CARBON FOOTPRINT DATA

Destination management and marketing organisations do not collect environmental data because it conflicts with the economic data of tourism creating income and jobs. This is the main finding of the study done by Dr Anna Torres and Prof Xavier Font. Having data such as the carbon footprint of tourism would be a threat to their organisational activities, and their identity as working in a sector that does good. For many employees of destination organisations, sustainability data is perceived as threatening their self-esteem and organisational identification, which influences their evaluation, and use, of the data.

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MOTIVATIONAL THEORIES OF SELF-DEFENCE CAN HELP US EXPLAIN THE REASONS WHY SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS ARE SELDOM USED TO INFORM TOURISM POLICY.

Dr Anna Torres-Delgado & Prof Xavier Font

Tourism policy is characterised by an abundance of sustainability initiatives juxtaposed with a lack of pro-sustainability governance. We use motivational theories of self-defence to explain how employees of destination management and marketing organisations experience carbon footprint data as a threat.

This is a three-stage study, with a total of 186 employees of destination management and marketing organisations designed to: 1) explore how the addition of carbon data to their business-as-usual data is experienced and the mechanisms mediating self-integrity threat and data evaluation use; 2) assess dissonance according to the level of change (fundamental vs incremental) and novelty

(emerging vs established) required to implement carbon reduction actions, and 3) explain personal and professional characteristics that influence the dissonance between self-integrity and new data.

The data shows few instances of consonant evaluation of sustainability data that lead to conceptual or instrumental use of indicators. Instead, dissonant cognitive evaluations result in the symbolic engagement and misuse of data to justify previous decisions, promote incremental change and delay sustainability actions. Greater levels of identification with the industry explain cognitive dissonance resulting in moral disengagement, through advantageous comparison, moral justification, and the downplaying, discrediting and disregarding of data.

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Torres-Delgado, A., Font, X., & Oliver-Solà, J. (2024). Self-defence against carbon footprint evidence: How employees of destination management and marketing organisations cope with conflicting environmental and economic data. *Annals of Tourism Research*.

Link: