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Metropolitan neighbourhoods in the mountains: The Alpine gentrification

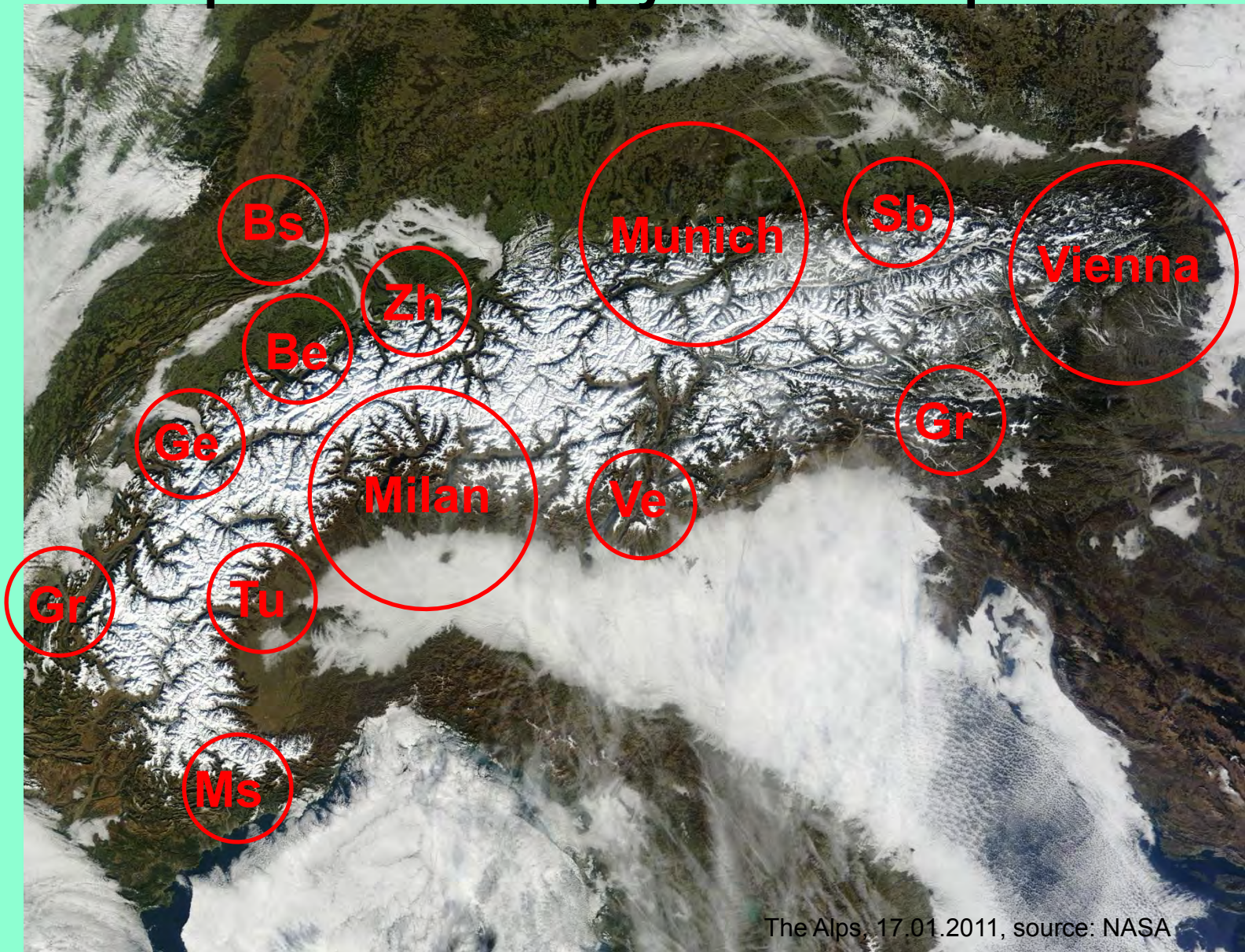
Regional Studies Association Annual Conference

Regional Development and Policy -Challenges, Choices and Recipients

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1 The Alps – not an empty “natural” space



2 New spatial and functional dynamics

- Switzerland: The urban growth is disproportional since the 1990ies again



Fig. 1: The double turnaround of regional growth in Switzerland (Schuler et al. 2004; Schuler & Perlik 2010).

2 New spatial and functional dynamics

European macrotendency:

- The metropolisation process establishes metropolitan regions which comprehend
 - densified metropolitan cores,
 - periurban sprawl,

2 New spatial and functional dynamics

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- The metropolisation process establishes metropolitan regions which comprehend
 - densified metropolitan cores,
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 - **leisure landscapes**

2 New spatial and functional dynamics

European macrotendency:

- The metropolisation process establishes metropolitan regions which comprehend
 - densified metropolitan cores,
 - periurban sprawl, and – new -
 - = resort towns
 - = labelled parks

2 New spatial and functional dynamics

Metropolisation = two processes

A Metropolitan regions enlarge along the foothills of the mountains and into the large main valleys.
= Periurbanisation.

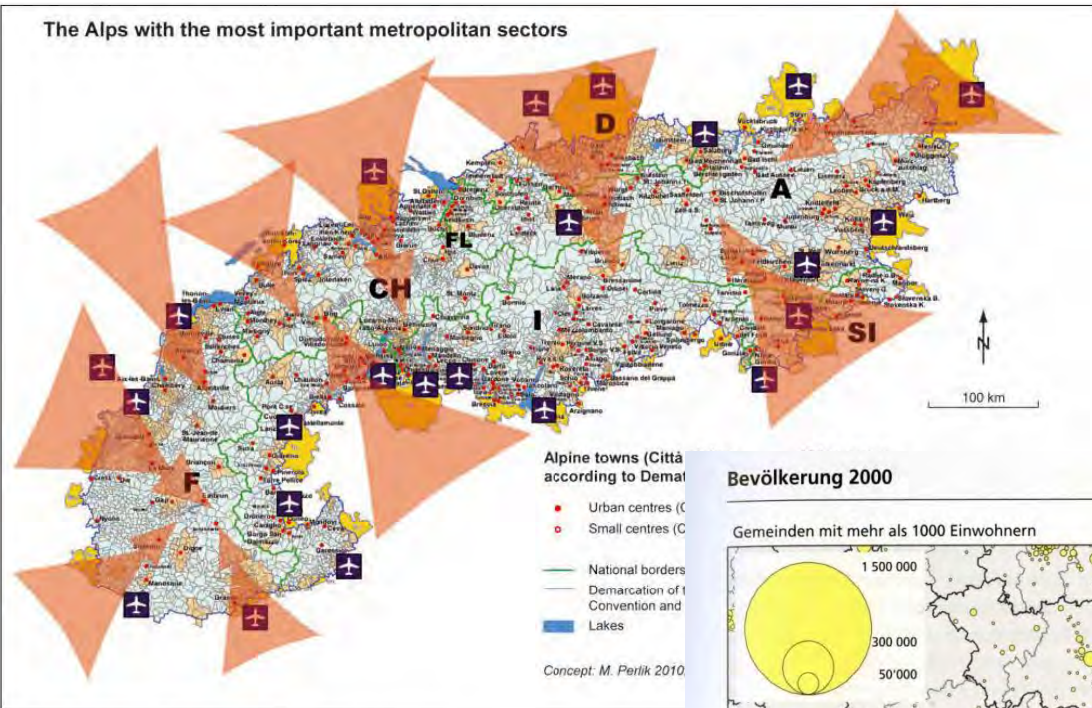


Periurbanisation

- Spacious lots
- Mountain-/lakeside-/river-(!) views
- Low taxes
- High reputation
- Perfect accessibility



The Alps with the most important metropolitan sectors



Alpine towns (Città according to Dema)

- Urban centres (C)
- Small centres (C)
- National borders
- Demarcation of Convention and
- Lakes

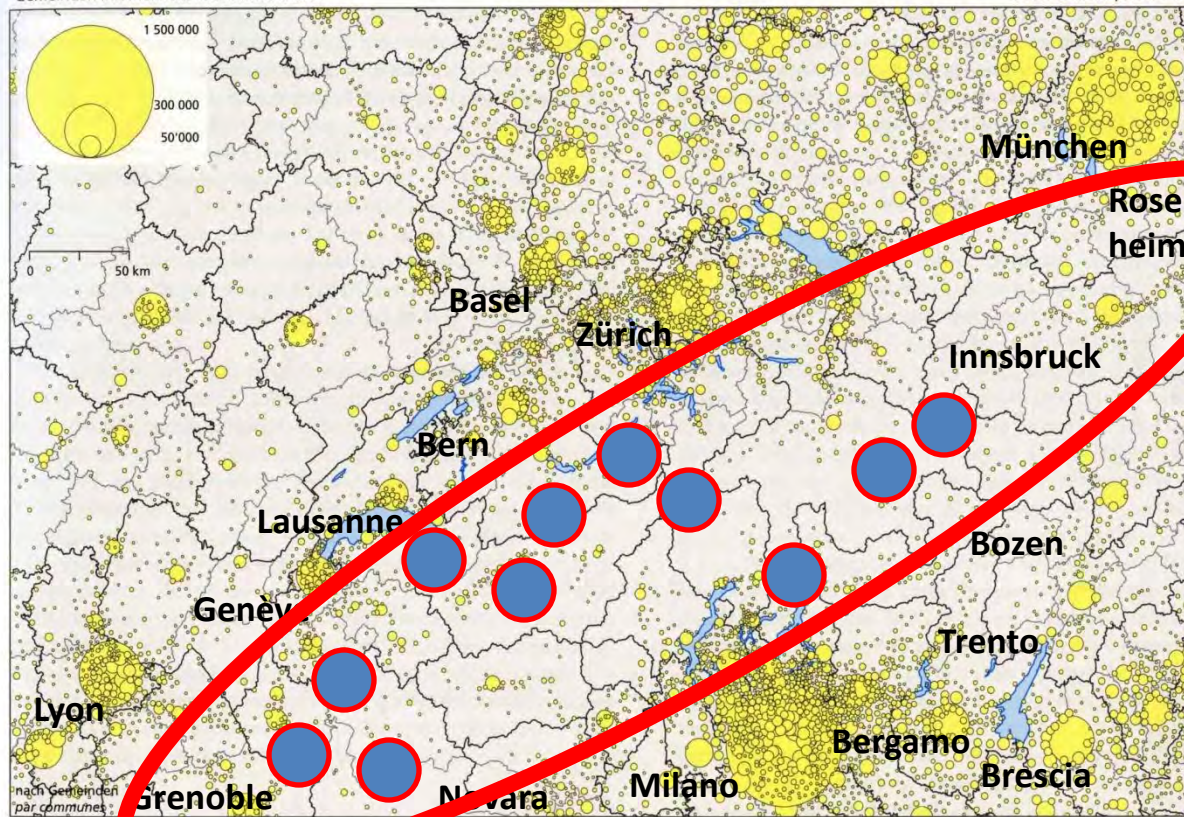
Concept: M. Perlik 2010

Two processes

B Resort towns in the former peripheries used by multilocal dwelling.

Bevölkerung 2000

Gemeinden mit mehr als 1000 Einwohnern



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Quelle: SABE, BFS, nationale statistische Ämter / Sources: SABE, OFS, offices sta

Schuler, Dessemontet et al., 2007: Strukturatlas der Schweiz.

Leisure landscapes for residential and outdoor use in a 3-hour ride from the perialpine agglomerations or by low cost airline, e.g. London – Chamonix

Multilocal Dwelling in Norway (sources: T. Arnesen, T. Flognfeldt)

- 50% of households have access to a 2nd- or 3rd flat
- Leisure belt 250-350 km around of Oslo
- From “cabin“ (30-60 m²) to “house“(100-250 m²)
- Working place & meeting-point for several generations



Multilocal Dwelling Switzerland

- Prestigious places
- Global Branding (region + design)
- 5'200 permanent residents in St. Moritz
17'000 in the Upper Engadine
>100'000 in the Upper Engadine in winter



2 New spatial and functional dynamics

- The enlargement into attractive landscapes (**A**) is the chance of smaller metropolitan regions to attract high qualified people to become **permanent** residents.
- With the resorts (**B**) these metropolitan areas have supplementary unique selling positions.
- The perception is rural – but education, qualification and many other aspects of lifestyle **are urban**.
- The Alps become a neighbourhood of the perialpine agglomerations: "**Alpine gentrification**"

2 New spatial and functional dynamics

What is new?

- Periurbanisation is not new. Second homes either. The metropolises **integrate the separated productive and recreative areas** in their “territory”

2 New spatial and functional dynamics

What is new?

- The functional integration
- The peripheral regions are constraint to open to urban ways of life to get the support of the urban majority (innovativeness).

2 New spatial and functional dynamics

What is new?

- The functional integration
- The urbanisation of the rural
- The urban cores need the rural areas as resources to profile their unique selling position and to attract high qualified people.

2 New spatial and functional dynamics

What is new?

- The functional integration
- The urbanisation of the rural
- The “rural” as urban profile
- The “re-merging” of work and residence:
 - In the past we had the functional separation of dwelling and working linked by commuting
 - Now these functions are combined again – but dis-embedded at alternating places, commuting has aggravated

3. New forms of uneven spatial development

- **Investment** takes places according to regional rankings where high excellent access, high skilled population and belonging to an urban agglomeration offers major credit terms
- **Demands** for dwelling sites rise according to spectacular views, lake-views, climate and quick access
- **Centre-periphery problems get invisible** (in classical terms of GDP, personal income and regional purchase power on regional scale)
- **Uneven spatial development rises** in terms of reputation and in terms of future chances (specific value added of different economic sectors)

Inhabitants	Wassen/UR		Andermatt/UR	
1900	990	Trajectory/ Trajectoire Agriculture	818	Trajectory/ Trajectoire Agriculture + Army
1950	880	Decline in tourism Ageing population	1231	Decline in tourism
1970	764	Geriatric services Few secondary homes	1589	External Investment (golf, apartments, hotels)
2000	480		1282	
2009	449	Future: Affordable housing for Andermatt's work force	1270	Future: Land prices and rents like in St. Moritz



4. Selective landscape uses and its impact on the Territorial capital

What is Territorial capital?

- Specific acquisitions and properties achieved during a historic process as a specific trajectory (p.e. Camagni/Capello, 2010)
- Especially: Local (tacit) knowledge, food, identity, culture, landscape
- Local actor relations (social capital))
- Persistence and influence of previous trajectories and social structures (in the sense of Martin/Sunley, Bourdieu and others)
- TC has found its way into European regional cohesion policies

4. Selective landscape uses and its impact on the Territorial Capital

What is the impact on Territorial Capital?

- Leisure regions gain purchasing power by new residents
(→ Economies of scale: Retailing, personal services, real estate business)
(→ Economies of scope: Higher quality and higher diversity of services)
- But they do not necessarily gain innovative actors
(→ Wealth people, but mainly consumptive people)
- The new residential use probably is less less problematic related to direct environmental damages or economic disparities.

4. Selective landscape uses and its impact on the Territorial Capital

There are indicators for a long-running degradation:

- Displacement of relatively weak economic sectors (endogene tourism, agriculture)
- Weakening of local actors, interest, knowledge and qualification
- Diminishment of immobile factors (residences are easily to relocate)
- Risk of losing old skills but not maintaining new functions in the long run
- Downsizing of public space

5. Upcoming distribution conflicts on amenities

- «Landscape» becomes a rare resource
- Urban population decides about peripheral development, not always ecological, not always free of egoism
- The rejection of urban sprawl and the appraisal of «densification» has become mainstream in the public of the decision makers
- A rising cleavage between town and countryside can be observed
- An access to the resources is guaranteed by exclusion rules, exercised by the possessing against the non possessing

Actual example in Switzerland:

An initiative to limit migration with ecologic arguments (to stop urban sprawl) by an organisation named «Ecopop»

Hiding the xenophobic background with a luxury version of Malthusian thoughts.

6. Conclusion

1. **Uneven spatial development:** Metropolises amplify their decision power, leisure landscapes become metropolitan assets. Rising disparities by different economic functions, not necessarily visible in GDP/capita.
2. **Appropriation economy:** Appropriation of public goods by the creation of new resources.
3. Environmental qualities are becoming **new resources:**
 - Individual: positional goods (p. ex. lakeside view)
 - Entrepreneurial: increasing returns, temporary monopole (“uniqueness”)
 - Regional: Conversion of existing Territorial Capital (regional marketing)
4. **Degradation:** Strong indicators that strategies of amenity/ lifestyle/ landscape consumption degrade existing Territorial Capital without gaining new equivalents in the long run.
5. **Distribution conflicts**

Thank you for your attention

Forthcoming April:

Perlik, M. (2011): The mountain village as a gentrified metropolitan neighbourhood. New inhabitants between landscape adulation and positional good. *Revue de Géographie Alpine* vol. 99(1).

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