

Structural Change in the Alps: Spatial and Landscape Dynamics in the Mountaineous Regions of Switzerland

First Swiss Landscape Conference

Lucerne, August 24 2018

Dr. Daniel Müller-Jentsch

Senior Fellow

Avenir Suisse

Polarisation of Spatial Development

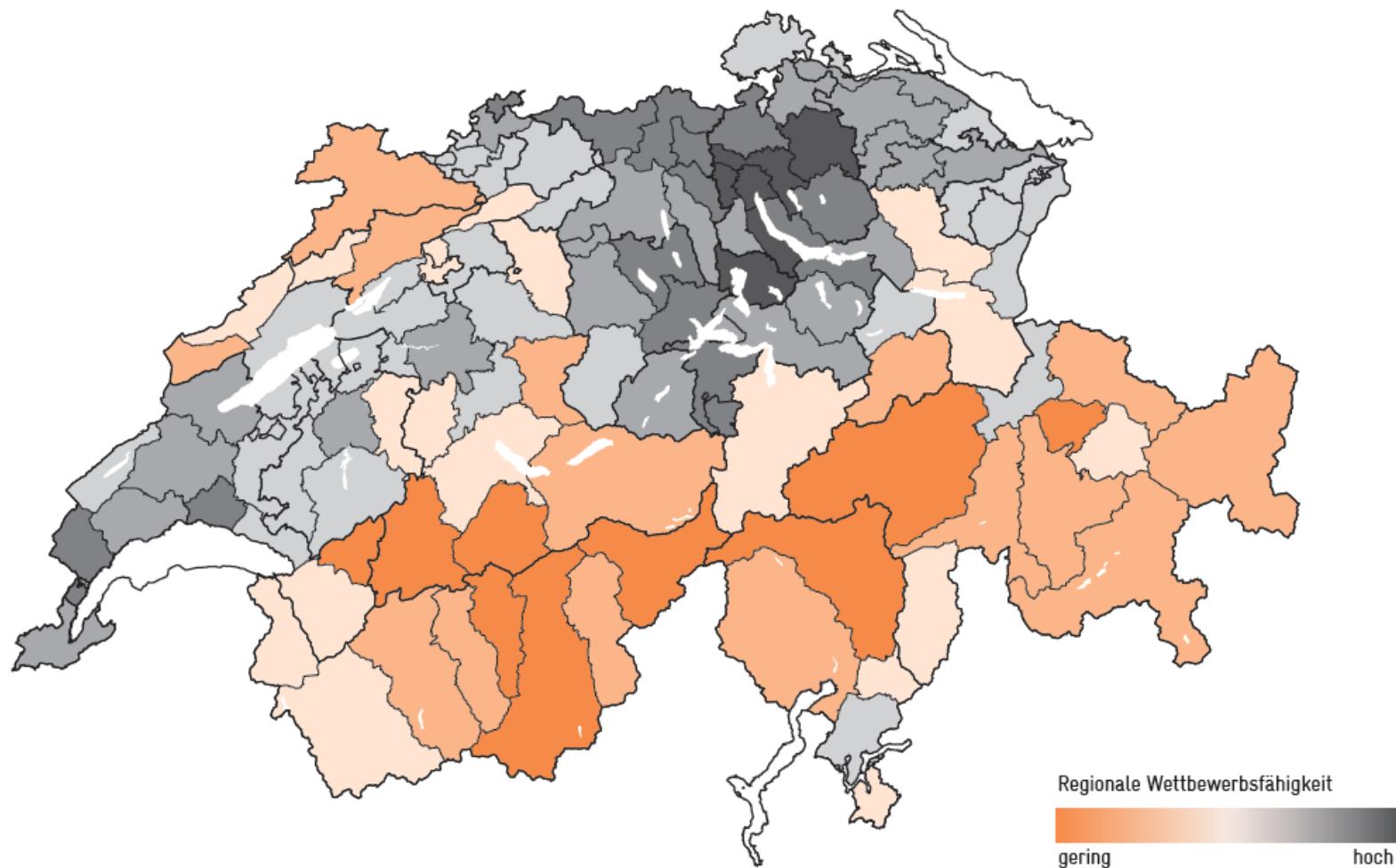
- ***Retreat from the high-lands:*** Demographic and economic erosion in the Alpine periphery (regions of high altitude and poor accessibility)
 - ***Urbanisation of the low-lands:*** Population and economic growth in Switzerland's central plain (Mittelland).
 - These developments leave their imprint on the Swiss landscape:
 - Densification and urban sprawl in central plain
 - Loss of traditional agricultural landscapes in the Alps
- Intensification (Mittelland) and extensification (mountain area) of land-use as drivers of landscape change.

High-lands: Die «Upper Half» of Switzerland



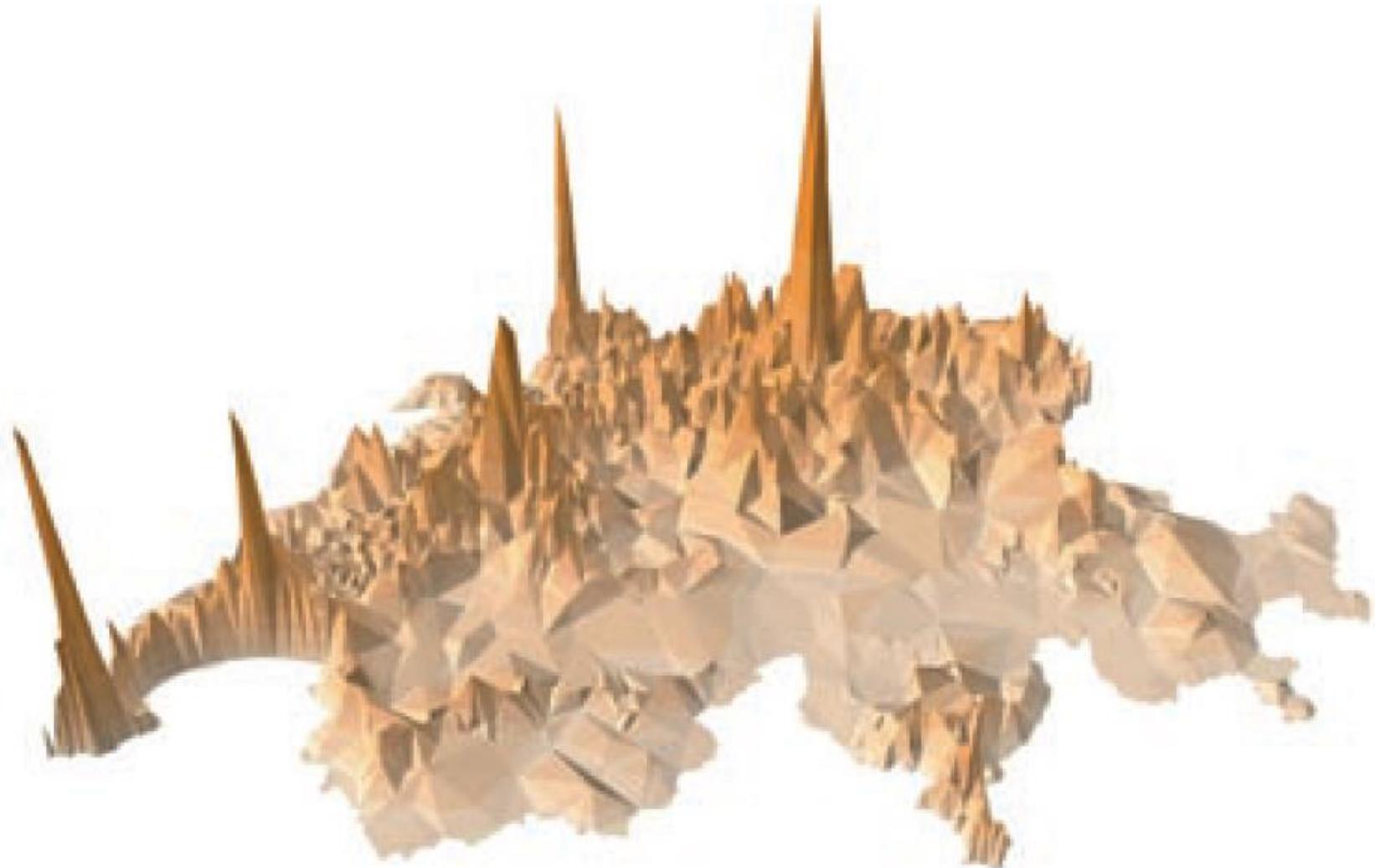
Quelle: ARE (Arealstatistik, 2005)

Low Competitiveness of the Mountainous Regions



Quelle: UBS 2016

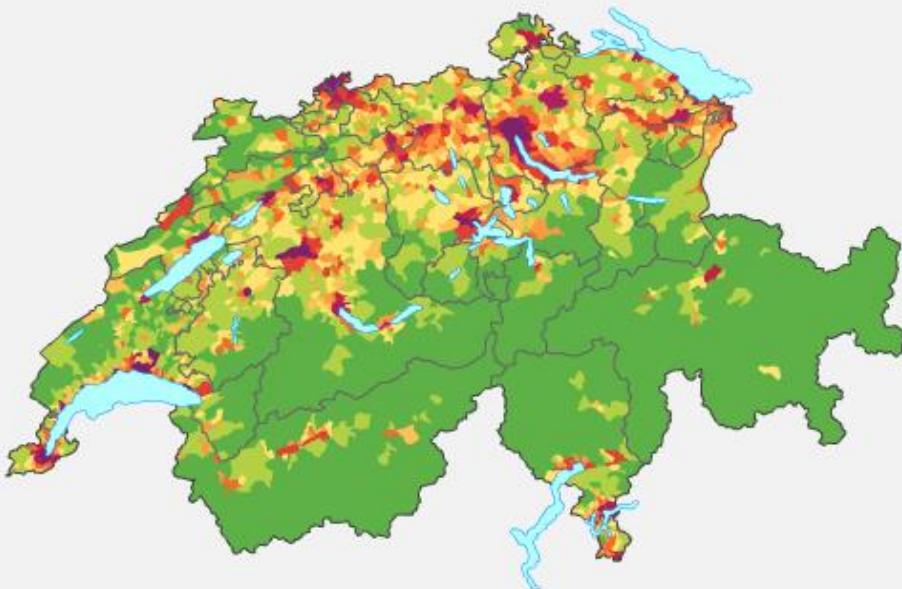
Accessibility Mountain Range (Erreichbarkeitsgebirg)



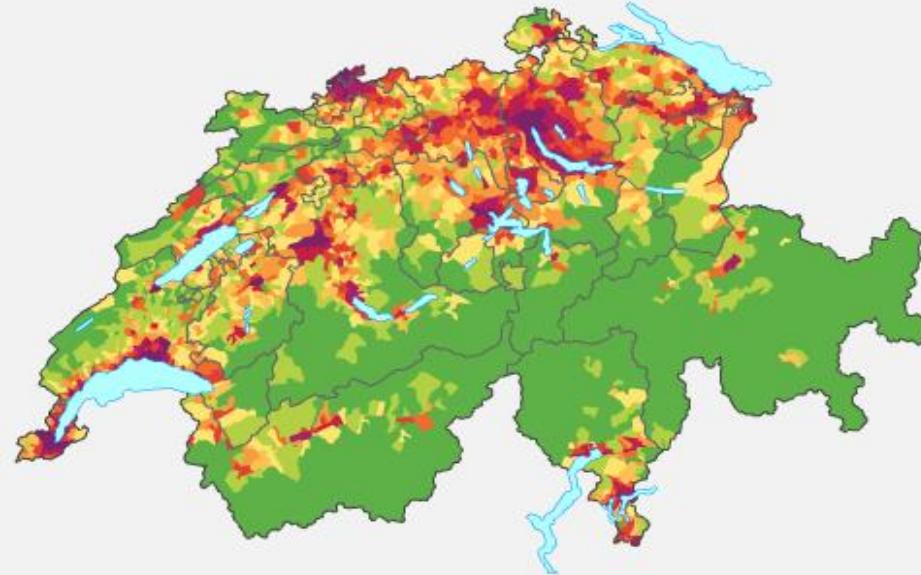
Quelle: Axhausen et. al (ETHZ)

Population Growth Took Place in the Low-Lands

1960

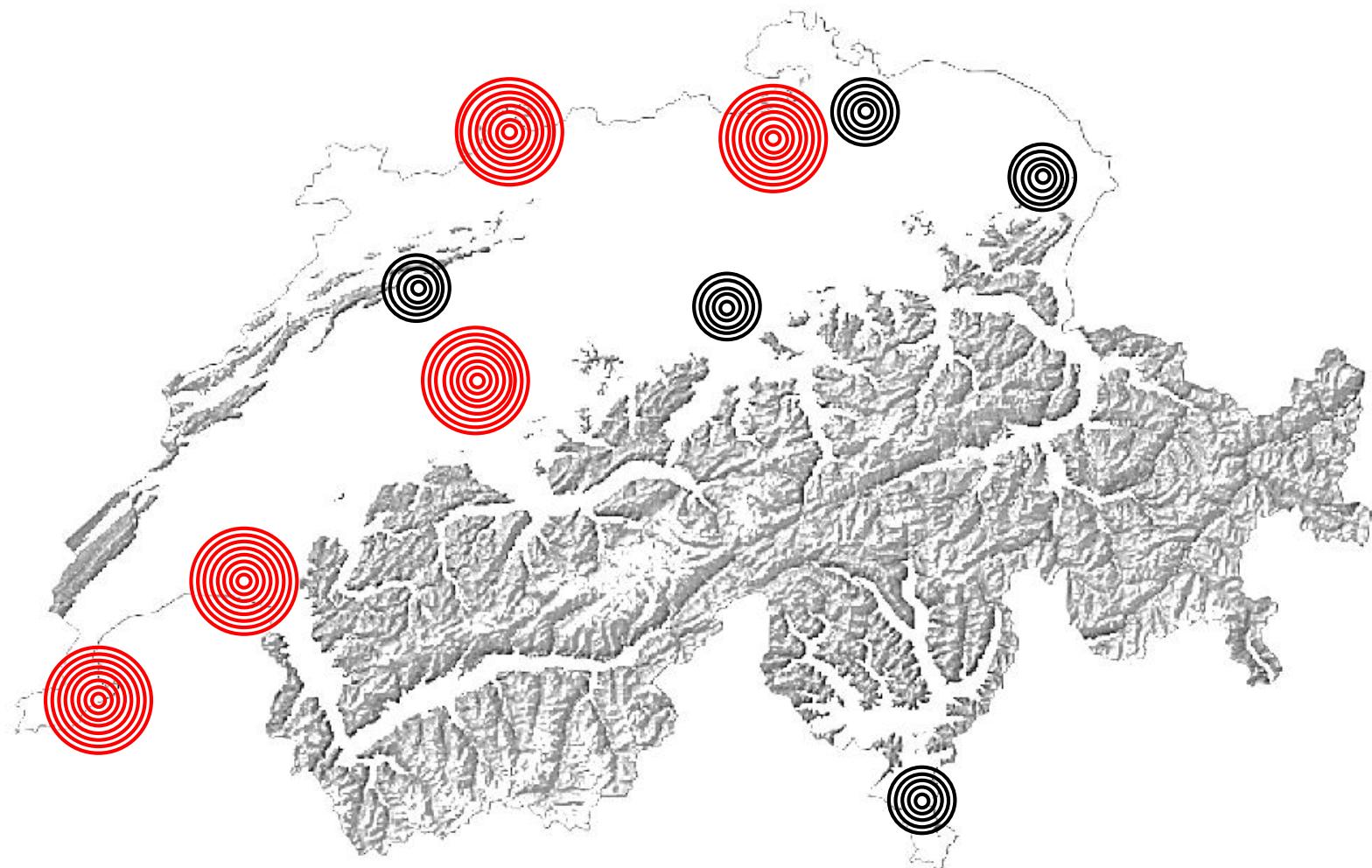


2010



Quelle: BFS , Avenir Suisse (2012)

All Major Cities (>50'000) are Located in the Low-Lands



Mastering Structural Change

Engines of Economic Growth in the Alps

- ✓ **Proximity to the cities of the low-lands:** Glarus, Unterwallis, Berner Oberland
 - ✓ **Alpine agglomerations:** Sion, Chur, Davos, Bellinzona
 - ✓ **Tourist destinations:** Zermatt, Gstaad, St. Moritz, Klosters, Andermatt
 - ✓ **Centres of industry:** Watch-making cluster Jura, Domat/Ems, Visp
 - ✓ **Centres of higher education:** EPFL-Campus Sion, USI
 - ✓ **Innovation in craft, agriculture and forestry**
- Strategies for mastering structural change need to be region-specific (based on a SWOT-analysis).

Valley Mergers: The Valley as a Functional Space

Valleys as the main category of functional space in the Alps:

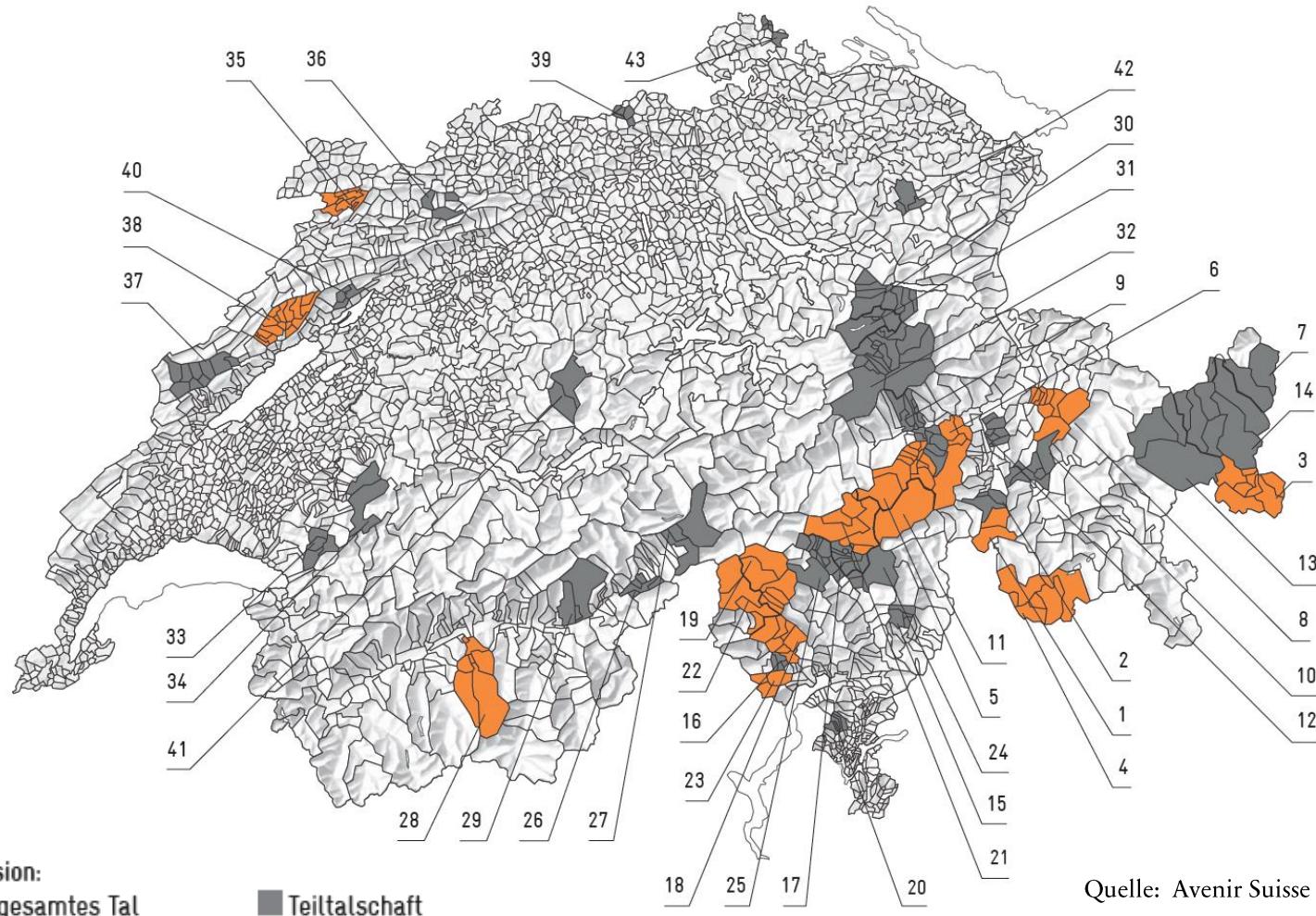
- Landscape chambers as natural spatial, social, and economic units
- Competing land-use on the valley floor: Need for spatial planning
- (In the Mittelland the main type of functional spaces are agglomerations.)

Trend towards mergers of municipalities within a valley:

- 2000-2015: 43 valley mergers (1/3 entire valley, 2/3 sections of larger valleys)
- Average: Merger between 5,5 municipalities, 3500 inhabitants, 134 km²
- Political feasibility, because valleys are also «identity spaces»
- Territorial reforms at cantonal level (e.g. Glarus from 25 to 3 municipalities)

→ Convergence between functional spaces and political units.

Trend Towards «One Valley, One Municipality» (2000-2015)



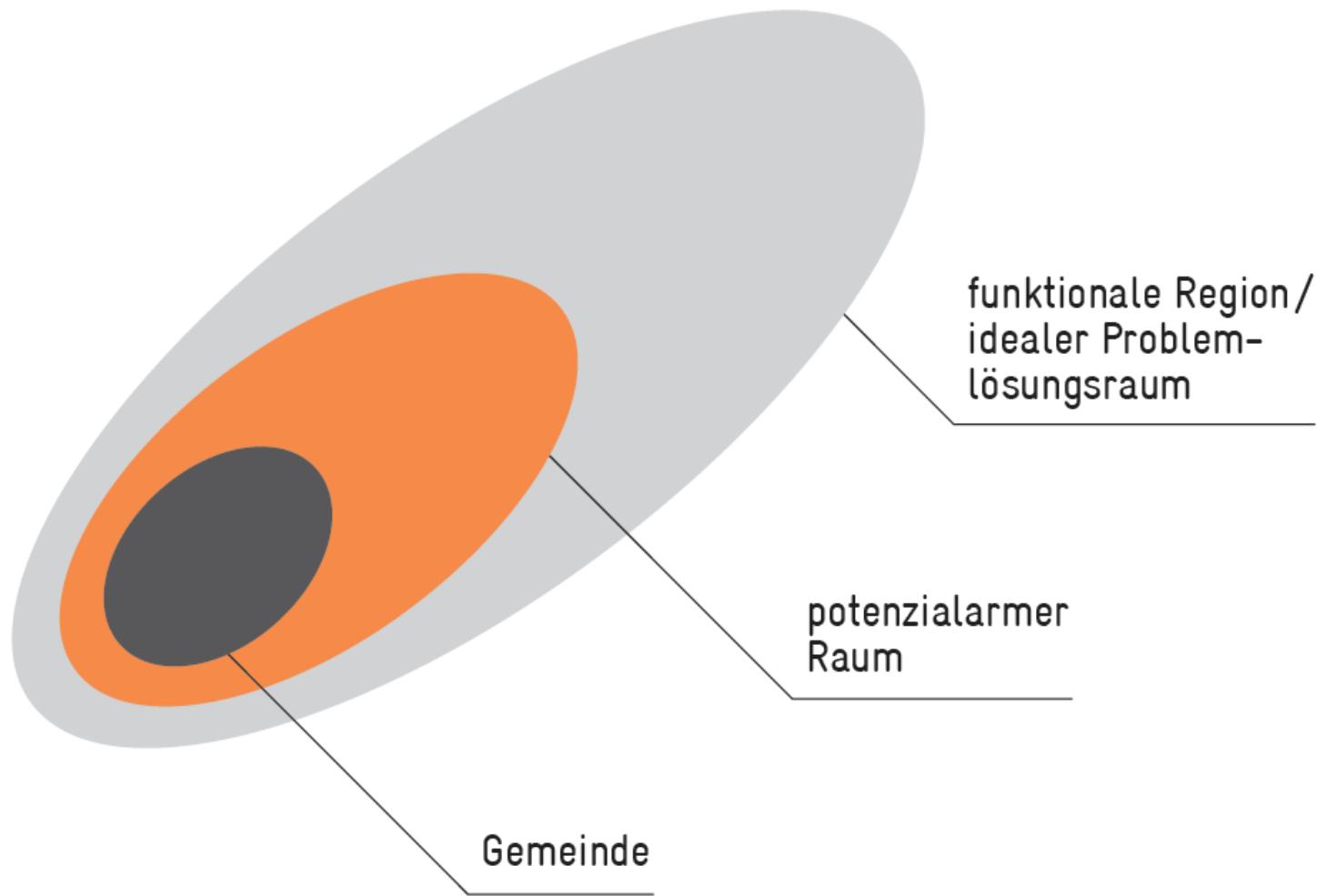
Peripheral Mountain Regions: Strategic Directions

Potenzialarme Räume: Mountaineous regions of high altitude and/or poor accessibility with low potential for regional economic development.

Tailor-made strategies for peripheral mountain regions:

- Strengthening regional centres instead of spreading scarce resources thinly
- Cost-efficient solutions for infrastructure and public service
- Digitisation: Online-distribution of regional products
- Digitisation: teleworking and «mountain hubs»
- Seclusion as a location advantage: e.g. boarding schools, burnout clinics
- Regional parks with value-chains in sustainable tourism
- *But also:* retreat from certain regions

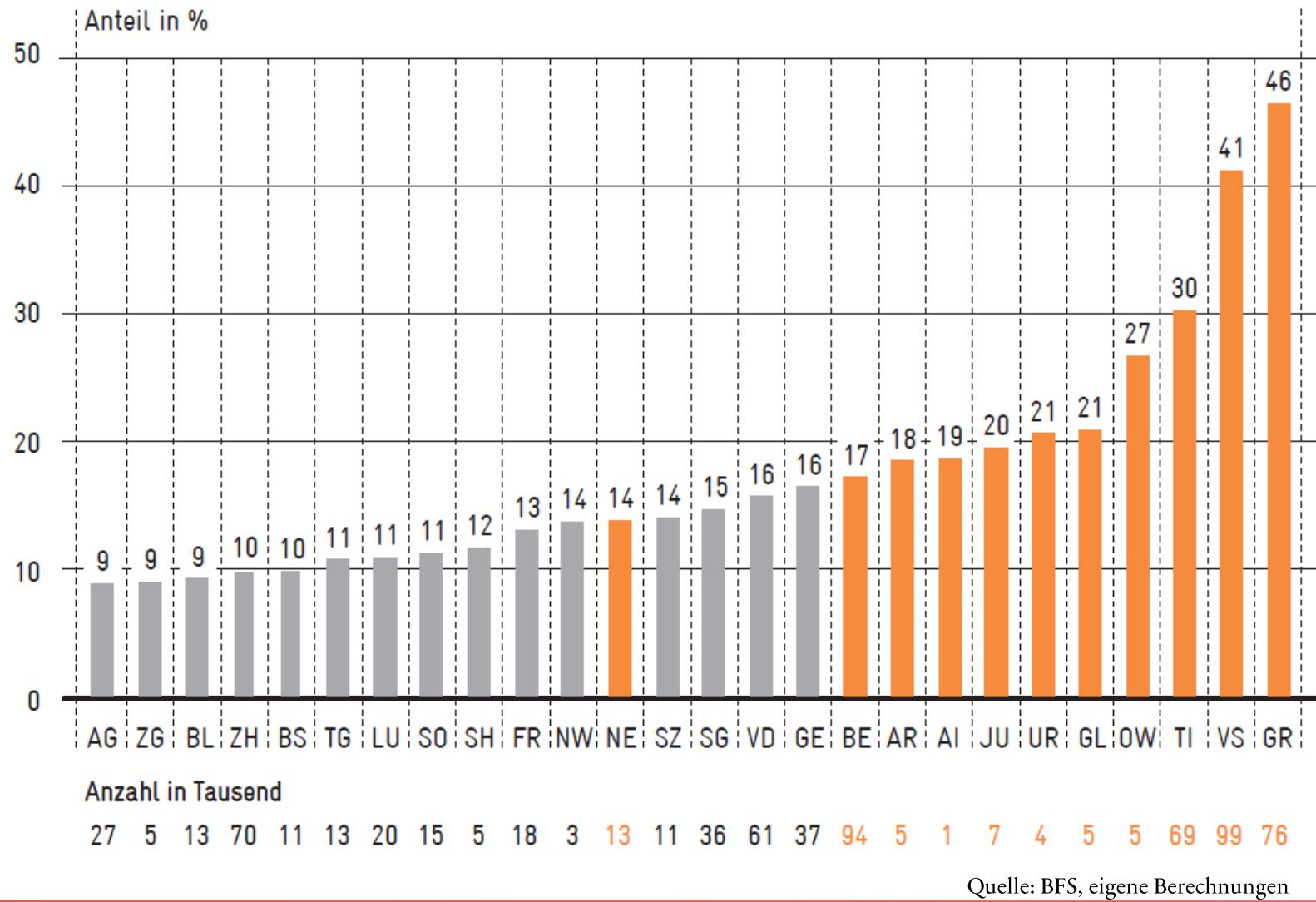
«Solution-Space» Requires Wider Perimeter



Mobilising Second-Home Owners

- **350'000-400'000 holiday-homes in the Swiss mountains**
- **Their owners have the potential to make a difference:**
 - Above-average income/wealth/education, many with strong personal networks, emotionally attached to their respective mountain regions
 - Entrepreneurs, investors, innovators, agents of change
- **Approaches to activating this underused resource:**
 - Advisory council of second-home owners
 - Targeted recruitment for local projects
 - Tax incentives for relocation of primary residence
 - Institutionalised relationship-management at the cantonal/municipal level (similar to alumni-management strategies of universities)

350'000-400'000 Holiday Homes in the Swiss Mountains



Fallstudie Südtirol: Innovationssystem Landwirtschaft

Exzellentes regionales Innovationssystem in der Landwirtschaft:

Forschungsinstitutionen: *Landwirtschaftliches Versuchszentrum Laimburg* mit 200 Mitarbeitern und 350 Forschungsprojekten jährlich sowie *Universität Bozen* mit der Fakultät Natur- und Agrarwissenschaften

Beratungsringe: Landw. Beratungsringe für *Obst- und Weinbau* sowie für *Berglandwirtschaft* dienen als Transmissionsriemen neuen Erkenntnisse in die Praxis und unterstützen Betriebe bei der Anpassung ihrer Strukturen.

Genossenschaften: Genossenschaftsstrukturen bringen einer kleinteiligen Branche Skaleneffekte/Kapitalkraft für Marketing, Vertrieb und Produktion

Nahrungsmittelindustrie: Südtirol hat auch bei der Weiterverarbeitung landwirtschaftlicher Erzeugnisse innovative Unternehmen (z.B. Dr. Schär)

→ Exportorientierter Sektor mit hoher Wertschöpfungstiefe.

Fallstudie Vorarlberg: Kompetenzcluster Holzbau

Die Holzbaubranche in Vorarlberg:

- Visitenkarte der Region (Standortfaktor, Tourismuskapital, Imageträger)
- Traditionsbewusste, innovative und stark vernetzte Branche
- *Vorarlberger Architektur Institut*: Ausstellungen, Symposien, Weiterbildung
- Jährliche Verleihung des *Holzbaupreises* in 11 Kategorien
- Jährlicher *Tag der offenen Holzbau-Türen*, Themenwanderwege für Touristen
- Innovative Konzepte in der Lehrlingsausbildung
- Hoher Qualitätsanspruch bei öffentlichen Bauten (Wettbewerbe etc.)

Vergleichbare Potentiale im Schweizer Berggebiet:

- Alpines Bauen in *Graubünden* (Baukultur, Handwerk, Architekten)
- Holzbaubranche im *Berner Oberland*

→ Ansätze aus Vorarlberg gut replizierbar (Studienreise).

Projektidee: Weltkulturerbe Bergtourismus

- **CH als Heimstätte des alpinen Tourismus. Dieses Erbe jedoch wird überformt, verfällt, ist nur noch in Fragmenten erfahrbar**
- **Erbe des alpinen Tourismus erhalten, aufwerten, aktivieren:**
 - Inventarisierung historischer Infrastruktur (Hotels, Bahnen, etc.)
 - Aufarbeitung touristischer Pioniertaten und Archivmaterialien
 - Sicherung und Modernisierung historischer Substanz
 - Strategien zum Schutz historischer Ortsbilder und Kulturlandschaften
 - Strategien zur Revitalisierung und Inszenierung des historischen Erbes
 - Vernetzung der Fragmente zu einem erfahrbaren Gesamtsystem

→ Alleinstellungsmerkmal & sanfte Alternative zu Olympia.

Landscape as a Ressource for Regional Development

Landscape & Tourism

Unique Selling Proposition (USP) of Swiss Tourism:

- Particularly beautiful/striking natural and cultural landscapes
- Well-preserved historic cities and diverse architectural heritage
- Home of Alpinism (e.g. historic hotels and tourism infrastructure)
- Swissness with characteristic features

Values of the brand Dachmarke Graubünden:

- *wahr* (authentic, traditional, unique)
- *wohltuend* (inspiring, harmonious, sublime)
- *weitsichtig* (enduring, sustainable, holistic)

→ Attractiv natural/cultural landscapes as part of Swiss tourism DNA.

Snapshots from Swiss Tourism Advertisement



Quelle: Schweiz Tourismus

Landscape as a Main Contributor to the Quality of Life

Switzerland is urbanising ...

- 75% of the population lives in conurbations
- The central plain is turning into a large metropolitan area
- Densification, urban sprawl, «Dichtestress»

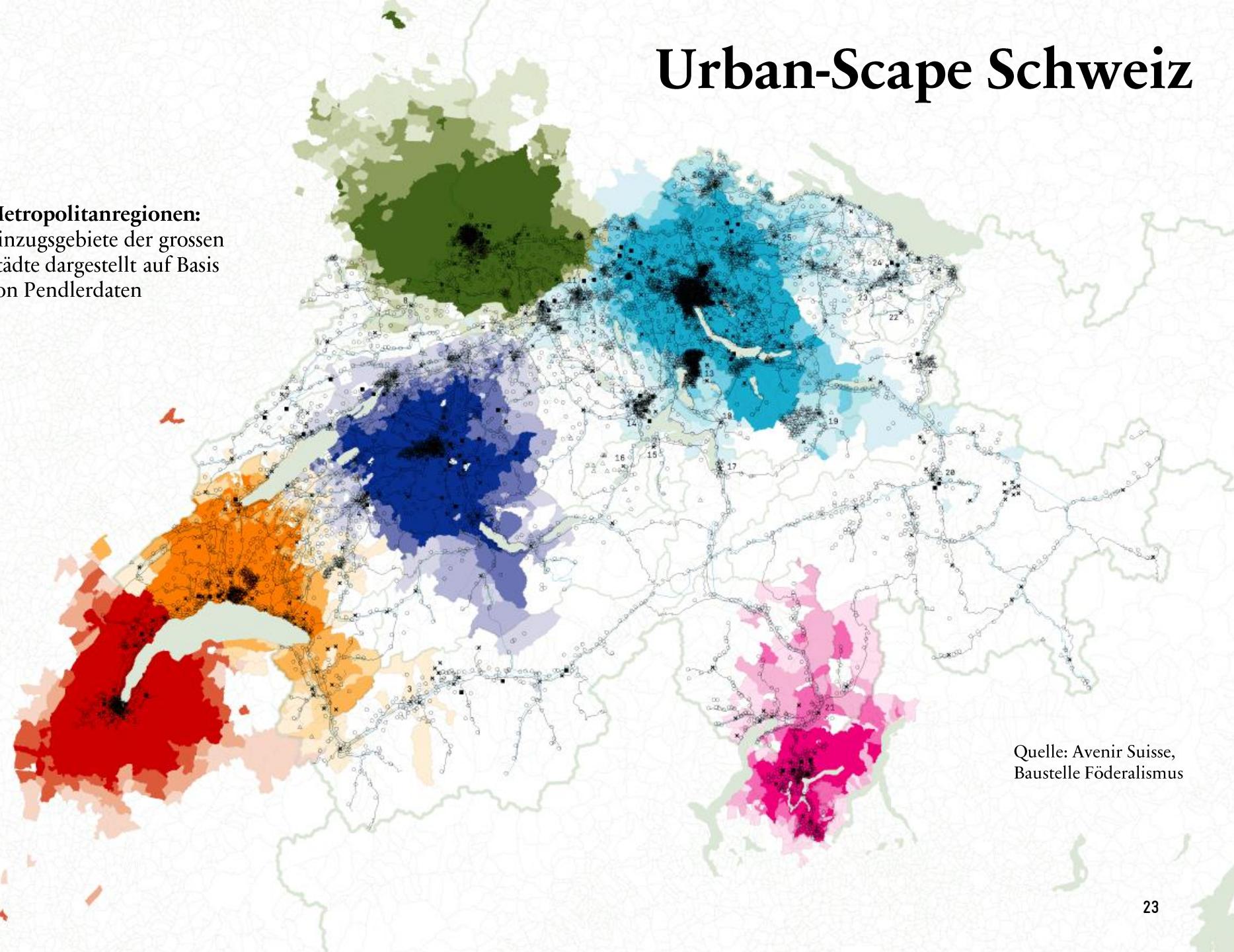
... and remaining landscapes are turning into parks:

- «Agglomerationspärke» and «Parklandschaften» close to the cities
- Regional parks in rural areas
- Farmers als «landscape gardeners» (incentives through agricultural subsidies)
- The Alps as «Alpine Hinterland» of Swiss Cities

→ Upgrading the public-good functions of the landscape.

Urban-Scape Schweiz

Metropolitanregionen:
Einzugsgebiete der grossen
Städte dargestellt auf Basis
von Pendlerdaten



Quelle: Avenir Suisse,
Baustelle Föderalismus

Credit Suisse Identity Barometer 2010



Public Opinion Poll.

Answer to the question:

«Name three items/values that, in your view, are characteristic for Switzerland.»

Sustainable Use of Landscape as a Locational Factor

Cantons/municipalities use landscape as an important soft factor to influence location decisions of taxpayers, firms and other institutions

- **Strategy (1) Consuming the landscape:**
 - Using attractive landscapes for the location marketing
 - The aim is to trigger an influx of new firms and residents, building activities etc
 - These in turn erode the landscape qualities (collateral damage)
- **Strategy (2) Sustainable use:**
 - Using attractive landscapes for the location marketing
 - Active management of associated growth through urban and spatial planning
 - Protecting and upgrading remaining landscape / compensate for damage

→ Sustainable use as the superior strategy.

Case-Study Glarus: Alpine Suburbia



Standortnische: Gebirgskanton in der Metro-Region Zürich

Alleinstellungsmerkmale des Kantons Glarus:

- Imposante Kulisse der Glarner Alpen vom Stadtzentrum Zürichs aus sichtbar
- Kleiner Bergkanton innerhalb der Metropolitanregion Zürich
- 2,5 % der Bevölkerung der Metropolitanregion Zürich (40'000 von 1,66 Mio.)

... und die sich daraus ergebende *Standortnische*:

- Naherholung, stadtnaher Tourismus (*Ziel*: längere und häufigere Aufenthalte)
- Pendlerwohnort (*Ziel*: mehr hochqualifizierte/einkommensstark Pendler)
- Zweitwohnsitz (*Ziel*: Wechsel zum Erstwohnsitz, z.B. kreative Selbstständige)
- Ausgelagerte urbane Funktionen (*Ziel*: alpine Dienstleistungen entwickeln)
- Partizipation in Wertschöpfungsketten und Clusterstrukturen
(*Ziel*: Integration in / Synergien mit regionalen Wirtschaftsstrukturen)

Diversity in the Vicinity: Mosaic of Different Landscapes

A peculiarity of the Swiss landscape is ist «Diversity in the Vicinity»:

- Complex topography («Verkammerung»)
- Diverse Mosaik of different types of natural/cultural landscapes
- Compact geography, good accessibility, diverse land-use, high pop. density

Zurich as an example:

- Cosmopolitan city with mideaval center, vibrant economy
- 10 min. to lake, forests, urban parks (e.g. Uetliberg)
- 20 min. to traditional cultural landscapes (e.g. Pfannenstil, Säuliamt)
- 30 min. to Sihlwald, 60 min. to the Alps (e.g. Alpstein, Zentralschweiz)

→ Access to highly diverse types of landscape at short distance.

Location Marketing Region of Zurich



← A3, at the entrance of the city

A3, 10 min. outside the city →



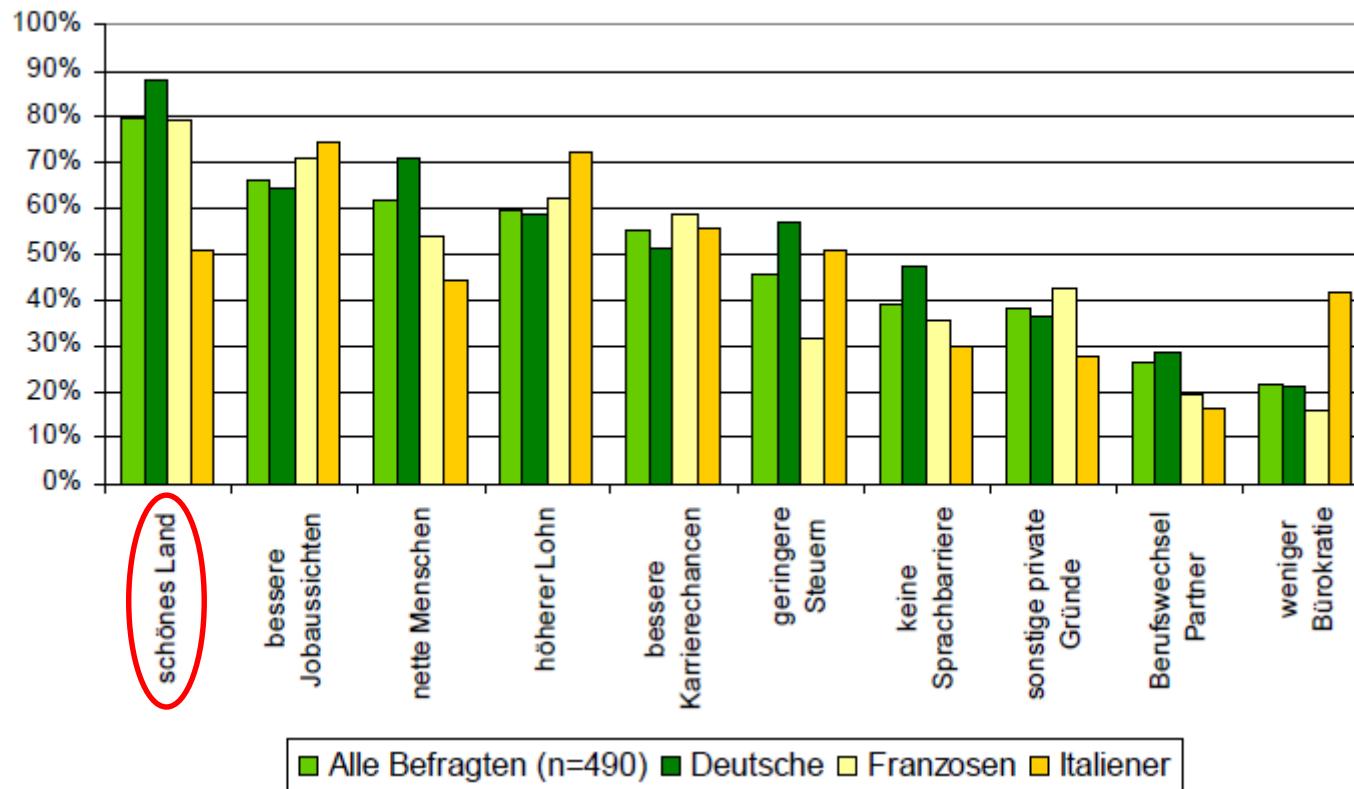
Conclusions

- The polarisation of spatial development transforms the landscape.
- Urban sprawl in the Mittelland, loss of traditional landscapes in the Alps.
- Managing the transformation of the mountain economy is a prerequisite for preserving traditional Alpine landscapes.
- Cultural/natural landscapes are part of the DNA of Swiss Tourism.
- Landscape qualities help attract new residents and firms, but the influx calls for sustainable landscape management (spatial planning).
- As Switzerland becomes denser and more urban, the remaining landscape needs to be protected and upgraded (similar to parks within a city).
- Diversity in the vicinity is a unique characteristic of the Swiss landscape: a finely grained mosaic of different and accessible landscapes.

Supplementary Slides

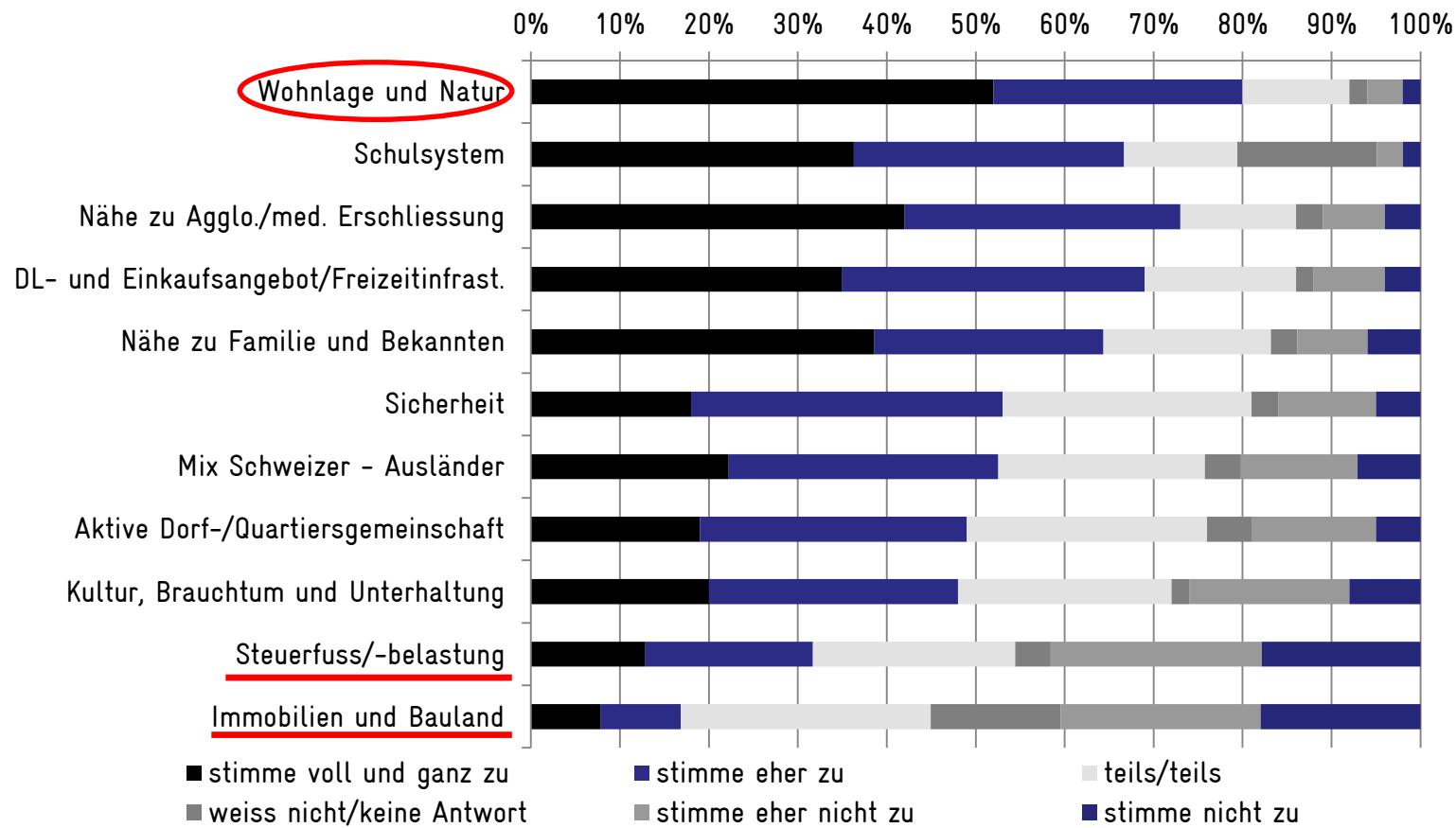
Standortfaktoren für qualifizierte Zuwanderer

Gründe für einen Umzug in die Schweiz



Online-Umfrage von comparis.ch (2008) unter neu zugewanderten Erwerbstätigen:
Durchschnittliches Haushaltseinkommen 100'000 CHF, 63% mit Hochschulabschluss

Standortfaktoren für die Wahl des Wohnorts



Umfrage von Input Consulting (2010) unter Schweizern:
Ausschlaggebende Faktoren für die Qualität des eigenen Wohnortes