## Werk

**Titel:** Amenity Migration in Rural Mountain Areas

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# Amenity Migration in Rural Mountain Areas

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Population growth in those rural areas which are characterised by high levels of natural amenities has recently received increased attention. Continuing in-migration led by alternative lifestylers, downshifters, economic migrants and retirees is transforming rural mountain areas. With the new trend of amenity migration, migrants move for reasons of lifestyle rather than job, choosing places with natural amenities, climate, authentical rural culture, recreation and affordable housing.

The concept of "amenity migration" was developed by *Laurence Moss* (1994) and other North American authors (see *Moss* 2006, 2008, *Moss* et al. 2009). *Moss* defines the phenomenon as "people moving into the mountains to reside year-round or intermittently, principally because of their actual and perceived greater environmental quality and cultural differentiation" (*Moss* 2006: 19). For him, amenity migrants come for both active recreation and passive contemplation; they tend to be economically active and usually need a well-developed communication support system as well as relatively convenient access to their new homes of choice. Amenity migrants, typically relocating from highly urbanised centres, are motivated by a desire to escape from negative metropolitan conditions (*Moss* 2006). Usually, they have become acquainted with their new place of residence through past leisure-based experiences. Amenity migrants bring with them both positive and negative effects. Positive effects include the infusion of new economic, institutional and physical infrastructure capacity into the host region – *Moss's* main argument (2006); negative impacts include unanticipated growth-related stress on the capacity of local social and health delivery systems, environmental resources, cultural and recreational facilities, retailing services and housing (*Williams* and *Gill* 2004: 2).

Mobility and amenity-driven migration are major forces reshaping many rural areas. This may provoke strategic concepts for sustainable development (*Glorioso* and *Moss* 2007). The more mobilised nature of both employment and retirement, and lifestyles which increasingly involve circulating through geographically extended social networks – all this has enormous impacts on public space and amenity landscapes.

Still, most conceptions of migration, tourism, culture, home, community and identity are built on the presumption that people usually have their one and only residential place and that high levels of residential mobility are seen as the exception rather than the rule. However, amenity migrants are characterised by a high degree of mobility (*McIntyre* 2006), and it is therefore necessary to understand the impact of increasing geographic mobility on how people value and use public space and the extent to which seasonal homes add to or detract from a shared sense of place and community identity.

In the German-speaking scientific community amenity migration has raised attention with respect to the Alps, where the in-migration of owners of new or second homes is a driving force in rural areas, even in those which had suffered from population loss and out-migration before. *Perlik* (2006, 2009) has investigated this phenomenon especially in Switzerland and *Steinicke* in the Italian region of Friaul (*Löffler* and *Steinicke* 2007a; *Steinicke* 2009, *Steinicke* et al. 2009). *Löffler* and *Steinicke* (2006, 2007b) also studied the U.S. Sierra Nevada. This leads to comparative research on amenity mobility in the sense that *Williams* and *Kaltenborn* (1999) have undertaken it for the U.S. and Norway.

For *Perlik* (2009: 81) the main differences of the Alpine case are: the short distances between the metropolises which even allow daytripping or commuting; the existing tourism infrastructure and the efforts of tourism managers to keep it alive, even at a time when tourism is declining; and the search for a "romantic pseudo-wilderness" (see also *Perlik* 2006). *Steinicke's* interest is motivated by the effects of amenity migration on ethnic minorities in the Alps. He resumes that the processes of depopulation and resettlement of remote regions carry a potential for considerable ethno-cultural conflicts (*Steinicke* 2009: 158).

The studies of other Alpine scientists like *Bourdeau* (2006, 2009) and *Ferrario* (2009) have widened the perspective. Following *Bourdeau* (2009: 30) the migrants are celebrating a continuous vacation or even their "longest holiday in lifetime"; these observations have led him to the postulation of a new period in tourism which he calls "post-tourism". *Ferrario* looks to the remodeling of rural space by amenity migrants, interprets the latter as "leisure landscapers" (*Ferrario* 2009: 113) and analyses their impacts on the redefinition of rurality and the redevelopment of remote or even abandoned mountain villages.

Bit it is not only in North America and the Alps that individual scientists and research teams are investigating amenity migration. *Bartoš* (2007, resp. *Bartoš* et al. 2008, 2009) has looked into the place-specific character of this kind of mobility in Czech mountain regions. In 2007 the Royal Geographic Society organised an international conference on "Amenity Migration and Urbanisation in Mountain Regions". In Norway, a network of researchers organised a workshop on "Seasonal Homes and Amenity Migration" in 2006, and a second will follow in 2010. In Spain, *Michael Janoschka* (an author of this issue) will also organise a conference on this topic, in 2010. Latin American researchers have formed a Network of Amenity Migration residing in Neuquén, Argentine (http:// migracionamenidadla.ning.com/).

Research, conferences and networks demonstrate the relevance of studies on amenity-led migration. This is also why DIE ERDE decided to dedicate this issue to this phenomenon. As a rather new subject of research it may be asked if term, concept and theory are already well-founded. In his theoretical reflection, *Norman McIntyre* not only proposes a new term ("lifestyle migration", following *Schechter* 2009) but also includes the theoretical concepts of mobility, lifestyle and socio-ecological systems. His contribution may open up the discussion on an improved theory of lifestyle or amenity migration.

Following his argumentation, *Michael Janoschka* uses the term of lifestyle migration to characterise the residential migration process of U.S. retirees to Central America. Applying the concept of regime analysis he focuses on the question how the destinations of lifestyle migration are produced and which mechanisms of exclusion are established.

*Axel Borsdorf* and *Rodrigo Hidalgo* carried out an investigation on amenity migrants in the hinterland of Santiago de Chile and Valparaíso. This opens the view to the different scales of amenity-led migration which may include long- and middle-distance commuters and may be re-

garded as a new expression of counterurbanisation. Their focus is a detailed analysis and description of the phenomenon.

Widening the perspective to application issues *Romella Glorioso,* in her contribution, looks for better planning tools and strategic scenarios to steer and govern the dynamics of amenity migration. She argues that multiple scenario analysis can result in a more effective assessment of the opportunities and threats which mountain communities are facing; these in general are outside their sphere of control and influence. The strength of the method is to prepare the localities for the unexpected, allowing faster, better-informed response to disruptions, and perhaps create a more favourable condition by heightening awareness and understanding of strengths and weaknesses and how fit they are towards future opportunities and threats.

The last contribution to this issue of DIE ERDE is not dedicated to the amenity migration topic, but this paper, too, deals with rural areas and urban-rural relationships. *Einhard Schmid-Kallert* analyses the livelihood strategies of multi-locational households. Non-permanent forms of migration constitute an important safety net for migrants who keep their strong relationships to their home regions. They actually live in two locations and take advantage of both urban and rural opportunities. Similar to the new trends of amenity migration this process also demands novel forms of governance.

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