



University of Natural Resources and
Applied Life Sciences Vienna
Department of Landscape, Spatial and
Infrastructure Sciences

PROTECTED AREAS IN TOURISTS' DESTINATION CHOICE IN THE ALPINE SPACE



*Forest Recreation & Tourism serving
urbanised societies, Hämmeenlinna, Finland*

DI Veronika Wirth

Prof. Dr. Ulrike Pröbstl

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Haider

Background



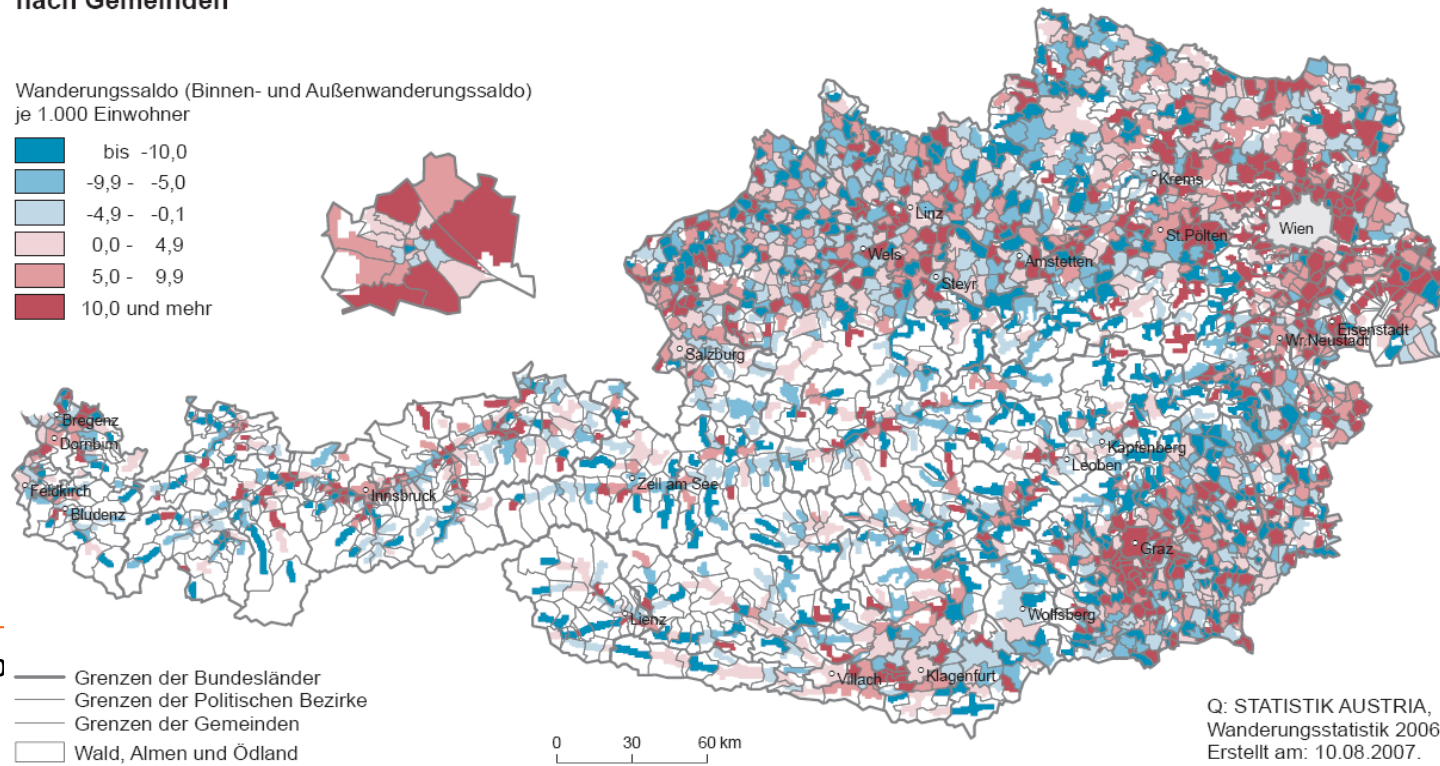
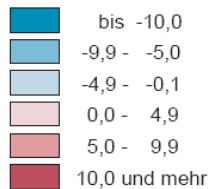
- Landscape and nature experience is increasing as motivation for tourism
 - Experience nature is for 78-83% of the German population very important or important. (F.U.R. 2004)
- Alpine summer tourism strongly relies on landscape.
 - Landscape is the most important factor in the decision for a summer holiday in Austria (Tourismus Monitor Austria 2005:16).
- Trends supporting nature based tourism and eco-tourism in the alpine area
 - Hiking and authentic experiences (ETC 2006, Tourismus Monitor Austria 2006, Schmitz-Veltin 2005)
 - Hopes for a revival of summer resort epoche of the Alps ("Sommerfrische") in the Belle Epoque as more days of sun can be expected in the alpine space. (Müller et al. 2007).

Rural development – role of protected areas



- In Europe there is a trend to urbanisation. Negative impacts for rural areas are feared.
- This trend takes shape especially in the alpine space
- **Bevölkerungsbilanz 2006: Wanderungsbilanz nach Gemeinden**

Wanderungssaldo (Binnen- und Außenwanderungssaldo)
je 1.000 Einwohner



Q: STATISTIK AUSTRIA,
Wanderungsstatistik 2006.
Erstellt am: 10.08.2007.

Marketing of rural areas enhancement via protected areas

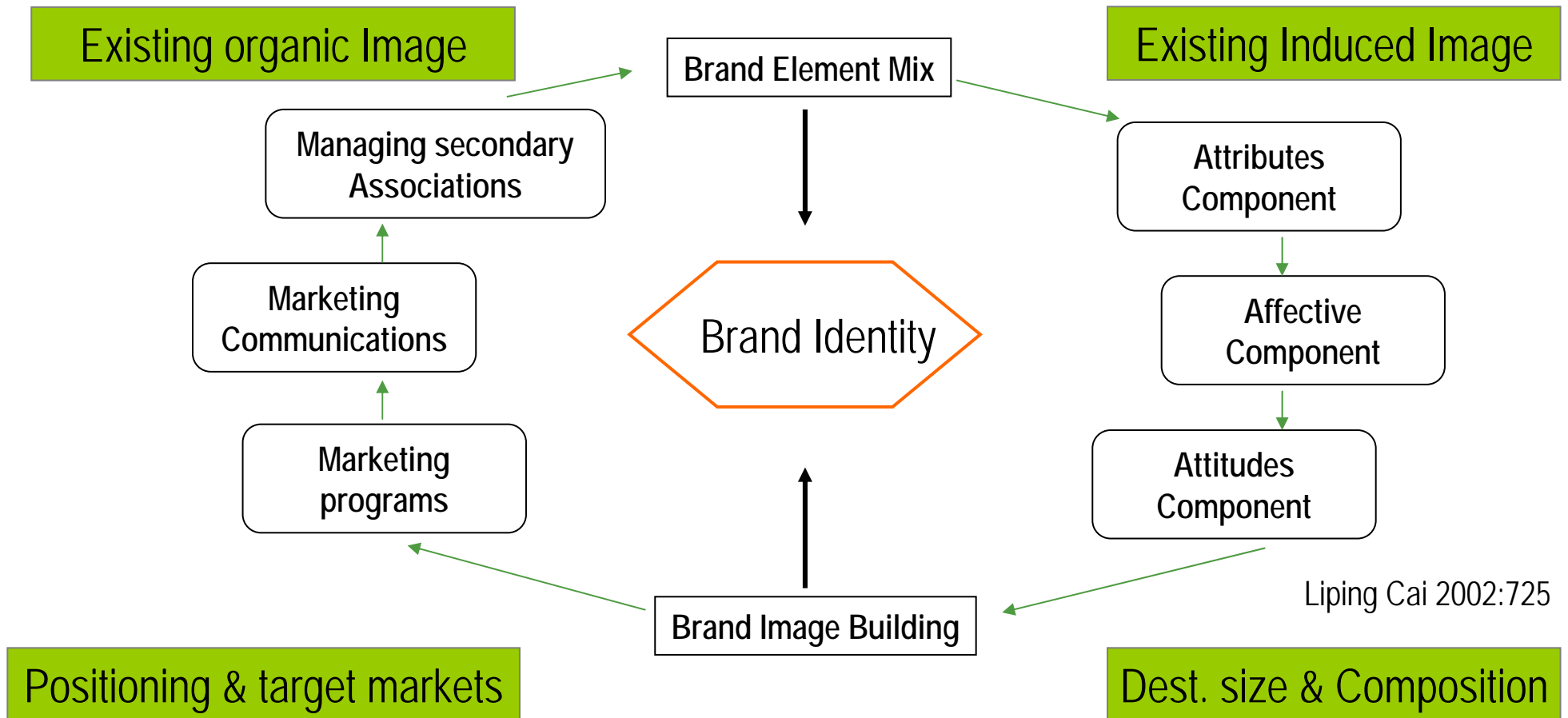


In the context of rural tourism marketing and branding plays an increasing role:

- The competition in the tourist sector increases. On the market there are more and more similar products without independent profile.
- The destination choice becomes more difficult and complex for tourists. The image of a destination can be the critical stimulus in the decision
- This situation makes it necessary to offer a differentiated product with a clear profile and an appealing image. This can be achieved most effectively by branding.

(European Travel Commission 2006, Bieger 2005, Scherhag 2003)

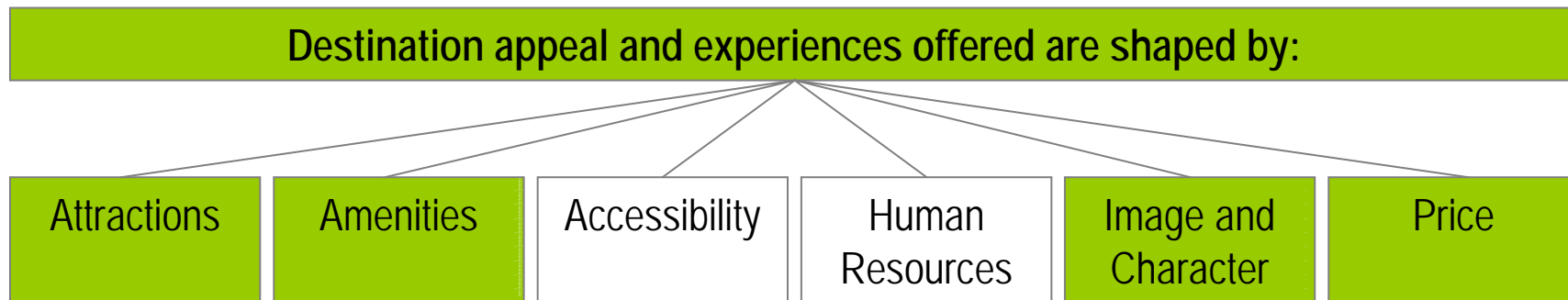
Model of destination branding



Factors in tourists' destination choice



University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences Vienna
Department of Landscape, Spatial and Infrastructure Sciences



UNWTO 2007:1

Research questions



- Which role do protected areas play in the destination choice?
 - Which tourists find destinations in protected areas attractive? What are their expectations?
- Can protected areas contribute to destination branding?
- Is a higher price in a region with protected areas acceptable, a kind of “nature- tax”?
 - Under which conditions are tourists willing to pay more in regions with protected areas?
 - What amount are tourists willing to pay?

Sampling and survey



**University of Natural Resources and
Applied Life Sciences Vienna**
Department of Landscape, Spatial and
Infrastructure Sciences

- Web based survey in a major tourist origin area for alpine summer tourism
- Germany-wide representative online survey
 - at least one holiday trip in the last 3 years
 - age group: 18-70 years
- Sampling procedure via online panel
- N= 1153
- Response rate: 56%
- 34/26 questions

Design of one choice set

The image shows a side-by-side comparison of two website pages for 'Ort A' and 'Ort B'. The pages are designed to present information about each location in a structured, grid-like format. Callouts point to various design and content elements:

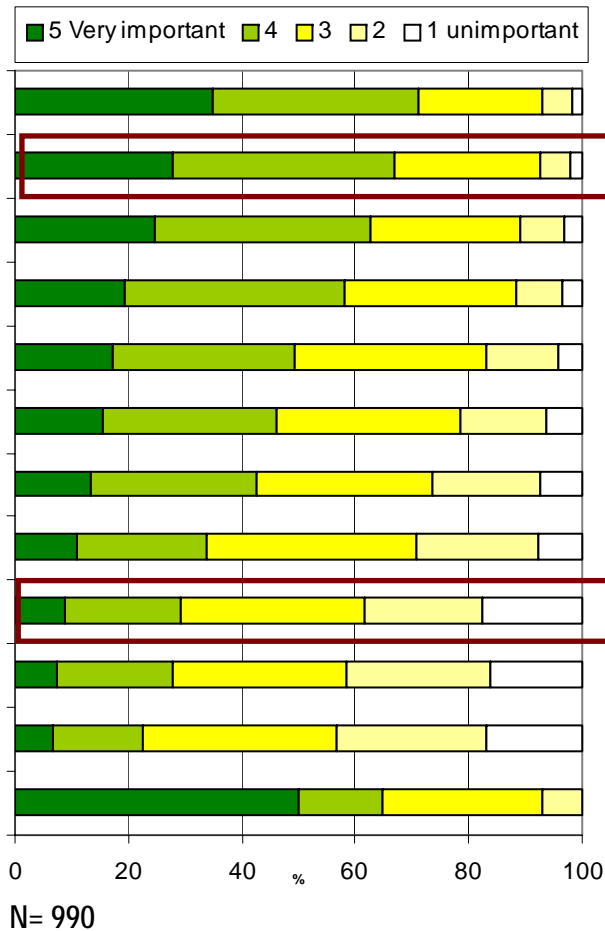
- Protected areas in the surroundings:** Points to the 'Naturpark' label on the Ort A page.
- Possible Activities (Sports and Infrastructure):** Points to the 'Aktivitäten' section on the Ort A page, which lists: Wandern, Mountainbiken, Klettern/ Klettersteige, Reiten, Golfen, and Baden.
- Days of sun in the summer period:** Points to the weather icon and text '15. Juni bis 15. Sept. 55 Sonnentage' on the Ort A page.
- Size, character and offers of the location:** Points to the overall layout and content of the Ort A page.
- Nature and landscape in the surroundings:** Points to the large landscape image at the top of the Ort B page.
- Cultural offers and events:** Points to the 'Kultur & Events' section on the Ort B page, which lists: Brauchtum und Tradition (Trachtenfest, Bauerntheater...), Kulturangebote (Musikkonzerte, Ausstellungen...), and Events (historisches Festival Musikfestival...).
- Price difference:** Points to the 'Spezial Sommer Angebot: - 10%' banner at the bottom of the Ort B page.

At the bottom of the comparison, a navigation bar indicates the location of each element: 'In Ort A', 'In keinem von beiden', and 'In Ort B'.

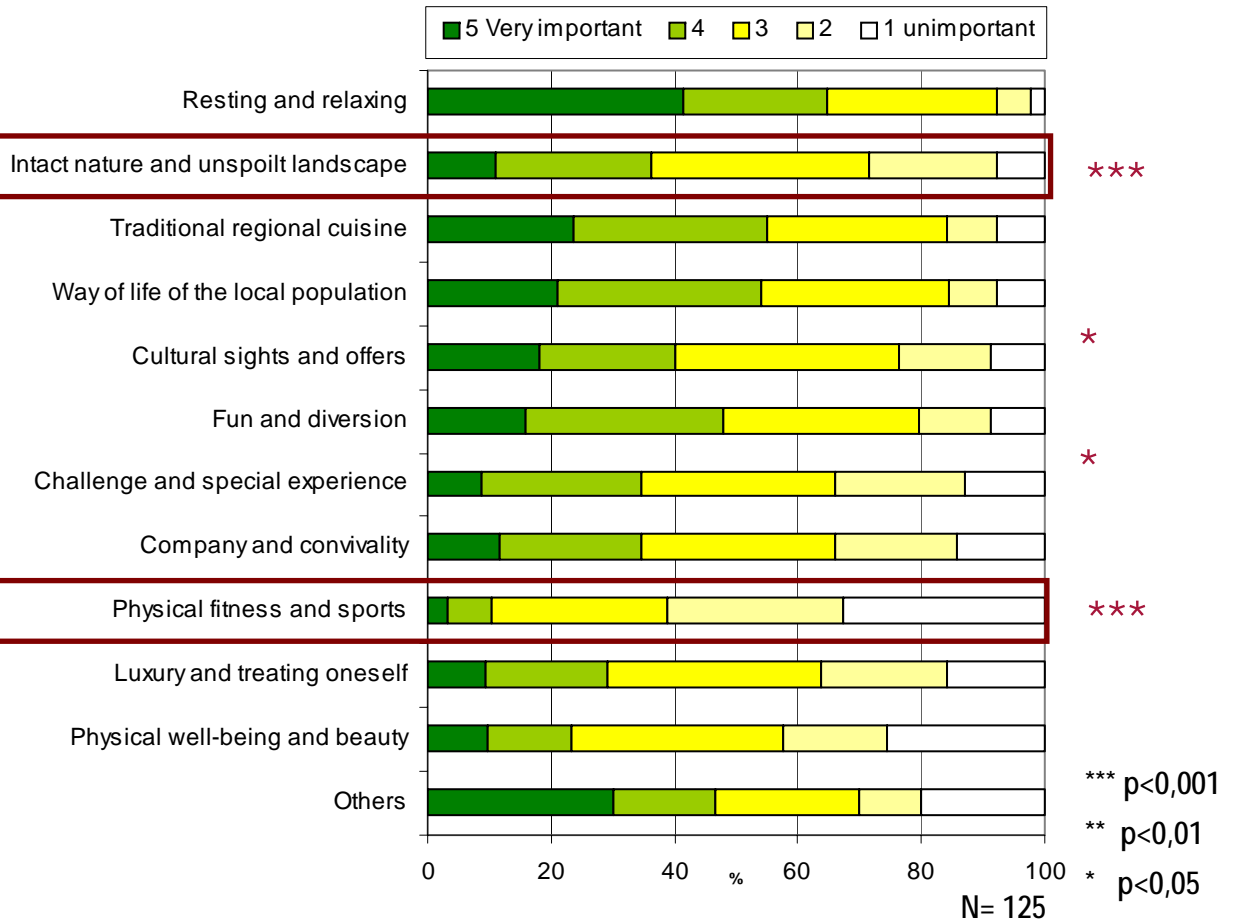
Results – Motives



**Motives for summer holidays in the Alps
(alpine interested)**



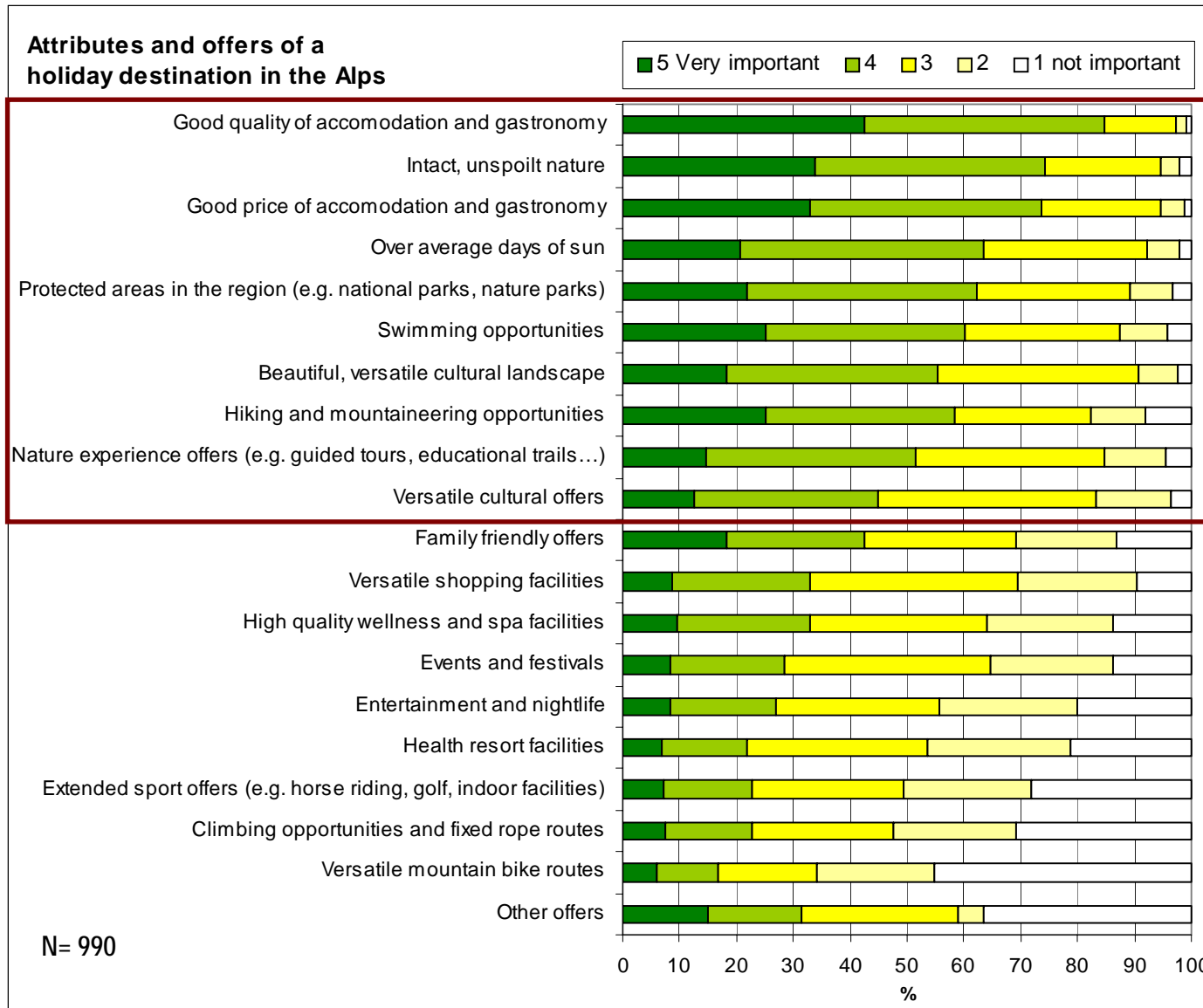
**Motives for summer holidays
(non-alpine interested)**



Attributes in the destination choice



University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences Vienna
Department of Landscape, Spatial and Infrastructure Sciences



First results of the DCE

Latent class segmentation to document heterogeneity



- Social oriented visitor (60%)
 - Significant attributes influencing the destination choice positively: rather large busy locations, sport activities, cultural offers, nature experience offers, days of sun, price; no influence of protected areas.
 - Group characteristics: Over average representation of young persons, with basic education and A-levels, under average time spent outdoors; Motivational factors: Conviviality and fun.
- Nature oriented visitor (27%)
 - Significant attributes influencing the destination choice positively: small locations with only basic facilities, sport activities, cultural offers, national parks, nature experience offers, price.
 - Group characteristics: Over average representation of elder persons, secondary school and university degree, time spent outdoors. Motivational factors: Nature and regional characteristics.
- Outdoor oriented visitor (13%)
 - Significant attributes influencing the destination choice positively: sport activities, days of sun, national parks.
 - Group characteristics: Over average representation of elder persons, basic and secondary school.

Different protection categories in the destination choice



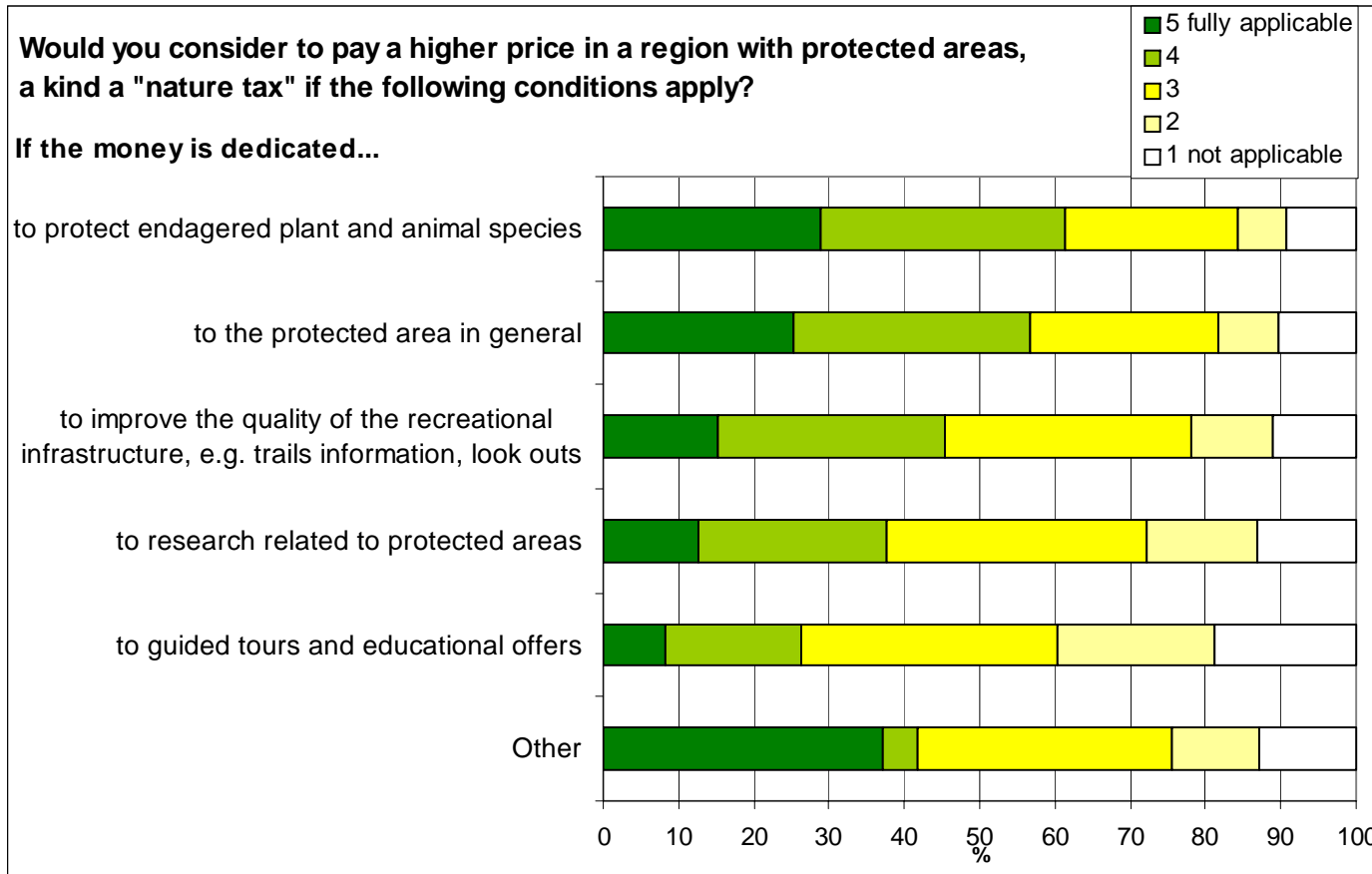
University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences Vienna
Department of Landscape, Spatial and Infrastructure Sciences

- National parks and nature parks are a selection criteria for some market segments
 - National parks are most preferred
 - Nature parks are a significant selection criterion only for people who are well informed about PA
 - Natura 2000
 - Opportunities have been associated with this “brand”
 - Disappointing results
 - Even negative for some visitor segments

Willingness to pay for PA



University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences Vienna
Department of Landscape, Spatial and Infrastructure Sciences

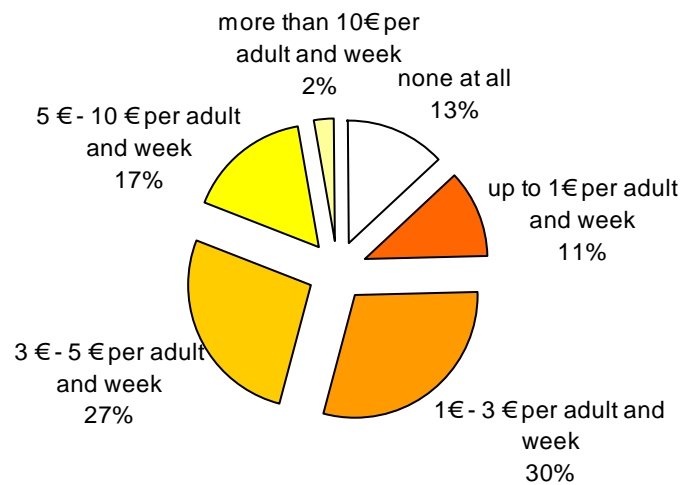


Willingness to pay for PA



University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences Vienna
Department of Landscape, Spatial and Infrastructure Sciences

Which amount do you consider to pay if your selected criteria apply?



Discussion

- These results reflect the opinions of a representative sample of the German population interested in spending summer holidays in the Alps
- For a market segment of about 30-40% (classes 2 and 3) protected areas are an attribute affecting destination choice, strongly related to the motives.
- Protected areas are an attraction only in combination with other offers, especially recreational activities.
- There are large differences between different protection categories.
- Respondents state a general willingness to support the maintenance of conservation issues and recreational infrastructure in protected areas.



**University of Natural Resources and
Applied Life Sciences Vienna**
Department of Landscape, Spatial and
Infrastructure Sciences



**University of Natural Resources and
Applied Life Sciences Vienna**
Department of Landscape, Spatial and
Infrastructure Sciences

DI Veronika Wirth

Prof. Dr. Ulrike Pröbstl

University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences Vienna
Department of Landscape, Spatial and Infrastructure Sciences
Institute of Landscape Development,
Recreation and Conservation Planning

Peter-Jordan-Str. 82, A-1190 Vienna
Tel.: +43 1 47654-7248, Fax: +43 1 47654-7209
veronika.wirth@boku.ac.at , www.boku.ac.at

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Haider

Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., Canada
School of Resource and Environmental Management

8888 University Drive, Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6
Phone: +1 778- 782-3066 wolfgang_haider@sfu.ca, www.rem.sfu.ca