



The Alpine Pearls holiday

A sustainable tourism mobility passage in the Alpine region

Consumer Behavior in Tourism Symposium



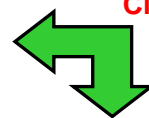
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Problems of the Alpine region

Important tourism destination

- 100 million tourists a year
- Economic dependence on tourism



Climate-tourism hot-spot!

Environmental challenges

- Climate change effects (less snowfall)
- Air pollution
- Loss of biodiversity

Becken & Hay, 2007; Bätzing, 2003; EEA, 2003; Pechlaner & Tschurtschenthaler, 2003; Siegrist, 1998; Alpenkonvention, 2007

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Sustainability strategies

“Up to 80% of all tourist journeys to the Alps, where public transport is crucially lacking, are by car” (EEA, 2003: 86).

Needed: a shift towards environmental-friendly transportation modes

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The Alpine Pearls association

The AP association employs a sustainability strategy;
Enable tourists to travel environmental-friendly to and in the
Alpine region

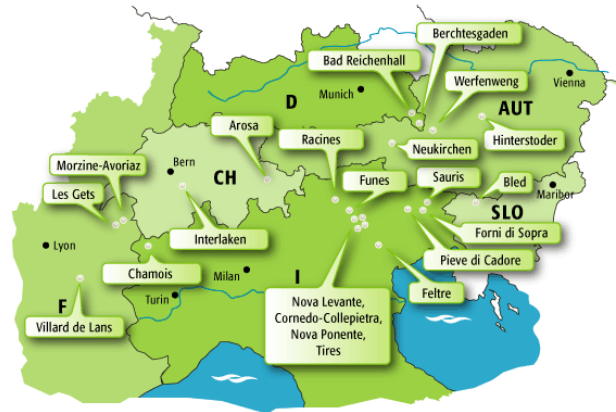
- 22 villages
- municipalities
- tourism boards



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The 22 Alpine Pearl villages



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Goals of the Alpine Pearls association

1. Environmental protection of the region
 2. Attract more tourists
 3. 'Comfortable', 'unique', 'high-quality' holidays
- Enable tourists to travel environmental-friendly to and in the Alpine region
 - Alpine Pearls holiday; mobility+

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What is special about this sustainability strategy?

Alpine Pearls is a contextual approach to sustainable development of tourism

- Aimed at a specific holiday practice: Alpine holidays
- Environmental, economic and socio-cultural issues are connected in one storyline
- The journey is embedded in the holiday

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Why a contextual approach?

According to the Social Practices Approach (Spaargaren, 1997; 2003; 2006), sustainable development of consumption behaviour would benefit from a contextual approach;

In a contextual approach, sustainability strategies:

- Fit with the time-space context; and
- Are organised on the level of specific social practices / are embedded in specific social practices.

In light of SPA, sustainability strategies in tourism should:

- Neither be focused on the individual tourist,
- Nor on technological innovations and structural solutions,
- But on the so-called holiday practice where these two come together (see more in Verbeek & Mommaas, 2008).

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A contextual approach to travelling behaviour: Passages

“Travelling is about solving problems” (Peters, 2006)

A passage:

- an order of material and immaterial elements
- reduces the uncertainty and unpredictability of travelling
- enables smooth and problem-free travelling

(see Peters, 2003; Peters, 2006).

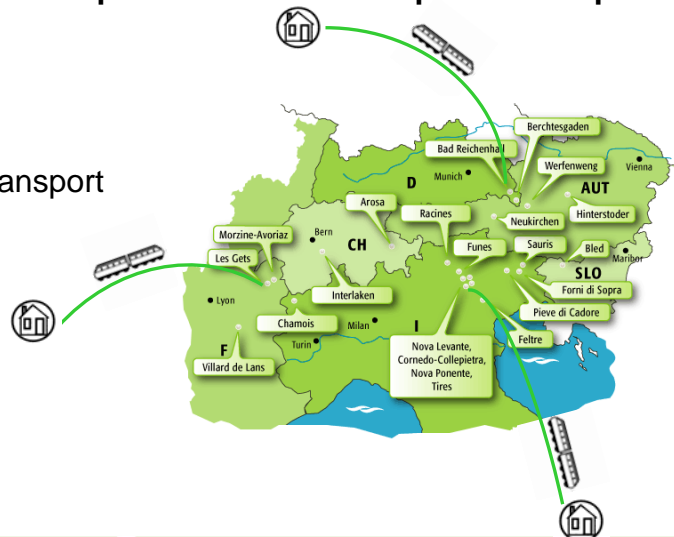
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An abstract representation of an Alpine Pearls passage

OD-transport



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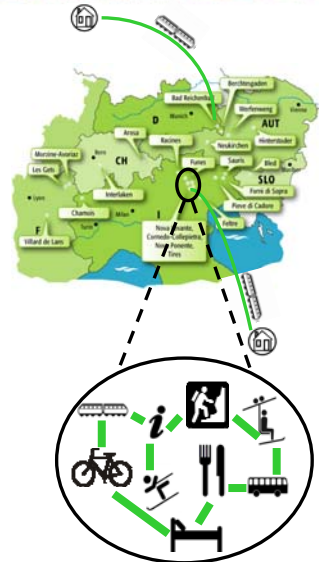
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An abstract representation of an Alpine Pearls passage

Mobility *in* the region

Mobility – accommodation – activities

- Services
- Information



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Research question

“To what extent can there be spoken of a passage for Alpine Pearls holidays, and what does this passage entail?”

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Passage for Alpine Pearls holidays

1. Involvement of politics, market, technology, and users
2. A unique storyline
3. Transport modes available
4. Additional Alpine Pearls services available
5. Information on 3. and 4. (in line with 2.)

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Transport modes available

pictures

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Alpine Pearls in hotels

pictures

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Alpine Pearls in hotels

pictures

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Alpine Pearls in the Pearl village

pictures

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Information on Alpine Pearls at Tourist Offices

pictures

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Passage is however not yet complete and continuous

OD-transport facilities lack behind intra-Alpine facilities

Alpine region: 6 countries

- different transport infrastructures (many transfers, bad connections)
- different railway and bus companies
- different ticketing systems

Not all Pearl villages are well connected to the AP passage

Most hotels are not included in the AP passage

Most tour operators are hesitant to become a partner of AP

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What obstructs a complete and continuous passage?

- Nationally organised transport infrastructures
AP association has to convince national railway/bus companies
- Sectorially organised tourism industry
AP association should create a passage among elements

AND:

Passage creator is a non-profit association

Lack of power and authority

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What can be learned from the Alpine Pearls case?

A contextual approach is useful, since it:

- Considers the whole holiday
- Fits with the characteristics of:
 - The holiday
 - The travellers
 - The region

However: Misfit with current systems of provision

Contextual

On the level of holiday practice



Nationally

Sectorially

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Sustainability challenges of the tourism industry

Take the challenge to take a contextual approach to
sustainable development of tourism

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Discussion – now or afterwards

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