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Enhancing the resilience of mountain food systems through farm diversification: Examples from Austria

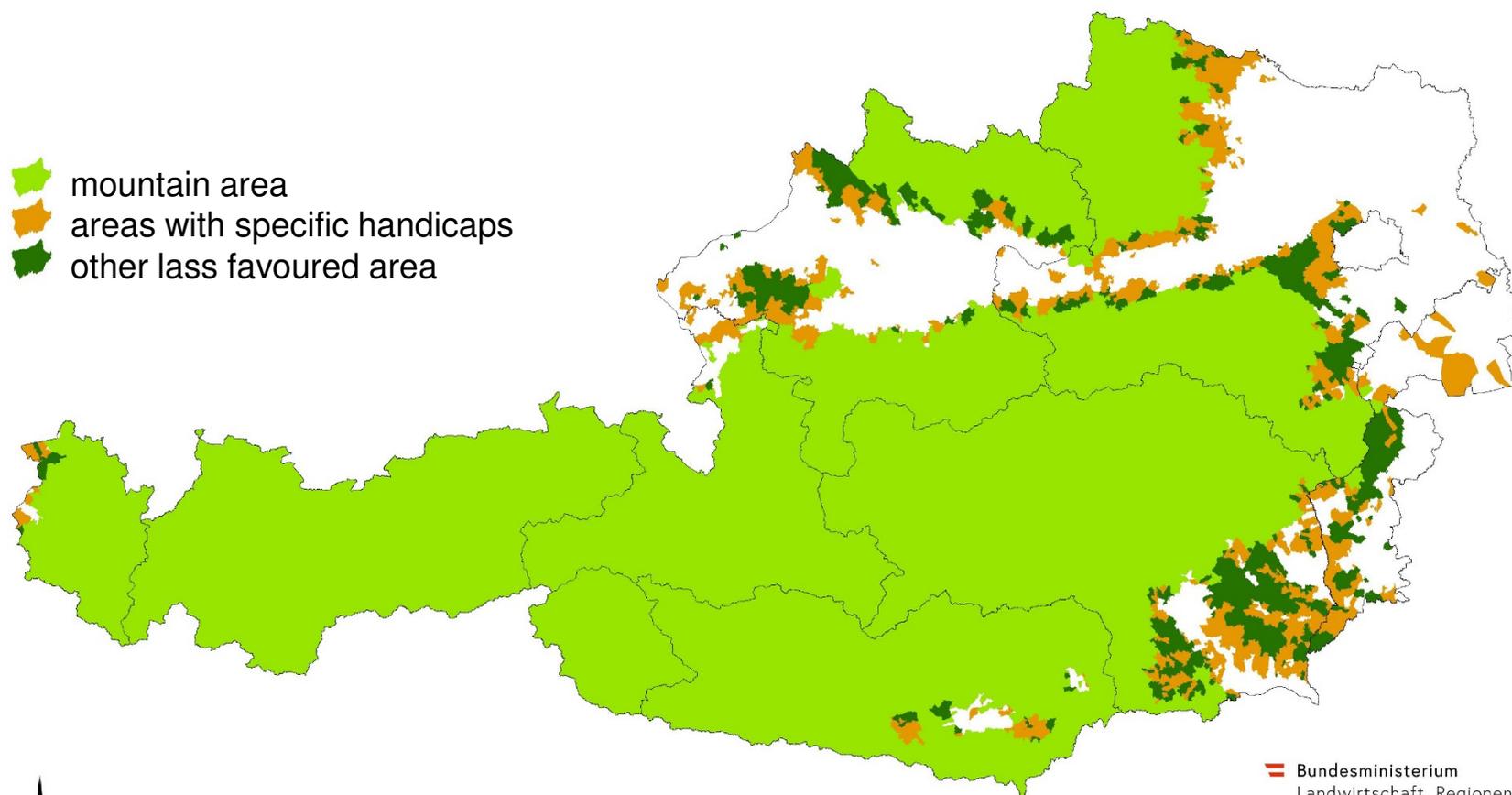
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Resilience of the UK Food System End-Programme
Conference

Tuesday 5 April 2022

Context – Less Favoured Areas



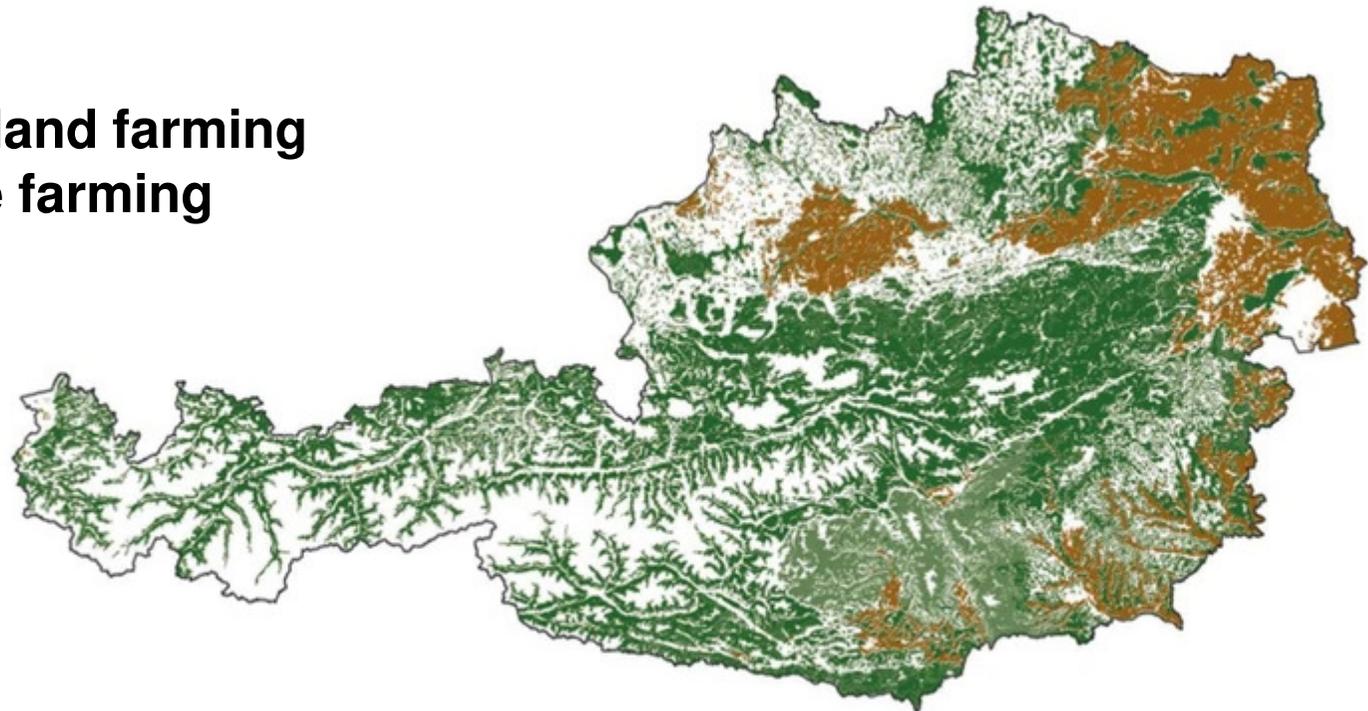
- mountain area
- areas with specific handicaps
- other less favoured area



0 25 50 100 km

Context – Land Unse

- Forest
- Grassland farming
- Arable farming







Introduction

- **Farming in the European Alps**
 - ➔ Livelihoods for individual families
 - ➔ But: declining importance of food production
 - ➔ Provision ecosystem services
 - ➔ Impact on social cohesion
- **Family farms**
 - ➔ Austria: 60% of farmland is managed by approx. 150.000 family farms
 - ➔ Modernised agriculture exceeds the financial scope
 - ➔ Part-time farming
- **Tourism in the European Alps**
 - ➔ Options to integrate farm activities (agritourism-services, off-farm employment, provision of high-quality food, compensation payments)



Research Aim

- How does farm diversification into tourism enhance the different farm resilience capabilities of family farms?
- How does the peasant habitus enhance the resilience of family farms?



Conceptual Frame

- Farm resilience is defined as the „buffering capability, adaptive capability and transformative capability“ (Darnhofer 2014, p. 467)
- However, a farm is **not** resilient when it has undergone the transformation (e.g. from full-time farming into full-time tourism)
- Proactive resilience strategy
 - ➔ E.g. adaptive strategies in farm management before shock (e.g. diversification into tourism)

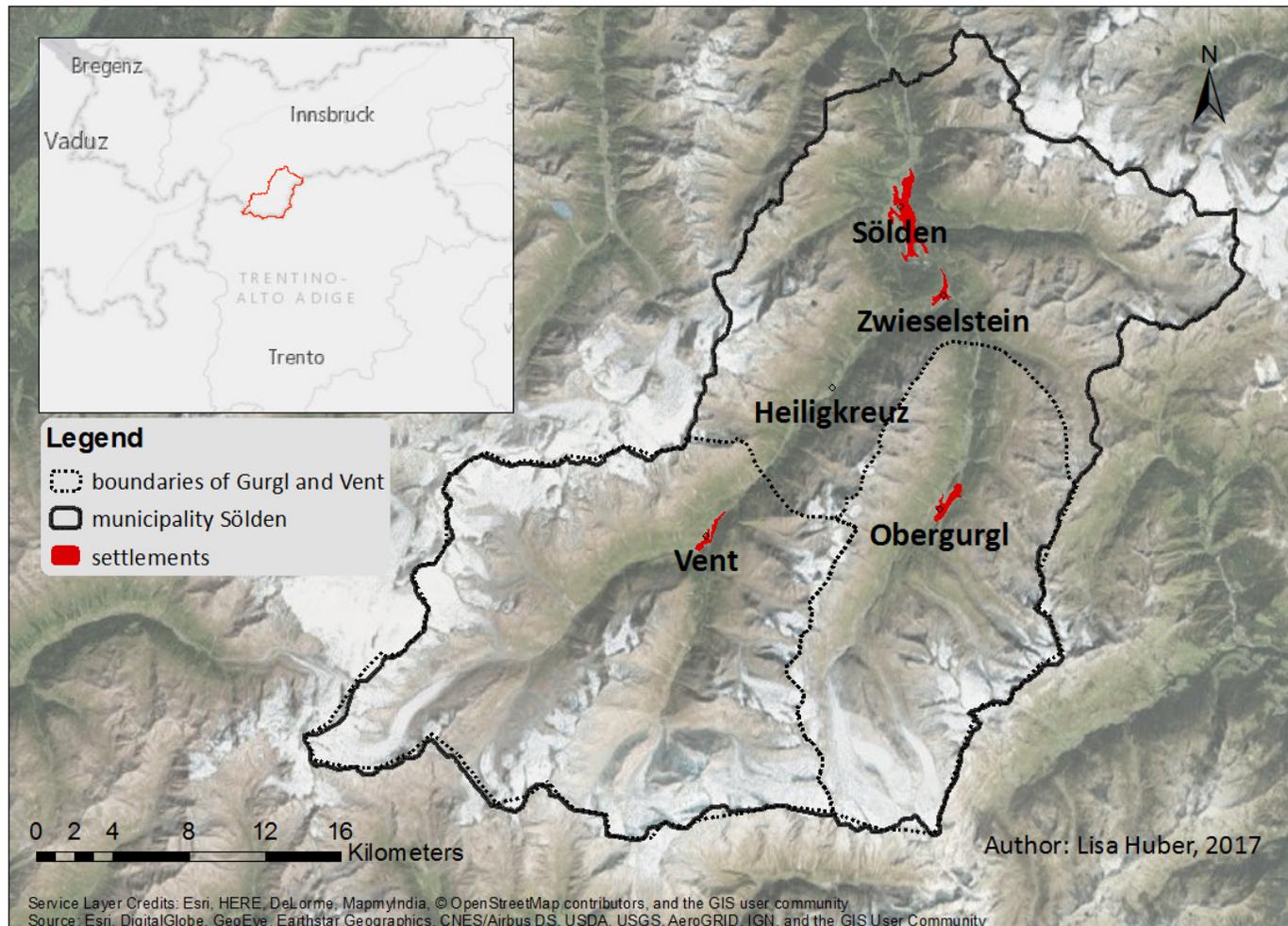


Conceptual Frame

- Peasant (Shanin 1973)
 - ➔ Farmer (Landwirt*In) /peasant (Bauer*in)
 - ➔ Peasantry ➔ counter-model to industrial farming
 - ➔ Rooted in locality, striving for autonomy, reducing capital intensification, applying resource based sustainable food production and distribution practices (van der Ploeg 2009)
- Habitus (Bourdieu 1984)
 - ➔ Inherent system of dispositions shaped by our experiences
 - ➔ Unconscious guidelines for choosing one way of action
 - ➔ Farming activities influenced by habitus

Case Study Area

Location of the study area



Project Site

Obergurgl (1,907m)



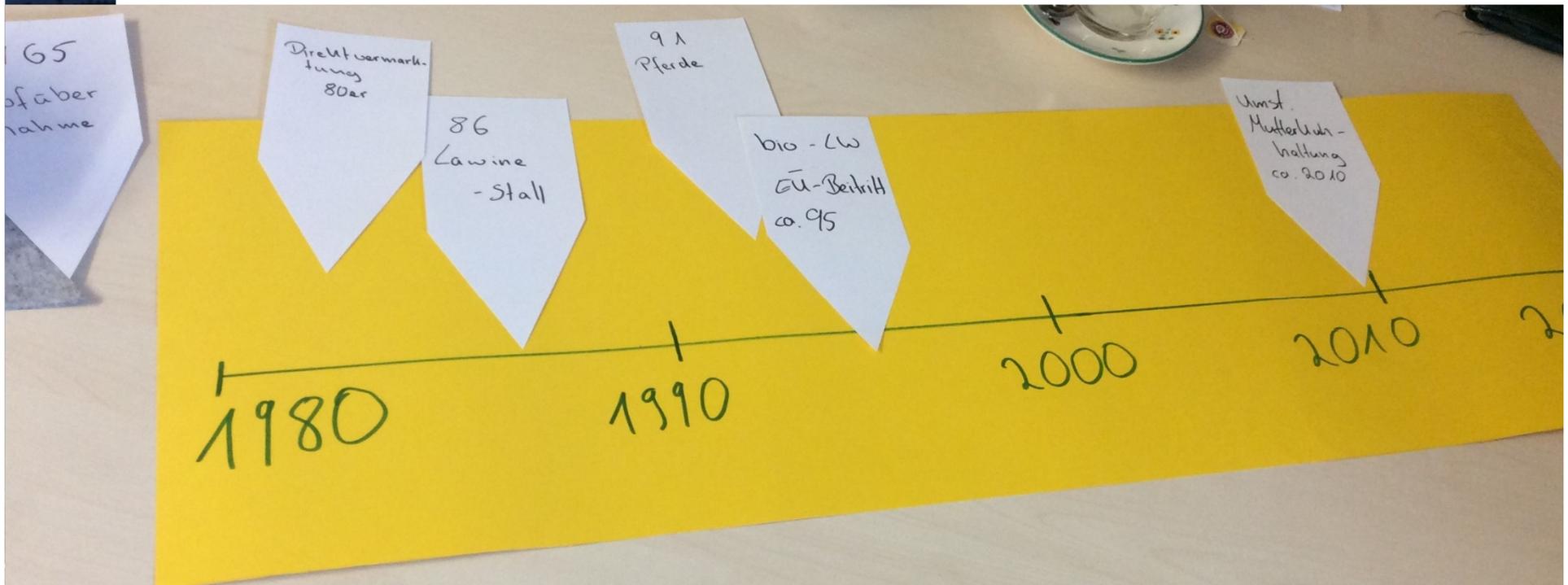
Project Site

Vent (1,895m)



Method

- Data collection - Farm biographies
 - ➔ narrative interviews





Participating farms

1. In brackets earlier occupations of the farmer.
2. The decline in mountain pastures from 2010 goes back to a change in capturing mountain forage areas. Prior to 2010, the areas submitted within the agricultural structure survey had always been those of the cadastral map of mountain pastures.

Farm	Location		Farm	Farm size (ha) 2010	Additional income ¹
1	Vent	full time	horse breeding, suckler cows	34	(ski instructor, on-farm tourism)
2	Vent	part time	cattle, pigs, sheep	6	ski school, holiday apartments
3	Obergurgl	part time	goats, sheep, bees	4	wood carver, (ski instructor)
4	Obergurgl	part time	cattle, chicken	7	bed and breakfast, (ski instructor)
5	Obergurgl	part time	cattle, sheep, pigs, alpaca	7	ski school, holiday apartments, land leasing
6	Obergurgl	part time	highland cattle	10	ski instructor, holiday apartments
7	Vent	part time	cattle, sheep, goats, horses	22	ski instructor, carriage rides, stable tours, holidays on the farm, teaching (wife)
8	Vent	part time	horses, goats, suckler cows	6	holiday apartments, mountain cabin
9	Obergurgl	part time	sheep, goats	0	bed and breakfast

1. In brackets earlier occupations of the farmer.





Discussion I

- How does farm diversification into tourism enhance the different farm resilience capabilities of family farms?
 - ➔ Different forms of farm diversification practiced:
 - land ownership
 - short local food supply chains
 - ➔ Additional income enables proactive adaptation strategies for survival
 - ➔ Adaptation strategies to optimize farmland & workload
 - ➔ Transformative capability into tourism provider



Discussion II

- How does the peasant habitus enhance the resilience of family farms?
 - ➔ Identification as peasants (Bauer, Bäuerin)
 - ➔ Continuity of farming activities justified with strong habitus
 - ➔ Tourism income cross-subsidizes farming infrastructure



Conclusion

- Additional income generated in the tourism industry creates leeway (transformation, adaptation, buffering capability)
 - Thus farm diversification into tourism enhances farm resilience
- Peasant habitus rejects transformative capability
 - Strong habitus enhances farm resilience

Thank you for your attention!

Stotten, Rike (2021): The role of farm diversification and peasant habitus for farm resilience in mountain areas: the case of the Ötztal valley, Austria. In: International Journal of Social Economic 48/7, S. 947 - 964.

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