

Andrea Boscoboinik (University of Fribourg, Switzerland) „Mobilities, Tourism and Social Change: an Illustration from the Swiss Alps“

Mountain landscapes have gradually become ideal places for a better life, particularly for wealthy urbanites. The social representation of mountains has shifted among the inhabitants of the plains from fear to desire. Taking as an example a region in the Swiss Alps, I discuss the recent transformation of the mountain landscape from a frightening wild space to the best place to live. I focus on the motivations that have led urban people to visit and to settle in mountain regions over the last three decades. These new forms of migration do not necessarily take place for economic reasons. They also draw on the imaginary of mountains as a trendy, ‘culturalised’ natural places in which to live. As they move in, urbanites bring their ‘urban way of life’ and ‘urban ethos’ to places that formerly were not urban. While giving voice to the research participants in order to understand the change in values and preferences towards mountain areas, I will clarify the underlying factors behind new forms of mobile life, lifestyle migration and multi-locality.

