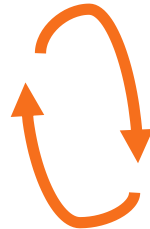**Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development**

Governance, Administration and Management of Biosphere Reserves and Protected Areas

Prof. Dr. Erik Aschenbrand

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Borders, regional identity and spatial layouts of biosphere reserves

Some European borders are easy to cross

Jerome (2001): Ein Café in Baarle-Nassau, Niederlande and der Grenze zu Belgien.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Baarle-Nassau_fronti%C3%A8re_caf%C3%A9.jpg

Diego Menna (2009):Swiss-Italian border Ponte Tresa.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Valico_Ponte_Tresa.JPG

Crossing borders is not always that easy though, and probably never was…

If you are a beaver, you **MUST LEAVE, NOW!!!**

Beaver: highly territorial

Human territoriality?

Crossing borders is not always that easy though, and probably never was…

Human territoriality?

Pictures: Neighbours fighting

If you are a beaver, you **MUST LEAVE, NOW!!!**

Beaver: highly territorial

„Human beings take terrioriality to an extreme level. As a species, we seem very strongly predisposed towards partitioning and demarcating our spatial surroundings for the purposes of **controlling access to natural resources** and **maintaining oversight of the activities of other individuals and groups**.“ (Watt & Llamas 2017, 191)

„the earth's surface is already divided into zones according to geographical terrain, … , and the boundaries between these zones are sometimes abrupt rather than gradual. Deserts, rivers, lakes, and mountain ranges can be significant obstacles to movement and the oceans have been insuperable for most of human history. Within these limits, though, we have sought to carve up the earth's land surface into larger and smaller units in ways that, in time, come to seem natural or inevitable“ (Watt & Llamas 2017, 191)

Watt, D. & Llamas, C. (2017): Identifying places – the role of borders. In: Montgomery, C. and Moore, E.: *Language and a sense of place*. Cambridge University Press.

Bordering as place-making:
attributing, appropriating and representing urban spaces (Scott & Sohn 2018)

Attribution points to the characteristics that are cognitively associated with place (functions, lifestyles, milieu, social image).

Appropriation relates to the everyday practices of using/experiencing urban places that allow for identification with place and transformations of place identities (for example, the naming of places, uses of public places, performative practices, coding of physical space).

Representation refers to the socially communicated place ideas that generally include the first two bordering mechanisms.

Scott, J. & Sohn, C. (2018): Place-making and the bordering of urban space: Interpreting the emergence of new neighbourhoods in Berlin and Budapest. European Urban and Regional Studies.
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0969776418764577?casa_token=5tIdml1I07kAAAAA%3AvTwhcCjZ5iwz6gfPoAT1dJ0D-16SyzYjbhQTAq_DRxl6B2y47LDOZ8UkivfCM1QLaLsMmzRzHyNd
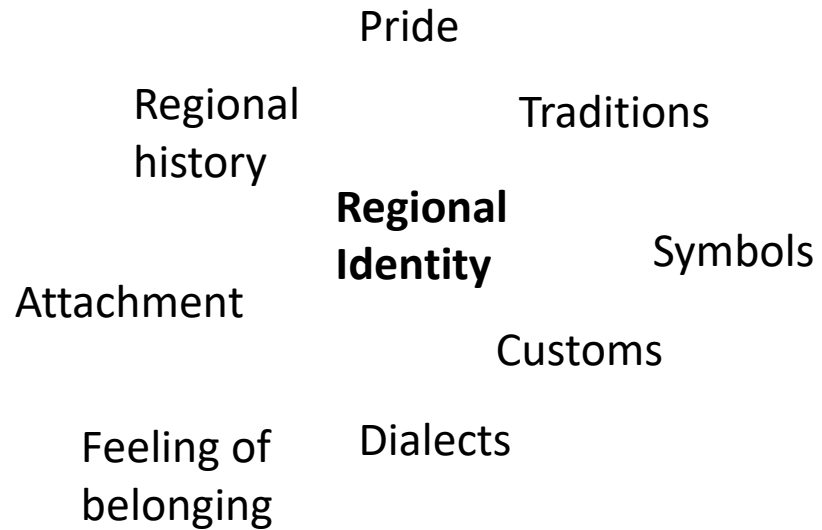
Subjective identities and political cohesion

"strong, subjective identities are central to the development of political cohesion" (Huddy 2013).
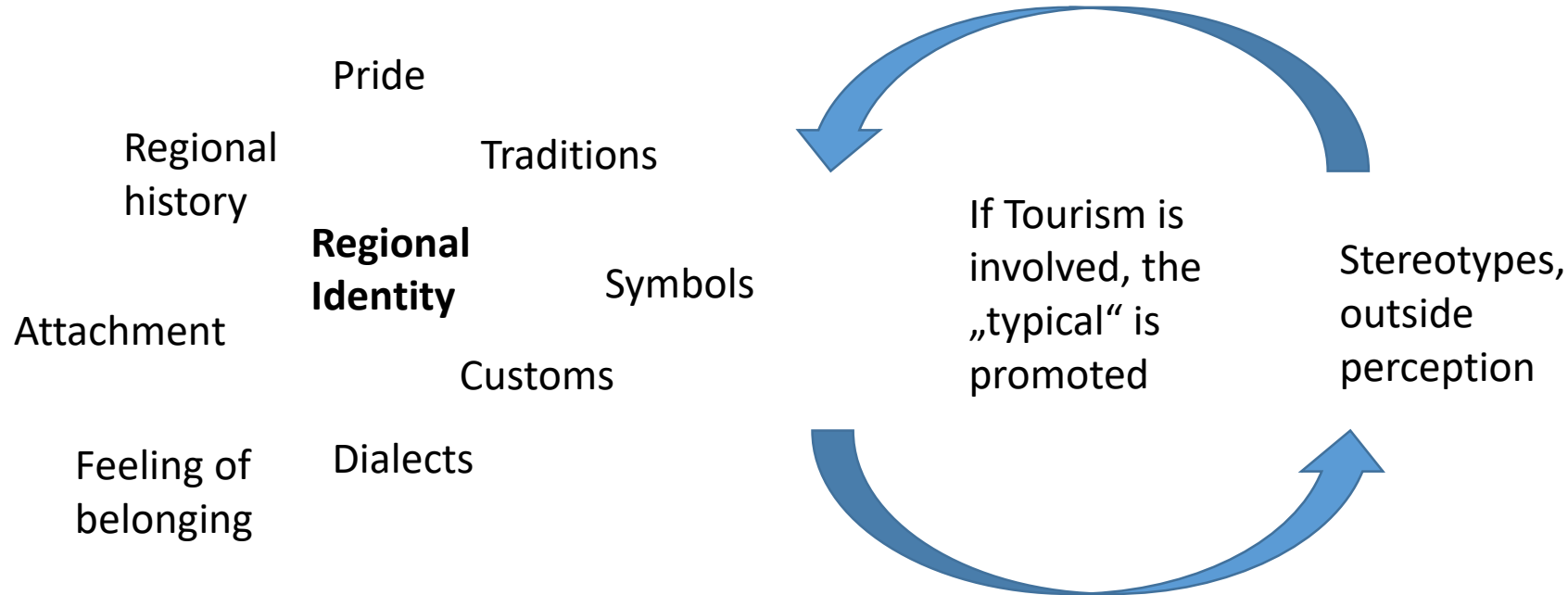
Social cohesion

"three essential dimensions of social cohesion: (1) social relations, (2) identification with the geographical unit, and (3) orientation towards the common good." (Schiefer & van der Noll 2017).

Huddy, L. (2013): From Group Identity to Political Cohesion and Commitment. In: Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology.

Schiefer, D. & van der Noll, J. (2017): The Essentials of Social Cohesion: A Literature Review. Social indicators research.

"The idea of regional identity has been implicit in geography for a long time, **since traditional approaches to regions and regionalism often celebrated the primordial nature of regions**, accentuating their 'personality' and the harmony/unity between a region and its inhabitants" (Paasi 2003)

Pride

Regional history

Traditions

Regional Identity

Symbols

Attachment

Customs

Feeling of belonging

Dialects

Paasi, A. (2003): **Region and place: regional identity in question. Progress in Human Geography.**

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If Tourism is involved, the „typical" is promoted

Stereotypes, outside perception

Paasi, A. (2003): **Region and place: regional identity in question. Progress in Human Geography.**

© picture-alliance/dpa

WHAT DISTINGUISHES BAVARIA FROM THE REST OF GERMANY

Believed to be 'typically German'

Many people who've never set foot in Germany have this image of Germans drinking beer and eating sausage, while wearing traditional costumes — Lederhosen for men and Dirndl for women — and performing the Schuhplatter stomp dance (picture). Though these clichés often serve to depict Germany as a whole, the traditions actually come from Bavaria, a German state with a very distinct culture.
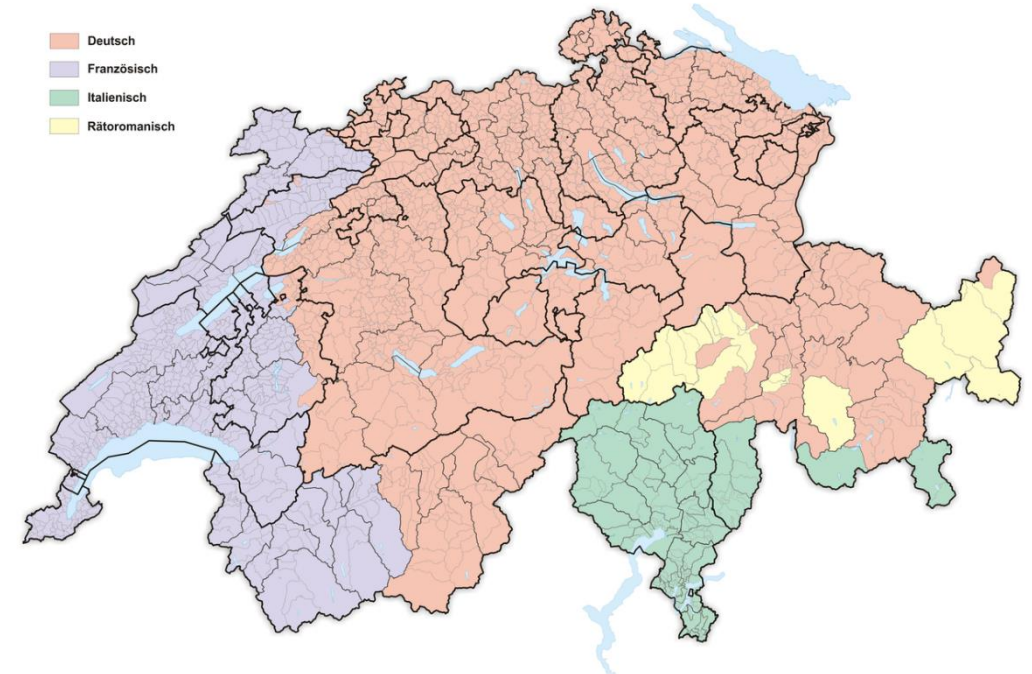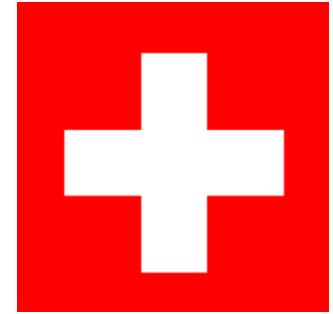
Nationalism and Ethnic pluralism

Nationalism

„many people blame ethnic divisions for creating conflict" (Fukuyama 2014, 287)

One nation one state?

Deutsch
Französisch
Italienisch
Rätoromanisch

„Ethnicity is often a tool that political leaders use to mobilize followers, rather than a fundamental source of conflict in itself" (Fukuyama 2014, 287)

Fukuyama, F. (2014): *Political order and political decay*. New York.

Identity and distinction (Fukuyama 2018)

Does every identity necessarily arise through distinction?

In any case, distinction often consolidates notions of identity and feelings of community (Fukuyama 2018).

Fukuyama, F. (2018): Identity. The demand for dignity and the politics of resentment.

Regional identity: Why is it important for biosphere reserves?

What is the ideal spatial layout of a biosphere reserve?

A tool for the integration of various „identities"/political entities?

Building on an existing strong integration necessary to achieve high ambitions?

The scope of a protected area – where to draw boundaries?
→ Defining a governance unit

Ecosystem-based ←→ Social and political coherence

Larger river basins:

+ ecological connection

- social cohesion

- political unity

Spatial layouts

Ecosystem approach: yes, please, but…

Development function needs:
- Common vision, social cohesion, shared social, economic, cultural interests

- Without naive idealization of „regional identities" that can often be exclusive

Borders and bordering

"borders inevitably cut across some other social relations that constitute social space. Borders do not hence embody any 'eternal truth of places' but rather are drawn on by diverging **actors** to serve particular **purposes**. Similarly, the spaces that borders enclose are never culturally 'pure'" (Paasi, quoting Massey)

Paasi, A. (2012): boarder studies reanimated. Environment and planning. 2303 – 2309.

Georg Simmel: "the boundary is not a spatial fact with sociological consequences, but a sociological fact that forms itself spatially" (1997, p. 142)

Simmel, G. (1997): The Sociology of Space. SAGE.