ECONOMIES OF IDENTITY
STATE OF THE ART

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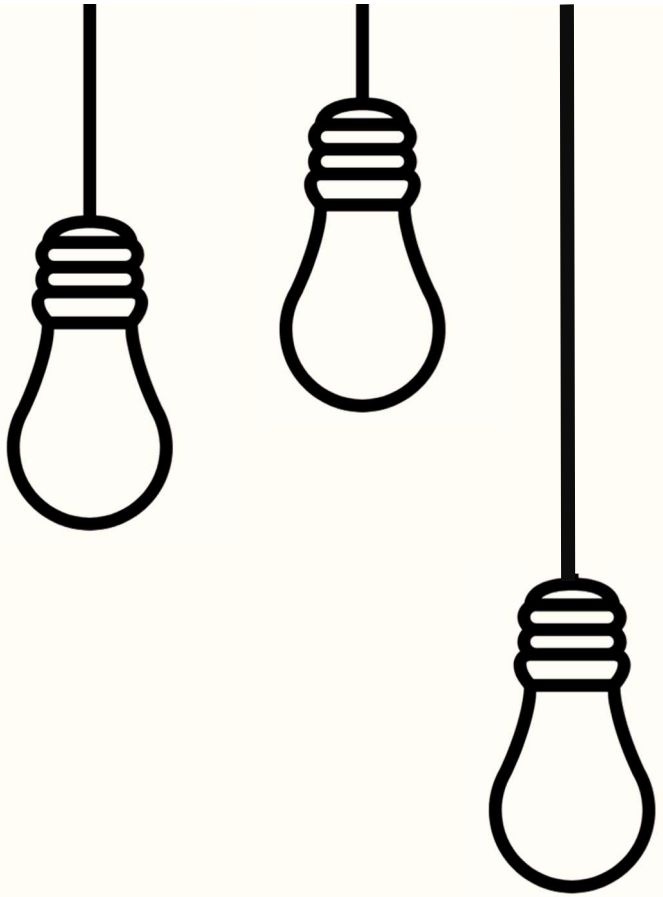
Swansea University, May 2018

Content



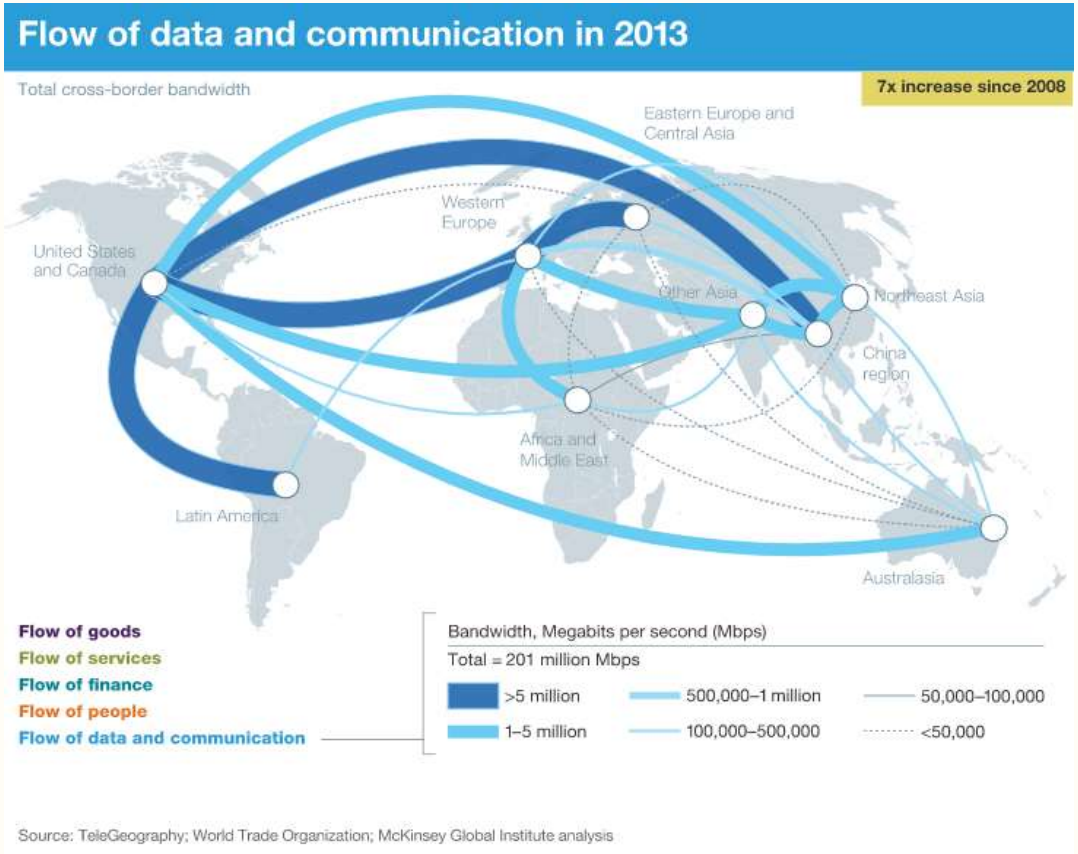
- Does Territory Still matter?
- what is a possible definition of territorial identities?
- What is the Economic Value Of Territorial Identities?
- How Can We Capture The Identity Of Places?
- Economies of Identity – Final remarks

DOES TERRITORY STILL MATTER?

I. A process of deterritorialisation

II. The ‘placelessness’ of the world system

III. The erosion process of nation-states sovereignty



DOES TERRITORY STILL MATTER?

I. Uneven development between territories

II. A growing international, inter-regional and inter-urban competition;

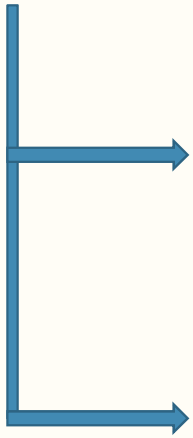
III. A process of “reterritorialization”

IV. Emergence of increasingly differentiated forms of production and consumption

V. Development of a countermovement: localisation

WHAT IS A POSSIBLE DEFINITION OF TERRITORIAL IDENTITIES?

Territorial identities



Territorial identity consciousness as a **sense of belonging and identification**

The identity of a Territory refers to those **features of nature, culture and inhabitants** that distinguish one territory from another

WHAT IS A POSSIBLE DEFINITION OF TERRITORIAL IDENTITIES?

Those **elements and categorizations** which help people to explain **what a region (or a place) is and how it can be distinguished from other regions** (or places): ideas on landscape, culture/ethnicity, dialects, economic success/recession, periphery/centre relations, stereotypic images of pleople/community, actual/invented histories, utopias, etc.

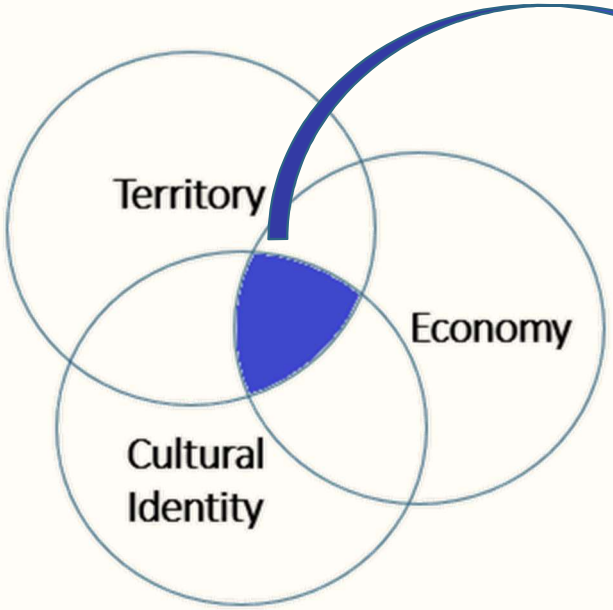
Paasi, 2003

Not fixed

Constantly changing

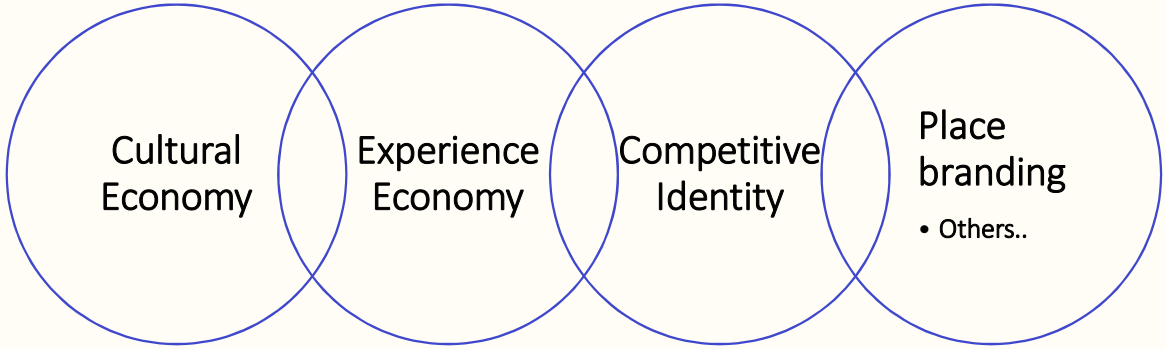
Social constructs

WHAT IS THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF TERRITORIAL IDENTITIES?



- COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

- MONOPOLY POWERS OF PLACE



What is the Economic Value Of Territorial Identities?

Reseach Field	Definition	Relevant publications
Cultural Economy & Cultural Capital	- The attempt to (re)valorise territories through its cultural identity in the face of increasing globalization - Culture as a form of capital exists in two forms: tangible and intangible	Throsby, 2001
Experience Economy	- Consumers seek unique experiences beyond merely consuming goods and services because the consistent high level of goods and service quality can no longer be used to differentiate choices for consumers	Pine, & Gilmore, 1999
Competitive Identity	- Synthesis of brand management with public diplomacy and trade, investment, tourism and promotion of exports - The image and reputation of a territory is an economic asset	Anholt, 2007
Place Branding / Marketing	- The process of territory communication which is based on identifying and promoting distinctive qualities of the place in order to attract new inhabitants, visitors, and investments	Clifton, 2011

How Can We Capture The Identity Of Places?

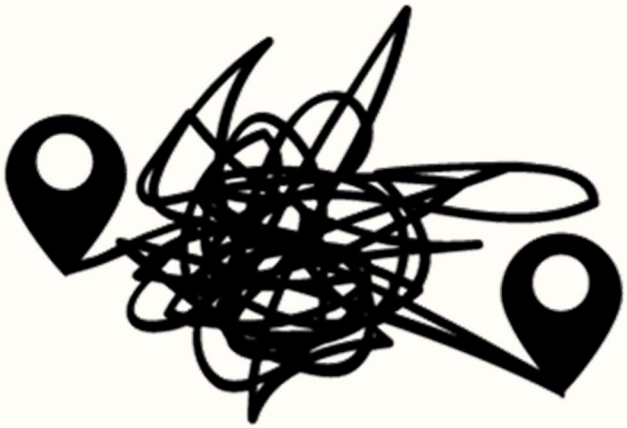
Main problems

- Definitions and approaches to research and analysis of territorial identity **vary between disciplines**

- Territorial identities are social constructs that are **constantly in changing**

- Territories have **multiple identities**

- Territorial identities are now shaped not only by **internal characteristics**, but also due to the interconnection of the world



How Can We Capture The Identity Of Places?

However...

- The definitions of Territorial Identity are usually related with **sameness (continuity)** and **distinctiveness (uniqueness)**

- Different identities of territories can contain **common elements**

- It is possible to distinguish between **stable identities with historical roots** and those that are more fluid and **future-orientated**

We need to identify common elements through Space and Time

How Can We Capture The Identity Of Places?

Useful Approaches

Paasi's model
- Territorial shape
- Symbolic shape
- Institutional shape
- Functional shape

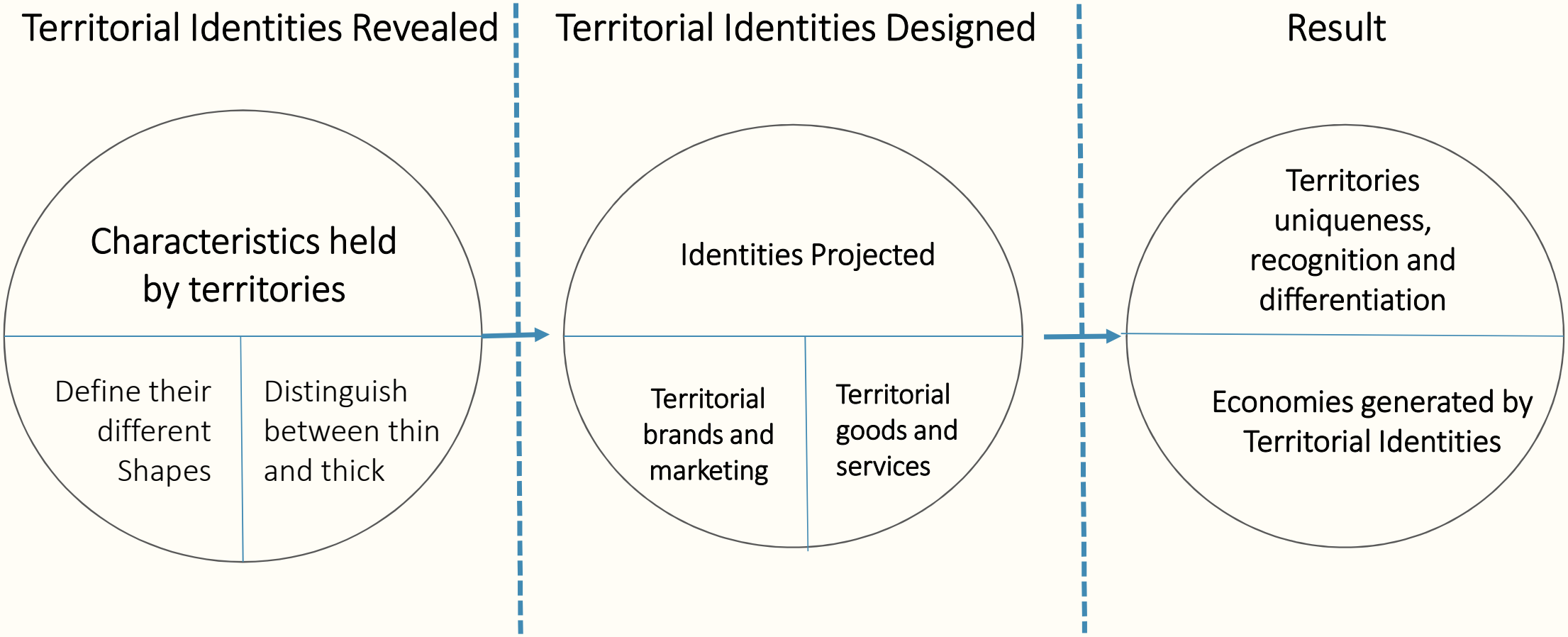
Terlouw's analytical division
- Old **traditional thick identities,** with strong historic roots
- New **thin identities**, which are more network-based, fluid and future-oriented

Useful methodological tools

- **Content analyses** allow the reconstruction of the existing dominant identity discourses and identify which elements are associated

- **Interviews (both in-depth and focus groups)** allow to understand how stakeholders see and evaluate their territory

ECONOMIES OF IDENTITY



ECONOMIES OF IDENTITY: FINAL REMARKS

- Building economies based on those elements that are rooted in space can play a key role in the economic and social future of territories

- The concept “Economies of Identity” still remains ill-defined for the purposes of analysis and measurement

- It is possible to identify concepts from different research fields that explore the relationship between territorial identities and economic value;

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