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Cultural Mapping 4.0 As A Tool For Visualizing Cultural Perceptions Of A Tourist Destination – Lake Constance Case Study

Florian J. Eitzenberger[1]*, Lara Leuschen[2], Patrick Laube[3], Nikos Bakogiannis[4], Hanno Rahn[5], Tatjana Thimm[6]

[1,6] *Constance University of Applied Sciences, Germany**
[2,3,4,5] *Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland*

Abstract

The present study uses a combination of digital cultural mapping, participatory mapping, and story maps (coined as Cultural Mapping 4.0) to visualise the Lake Constance region's culture and to analyse its tourists' perceptions of its cultural identity. In addition, the spatiotemporally varying culture of the Lake Constance region, how it is perceived by tourists, and the mobility patterns resulting from tourism were investigated. The results indicate that tourists perceive the culture of the Lake Constance region to be synonymous with that of the greater Lake Constance region, and that its cultural identity is a weaker motivator for travel than its nature. The study demonstrates that Cultural Mapping 4.0 makes it possible to deal with tourism related issues from both a scientific and a practical perspective.

Keywords: *Cultural Mapping, Story Maps, Participatory Mapping, Lake Constance, Cultural Image.*

1. Introduction

Culture and tourism are closely linked, and the desire to experience a culture is an important travel motivator. While it has been the tendency in recent years for cultural tourism offerings to feature trends such as festivalization, global brands ("McGuggenheimization"), or attractions such as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, there has been a growing desire among travellers to experience *the local* or *the original culture*, which they consider to be *more authentic* (Richards, 2021; Russo & Richards, 2016).

As a result, cultural institutions such as museums, which have traditionally had the authority to interpret exactly what represents a local culture, are increasingly losing this elitist position (Richards, 2020). As more players are involved in co-creating culture nowadays, investigating how a destination's cultural resources are represented is becoming increasingly important, for improving the experiences that tourists have, for the development of marketing materials and for facilitating sustainability, among others. Building on Berger and Luckmann's (1969) social constructivist theory, we understand cultural identities to be social constructs, which are not simply depictions of reality, but rather are collectively negotiated by individuals who live in a variety of different cultural and social contexts. This view implies that locals may routinely undergo shifts in their cultural identity, depending on time and place, and it makes it necessary to understand cultural identities as social processes. Such a process in a specific group of people is by no means detached from the perception of others. On the contrary, an individual's identity and how it is perceived have an influence on each other, and regional marketing initiatives specifically try to affect this (Rimkus, 2009).

To shed light on the valuation of cultural identities for tourism purposes, knowledge of these identities and how they are perceived by others is required. So far, previous studies on the Lake Constance area have not been able to gain any insight into whether there is an overarching cultural identity of this border region and if so, how it comes into being. The countries bordering Lake Constance (Germany, Austria, and Switzerland)

are not only united by a common language and history, but also by a constantly intertwining economic area. However, the potential for transnational cultural tourism has not yet been fully realized.

As part of an interdisciplinary research project called “Cultmap 4.0 – New Ways to Strengthen the Cultural Identity of Lake Constance", various aspects of cultural identity were investigated in a quantitative survey using maps to assess spatial perceptions of cultural identity. In a sub-project called “Tourism & Mobility”, the spatiotemporally varying cultural resources in the Lake Constance region, how they are perceived by tourists, and the resulting mobility patterns were investigated using Cultural Mapping techniques.

The resulting empirical data shows that the cultural identity of the region remains fluid and multifaceted, and that the perception of cultural identity always depends on the context. This paper aims to reflect on new digital approaches of understanding cultural identities and how to discern what the implications are for regional cultural tourism development. Thus, in the following, Cultural Mapping 4.0 is presented as a tool, which is simultaneously both a method and a result. As a method to showcase the cultural perceptions of a tourist destination, it employs a variety of digital tools that allow for the organisation and presentation of different tourist perceptions, values, and opinions about the culture of a region. Thus, it makes it possible to show spatiotemporal perceptions in a visual and easily understandable way and can function as a tool for regional tourism planning.

2. Literature Review

Global tourism has grown steadily since the 1950s, and the number of international tourists had increased more than fifty-fold by 2018 to approximately 1.4 billion (BMWi, 2020). A major reason for these tourism activities, besides recreation, is experiencing foreign cultures. An unfiltered authentic cultural experience is of particular interest to cultural tourists. At the same time, however, tourism is often associated with undesirable influences on culture, which are caused by commercialisation, cultural exchange, or negative excesses due to phenomena such as *overtourism*. The current state of research concerning these polarized views can be described as ambivalent, with authors emphasising both the positive effects of tourism on local culture and its negative influences.

Tourism as a phenomenon is not easy to define, as it is by nature a very broad term, encompassing several sectors, industries, and services (Gilbert, 1990). Reducing the definition of tourism to the movements of people and related services has been rejected by recent authors (Cooper, 2003). Conversely, postmodern scholars have argued for a more flexible approach to tourism, by including contributions from other subjects and disciplines (Coles et al., 2006; Airey, 2015). As a result, tourism has no clear boundaries and encompasses a wide range of activities and services that continue to expand over time. The World Tourism Organisation has therefore broadened its definition of tourism over time and has recently arrived at the following: "Tourism refers to the activity of visitors[1]" (UNWTO, 2022). Research in tourism studies can therefore be understood as a cross-sectional discipline that is dependent on interdisciplinary exchange due to its diverse objects of study. Since tourism activities have a lasting impact on tourism destinations and their populations, various scholars have dealt with the diverse influences of tourism on the local culture of destinations.

Especially in earlier research, tourism was mainly considered to have a negative impact on local culture (Wöhler, 1994, Palmer, 1999, Hunter, 2011). Frequent objects of investigation in research on cultural identity and tourism were the differing perceptions of reality between tourists and locals (Wöhler, 1994). To

[1] As s “visitor” the UNWTO understands “a traveller taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited.” (United Nations 2008: 10)

shed light on these differences when culture is being presented as a tourist attraction, Proshansky developed the concept of *place-identity*, which encompasses "those dimensions of the self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment" (Proshansky et al., 1983, p. 62). Place-identity is characterised by three main components: the static physical environment (physical features or appearance), activities (observable activities and functions) and meanings (or symbols) (McIntosh et al., 2002, p. 41). These interrelated elements are understood as the raw material place-identity. In contrast to this original local cultural identity, McIntosh et al. (2002) have coined the term attraction-based identity, which refers to the extension and presentation of the local culture in a tourist destination. Most research findings indicate that (local) stakeholders in particular decide what is attractive to tourists and what is not (Franck & Rich, 2016; Hunter, 2011; Palmer, 1999; Wöhler, 1994). In this context, what is specific to the locality is often perceived as inferior by the locals and therefore withheld from the tourist (Wöhler, 1994, pp. 270-271). Therefore, what is offered to tourists often includes specially created illusory worlds, in which tourists move around separated from the actual local life, as if they are in a museum (Franck & Rich, 2016; Hunter, 2011; Verheijen & Putra, 2020; Wöhler, 1994). Accordingly, the cultural identity perceived by tourists differs from the actual cultural identity perceived by the inhabitants themselves.

The proven influence of tourism marketing on the cultural identity of destination inhabitants should also not be underestimated (Light, 2007; Pritchard & Morgan, 2001; Leuschen & Thimm, 2019). Politicians often try to influence the image of a tourist destination to promote higher demand (Simon-Charteris et al., 2013, p. 60). Morris (1995) suggests that in all places where tourism is used as an economic or even a policy strategy, social and cultural change inevitably occurs when culture is presented as a (tourist) attraction. The new cultural identity presented specifically to tourists influences the original culture of the inhabitants.

In addition to the negative effects of tourism on local cultural identities, positive influences have also been identified. According to Anglin (2014), important positive effects brought about by tourism are the generation of jobs and the strengthening of the local economy. This is accompanied by better opportunities for the preservation of historical and cultural heritage (if sustainable). According to Wöhler (1994), the interaction with, as well as integration of, the tourist is the key to a new understanding of cultural tourism, which can lead to the removal of illusory tourist worlds. He uses the example of “farm holidays” to illustrate this, as tourists are integrated into everyday life and have to lend a hand, so that the quality of the stay also depends on their own commitment. This results in an authentic cultural experience and perception. Especially at this stage, tourism offers opportunities in the negotiation and construction of local and translocal culture (Rapuano & Fernandez, 2010). In the case of Baltic memory culture, McKenzie (2013, p. 119) claims that tourism can promote and strengthen engagement with one's own culture.

In the case of the Lake Constance region, it is particularly of interest how existing cultural identities are influenced and shaped by tourism activities. To shed more light on the relationship between tourism and the cultural perceptions of this cross-border destination, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How can the Lake Constance Region be visualised as a cultural tourism destination by new digital mapping approaches?
2. What conclusions can be drawn from Cultural Mapping 4.0 about a cultural identity of the region, as perceived by tourists?

3. Methodology

As a cultural tourism location, the Lake Constance region is of particular interest for tourism research due to its internationality. It is not easy to determine how the culture of a region, which is unified by Lake

Constance but is also divided into three nation states, is perceived, and this requires a sophisticated methodological approach.

In the present case, the cultural mapping method was employed. This method originated in the 1960s, with the aim of identifying cultural differences, preserving cultural diversity, and promoting intercultural dialogue, with a focus on local communities (Crawhall, 2010; Poole, 2003). Analogue mapping processes have been applied in indigenous contexts and have proven valuable in making community knowledge, relationships, and communication visible through maps (Stewart & Allan, 2013). As a result, cultural maps as a methodological tool can encourage participation in planning processes and provide innovative access to cultural perceptions and value attributions (Duxbury et al., 2019).

The data that is used for cultural mapping can be obtained through different methods, such as secondary data analysis, quantitative surveys, and participatory mapping. Through secondary data analysis, a database was created in which the cultural assets of the Lake Constance region that have an influence on its cultural identity were listed and categorised. The categories which were created were archaeological sites, libraries, rituals/traditions, monuments, events, festivals, places of worship, cinemas, art galleries, museums, parks/gardens, castles, theatres, and associations. In total, 418 cultural assets were gathered, which were then digitised and mapped onto an interactive cultural map of the Lake Constance region.

Furthermore, this project sought to integrate digital tools into the cultural mapping process, by enriching it with a geoinformatics approach. This included participatory mapping and story-mapping with GIS (PGIS). In the context of this study, digital tools have been integrated into the cultural mapping process in two distinct ways. Firstly, the data recording aspect of cultural mapping was accomplished by using digital questionnaires and digital participatory mapping. Secondly, for outreach surrounding the project, new insights were shared with stakeholders and planners by using story-mapping as a digital form of storytelling. Both approaches and the workflows are briefly summarised here. **A detailed outline of the research methodology as well as the state-of-the-art research on different forms of mapping can be found in Leuschen et al. (2021).**

The digital participatory mapping workflows implemented in this study are grounded in the theoretical underpinnings of participatory GIS (PGIS) and public participatory GIS (PPGIS) (Brown & Kyttä, 2014; Fagerholm et al., 2021; Sieber, 2006). Whereas PPGIS mainly refers to public involvement in regional planning initiatives in developed countries, PGIS is primarily used as a form of empowerment in developing countries. The present study combined conventional questionnaires with participatory mapping tasks. The digital and responsive designs of these questionnaires and mapping tasks allowed them to be flexibly used multiple times in on-site interviews, where tourists responded using tablet computers (approx. 250 participants across nine sites, Meersburg, Schaffhausen, Konstanz old town, Konstanz Lago, Konstanz Harbour, Dornbirn, Bregenz, St. Gallen, and Romanshorn). Participatory mapping tasks included both the mapping of points of interest (e.g., visited cultural sites) and areal delineations of cultural boundaries of the investigated tourist destinations (e.g., the extent of tourism regions).

The second aspect of digitisation which was included was the use of story-maps for presenting results and insights gained from the questionnaires and participatory mapping exercises. Story-mapping as it was used here was an accessible and appealing form of digital storytelling, integrating text with interactive maps and supplementary digital media such as photos, videos or sound clips into interactive web-content (Molden, 2020). The term story-maps refers to the wider concept as well as to a popular proprietary software solution by the industry leader ESRI (https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/arcgis-storymaps/overview). In this study, several topical story-maps were developed (e.g., on tourism and mobility, or image vs. identity) to integrate and visualise the spatial perceptions of the interviewed tourists, resulting in accessible summaries for stakeholders and decision-makers in the sector to derive insights from, as well as for the general public.

4. Results

Maps were used to both visually represent the opportunities for cultural tourism in the Lake Constance region, and to draw conclusions about the tourist's perceptions of the region's cultural identity. To effectively accomplish this, the research results were divided into three sub-categories: The cultural assets of the Lake Constance region (derived by secondary data analysis), the spatial perception of the region by tourists (derived by participatory mapping) and what the tourists attribute value to, as well as their travel motivations (derived from a quantitative survey and visualised in Story Maps).

4.1 Mapping Cultural Assets: Visualising cultural resources in maps

Culture can make a significant contribution to the region's range of tourist attractions, and it creates opportunities to extend the tourist season, especially in the winter months when visitor numbers are in decline. Figure 1 shows an interactive map which highlights the diverse cultural heritage of the Lake Constance region. Both intangible aspects of cultural heritage, such as festivities, traditions and customs, and tangible aspects of cultural heritage, including museums, monuments, libraries, theatres, places of worship, art galleries and associations, have been included.

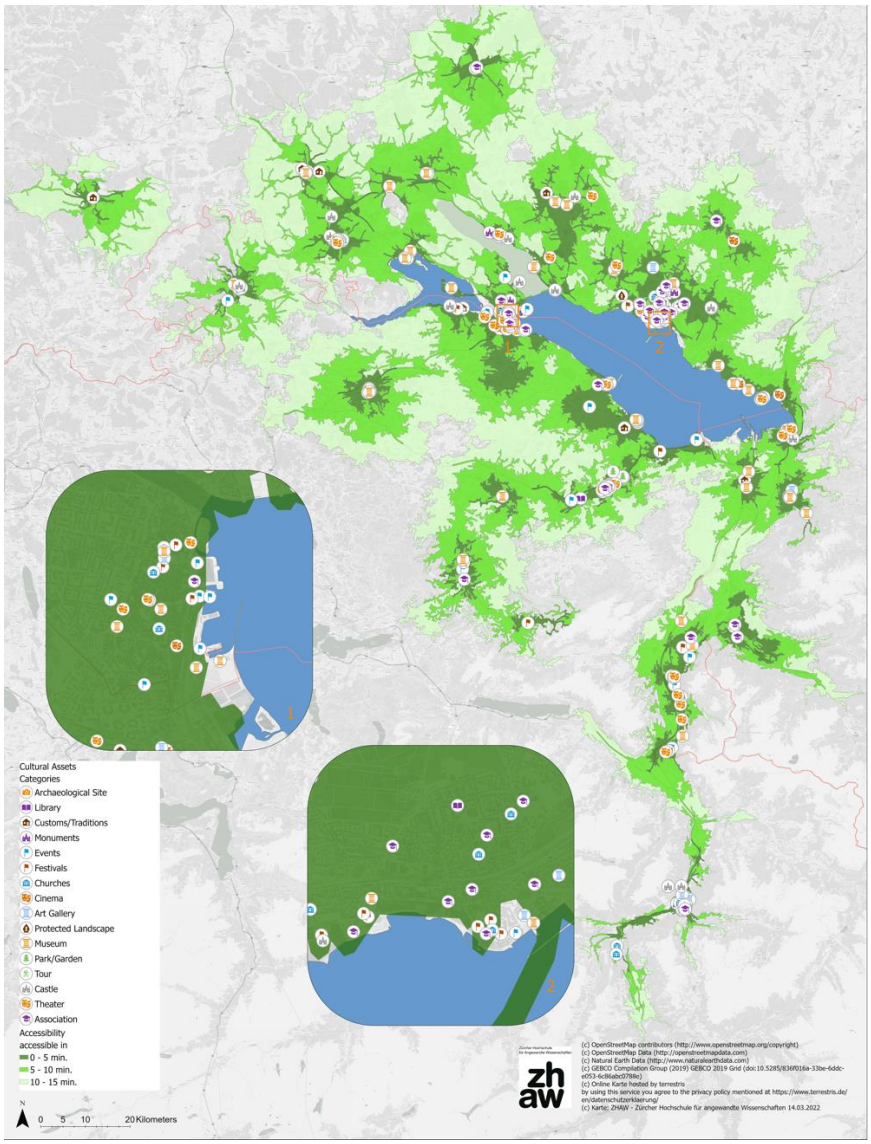

Fig. 1. Cultural asset map of the Lake Constance region

The map reveals a high density of cultural assets relevant to tourists in the Lake Constance region. A particularly high density of cultural heritage attractions can be found in the Constance/Kreuzlingen area, the

cities of Friedrichshafen and Bregenz, and in Liechtenstein. The green-coloured fields on the map show the distances in minutes by car. The darker the colour, the faster the respective area can be reached by car.

The map provides insights into the diversity of the region's cultural offerings as well as their spatial distribution.

The cultural tourism potential of the Lake Constance region is ultimately also reflected in the cultural consumption of tourists. When asked where they had already been to consume culture, an above-average number of respondents named the Constance/Kreuzlingen area. The city of Meersburg received the second highest number of responses, followed by Bregenz, Lindau and Friedrichshafen, as figure 2 illustrates.

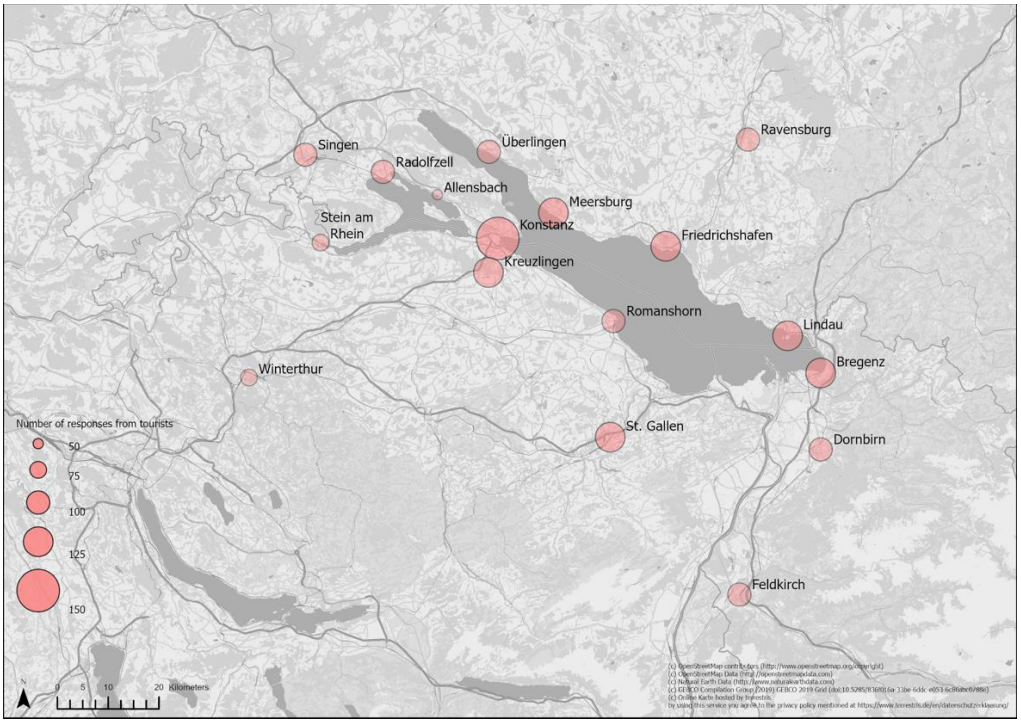

Fig. 2 Places visited by tourists for cultural consumption (n=218)

As can be seen from both maps, the cultural offerings correlate with those consumed by cultural tourists and are an important feature of tourism in the region.

4.2 Mapping spatial perception: Mapping supraregionality through participatory mapping

Participatory mapping was used to identify the perceived boundaries of the Lake Constance region as a cultural tourism destination. The interviewed tourists were asked to outline the Lake Constance region on a map. The mappings are shown in Figure 3 and there is a great deal of agreement that the lake as a spatially defining element makes subdividing the region an unattractive option. Although most people perceive the region as a unit, this unfortunately does not allow for any statements to be made about the cultural boundaries perceived by tourists within the region.

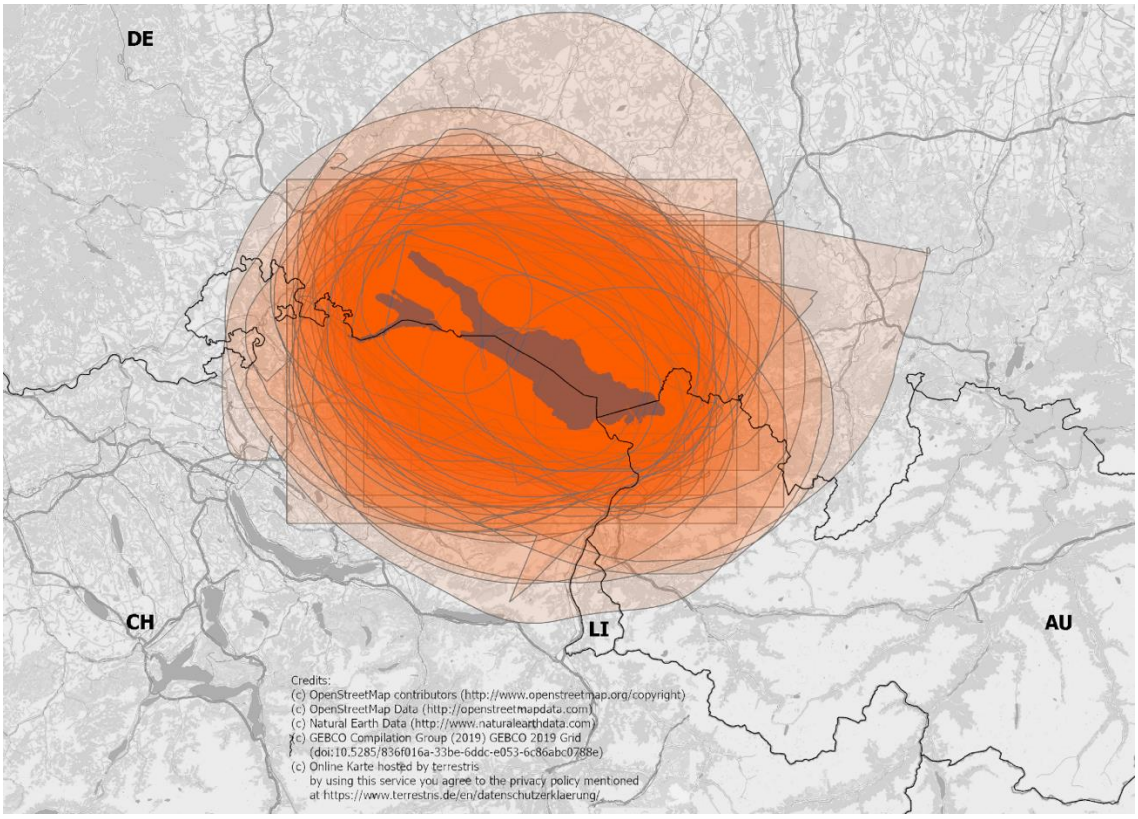

Fig. 3 Participatory Mapping of the Lake Constance region by tourists

4.3 Mapping quantitative survey data: Visualising tourist associations and travel motives in Story Maps

The results of the quantitative survey were visualised with ArcGIS StoryMaps, which allows the data to be presented in a clear and targeted way. As a result, stakeholders, decision-makers, and others from the general public who are interested can easily access the maps and gain valuable insights into the region. The full story maps are available online at the following link: https://bit.ly/3vdBzVu

Fig. 4 QR-Code leading to Story Maps

The story map which was developed for the “Tourism & Mobility” sub-project reveals, among other things, that tourists do not strongly associate culture with the Lake Constance region. Tourists who travel to the region are primarily interested in its nature, the landscape, the weather, or the opportunities for sporting activities. However, the responses were different when the tourists were asked about the strengths of the region. In this case, the region’s culture was clearly identified as a strength by the respondents. Terms such as cultural diversity and cultural exchange were also mentioned more frequently. Tourism itself was also identified as a strength by many respondents. In addition, a few respondents named cultural offerings, internationality, and versatility as strengths. Among the weaknesses, the term "countries" was mentioned more frequently, probably referring to the division of the region into different nation states. However, it is most likely not the cultural differences that are meant as a weakness, but rather the associated restrictions to

tourist mobility. In fact, traffic, transport, transport connections and distances were mainly identified as weaknesses. It is also striking that tourism is not only seen as a strength, but also as a weakness of the region. This is most likely related to the congestion of the infrastructures by crowds of people in the high season.

The tourists interviewed named different motives for their trip to the Lake Constance region. The main reasons for a trip to the region were nature, recreation, culture, visiting friends, spatial proximity, sports, shopping, and gastronomy. The consumption of culture plays only a minor role in the decision to travel to the Lake Constance region compared to other motives, foremost of which is nature (see story maps).

The data collected concerning the spatial mobility of day tourists is of particular interest, as it demonstrates differences among the countries in the Lake Constance region. In the quantitative survey, inhabitants of the Lake Constance region who visit the Austrian, Swiss or German parts up to twelve times a year were asked what their motivation was for doing so. It can be deduced that the reasons for mobility flows between Germany, Austria and Switzerland differ greatly. The Swiss and Austrians, for example, mainly stated that they travel to Germany for shopping, which is also reflected in the high amounts of shopping tourism, especially at the Swiss-German border. Germans, on the other hand, said they mainly travelled to Austria and Switzerland for day trips, whereby the proximity of the two countries to the Alps probably plays a role. In general, excursions were the most frequent reasons provided for day trips, which alludes to the tourism potential of the region. Visits to cultural attractions, however, are only of limited importance here. The smallest mobility flows take place between Austria and Switzerland, whereas Austrians and the Swiss travel to Germany for cultural offerings, just as Germans do to neighbouring countries. There seems to be a deficit in cultural tourism between Austria and Switzerland.

5 Discussion

The results show that mapping based on secondary data and participatory mapping in combination with the visualisation via story maps (coined as Cultural Mapping 4.0 in this research project) is a suitable tool to provide a cultural overview of tourist destinations. Since tourism is a spatial phenomenon, maps and especially digital and interactive maps equipped with explanatory text blocks provide a useful option for communicating research results. However, since the data collection took place during the covid-19 pandemic and was thus only possible with restrictions, the sample size was not as extensive as it should have been, and a representative sample could not be obtained.

One of the main findings is that cultural identity is uniformly perceived around Lake Constance. There are a multitude of possible explanations for this: it could be the case that the tourists' focus is not primarily on culture, and their perception of the region is mostly superficial, since they predominantly consume tourism experiences as tourism products. Another explanation may be that the vast majority of tourists at Lake Constance are German domestic tourists. Since German is spoken around the lake, even if it is a dialect, this may also contribute to the tourists' perception of a "unified cultural tourism space" and thus a unified cultural identity. Likewise, Lake Constance as a unifying landscape element mainly relevant to the tourism stay might be so prominent that cultural boundaries simply fade into the background for tourists.

Further research could focus on the differences between the perception of cultural identity of the inhabitants and the perception of tourists, the analysis of the cultural image of the region as an important aspect of destination marketing or the influence of landscapes on the perceptions of culture.

6 Conclusion and outlook

The research data paints a comprehensive picture of the region as a tourism destination, which is, however, difficult to grasp due to a multitude of influencing variables. Answering the first research question, Cultural Mapping 4.0. offers the possibility to synthesise and compare the data in a superordinate platform, visualising the research results in story maps. As to the second research question, the results show that cultural identity - just like the Lake Constance region - is perceived by tourists as uniform. Furthermore, culture is a weaker travel motive than nature.

Especially by enriching the platform with research data from the other subprojects of this interdisciplinary research project, a promising tool is expected that will reveal the implications for regional planning. Thus, a Cultural Mapping 4.0 platform could be a starting point both for supra-regional networking in tourism, as well as for supra-regional visibility of the Lake Constance region as a cultural tourism location. The platform could be an incentive for various business models, for example to link maps with booking options. In addition, future cultural mapping projects could record, and market offers by freelance artists, as well as cultural offers for the younger target group. Maps could then also be linked to advertising options or information about attraction points could be included. In general, cultural mapping and participatory mapping offer possibilities for dealing with tourism issues in science and practice.

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