

# Initial results on regional identities and requirements for participation in planning

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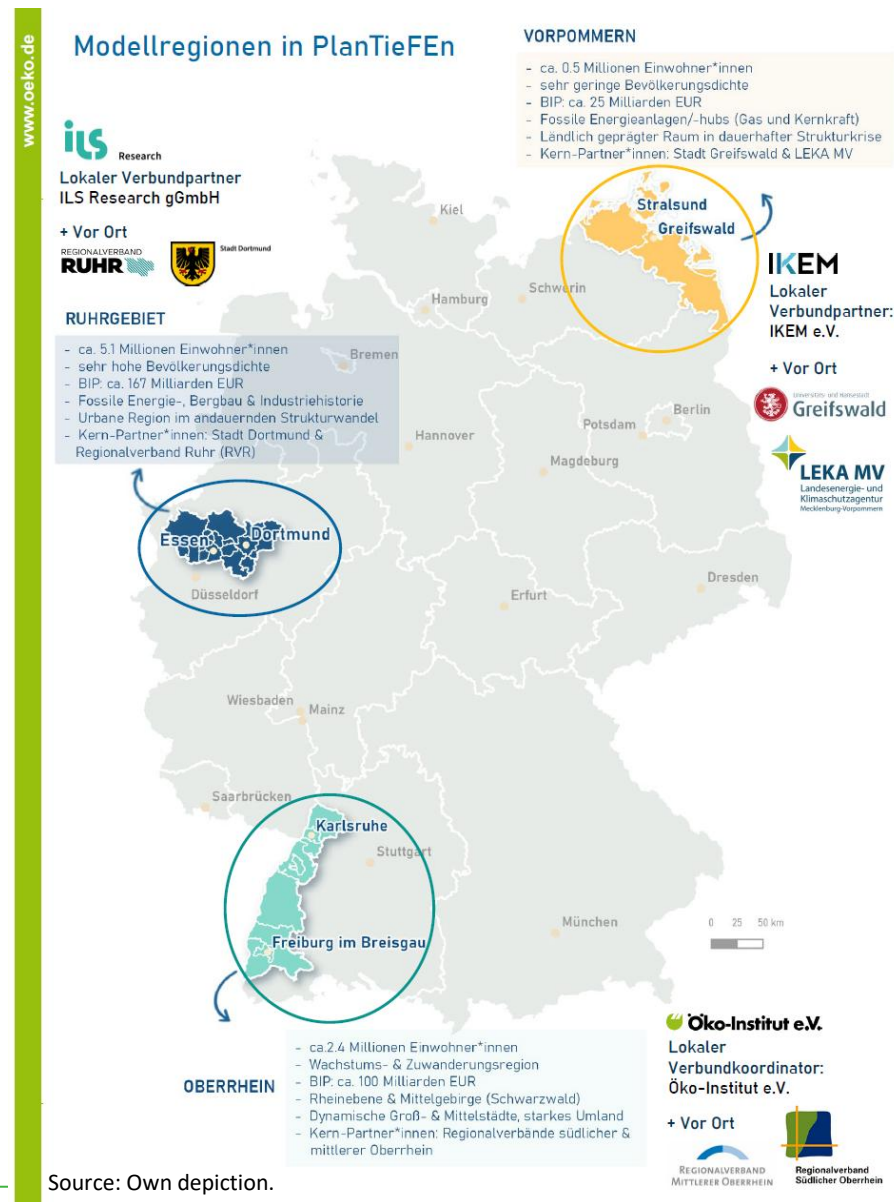
# Some theoretical considerations

- Two basic approaches:
  - **place attachment** (Altman/Low 1992): collective and individual perceptions and values people attach to a place as well as the factors that influence it (Mbah/Kuppler 2024)
  - and **place identity** (Proshansky et al. 1983): spatial characteristics as part of individual identity
- Regional identity = **sense of belonging** to one region, distinguishing the region from other regions → **identification with the region** and **characteristics of the region** (Zimmerbauer 2008)
- Regional identities used since 1980/90s as **planning instrument** to optimize the development of a region (Weichhart 2009)
  - **Marketing instrument** to create an identification of and with the region (participation of key actors)
- Regional identities are formed by (cf. Kienast et al. 2018; Scannel/Gifford 2010; van Veelen/Hagget 2017):
  - Social relations
  - Individual meanings of places
  - Collective memories and narratives
  - Wishes and emotions
  - Perceptions of artefacts and landscape
  - ...

# Methodological approach

**Aim:** identify (landscape-based) regional identities, cultural aspects and ways of incorporation in planning procedures for renewable energies

- **Transdisciplinary research design**
- **Three model regions** in Germany with smaller units for analysis and collaboration with practitioners in so-called focus regions
- **Methods used:**
  - desk research on regional characteristics
  - About 7 interviewees per region
  - Several workshops with practitioners in the regions planned – two already conducted:
    - (landscape based) identities (emo/action mapping), participation requirements and mapping of (im)possible sites for renewable energies
    - participation opportunities and innovative informal forms of participation
    - reflexion and best practices (forthcoming)
    - regional energy visions (forthcoming)



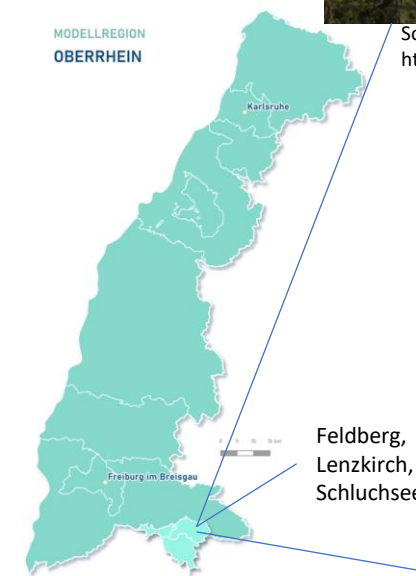
# Some initial results on regional identities

## Black forest

- Landscape: forested mountains, pastures and municipalities in the valleys
- Natural and cultural landscape important, especially as economic factor (agriculture/farming and tourism)
- Village communities and local associations important
- Traditional energy production/ressources: hydro power, timber industry
- Rather conservative and reserved mentality



Sources of images: Florian Jesse - Eigenes Werk, CC0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=19563246>



Source: Own depiction.



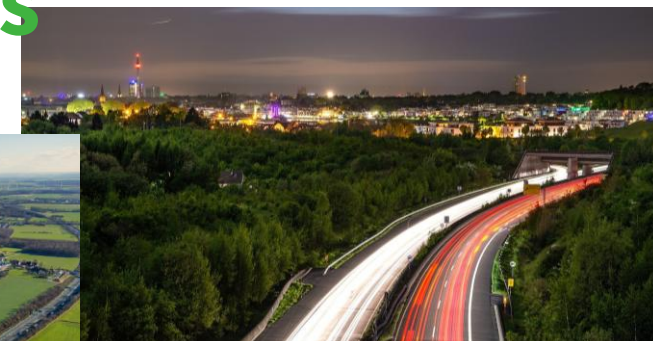
# Some initial results on regional identities

## Ruhr area

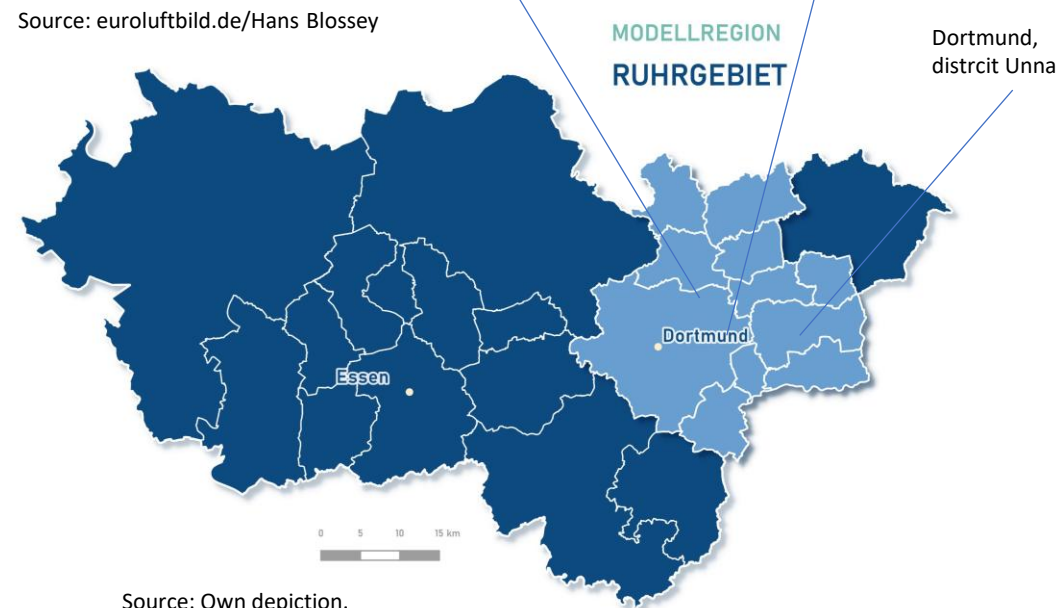
- Important till today: **early industrialization** and landscape (as well as socioeconomic) **transformations**
- Densely built environment, high population pressure
- Past: **Mining and steel industry** (welcome culture and support structures); today: communication, IT and logistics services
- **Distinction between mentalities** in cities (open) and rural areas (conservative)



Source: euroluftbild.de/Hans Blossey



Source:  
<https://pixabay.com/de/photos/dortmund-nachtlicht-b236-3356819/>

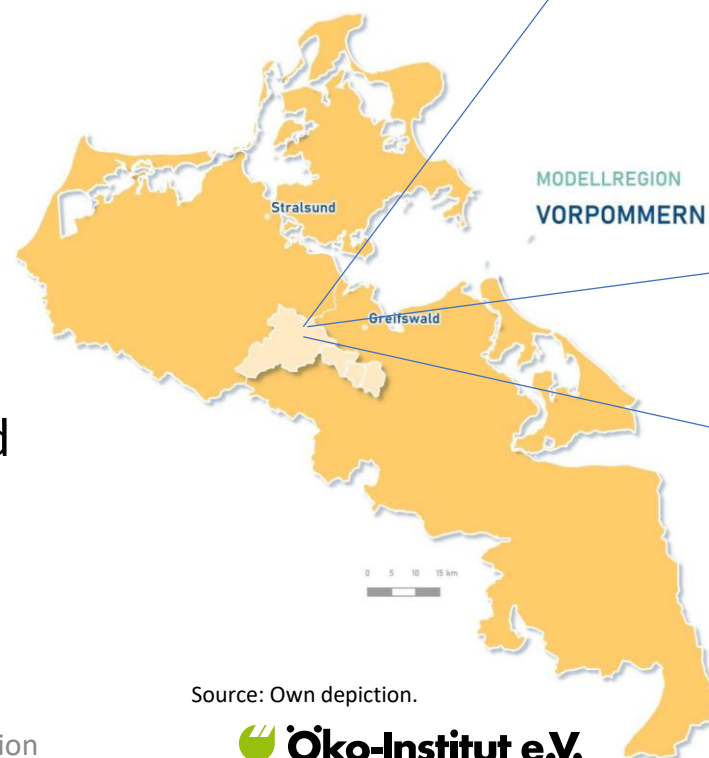


Source: Own depiction.

# Some initial results on regional identities

## Vorpommern – Greifswald

- Landscape: water (bodden, lakes, coast), mostly flat with pastures, agricultural land, moorland and woods
- Natural and cultural **landscape important as economic factor** (agriculture/farming, energy production and tourism)
- Past: prussian estate structures and agricultural production cooperatives; today: still **large landowners**
- Strong **structural transformation** experience and demographic change; **reserved mentality** (distrust in national politics)



Sources of images: Chron-Paul - Eigenes Werk, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=24497656>

Greifswald, and surrounding rural municipalities

Source: Own depiction.

# Some initial results on participation requirements

## Black forest:

- Early and transparent information (communication)
- **Genuine participation** (opportunities to shape and participate with a focus on the common good)
- Stronger **regional cooperation** (jointly develop benefits between municipalities)
- Intergenerational justice
- Simplified legislation

## Ruhr area:

- Acceleration of planning and implementation
- Development of a **positive narrative**: innovative and climate neutral
- Better regional collaboration (city and rural municipalities)
- **Fairness of interests, benefits and loads**
- Need for regulations (e.g. regarding PV and wind → design and distance)

## Vorpommern – Greifswald:

- Financial assets and participation opportunities for inhabitants (not only big landowners and municipalities) → early communication and participation in design
- Realization of local benefits (in rural areas) for the common good
- **Transparency regarding usage of financial benefits** from renewable energies
- Need for **exchange/transfer of experiences** (best practice)

# Conclusion: regions have different needs

- Regional identities in rural areas often refer to landscape characteristics and its value for income generation
- Past transformation experiences shape perceptions; mentalities in rural areas seem to be less open to innovations or transformation
- Past/historical experiences regarding energy production important
- Regional identities shape collaborations needs (existing networks → shape trust and formats)
- Participation forms need to be regionally adapted:
  - consideration of identities and mentalities
  - transparency, fairness of benefits and loads as well as negotiation of interests
- Interregional exchange and role models needed → best practice examples

**Open questions: How can cultural dimensions be better integrated in (formal/informal) planning procedures? Which participation forms in which regions?**



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# Thank you for your attention!

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