

Illuminating Regional Identity: An Interdisciplinary Exploration in Saskatchewan

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Abstract : Both inside and outside of academia, people have sought to understand the “sense of place” of various regions, many times over and for many different reasons. The concept of regional identity is highly complex and surrounded by considerable contention. There are multiple bodies of research on regional identity theory in many different disciplines and even across sub-disciplinary classifications. Each discipline takes a slightly different angle or perspective on regional identity, resulting in a fragmented body of work on this topic overall. There is a need to consolidate this body of increasingly fragmented theory through interdisciplinary integration. For the purpose of this study, the province of Saskatchewan will serve as an exemplar for exploring regional identity in a concrete context. Saskatchewan can be thought of as a ‘functional region,’ with clear boundaries and clear residency, from which regional identity can be studied. This thesis shares the outcomes of a qualitative study grounded in a series of group interviews with askatchewan residents, from which it is concluded that the use of interdisciplinary theory is an appropriate approach to the study of regional identity. Regional identity cannot be compartmentalized; it is a web of characteristics, attributes, and feelings that are inextricably linked. The thesis thus concludes by offering lessons learned about how we might better understand regional identity, as illuminated through both interdisciplinary theory and the lived experiences and imaginations of people living in the region of Saskatchewan.

Keywords : interdisciplinary, regional identity, Saskatchewan, tourism studies

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