



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## Edinburgh Research Explorer

# The impact of the Corona crisis on borderland living in the Danish-German border region with a special focus on the two national minorities

### Citation for published version:

Tarvet, R & Klatt, M 2021, 'The impact of the Corona crisis on borderland living in the Danish-German border region with a special focus on the two national minorities', *National Identities*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2021.1938522>

### Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1080/14608944.2021.1938522](https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2021.1938522)

### Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

### Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

### Published In:

National Identities

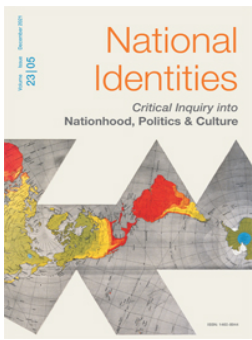
### General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

### Take down policy

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact [openaccess@ed.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@ed.ac.uk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.





## The impact of the Corona crisis on borderland living in the Danish-German border region with a special focus on the two national minorities

Ruairidh Tarvet & Martin Klatt

To cite this article: Ruairidh Tarvet & Martin Klatt (2021): The impact of the Corona crisis on borderland living in the Danish-German border region with a special focus on the two national minorities, *National Identities*, DOI: [10.1080/14608944.2021.1938522](https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2021.1938522)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2021.1938522>



© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 23 Jun 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 761



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

# The impact of the Corona crisis on borderland living in the Danish-German border region with a special focus on the two national minorities

Ruairidh Tarvet <sup>a</sup> and Martin Klatt<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Scandinavian Studies, Literatures, Languages & Cultures, The University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland;

<sup>b</sup>Centre for Border Region Studies, University of Southern Denmark, Sønderborg, Denmark

## ABSTRACT

In 2020, the Sars-CoV-2 (also known as the COVID-19/Coronavirus) crisis resulted in the closure of most of Europe's borders, both external and internal. What consequences does this have for border regions as living spaces? This article uses the Danish-German border region as an example for the complex impact of the Sars-CoV-2 crisis on a European borderland. A special focus is placed on the region's reciprocal national minorities on either side of the border. This article shows that these groups have been most impacted by the nation state measures of restricting and controlling access across the border, as this has reduced their opportunities of kin-state contact and interaction.


## KEYWORDS

Borderlands; borders; minorities; Sars-CoV-2; pandemic

## Introduction

The Sars-CoV2 crisis has closed most of Europe's borders, external as well as internal. But are these border closures only a temporary measure to cope with a pandemic, or are we experiencing a new climax of re-bordering trends in effect since 9 September 2001? What consequences will these trends have for border regions as living spaces? This article will use the Danish-German border region as an example for the complex impact of the Sars-CoV-2 crisis on a European borderland with a balanced system of multiple interaction and integration across the border. Special focus will be placed on the region's reciprocal national minorities on either side of the border: these groups illustrate the continuous existence of a blurred borderline beyond the official border drawn in 1920. It is poignant that during the 100-year anniversary of the present-day border, cross-border activity has been severely restricted, and the actions of the nation state executives have taken precedence over transnational cooperation. It is our hypothesis that these groups have been most impacted by the nation state measures of restricting and controlling access across the border, as this has reduced their opportunities of kin-state contact and interaction.

Starting with an overview of national governments' re-bordering initiatives in March 2020, we will contextualize these actions with the latest state of the art of research on

**CONTACT** Ruairidh Tarvet  Rtarvet@ed.ac.uk

© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

de – and re-bordering in Europe. The general contextualization is followed by a specific contextualization of the chosen case of Sønderjylland-Schleswig. Hereafter, we present and analyze our empiric material gathered in summer 2020, followed by the conclusion.

### March 2020: executive action

When analyzing European border regions, the reactions to the Sars-CoV-2 crisis raise questions on the multi-level governance processes of the European Union and its complex system of hierarchies: is it the EU (Commission, European Parliament, Court of Justice), the member states' governments and parliaments, or regional governments that have the final say? It has become evident that the present crisis is the time of the executive. More or less guided by experts, the executive has introduced measures to ensure social (or rather physical) distancing, the delivery of supplies to the healthcare system, economic help to business and employees, closures of national, regional and local borders and administrative lines. This has proven to be relatively successful in limiting the virus' spread, its damage to the economy and has safeguarded the capacities of healthcare systems.

On the other hand, it had a significant impact on European border regions: One central element has been common in almost all countries' reaction to the pandemic: the closure of borders from mid-March starting with Czechia on 12 March 2020 (borders to Germany and Austria), followed by Denmark on 13 March (all borders) and Germany on 16 March (borders to Switzerland, France, Luxemburg, Denmark and Austria). By 31 March, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Spain had fully closed their borders, while the rest of the EU-member states had closed at least some of their borders. Borders have slowly reopened since May 2020, but some restrictions to free movement have prevailed at many internal EU borders. Soft pressure from the EU and regional stakeholders may have played a role in the re-openings, but the final decisions were made by national governments driven by different interests and with different priorities and different selection criteria on who is allowed in. In effect, with new border crossing restrictions enforced during the virus' second wave in winter 2020/21, Covid-fencing (Medeiros et al., 2020) is a new, very relevant issue when analyzing cross-border regions and cross-border cooperation within the EU.

### Europe: de- and re-bordering

This development has challenged a core element of European integration: the narrative of a borderless Europe and the 'four freedoms of movement' (people, goods, capital and services). Border regions can be understood as laboratories of European integration. Here, the successes of integration can be tested, persisting challenges can be identified and policies to overcome them can be designed. But border regions have likewise been disputed territories; they have been subject to questions of identity, areas reflecting prejudices and stereotypes, and sites of nationalism (Stokłosa & Besier, 2014). It is important not to forget this heritage when analyzing border region development (O'Dowd, 2010). About 30% of the EU population lives in the NUTS-3 areas along the 40 land borders between the EU and EFTA Member States. Since 1990, the EU's Cohesion Policy has supported cross-border cooperation with the Interreg initiative, with a total of €6.6 billion in the 2014–2020 funding period. Border

region residents have been encouraged to exploit free movement and actively engage in creating cross-border living spaces, where daily life activities such as residence, work, education, shopping and other leisure activities span borders. Based mainly on observations from the EU-15, the 1990s and 2000s had produced a research consensus that multi-level governance theory, EU regional cohesion policies, the political agenda of the Europe of Regions and an increase in para-diplomatic activities of non-central governments have resulted in the rescaling of Europe with an increasing influence of regional and local actors (among others Keating, 1998; Scott, 1999; Telo, 2007; Warleigh-Lack et al., 2011).

At the same time, the development towards more open, prosperous border regions has already been challenged prior to the Sars-CoV-2 crisis. Migration and terror have demonstrated the vulnerability of the Schengen system of open borders. Also, the Cohesion Policy has not prevented European regions from drifting apart economically. Legal, administrative, cultural and mental barriers have persisted in European border regions. Two Eurobarometer polls that specifically address border regions (from 2015 and 2020) have revealed very different levels of cross-border practices and mutual social trust among border region residents in the EU (Commission, 2015; Commission, 2020). Hard re-bordering in forms of temporarily closed checkpoints and the erection of infrastructures of wires and walls can impact daily lives to a great extent. But even soft re-bordering in discourses on security, terrorism, large scale migrations and xenophobia challenges border transgressing activities. Political parties asking for more national independence and strong nation states have had considerable success in many border regions, both in the elections to the European Parliament in May 2019, as well as in national elections. Brexit (i.e. from the point of view of the Irish backstop) also demonstrates how free movement, hitherto taken for granted, is suddenly challenged by possible re-borderings. Sars-CoV-2 and the resulting border closures are perhaps just a continuation of this trend, away from a Europe of open borders and integration.

This demonstrates how widely encompassing borders are, from highly geopolitical to symbolic, identity-related and intrinsically linked to people's daily lives. From a bottom-up perspective, three concepts have already been developed to classify people living in border regions, beyond the territorial trap of binary separation into groups of different passport holders: *national/transnational borderlanders*, *regionauts* and *border surfers*. Martinez' (1994) distinction of *national* and *transnational borderlanders* plays on the level of border region residents' border crossing practices. It is empirically based on ethnographic research in the US-Mexico borderlands. When analyzing nationalization processes in 19th and twentieth century Central and Eastern Europe, historians have used the concept of national indifference to characterize people not clearly identifying with a specific nation (Zahra, 2010). In a contemporary European borderlands context, these concepts have been adapted with the terms *regionauts* (Löfgren, 2008; O'Dell, 2003) for border region residents developing the necessary skills of including the other side of the border into their living space, and *border surfers* (Terlouw, 2012) for border region residents profiting from exactly the economic and the social differences contained by the border, often contrary to the intentions of regional and EU policies stimulating cross-border integration. National minorities' role adds an additional layer of complexity to border regions as living spaces (Klatt, 2017), with ethnonationalism remaining a complicating factor.

Contemporary borderlanders' social practices are also described by the dichotomy of unfamiliarity/familiarity. This explains the degree of the known in relation to the

unknown in social contacts and interaction. Borders refer to the threshold between the known and the unknown. Unfamiliarity, the unknown, can be threatening, but it can also be exciting, it can offer new opportunities. Thus, unfamiliarity has an influence on agency and on social practices, but not only in border regions. In a border region context, it can be applied to explain interaction and flows in border- or rather cross-border regions: why do people cross borders, and why don't they. There are both rational and emotional differences that hinder or encourage social interaction across borders. Martin van der Velde and Bas Spierings have examined this for the field of consumer mobility in border (Spierings & van der Velde, 2008, 2013). Other researchers have expanded the concept to other fields of cross-border interaction (Andersen, 2012, 2014; de Fátima Amante, 2012; Izotov & Laine, 2012; Klatt, 2014, 2017; Knotter, 2014; Szytniewski & Spierings, 2014; Yndigegn, 2012). The core conclusion is that there exists a bandwidth of familiarity within which social interaction takes place. The research question as such is, how far has this bandwidth of familiarity been affected by the crisis caused by Sars-CoV-2 and the different measures governments have introduced to cut back on mobility, restrict movement and reinforce borders? Furthermore, this paper aims to document and analyze the experiences of members of the German and Danish minorities during the Sars-CoV-2 crisis and to determine whether these experiences have influenced their sense of national identity.

Identity is here understood as a person's self-concept, in the sense who they are and what their relation to other people is. Thus, identity is at first sight individual, but also collective, as it implies belonging or sharing characteristics with one group, but not another; it is an 'us' and 'them'. Humans have many concepts of themselves: as men, women, football players and fans, garden lovers, railway enthusiasts, members of a club etc. (Klatt 2020a). Spatial identities start in the utmost local conception of *Heimat* as our home, the place where we belong (Confino, 1993; Larkey, 2008). The originally purely local *Heimat* has been spatially expanded by instrumentalizing dynastic, linguistic, territorial and often religious allegiances to create larger imagined communities (Anderson, 1983). Nonetheless, identities continue to be multiple, fluid and changeable.

### **Context: the Danish-German border region Sønderjylland-Schleswig: a narrative of reconciliation**

The Danish-German border region of Schleswig is chosen for this article because of its context as a European border region, where national conflict has been replaced by reconciliation and accommodation of diversity in a national minority setting. This was to be celebrated in 2020 as the 100th anniversary of 'the world's greatest border' (*verdens bedste grænse*).<sup>1</sup> The 1920-border was an attempt to solve the nineteenth century national struggle on the former duchy of Schleswig by a plebiscite. It was contested until the 1950s (Becker-Christensen, 1998; Johnsen, 2005; Noack, 1974, 1989, 1991) the 1955 Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations on the two national minorities in the borderland, Denmark's accession to the EC/EU in 1973, the establishment of the (Euro-)Region Sønderjylland-Schleswig in 1997 and the implementation of the Schengen agreement in 2001 have created a borderland celebrating a story of self-determination, reconciliation, minority accommodation and increasing cooperation in an integrating, open cross-border region (Klatt, 2006, 2015; Kühl, 2005; Kühl & Weller, 2005).

The core element of the reconciliation narrative is the accommodation of the national dissenters of the plebiscite as national minorities with cultural autonomy. Historically, identity in Schleswig had been multiple and hardly unambiguous, but the plebiscite demanded a clear decision for either Germany or Denmark. It has been the climax of nationalization: From now, the regions' inhabitants were categorized into Danish and German. Either as majority, or, in case of dissent with the plebiscite outcome, as national minority. In fact, though, the new national minorities were far from clear-cut, distinct, identifiable groups. Ambiguous identities have continued until today, with shifts of identification between Danish and German national majority and identities in between. From a long-term perspective, national identification and affiliation were vulnerable in crisis (Klatt, 2019): A crisis of the monarchy nationalized Schleswig in the nineteenth century. Political crises of democracy in the 1930s had an impact on national identification, as did the collapse of Nazi-Germany in 1945. In late 20<sup>th</sup>/early twenty-first century, being minority became a lifestyle; so perhaps we live in an age of post-national minorities. This is how Jørgen Kühl has termed the fluidity within the Danish minority in South Schleswig, where only a few members have a Danish lineage spanning multiple generations but many more have joined the minority by sending their children into its institutions (Kühl, 2018). A recent study documented surprisingly that many German and Danish minority members identified closest with their reciprocal minority, rather than with their kin-state (Tarvet 2021).

This study analyzes the impact of Covid-fencing (Medeiros et al., 2020) on borderland identities, especially of borderlanders perceiving themselves as part of one of the national minorities. These persons, with closer cultural, linguistic and social ties across the border, can be expected to be more sensitive to measures hindering free movement and physically demarcating the border as a line of separation. This effect could be recognized already when different Danish and German immigration policy paradigms culminated in the so-called migration crisis in 2015. Many minority members felt aghast by the strict actions taken by the Danish government to restrict refugees' access to the country, but also by negative popular reactions to the migrants. Instead, they were more compelled with the original German *Willkommenskultur* of August-September 2015 (Klatt, 2020b). (Tarvet 2021) Then, the erection of the 42-mile 'wild boar' fence by Denmark along its southern border in 2019, induced by the threat of African Swine Fever, was perceived by some as a provocative move by Denmark and a further sign that Denmark was following a path of national isolation. Furthermore, recently it was made public that the Danish government had already procured material to quickly erect a high fence at the border during the so-called migration crisis of autumn 2015, adding to a perception of Denmark not really being interested in a return to the Schengen regime of open borders.

Despite of these issues, the political narrative of Danish-German relations being as good as ever remained in place and was supposed to be manifested in the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the border (and North Schleswig's reunification with Denmark). The celebrations were to reflect two narratives: 'Reunification' and 'Reconciliation'. Reunification accounts for Denmark having recovered parts of the territories lost in 1864. Reconciliation plays on the narrative of successful border drawing in a nationally divided territory implementing the right of national self-determination and the subsequent accommodation of national dissenters into culturally autonomous

national minorities. To emphasize this, 2020 was also named the Year of Danish-German cultural friendship (<https://tyskland.um.dk/da/kultur/venskabsaar2020/>, accessed 31 July 2020). Except for a start-up scientific conference at the Danish national parliament, *Folketinget*, followed by a gala in the Danish Royal Theatre in January 2020, however, all important events have been cancelled or postponed until 2021. Instead, the border was closed and both countries moved into a lockdown from mid-March. Several stakeholders criticized the border closure. In particular, the two national minorities used a narrative of a lifeline being cut or of the unfortunate fact that the border was closed and militarized during the 100-year anniversary of its existence – an anniversary intended to be celebrated along a narrative of reconciliation and overcoming the border in daily life. So, are we experiencing a goodbye to the open border and the borderless region ideal celebrated in Sønderjylland-Schleswig and other border regions?

### Quick facts: what has happened at the Danish-German border?

While acting surprised at the drastic Danish border closure decision on 13 March 2020, Germany followed quickly two days later and closed the border for most entries from Denmark effective 16 March. At first, only commuters, goods and the persons transporting them, and children of separated parents had been allowed to cross the border. From mid-April, Denmark eased access to allow parents to visit children and vice versa, as well as allowing couples in a long-standing relationship (defined as having resided together at a point in time) to visit each other. From 18 May, Germany allowed extended family visits (children, grandparents, siblings, in-laws; all only in the case of important family events). Quarantine rules were dropped for people entering from EU and EEA countries as well as from the UK. From 15 June, there were no more entry restrictions to Germany for residents of EU, EEA and the UK. Denmark allowed tourists from Germany, Iceland and Norway to enter if they could document a hotel/campground/summer cottage booking of at least six nights. Residents of Schleswig-Holstein were also allowed to enter Denmark, without requiring a booking or naming a specific reason for entry. From July, the six-day booking requirement was waived for residents of Norway and Iceland. Entry to Denmark has since been tied to weekly updates of the Sars-CoV-2 situation for all EU/EEA countries and the UK and for Sweden on a regional basis. By mid-September, all border crossings have been reopened and controls reduced to random checks. New restrictions were implemented in response to surging numbers of infections in late autumn 2020, but these explicitly catered for border region residents and prevented the physical closure of border crossings until February 2021. Since then, though, further restrictions such as regular testing requirements, quarantine and intensive border controls in Denmark have reinstated the situation of spring 2020.

The border closure increased awareness of existing cross-border flows and social interaction. The Euroregional office Infocenter has been confronted with many issues evolving from the closure. On social media, people have exchanged advice on Facebook groups as *Flensbook – for danskere i Flensburg* (predominantly Danish citizens who have moved to Flensburg), *Arbeiten in Dänemark* (predominantly Germans commuting to Denmark), *Einreiseverbot Dänemark* (predominantly Germans affected by the border closure) and *Åbn*



*Grænsen NU* (predominantly members of the two national minorities). Cases go into fine details: people in the process of moving into the other country and the consequences, construction of a house on the other side of the border, child custody issues, living together with a partner who has not registered his/her address, acute family crisis/separation, but also simple issues, such as access to a farmland, riding horse, sailboat or machines stored on the other side of the border.

## Local perceptions of border closures and national management of the sars-CoV-2 crisis

### Method

In order to gather information on the effects of the border closures on the population of the border region, a survey was conducted in July and August 2020. The survey was made available in the German and Danish languages and advertized widely through conventional and social media outlets with direct relevance to the Danish-German borderlands. These outlets included the Danish language newspaper in Germany *Flensborg Avis*, the German language newspaper in Denmark *Der Nordschleswiger*, the social media pages of official minority institutions *Sydslesvigsk Forening*, *Bund Deutscher Nordschleswiger*, *Deutsche Büchereien Nordschleswig* and the community social media pages *Bevar de Danske Skoler* and *Debatforum for det Danske Mindretal i Sydslesvig*. This ensured a targeted reach to both German and Danish speakers located in the border region. With a cross-border population of approximately 700,000 in the region Sønderjylland-Schleswig, out of which about 12,000–15,000 belong to the German minority in Denmark and 50,000 to the Danish minority in Germany,<sup>2</sup> the survey required a minimum sample size of 384 respondents in order to be representative of the population as a whole (with a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5%, respectively higher for the minority members). In principle, the survey achieved representativity with a total of 392 responses from varying segments of the population across both sides of the border. In effect, though, 85% of the respondents indicated membership in one of the two borderland minorities. This, of course, limits the representativity of the survey regarding the whole population of the border region, however it positively increases representativity with regard to the border region's two national minorities. It must also be assumed that the survey has a natural bias resulting from a higher probability of respondents personally affected by the border closure.

In the following discussion, the responses from the survey have been self-translated to English from German/Danish. The biographical breakdown of the survey was as follows:

Age	
	0.51%
0–18	2
	28.06%
19–40	110
	49.23%
41–60	193
	22.19%
61+	87
TOTAL	392

### Country of Residence

Denmark	43.22%
	169
Germany	55.75%
	218
Other	1.02%
	4
TOTAL	391

### Gender

Male	44.10%
	172
Female	55.90%
	218
Other	0.00%
	0
TOTAL	390

### Citizenship

Danish	32.65%
	128
German	61.48%
	241
Danish AND German	4.59%
	18
Other	1.28%
	5
TOTAL	392

The biographical data of respondents shows a well-balanced representation of age (with the exception of the under-18 category), country of residence and gender. With regards to citizenship, almost twice as many respondents possess German citizenship as opposed to Danish citizenship. It should be noted, however, that this is not representative of the respondents' identities. When taking the answers from minority-specific questions into account, it becomes clear that 333 respondents (85%) were from the minority communities: 178 respondents (45%) were from the Danish minority in Germany and 155 respondents (40%) were from the German minority in Denmark, suggesting a more accurate balance of national identities.<sup>3</sup> A further 59 respondents (15%) were from the majority communities in the borderlands. This outcome was striking, as it suggests that the national minority communities felt more inclined than the majority communities to contribute to a discussion on border closures and express their opinions. In light of this, the data from this study provides an accurate and useful insight into the impact of border closure on the national minorities of Schleswig.

## Results

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide their own evaluation of Germany and Denmark's responses to the Sars-CoV-2 crisis. Overall, there was a high degree of satisfaction with both the national responses. With regards to Germany, 34% of respondents

rated the national response as 'very good' with an additional 48% describing it as 'good'. Satisfaction was somewhat lower (yet still high) for Denmark, whereby 23% described the national response as 'very good' and 49% as 'good'. Active dissatisfaction with the national responses was at or below 10% for both countries (6% for Denmark and 10% for Germany respectively). Whilst the question allowed scope to express satisfaction with all aspects of national Covid management strategies, these responses are useful to bear in mind when addressing the specific issue of border closures, which are also measures taken at national level.

The following question asked whether the German-Danish border should have been closed earlier, later or not at all. The results highlighted a clear divide among respondents, wherein 45% believed that the border should never have been closed and a further 44% believed that it was closed at the right point in time. Only 8% of respondents believed that it should have been closed earlier and 3% believed that it should have been closed later. This split is further accentuated in the next question, whereby 36% of respondents argued that the closure of the border was an effective measure for combatting Sars-CoV-2 and a further 37% argued that it was not effective. Around 21% of respondents thought that the closure of the border was neither effective nor ineffective. There was no statistically relevant difference in answer with regards to minority grouping, citizenship, place of residence or age, however, there was a slight difference in response in relation to gender, as 27% of males and 42% of females argued that the border closures were effective, in comparison with 47% of males and 29% of females who argued that they were ineffective. As such, it would appear that female respondents are slightly more in favor of border closure than male respondents.

Respondents were then asked to what extent they believe the German and Danish governments have listened to and understood the special concerns of borderland residents. This was measured on a sliding scale of 0 (not at all) to 100 (fully). Both countries received unimpressive scores in this respect. For Germany, the average number awarded was 50. This contrasts dramatically with Denmark, which performed half as well, receiving an average number of just 25. There was no statistically relevant difference across the various biographical parameters. This result highlights a major concern among borderland residents, namely that national governments have not adequately understood the particularities of borderland life and have not taken this into account when implementing border closures which have an impact on the borderland residents' lives.

The exact effects of the border closures on borderland life were highlighted in the responses to the next question. Respondents were given a list of hypothesized effects of border closure and asked whether they had experienced any of these. Multiple answers were permitted. The most common aspect affected was visiting friends and family (74% of respondents), followed by a feeling of community across the border (62%), trips (57%), shopping (57%), a sense of exclusion (48%), commuting to/from work (27%) and job loss (2%). Respondents were also invited to expand upon their answers in a comment box. The most common trends in these responses were that crossing the border is a natural part of everyday life (26 comments), issues with visiting family (25 comments), a feeling of being restricted (21 comments), issues with meeting friends (19 comments), issues with bureaucracy and clarity from border police (18 comments), long queues (15 comments), a sense of being treated as a criminal when crossing the

border (9 comments) and no concerns whatsoever (9 comments). These trends are exemplified in the following quotations from the respondents:

Ich war ausgeschlossen, konnte weder meine Familie noch meine Heimat besuchen obwohl die Fallzahlen nördlich und südlich der Grenze niemals bedrohlich waren. Die dänische Regierung zeigte sich meiner Meinung nach völlig unwillig, auch nur zu versuchen, die besonderen Verhältnisse im Grenzland zu verstehen oder etwa zu berücksichtigen. Der Tag, an dem die Betonklötze auf die Straße gestellt wurden, und damit die Grenze zu war, war der schlimmste Tag für mich in der ganzen Corona-Krise. Ich habe geweint - und jedes mal, wenn ich jetzt daran denke, kommen mir immer noch die Tränen.

(I was excluded, could not visit my family or home, even though the case numbers north and south of the border were never a threat. In my opinion, the Danish government proved to be fully unwilling to even try to understand the particularities of the borderland or to take these into account. The day the concrete blocks were placed on the road and the border was closed was the worst day for me during the Corona crisis. I cried – and every time I think about it tears come to my eyes again).

Jeg følte mig marginaliseret og krænket, både i forbindelse med corona lukning og vildsvinehegn. Når man i årevis har arbejdet med både regionale og mellemfolkelige projekter på tværs af grænsen, så bliver jeg både krænket og såret dybt i hjertet, når der langt fra grænseområdet sidder politikere og tager så store beslutninger - egenrådigt, UDEN at tage dem sammen med nabolandet. Det drejer sig ikke billige dåseøl og grænsehandel - det drejer sig om ganske almindelig respekt for området og de people to people relationer og samarbejde der blomster, ligesom det lokale regionale politiske og institutionelle samarbejde. Det gør ondt, både mentalt og fysisk, når gode venner, bekendte, samarbejdspartnere, kolleger lukkes ude. Tyskerne er lige så ansvarlige i deres omgang med corona, som danskerne er, så jeg følte virkelig at vi som borgere her i grænselandet blev marginaliserede/udgrænsede.

(I felt marginalized and insulted, both by the [border] closure for Corona and the wild boar fence. As I have worked for years with regional and intercultural projects across the border, I feel insulted and deeply heartbroken when politicians far from the border region take such huge decisions WITHOUT coordinating them with their neighbouring country. This isn't about cheap beer or border shopping – it's about common respect for the area, people to people relations and cooperation that flourishes, such as local regional-political and institutional cooperation. It hurts both mentally and physically when good friends, acquaintances, cooperative partners and colleagues are shut out. Germans are just as responsible in managing Corona as Danes so I really feel that we, as citizens of the borderland, have been marginalized/excluded).

Ich bin ein Kind dieser Region. Es war immer normal auf beiden Seiten der Grenze zu sein. Meine Vorfahren kommen von beiden Seiten der heutigen Grenze. Das Gefühl war sehr schlimm, dass ich einen Teil meiner Heimat nicht mehr erreichen kann.

(I am a child of this region. It has always been normal to be on both sides of the border. My ancestors come from both sides of the present border. The feeling that I could no longer reach part of my home was very bad).

Der er/var fra dansk regerings side ikke vist nogen forståelse for grænseregionen særlige forhold. At lukke og stadig lukker de små men lokalt vigtige grænseovergang med beton etc. Er en hån mod det historisk samlede Slesvig også netop i jubilæumsåret.

(From the perspective of the Danish government, there is/was clearly no understanding for the particularities of the border region. By closing and keeping the small but important

local border crossings closed with concrete etc. is a mockery towards the historically unified Schleswig, especially during the anniversary of the reunification).

Identitet kræver kontakt og ophold i DK - følte mig beskåret i det - fastliggerplads (camping) som var booket og betalt kunne ikke opsøges mellem påske og midt i juni - livskvalitet meget indskrænket

(Identity requires contact and visits to Denmark – I felt restricted in this sense – our static caravan (camping spot) that was booked and paid for could not be accessed between Easter and mid-June – our quality of life was heavily restricted).

These responses demonstrate a very strong sense of cross-border regional identity. It is clear that the respondents have previously straddled their work, leisure and family lives across both sides of the border without paying much heed to the national significance of a formal boundary. Upon losing access to a crucial part of their living space, the respondents subsequently feel excluded from their cross-border community. Several other comments also shed light on some less common effects of border closures, such as issues with looking after a horse on the other side of the border (4 comments), purchasing a house on the other side of the border (1 comment), a feeling of being patronized (2 comments) and recruiting a German actor for a theatre production (1 comment). Overall, the diverse range of issues faced, combined with the numerous contributions on the importance of cross-border access, serve as evidence of the particularities of life in the border region that may be taken into account in future discussions on border closures in the region.

The next two questions were addressed to members of the Danish and German minority communities and dealt with the issue of national identity. Respondents from these groups were asked whether their sense of national identity had changed since the start of the Sars-CoV-2 crisis. Whilst most respondents from the Danish minority felt that their sense of national identity had not changed (67%), 11% felt that they now identify more with Germany and 8% felt that they now identify more with Denmark. 14% of respondents were not sure. In the German minority, 37% of respondents felt that their sense of national identity had not changed, whilst 9% felt that they identify more with Germany, 7% identify more with Denmark and 46% were not sure. It is clear from these responses that the actions of national governments have had some impact on the minority's sense of national identity, with a slight trend towards more identification with Germany, regardless of whether Germany is the respondent's kin- or resident state. The clear lack of certainty among respondents from the German minority equally highlights an impact of the national responses to the Sars-CoV-2 crisis, as respondents begin to question their sense of national identity. Whilst a potential reason for the shift in national identification may be in response to the different approaches to Sars-CoV-2 management undertaken by the German and Danish states, several comments in the final section of the survey suggest that this shift has been a more gradual process and linked to a perceived swell in nationalism in Denmark.

In the final section of the survey, respondents were invited to provide their own comments regarding the closure of the Danish-German border and its influence on life in the border region. A total of 131 respondents provided such comments, which highlighted several trends. The two most cited issues were a sense that the closure of the border was more of a political decision than a healthcare decision (26 comments) and that there is a sense of growing nationalism in Denmark (25 comments). These two issues

are not unrelated and suggest that the notion of a borderless, unified Schleswig is coming under significant pressure. The following comments exemplify this:

I Danmark er der en grundholdning at man kan mere alene end sammen med andre, måske undtaget i nordisk fællesskab. Socialdemokraterne har bevidst overtaget dansk folkepartis udlændingepolitik med stigning af egen stemmeprocent og reduktion af dansk folkepartis stemmeprocent til følge. Nu holder man fast i 'sikringen' af grænsen. Det gælder lige som for vildsvinehegn også for lukningen af de små grænseovergange. Dertil passer det store behov for kontrol igennem nummerpladescanning ved alle grænseovergange. Corona er en del af 'vi kan selv' modellen. Dertil passer også Mette Frederiksens forhandlingsmodel i Brussels for en rabat til Danmark. Der blev udelukkende talt om rabat ikke om solidaritet. Det passer ret godt til den nævnte grundholdning. Vi kan selv. De andre volder os problemer.

(In Denmark there is a general belief that you can achieve more alone than together with others, perhaps with the exception of Nordic cooperation. The Social Democrats have clearly adopted the Danish People's Party's immigrant policies, resulting in an increased vote share for the Social Democrats and a reduction in the vote share for the Danish People's Party. Now they are focussed on 'securing' the border. This is the case for the wild boar fence and the closure of the small border points. Moreover, this fits in with the great necessity for number plate scanning at all border crossings. Corona is part of the 'we can do it ourselves' model. This is also seen in [Prime Minister] Mette Frederiksen's negotiation tactic in Brussels regarding a Danish rebate. The only focus was on rebates, not on solidarity. This fits into the aforementioned general belief. We can do it ourselves. Others just cause problems).

Außerdem möchte ich mitteilen, dass die Grenze faktisch seit 2015 (Flüchtlingskrise) 'geschlossen' ist, seitdem finden Kontrollen statt. Der s.g. 'Schweinezaun', der 2019 fertiggestellt wurde, verstärkt das Gefühl, dass Dänemark sich abschottet. Wir wohnen seit 20 Jahren im Grenzgebiet in DK und fühlen uns seitdem nicht mehr wohl hier. Der Europäische Gedanke ist völlig ad absurdum geführt und durch das 'Abgrenzen' verloren gegangen. Dass 2020 mit der 100 Jahrfeier der Grenzziehung die Region Nordschleswig/Südschleswig als Vorbild für andere Grenzregionen zum immatriellen Kulturerbe werden soll, ist meiner Meinung nicht mehr gerechtfertigt. Im Gegenteil: Das Projekt durchlässige Grenzen in Europa ist an der deutsch-dänischen Grenze gescheitert.

(Furthermore, I would like to point out that the border has actually been 'closed' since 2015 (migrant crisis) and since then border controls have been in place. The so-called 'wild boar fence' erected in 2019 strengthens the notion that Denmark wants to close itself off. We have been living in Denmark's border region for 20 years and since then we don't feel comfortable here. The European ideal has been implemented haphazardly and thrown away due to 'bordering'. In my opinion, the 100 year anniversary of the North/South Schleswig border as a role model for other countries and a potential element of intangible cultural heritage is not right. The opposite is the case: the European project of open borders has failed at the German-Danish border).

There were many emotional responses on the issue of growing nationalism in Denmark and a sense of hopelessness for the European project in general. In line with previous observations from the survey, a number of these also lamented that Copenhagen is too far away from the border region and did not take the concerns of the border population seriously. Although the border began reopening gradually in May and June 2020, 26 comments pointed out that the borders were still not fully open in late July/early August. This primarily related to issues with the small border crossings in forests and fields, as well as the lengthy queues (15 comments) at the road border crossing points.

A further 25 comments called for greater cooperation between Denmark and Germany, as well as coordination at EU level, whilst 13 comments stressed there was still too much bureaucracy and police control at border crossings. Only 5 comments suggested that the border closures had been necessary. The following comments exemplify these points:

Synes corona krisen har bekræftet følelsen af at Kbh. er meget la[n]gt væk fra grænseregionen og at regeringer i Kbh. til tider fører en politik, der ikke er til gavn for grænselandet.

(I think the Corona crisis has confirmed the notion that Copenhagen is very far away from the border region and the governments in Copenhagen sometimes pursue policies that are not to the benefit of the borderland).

Jeg synes, at statsministeren svarede undvigende på spørgsmål omkring lukning og genåbning. Regeringen havde åbenbart 'glemte' at vi også er danskere. Jeg havde på fornemmelsen, at vi ikke længere var en del af fællesskabet.

(I think the Prime Minister gave evasive answers to questions about closing and reopening. The government has apparently 'forgotten' that we are also Danes. I had a feeling that we were no longer a part of the community).

Der skal meget mere fokus på grænselandet i Kiel, Berlin og København. For politikere og borgere, der ikke kommer fra grænselandet, er det, tror jeg, helt uforståeligt, hvad vores særlige kultur og det fælles liv i grænsen egentligt betyder. Hvis der skulle komme en lockdown i efterår 2020, er det meget vigtigt at alle kæmper i fællesskab. Alle grænselandets borgere, erhvervslivet, politikere, organisationer ... Vi skal ses som en enhed, hvor grænsen ikke spiller en rolle. Grænsen bliver til en grænsen via politikernes italesættelse.

(There should be a far greater focus on the borderland in [the governments in] Kiel, Berlin and Copenhagen. For politicians and citizens who do not come from the borderlands, I think it is totally impossible to understand what our special culture and the shared life across the border actually means. If there is another lockdown in autumn 2020, it is very important that everyone fights together. All citizens, businesses, politicians and organisations in the borderland ... We should be regarded as one unit, wherein the border plays no role. The border becomes a border through politicians talking about it as such).

Less common responses included a lack of clarity on how border closures helped stop the spread of the virus (5 comments), clarification on the fact that Germany also closed internal borders (3 comments), a sense of growing hatred (2 comments), joy at the fact the border has reopened (2 comments) and discussion of Sønderjylland/Schleswig as one united region (2 comments).

## Conclusion

As is the case for most countries of the world, the Sars-CoV-2 crisis has exacerbated and accentuated existing economic, social and political issues, whilst creating new problems in its wake. For many in the minorities of the Danish-German border region, much of the local economic, social and political activity relates to a borderland lifestyle and free, unfettered passage between Denmark and Germany. Upkeep of this borderland lifestyle is thereby conditioned by the nature of the border; as border restrictions tighten, local economic and social activity declines and as restrictions ease, activity resumes. As has been highlighted in the survey, even slight obstacles such as queues of traffic at the border are perceived as a major obstacle to borderland residents, 5,000–6,000 of whom

commute across the border each day. As with any global crisis, time is of the essence and it is not surprising that national governments across Europe took drastic action, most of them including border restrictions, in response to a new and unknown virus. Armed with experience and a better understanding of how the virus spreads, the Danish and German national governments have lifted border restrictions in summer 2020. At the time of writing (March 2021), however, the second wave of Sars-CoV-2 has resulted in similar measures as in spring. Therefore, the governments' initial responses, the uneven speed at which restrictions were lifted (Germany before Denmark) and the (lack of) dialogue with borderland residents should be scrutinized to prevent damage to borderland life in the future. In particular, this study shows a strong criticism of the Danish government among borderland residents from both nation states, many of whom feel neglected in light of what they regard as an increasingly nationalist sentiment. Indeed, several respondents noted a trend in Danish border politics since the so-called migrant crisis of 2015, which saw the introduction of checks and restrictions at the border, which are still in place.

The border restrictions imposed in response to Sars-CoV-2 have clearly painted a negative picture in the minds of the borderland residents. It is a significant finding that 19% of respondents from the Danish minority and 16% of the German minority feel that their sense of national identity has changed since the start of the Sars-CoV-2 crisis and a further 14% and 46% respectively are unsure whether their national identity has changed. This is, of course, an unexpected reaction, when national identity is perceived as deeply rooted in most human beings. For the Schleswig case, it has been demonstrated that national identity has been multifaceted and historically unstable (Klatt, 2020a, 2019), as well as adept to change with the indication of a contemporary development towards a joint Schleswig minority identity in contrast to two stable national majority identities (Tarvet 2021). Has Sars-CoV-2 initiated a crisis of identity redefining borderlanders' regional and national affiliation? Whether this finding is to be interpreted as solely the result of the Sars-CoV-2 border restrictions or should be seen in conjunction with the wider tendency of border restrictions in the region is uncertain, however the implications of this finding are great. Should cross-border economic, social and political activity be subject to further restrictions in the future? Not only might this affect the economic health of the region, but so too might it drive borderland residents away from their regional and transnational identities and towards more distinctly national ones, as they shape their identities in line with and in opposition to national policies and actions.

It is clear from this study that citizens of the borderland feel the need for greater participation and influence in national decision-making processes and this could call for an increased focus on (and perhaps revision of) the existing system of multi-level governance in the Danish-German borderlands. During the reunification celebrations one hundred years ago, the then Danish prime minister Nils Neergaard gave a speech, in which he promised that the Danish minority would not be forgotten: 'De skal ikke blive glemte' (Adriansen, 2011). This statement has held symbolic significance in the border region and is often (mis)cited at minority gatherings and events. Nonetheless, its importance to the minorities highlights the potential implications of national state oversight of borderland issues. Local involvement and cross-border activity are crucial to minority life and when measures are taken at a national level without local political or civic involvement, this severely restricts this transnational ecosystem's ability to function. The history of



the Danish-German border region since the 1840s has demonstrated that when the people of the region are forced to side with one nation over the other in times of crisis, this leads to a flare up in emotions as their hybrid and complex identities become contested and challenged (Tarvet 2021). In order to avoid this and to maintain peace and economic prosperity in this cross-border region, it is necessary for national governments to involve regional decision-makers and policy-makers, including those from the neighbouring state, in decisions which directly impact the functionality of the Danish-German border, as this region relies on such a high degree of transnational cooperation and interaction. It is evident from this study that the Danish and German minorities' level of trust has been significantly damaged by the border restrictions. Whilst some of this damage may be temporary, the long-term impact of damage to the region's economy, cross-border social interaction and the residents' sense of identity remains unknown at this stage.

## Notes

1. Title of an episode in public Danish television's (DR) program *Kampen om Grænsen* [struggle about the border], 7 June 2020, where the moderator pressured Danish historian Karen Gram-Skjoldager to confirm that the 1920-border was the world's greatest border.
2. There are no official records on minority membership. These figures are based on the minorities' own assessment. They can be deducted from enrolment in minority schools in relation to general enrolment in schools.
3. 54 respondents answered questions relating to both minorities, suggesting that they consider themselves to be members of both communities, however this assumption cannot be considered statistically relevant due to a lack of direct confirmation of this.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Notes on contributors

**Ruairidh Tarvet** is a teaching fellow in Scandinavian Studies at the University of Edinburgh. His research investigates issues of language and identity in national minority communities, primarily in Scandinavia's border regions. His recent book, *Re-imagining Sleswig* (University Press of Southern Denmark 2021), explores the duality and hybridity of identity and language in the Danish-German border region.

**Martin Klatt** has been Associate Professor at the Center of Border Region Studies, University of Southern Denmark, Sønderborg, since 2005. He studied History, Political Science and Nordic Languages at the Universities of Kiel and Copenhagen (1989-1995). Research fellow at the Schleswig-Holstein Institute for Peace Research (1996) and the Research Department of the Danish Library for South Schleswig (1997-2000). PhD from University of Southern Denmark (2002). Research activities concentrate on national minorities in border regions, regional cross-border cooperation, cross-border regions in history and today, and cross-border regional governance. Current international research projects: Borders in Globalization (BIG), a network of academic partners from Canada, the United States, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, which is engaged with non-academic organizations that are involved in the management of borders and borderlands in Canada and worldwide. European Non-Territorial Autonomy Network (ENTAN), a COST Action aimed at examining the concept of non-territorial autonomy (NTA), from both a comparative and comprehensive

perspective. Jean Monnet Network Frontiers in Motion (FRONTEM), aimed at analysing contemporary challenges to the European project of open borders. <https://centre-jean-monnet.unistra.fr/the-project/>.

## ORCID

Ruairidh Tarvet  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6012-0774>

## References

- Adriansen, I. (2011). Genforening. In I. Adriansen, E. D. Jensen, & L. S. Madsen (Eds.), *Sønderjylland A-Å* (pp. 132–133). Historisk Samfund for Sønderjylland.
- Andersen, D. J. (2012). Exploring the concept of (Un)familiarity: (Un)familiarity in border practices and Identity-Formation at the slovenian–Croatian border on istria. *European Planning Studies*, 21(1), 42–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2012.716238>
- Andersen, D. J. (2014). Do if you dare: Reflections on (Un)familiarity, Identity-Formation and ontological politics. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 29(3), 327–337. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2014.938966>
- Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined communities*. Verso.
- Becker-Christensen, H. (1998). "Nordschleswig Erwache!!". Det tyske mindretal og nazismen i 1933. *Sønderjyske Årbøger*, 110(1), 161–204. <https://doi.org/10.7146/soenderjyskeaarboeger.v110i1.81268>
- Commission, E. (2015). Cross-border cooperation in the EU. In *Flash Eurobarometer*. European Commission.
- Commission, E. U. (2020). *Cross-Border cooperation in the EU 2020*. European Commission.
- Confino, A. (1993). The nation as a local metaphor: Heimat, national memory and the German Empire, 1871–1918. *History and Memory*, 5(1), 42–86.
- de Fátima Amante, M. (2012). Recovering the paradox of the border: Identity and (Un)familiarity across the Portuguese–spanish border. *European Planning Studies*, 21(1), 24–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2012.716237>
- Izotov, A., & Laine, J. (2012). Constructing (Un)familiarity: Role of tourism in identity and region building at the Finnish–Russian border. *European Planning Studies*, 21(1), 93–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2012.716241>
- Johnsen, A. (2005). *Dannevirke-mænd og Ejderfolk. Den grænsepolitiske opposition i Danmark 1920–1940*. Studiefælleskabet ved Dansk Centralbibliotek for Sydslesvig.
- Keating, M. (1998). *The new regionalism in Western Europe: Territorial restructuring and political change*. E. Elgar.
- Klatt, M. (2006). *Fra modspil til medspil?: grænseoverskridende samarbejde i Sønderjylland/Schleswig 1945–2005*. Institut for Grænseregionsforskning.
- Klatt, M. (2014). (Un)Familiarity? Labor related cross-border Mobility in sønderjylland/Schleswig since Denmark joined the EC in 1973. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 29(3), 353–373. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2014.938968>
- Klatt, M. (2017). Dybbøl 2014. Constructing familiarity by remembrance? In E. Boesen, & G. Schnuer (Eds.), *European borderlands. Living with bridges and barriers* (pp. 30–46). Routledge.
- Klatt, M. (2019). Mobilization in crisis – demobilization in peace: Protagonists of competing national movements in border regions. *Studies on National Movements*, 4, 30. <https://snm.nise.eu/index.php/studies/article/view/49/42>
- Klatt, M. (2020a). Regions in crisis: The volatility of regional identity in face of nationalisation projects. The case of schleswig. In D. E. H. de Boer, N. H. Petersen, B. Spierings, & M. van der Velde (Eds.), *The historical evolution of regionalizing identities in Europe* (pp. 275–306). Peter Lang.
- Klatt, M. (2020b). The So-called 2015 migration crisis and euroscepticism in border regions: Facing Re-bordering trends in the danish–German borderlands. *Geopolitics*, 25(3), 567–586. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2018.1557149>

- Knottner, A. (2014). Perspectives on cross-border Labor in Europe: "(Un)familiarity" or "push-and-pull"? *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 29(3), 319–326. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2014.938972>
- Kühl, J. (2005). Ein europäisches Modell? Die schleswigsche Erfahrung und die nationalen Minderheiten. In *Ein europäisches Modell? Nationale Minderheiten im deutsch-dänischen Grenzland 1945-2005*, edited by Jørgen Kühl, Robert Bohn, Uwe Danker, Karl Heinrich Pohl and Michael Ruck (pp. 401–507). Bielefeld.
- Kühl, J. (2018). "Ihr seid nicht vergessen worden". Königliche Neujahrsgrüsse 2001-2017 und Vorstellungen von der dänischen Minderheit in Südschleswig. In J. Kühl (Ed.), *Klaar kiming. Festschrift für Thomas steensen* (pp. 100–116). Nordfriis Instituut.
- Kühl, J., & Weller, M. (eds.). (2005). *Minority Policy in Action. The Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations in a European context 1955-2005*. Institut for Grænseregionsforskning.
- O'Dell, T. (2003). Øresund and the Regionauts. *European Studies: A Journal of European Culture, History and Politics*, 19, 31–53.
- Larkey, U. (2008). New places, new identities: The (ever) changing concept of Heimat. *German Politics & Society*, 26(2), 24–44. <https://doi.org/10.3167/gps.2008.260202>
- Löfgren, O. (2008). Regionauts: The transformation of cross-border regions in Scandinavia. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 15(3), 195–209. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776408090418>
- Martinez, O. J. (1994). *Border people. Life and society in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Medeiros, E., Ramírez, M. G., Ocskay, G., & Peyrony, J. (2020). Covidfencing effects on cross-border deterritorialism: The case of Europe. *European Planning Studies*, 29(5), 962–982. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2020.1818185>
- Noack, J. P. (1974). *Det tyske mindretal i Nordslesvig under besættelsen*, Dansk Udenrigspolitisk Instituts Skrifter. Munksgaard.
- Noack, J. P. (1989). *Det danske mindretal i Sydslesvig 1920-1945*. 2 vols. Institut for Grænseregionsforskning.
- Noack, J. P. (1991). *Det sydslesvigske grænsespørgsmål 1945-1947*. Institut for Grænseregionsforskning.
- O'Dowd, L. (2010). From a 'borderless world' to a 'world of borders': 'bringing history back in'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28, 1031–1050.
- Scott, J. W. (1999). European and North American contexts for cross-border regionalism. *Regional Studies*, 33(7), 605–617. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343409950078657>
- Spierings, B., & van der Velde, M. (2008). Shopping, borders and unfamiliarity: Consumer Mobility in Europe. *Journal for Economic and Social Geography*, 99(4), 497–505. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9663.2008.00484.x>
- Spierings, B., & van der Velde, M. (2013). Cross-Border differences and unfamiliarity: Shopping Mobility in the Dutch-German rhine-waal euroregion. *European Planning Studies*, 21(1), 5–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2012.716236>
- Stoklosa, K., & Besier, G. (2014). Introduction: Some thoughts regarding the study of borders and border regions. In K. Stoklosa, & G. Besier (Eds.), *European border regions in comparison. Overcoming nationalistic aspects or Re-nationalization?* (pp. 1–16). Routledge.
- Szytniewski, B., & Spierings, B. (2014). Encounters with otherness: Implications of (Un)familiarity for daily life in borderlands. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 29(3), 339–351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2014.938971>
- Tarvet, R. T. (2021). *Re-Imagining sleswig: Language and identity in the German-Danish borderlands*, *University of Southern Denmark Studies in history and social sciences*. Syddansk Universitetsforlag.
- Telo, M. (ed.). (2007). *European Union and New regionalism*. Ashgate.
- Terlouw, K. (2012). Border surfers and Euroregions: Unplanned cross-border behaviour and planned territorial structures of cross-border governance. *Planning Practice and Research*, 27(3), 351–366.
- Warleigh-Lack, A., Robinson, N., & Rosamond, B. (eds.). (2011). *New Regionalism and the European Union. Dialogues, comparisons and new research directions*. Edited by Thomas Poguntke, *Routledge/ECPR Studies in European political science*. Routledge.

- Yndigegn, C. (2012). Reviving unfamiliarity—The case of public resistance to the establishment of the Danish–German Euroregion. *European Planning Studies*, 21(1), 58–74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2012.716239>
- Zahra, T. (2010). Imagined noncommunities: National indifference as a category of analysis. *Slavic Review*, 69(1), 93–119. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25621730>