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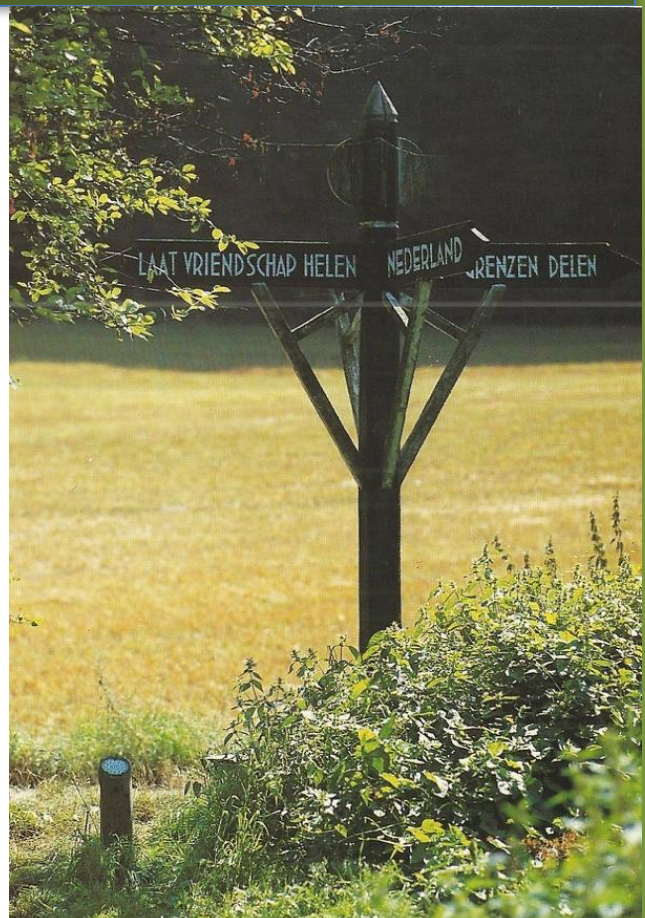
When refugees come closer: what borders mean for Dutch and German border residents.

A study on the perception of Dutch and German border residents regarding the arrival and presence of refugees in relation to their perception of the Dutch-German border.

INTERREG
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Master Thesis | Human Geography
Conflicts, territories and identities

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Preface

Looking back to the start of this thesis in February of 2018, I can tell that it was a long journey. Now, before you finally lies my Master's thesis; my final work for my study in Human Geography and thus also my final work for my graduation. It definitely was not an easy journey and it took much longer than I thought in advance. But I made it!

During a period of three months, my fellow student Maarten van Wel and I fulfilled an internship at the INTERREG secretariat ''Deutschland-Nederland'', located at the Euregion Rhine-Waal in Kleve, Germany. Both our studies are strongly related to the interests of the internship organization and the project it facilitates. As INTERREG encourages (cross-border) activities and cooperation between Germany and the Netherlands, the secretariat is interested in the perception of citizens living in the Dutch-German border region. Because this border perception may be changing over time due to e.g. large social developments – such as the recent influx of refugees - it was obvious to study the perception of the border and more importantly to what extent this development relates to the perception about the arrival and presence of refugees.

During my fieldwork, I got a chance of getting intriguing insights into the differing perceptions of a border which does not seem that present and/or important, but actually still is in many (complex) ways. Furthermore, I got a glimpse into the rich thoughts and ideas of the respondents – the interviewees in particular -, which I probably did not had the chance for, if it was not for writing this master's thesis. I am really fortunate to have been able to talk with all those people, to hear their interesting views and perceptions on refugees but also to hear their personal (life) stories. It really helped me understanding your way of reasoning, so for that I want to thank all of the respondents for their openness and welcoming (Maarten and) me to their homes. A special thanks to Frans Vorstenbos for letting us see his interesting photo collection and providing me with the beautiful front-page photo.

I would like to thank everyone who made it possible for me to write this thesis. First of all, I want to thank Martin van der Velde for helping me writing my thesis throughout the whole process. I really appreciate your support in mapping this difficult subject. Secondly, I want to thank Julia Wengert, my internship supervisor in Kleve who gave helpful insights and different perspectives towards this research. She always found some time to think with us on our approach and certain follow-up steps. Last but not least, a big thanks to my fellow intern/co-colleague and good friend, Maarten van Wel – also known as 'Wellie' - who I met during our pre-Master at the Radboud University and whom I could discuss with the challenges of research during the process of writing this thesis. I really like your optimism and I am glad that we have become even more close friends during this intense process, including our many, many, many long days in the library together. As I said, it was not an easy journey but I am happy that we choose to take this challenge together.

Not to mention, also many thanks to my boyfriend, friends and family who all listened to the 'incidental' struggles of executing this research and the ongoing writing process.

Enjoy reading my thesis!

Shauni Drost | April 2019, Nijmegen

Summary

Borders and refugees are strongly intertwined. As long as there are borders, there will always be refugees. And although attempts to decrease the importance of borders exist, refugees often have nowhere to go or are hindered in many ways when they attempt to find a safe haven. This can be clearly observed at the external and later on as well at some of the internal borders of the EU, which became highly debated in recent years. The so-called ''European refugee crisis'' ensured a lot of worry and uncertainty for refugees, but also for many citizens of EU host countries. And with the rise of far-right politics and the securitization of borders, national elections were dominated by debates about the 'other' refugee. Broadly two main narratives – with their coherent attitudes and responses - can be identified in these debates: a humanitarian and a security narrative. On the one hand, states increasingly enhanced the control of their borders. On the other hand, several states announced to 'open' their borders and welcome refugees.

Also in Germany and the Netherlands, several political parties indicated that they absolutely did not want to receive migrants and refugees anymore. Yet, the Dutch-German border physically does not exist (anymore); it is open and stable. Moreover, both countries welcomed and/or received many refugees despite the occasional struggles 'on the ground' around this theme. The question rises, whether and to what extent these events of displacement and crossing borders by thousands of 'others', affect the perception of citizens regarding the border(s) of 'their' perceived community. Because near the border, 'differences' of the 'other side' are at closest reach, I chose to focus on people living in the border region. This led me to begin this study by introducing the following research question: What is the relation between the perception of border residents regarding the Dutch-German border and their perception on the arrival and presence of refugees, and to what extent are the humanitarian and the security narrative reflected in the perception of refugees?

With the focus on ''the perception of the border as a barrier'', this research contributes to a better understanding for INTERREG ''Deutschland-Nederland'' in developments around the border. It shows what the border perception looks like, whether it has evolved in relation to refugees and why.

To answer the research question, data was collected by launching an online survey and conducting semi-structured interviews in both Germany and the Netherlands. The fieldwork resulted in 1048 questionnaires and 24 in-depth interviews that – as the qualitative part of this research – helped to uncover meaning behind the context the survey – as a quantitative method - delivers to this research. The 24 interviewees are living in the four municipalities that are selected for this study and are all located near the border; two Dutch and two German municipalities.

The collected data has been brought together and yielded several results and conclusions. First, the Dutch-German border in everyday life is (perceived) open and not physically present. But, the border is also perceived self-evident; as being 'just there', while functioning as a demarcation of states, identity,

administrative matters and security issues. Moreover, differences have become 'familiar' over the years, but one does still notice the border through for example visual, cultural and experiential differences between Germany and the Netherlands.

Second, the perception about refugees is characterized by refugees being noticeable, but also by thoughts on integration, feelings of anxiety and various themes that have been classified as 'tolerance'. Still, opinions, motivations and overall perceptions are complex and differ widely. Related to the foregoing, the study confirms that there are indeed two dominant, public narratives about refugees reflecting in the perception of border residents. In addition, it also showed that although the security narrative came out strongest, most perceptions reflected not one but both narratives, which made it seem like the respondents either contradicted themselves or nuanced their perception.

Finally, from the data it appeared that there is no clear relation between the perceptions studied. One important finding is that the us-them effect is clearly present and points to the presence of 'imagined communities'. But as the 'strength' of this effect is different in relation to different groups – 'us' versus the Germans or the Dutch and 'us' versus refugees in this case -, the related 'mental distance' to others also differs. This is why the perception of the border can be different too, depending on its context. So it appears that respondents think the existence of the border is important, but at the same time they do not want to be bothered by it too much. Crossing the border with ease due to its openness and stability, and the familiarity of the 'neighbors' on the other side, overweighs the border's (potential) barrier function. Only when their safety is perceived to be compromised, then the (potential) barrier function of the border plays a more important role by, for example, reintroducing (more) border controls. Ideas with regard to security and (more) border controls are somewhat reflected in the perception about refugees, but these are not present currently in relation to the neighboring country.

Samenvatting

Grenzen en vluchtelingen zijn sterk met elkaar verweven. Zolang er grenzen zijn, zullen er altijd vluchtelingen zijn. En hoewel er pogingen zijn om het belang van grenzen te verminderen, kunnen vluchtelingen vaak nergens heen of worden ze op veel manieren belemmerd wanneer ze een toevluchtsoord proberen te vinden. Dit is duidelijk zichtbaar bij de externe en later ook bij sommige van de interne grenzen van de EU, welke de laatste jaren tot hevige debatten hebben geleid. De zogenaamde ''Europese vluchtelingencrisis'' zorgde voor veel zorgen en onzekerheid voor vluchtelingen, maar ook voor veel burgers van EU-gastlanden. En met de opkomst van extreemrechtse politiek en de securitisatie van grenzen, werden nationale verkiezingen gedomineerd door debatten over de 'ander'; de vluchteling. Grofweg kunnen er twee hoofdverhalen - met hun coherente houding en reacties - worden geïdentificeerd in deze debatten: een humanitair en een veiligheidsverhaal. Aan de ene kant hebben verschillende staten aangekondigd om hun grenzen te 'openen' en vluchtelingen te verwelkomen. Aan de andere kant hebben staten steeds meer de controle over hun grenzen versterkt.

Ook in Duitsland en Nederland gaven verschillende politieke partijen aan dat ze absoluut geen migranten en vluchtelingen meer wilden ontvangen. Toch bestaat de Nederlands-Duitse grens fysiek niet (meer); het is open en stabiel. Bovendien verwelkomden en/of ontvingen beide landen veel vluchtelingen, ondanks de incidentele 'confrontaties' rond dit thema, ook op lokaal niveau.

De vraag rijst of, en in hoeverre, deze gebeurtenissen van ontheemding en het overgaan van grenzen door duizenden 'anderen', de perceptie van grensbewoners beïnvloeden met betrekking tot de grens van 'hun' waargenomen gemeenschap. Dit leidde ertoe dat ik met dit onderzoek begon door de volgende onderzoeksvraag te introduceren: Wat is de relatie tussen de perceptie van grensbewoners over de Nederlands-Duitse grens en hun perceptie van de aankomst en aanwezigheid van vluchtelingen, en in hoeverre wordt het humanitaire en het veiligheidsverhaal weerspiegeld in de perceptie over vluchtelingen?

Met de focus op ''de perceptie van de grens als barrière'', draagt dit onderzoek bij aan een beter inzicht voor INTERREG ''Deutschland-Nederland'' in ontwikkelingen rond de grens. Het laat zien hoe de grensperceptie eruitziet, of het is veranderd ten opzichte van vluchtelingen en waarom.

Om de onderzoeksvraag te beantwoorden, is data verzameld door het uitzetten van een online enquête en afnemen van semigestructureerde interviews in zowel Duitsland als Nederland. Het veldwerk resulteerde in 1048 vragenlijsten en 24 diepte-interviews die - als het kwalitatieve deel van dit onderzoek - hielpen om betekenis achter de grotere context te ontrafelen die de enquête - als een kwantitatieve methode - levert aan dit onderzoek. De 24 geïnterviewde burgers wonen in de vier gemeenten die voor deze studie zijn geselecteerd en allemaal vlakbij de grens liggen; twee Nederlandse en twee Duitse gemeenten.

De verzamelde data zijn bij elkaar gebracht en hebben verschillende resultaten en conclusies opgeleverd. Ten eerste is de Nederlands-Duitse grens in het dagelijks leven (waargenomen als) open en niet fysiek aanwezig. Maar de grens wordt ook als vanzelfsprekend beschouwd; als er 'gewoon zijnde', terwijl het functioneert als een afbakening van staten, identiteit, administratieve aangelegenheden en veiligheidskwesties. Bovendien zijn verschillen door de jaren heen 'vertrouwd' geworden, maar is de grens nog steeds merkbaar door bijvoorbeeld visuele, culturele en ervaringsgerichte verschillen tussen Duitsland en Nederland.

Ten tweede, de percepties over vluchtelingen worden gekenmerkt door het merkbaar worden van vluchtelingen, maar ook door gedachten over integratie, angstgevoelens en verschillende thema's die zijn geclassificeerd onder de noemer 'tolerantie'. Toch zijn meningen, motivaties en percepties over het algemeen complex en verschillen ze sterk van elkaar. Met betrekking tot het voorgaande bevestigt het onderzoek dat er inderdaad twee dominante verhalen over vluchtelingen zijn die terugkomen in de perceptie van grensbewoners. Daarnaast is ook gebleken dat hoewel het veiligheidsverhaal het sterkst tot uiting kwam, de meeste percepties niet één, maar beide verhalen weerspiegelden, waardoor het leek alsof de respondenten zichzelf tegenspraken of hun waarneming nuanceerden.

Ten slotte bleek uit de data dat er geen duidelijke samenhang is tussen de onderzochte percepties. Een belangrijke bevinding is dat het wij-zij effect duidelijk aanwezig is en wijst op de aanwezigheid van 'ingebeelde gemeenschappen'. Maar omdat de 'sterkte' van dit effect anders is in relatie tot verschillende groepen - 'wij' versus de Duitsers of de Nederlandse en 'wij' versus vluchtelingen in dit geval - verschilt ook de gerelateerde 'mentale afstand' tot anderen. Daarom kan de perceptie van de grens ook anders zijn, afhankelijk van de context. Zo blijkt dat respondenten denken dat het bestaan van de grens belangrijk is, maar tegelijkertijd willen ze er niet te veel last van hebben. Met gemak de grens oversteken vanwege de openheid en stabiliteit van de grens, en de 'bekendheid' met de 'buren' aan de 'andere kant', weegt op tegen de (potentiële) barrièrefunctie van de grens. Alleen wanneer hun veiligheid wordt ervaren als in het gedrang zijnde, speelt de (potentiële) barrièrefunctie van de grens een grotere rol door middel van bijvoorbeeld het herinvoeren van (meer) grenscontroles. Ideeën over veiligheid en het invoeren van bijvoorbeeld (meer) grenscontroles komen enigszins tot uiting in de perceptie over vluchtelingen, maar deze zijn momenteel niet aanwezig in relatie tot het buurland.

Zusammenfassung

Grenzen und Flüchtlinge sind stark miteinander verbunden. Solange es Grenzen gibt, wird es immer Flüchtlinge geben. Und während es Versuche gibt, die Bedeutung von Grenzen zu verringern, haben Flüchtlinge oft keinen Zugang oder werden auf vielerlei Weise behindert, wenn sie Zuflucht suchen. Dies ist deutlich sichtbar an den Außen- und später auch an einigen Binnengrenzen der EU, die in den letzten Jahren zu intensiven Debatten geführt haben.

Die sogenannte "europäische Flüchtlingskrise" bereitete viele Sorgen und Unsicherheiten für Flüchtlinge, aber auch für viele Bürger der EU-Aufnahmeländer. Mit dem Aufkommen von extrem rechter Politik und der Sicherung der Grenzen wurden nationale Wahlen von Debatten über Flüchtlinge dominiert. In diesen Debatten können ungefähr zwei Haupterzählungen - mit ihrer kohärenten Haltung und ihren Reaktionen - identifiziert werden: eine humanitäre und eine Sicherheitserzählung. Einerseits haben mehrere Staaten angekündigt, ihre Grenzen zu ‚öffnen' und Flüchtlinge willkommen zu heißen. Andererseits haben Staaten die Kontrolle über ihre Grenzen zunehmend verstärkt. Verschiedene politische Parteien in Deutschland und den Niederlanden gaben an, dass sie Migranten und Flüchtlinge auf keinen Fall mehr aufnehmen wollen. Die deutsch-niederländische Grenze existiert jedoch physisch nicht (mehr); sie ist offen und stabil. Darüber hinaus haben beide Länder viele Flüchtlinge aufgenommen und / oder empfangen, trotz der gelegentlichen "Konfrontationen" rundum dieses Thema auf lokaler Ebene.

Es stellt sich die Frage, ob und inwieweit diese Ereignisse der Vertreibung und das Überqueren der Grenzen durch Tausende ‚anderer' die Wahrnehmung der Grenzbewohner in Bezug auf die Grenze ihrer ‚wahrgenommenen Gemeinschaft' beeinflussen. Dies veranlasste mich zu dieser Untersuchung mit der folgenden Forschungsfrage: Welcher Zusammenhang besteht zwischen der Wahrnehmung der Grenzbewohner in Bezug auf die niederländisch-deutsche Grenze und ihrer Wahrnehmung in Bezug auf Ankunft und Anwesenheit von Flüchtlingen, und inwiefern spiegeln sich die humanitäre und die Sicherheitserzählung in der Wahrnehmung von Flüchtlingen wider?

Mit dem Fokus auf der" Wahrnehmung der Grenze als Barriere" leistet diese Untersuchung einen Beitrag zum besseren Verständnis der Grenze durch INTERREG "Deutschland-Nederland" und zeigt, wie diese Wahrnehmung aussieht und ob sie sich in Bezug auf Flüchtlinge verändert hat.

Um die Forschungsfrage zu beantworten, habe ich Daten gesammelt, indem ich eine Online-Umfrage und halbstrukturierte Interviews in Deutschland und den Niederlanden durchgeführt habe. Die Feldforschung führte zu 1048 Fragebögen und 24 Tiefeninterviews, die - als qualitativer Teil dieser Studie - dazu beigetragen haben, die Bedeutung hinter dem größeren Kontext herauszufinden, den die Umfrage als quantitative Methode für diese Studie bietet. Die 24 befragten Bürger leben in den vier Gemeinden, die für diese Studie ausgewählt wurden und alle in der Nähe der Grenze liegen: zwei niederländische und zwei deutsche Gemeinden.

Die gesammelten Daten wurden zusammengeführt und führten zu verschiedenen Ergebnissen und Schlussfolgerungen. Erstens ist die deutsch-niederländische Grenze im täglichen Leben offen (wahrgenommen) und nicht physisch präsent. Aber die Grenze wird auch als selbstverständlich vorausgesetzt, als ‚einfach da', als Abgrenzung von Staaten, Identität, Verwaltungs- und Sicherheitsfragen. Darüber hinaus sind Unterschiede im Laufe der Jahre ‚vertraut' geworden, aber die Grenze ist durch visuelle, kulturelle und erfahrungsbasierte Unterschiede zwischen Deutschland und den Niederlanden noch immer spürbar.

Zweitens ist die Wahrnehmung von Flüchtlingen durch die „Auffälligkeit" von Flüchtlingen, aber auch durch Integrationsgedanken, Angstgefühle und verschiedene Themen, die als „Toleranz" eingestuft wurden gekennzeichnet. Meinungen, Motivationen und allgemeine Wahrnehmungen sind jedoch komplex und unterscheiden sich stark voneinander. In Bezug auf das Vorstehende bestätigt die Untersuchung, dass es tatsächlich zwei dominante ,,Erzählungen'' über Flüchtlinge gibt, die sich in der Wahrnehmung der Grenzbewohner widerspiegeln. Darüber hinaus zeigte sich, dass, obwohl die Sicherheitserzählung am stärksten zum Ausdruck gebracht wurde, die meisten Wahrnehmungen nicht eine, sondern beide ,,Erzählungen'' widerspiegelten, was den Anschein erweckte, dass die Befragten sich selbst widersprachen oder ihre Wahrnehmung differenzierten.

Aus den Daten ergab sich schließlich, dass zwischen den untersuchten Wahrnehmungen keine eindeutige Kohärenz besteht. Eine wichtige Erkenntnis ist, dass die „wir-sie-Wirkung" eindeutig vorhanden ist und auf die Präsenz „imaginierter Gemeinschaften" hinweist. Da jedoch die "Stärke" dieses Effekts in Bezug auf verschiedene Gruppen unterschiedlich ist - "wir" gegen die Deutschen oder die Niederländer und "wir" gegen Flüchtlinge in diesem Fall -, ist die damit verbundene "geistige Distanz" zu anderen auch unterschiedlich. Deshalb kann auch die Wahrnehmung der Grenze je nach Kontext unterschiedlich sein. Es scheint also, dass die Befragten die Existenz der Grenze für wichtig halten, gleichzeitig aber nicht zu sehr von ihr beeinträchtigt werden wollen. Das einfache Überqueren der Grenze aufgrund der Offenheit und Stabilität der Grenze und der "Vertrautheit" mit den "Nachbarn" auf der "anderen Seite" überwiegt gegenüber der (potenziellen) Barrierefunktion der Grenze. Nur wenn ihre Sicherheit als gefährdet wahrgenommen wird, spielt die (potenzielle) Barrierefunktion der Grenze eine größere Rolle, beispielsweise durch die Wiedereinführung von (mehr) Grenzkontrollen. Vorstellungen von Sicherheit und beispielsweise die Einführung von (mehr) Grenzkontrollen spiegeln sich in der Wahrnehmung von Flüchtlingen wider, sind jedoch derzeit nicht in Bezug auf das Nachbarland vorhanden.

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List of Abbreviations

AsylVfG	Asylverfahrensgesetz[1]
AZC	Asielzoekerscentrum[2]
BAMF	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees
EAE	Erstaufnahmeeinrichtungen[3]
EU	European Union
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
COA	The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers
GU	Gemeinschaftsunterkünften[4]
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IND	Immigration and Naturalization Service
IOM	International Organization of Migration
MS	Member states
NIMBY	Not in my back yard
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
ZUE	Zentrale Unterbringungseinrichtungen[5]

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[1] German word for 'Asylum Procedure Act'.
[2] Dutch word for 'Asylum seekers Centre'.
[3] Initial accommodation facilities.
[4] German word for 'sharing housing'
[5] German word for 'Central accommodation facilities'

Chapter 1 – Introducing the theme

''[M]any of the borders which order our lives are invisible to the human eye but they nevertheless impact strongly on our daily life practices'' (Newman 2006, p.172).

The year of 2015 will enter the history books as the year of the (poorly termed) ''refugee crisis''. When the number of forced migrants and asylum seekers increased tremendously that year, the refugee plight received a lot of attention in both public and academic debate. Many stories and images of the tragic events became headline news and the outer borders of the European Union (EU) including its control function have received renewed attention. The forced displacement of people from their homes, goes combined with a regime of border controls that creates numerous barriers for their escape.

Still, with the arrival of over one million refugees in 2015 and more than three hundred thousand in 2016, the EU's migration and asylum system as well as its reception facilities in the different EU countries have been mostly overwhelmed (UNHCR, 2016), which went intertwined with a lot of worry and uncertainty among refugees as well as citizens of EU host countries.

When the seriousness of the situation came through, the attention shifted to the inner EU borders. As refugees moved further into the EU, they also stayed in the nearby region of citizens; from then on, they became more visible to people. Together with the rise of far-right politics in (international) politics and a governmental claim to the security of borders, national elections were dominated by the debate of the refugee 'other'. Through the idea of 'othering', forced migration as well as border spaces seem to have become 'fault lines' posing risks to society.

Yet, responses were divided. On the one hand, states increasingly have attempted to curtail the movements of refugees into their territories by enhancing the control of - and clearly demarcating - their national borders (Dearden, 2016; Bendixsen, 2016; Parekh, 2017). Countries such as Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey even built fences (Walker, 2015; Tash, 2016). As these morally questionable measurements are hindering the possibility of refugees to freely move and seek asylum, some of their rights are being violated. In several places, the discussion on the (re)settlement of refugees, even led to confrontations 'on the ground' (Graat & Friedrichs, 2018). On the other hand, countries like Germany, Sweden and Austria (initially) announced to 'open' their borders and many local citizens welcomed them upon their arrival (Graham-Harrison et al., 2015; Hall, 2015; Reuters, 2015). The question rises, whether and to what extent these events of displacement and crossing borders by thousands of 'others', affect the perception of citizens with regard to the borders of what they perceive as 'their' community.

Within the context of globalization, contact possibilities between people all over the world became easier and societies are increasingly connected. However, as is evident during the refugee crisis, the nation state remains relevant and solid (van Houtum, 2000; van Houtum and van der Velde, 2003). Distinctions between 'us' and 'them' continue to be of value and border markings are constructed to

separate these differing identities and the 'here' from 'there' (Duarte et al., 2016). The refugee crisis enhances differences felt in society and sharpens divisions between 'natives' and 'foreigners', 'insiders' and 'outsiders'; divisions which often lead to an increase in hatred and hostility between groups. These struggles of creating and maintaining barriers expose that borders are - in practice - a complex phenomenon instead of a simple land division. Since difference and identity are part of the creation of today's ''borders'', the question is highly relevant whether the perception on arrival of refugees also relates to the perception of inner EU borders among the 'ordinary' citizen. With the existence of different border types and the fact that borders are (ever) dynamically changing, it is important to study different cases at different times.

It is precisely this that this study contributes to. This particular research zooms in on the Dutch-German border region - in which we are dealing with the wider EU program named INTERREG – and the particular border perception of people living near this border. With the focus on cross-border cooperation along land – or state - borders, this research contributes especially to what is named INTERREG A, and more specifically to the cooperation program ''Deutschland-Nederland''. By implementing a survey and conducting interviews, it evaluates the different perceptions among border residents in this specific region and shows whether perceptions have evolved while a major development like the flow of refugees took place – and are still unfolding - within the EU.

In this region, for quite a long time already it is not that much about the border as a physical or an institutional barrier. It is about an open and stable (territorial) state border with its own history, which can be crossed easily until today. But this border still exists in different (other) ways. This is what in INTERREG ''Deutschland-Nederland'' is meant by ''the perception of the border as a barrier''.

These events, observations and questions, have led me to conduct this research on citizens' perception of the Dutch-German border (as a barrier) and their perception on the arrival of refugees in Germany and the Netherland. To what extent are Dutch-German border residents concerned with this issue? And if so, what are their thoughts and stories about it? Essentially, the main question this thesis pursues to answer is whether there is a relation between these two variables by also finding out how these perceptions look like and evolved over time. Hence, the eventual aim is to gain knowledge on the relation between border residents' perception on the arrival of refugees and their perception of the Dutch-German border (as a barrier).

1.1 Research objective

This study contributes to the INTERREG-program ''Deutschland-Nederland'' priority 2 - that is part of a wider EU plan – by creating a better understanding for INTERREG of certain developments around the border. As a follow-up to an earlier study (van den Broek, van der Velde, & ten Berge, 2015), the results of the survey led to an evaluation on how people, living in the border region, currently perceive the German-Dutch border and if this perception has changed over the past three years. INTERREG particularly focuses on reducing the ''perception of the border as a barrier'', which is why the possible

change of perception of the Dutch-German border is addressed. Furthermore, data was gathered in municipalities along the border, located in the Netherlands and Germany. All the fieldwork was conducted in April, May and June of 2018.

Though an overall focus on finding out a relation between border perception and the perception about refugees is present, another perspective has been chosen with regard to the perception about refugees. Hence, the objective of this research is threefold:

- To contribute to the existing knowledge concerning the (current) perception and understanding of the Dutch-German border by border residents, and examine whether it changed over time;
- To examine how these citizens (differently) perceive the arrival and presence of refugees. Thereby focusing on the embeddedness of two distinct but dominant public narratives: a security and a humanitarian narrative.
- Find out whether and to what extent the perception of the Dutch-German border relates to the perception of arriving refugees

As the above points show, the focus lies on the perception of border residents. This means it is researched how Dutch as well as German citizens, living in the border region, perceive refugees arriving and those who are already living in the Netherlands and Germany. By doing this along two sides of the border, it was possible to compare the perceptions of Dutch and German border residents and show any differences and/or similarities. To 'measure' the perception of border residents and compare the results between Dutch and German citizens, first a survey was distributed in both countries. As the aim of this research is not just to abstract and simplify, the qualitative part of this research should help to uncover meaning behind the context the survey – as a quantitative method - delivers to this research. As such, also in-depth data was collected in the form of talking directly to citizens through interviews. To do this in such a large area, a sample was chosen of two Dutch and two German small to medium-sized municipalities that are located close to the border. Furthermore, this research focused on the personal stories of the interviewees to test the extent to which two dominant narratives reflected in this. This told me more about their reasoning.

Finally, new insights regarding the perception of the Dutch-German border, how this perception of border residents came about and whether it has changed over the past few years will be evaluated. This might help to understand the impact of arriving refugees – and the possible associated problems with it – and how it relates to border perception.

1.2 Research questions

The question that is central to this master thesis research, is defined as:

What is the relation between the perception of border residents regarding the Dutch-German border and their perception on the arrival and presence of refugees, and to what extent are the humanitarian and the security narrative reflected in the perception about refugees?

This question can only be answered in a comparative sense, which means it needs to be inquired whether these 'perceptions' have changed over time.

To understand the perception with regard to refugees, personal stories which are presented interpreted in the form of narratives should give deeper insight into the shaping of perception.

To specify the above-mentioned central question and clarify what areas of inquiry will pass, several sub questions have been formulated:

1. How do people perceive the Dutch-German border, how has this changed over the past three years and why?
2. What does the perception of Dutch and German border residents look like with regard to refugees coming to the Netherlands and Germany, how has this changed over the past three years and why?
3. To what extent can the humanitarian and security narrative regarding the perception on the arrival of refugees be identified among Dutch and German border residents and how can this be explained?
4. Does the perception on refugees and the perception of the Dutch-German border relate and why (not)?

1.3 Scientific relevance

When looking at the influence of borders and its relation to people in human geography, there is plenty of opportunity for raising interesting questions about how refugees affect (social) geographies and interact with people from different nationalities and/or host countries.

Over the years, a shift has taken place from scientific studies that focus mainly on 'physical' borders to the study of 'borders in the mind' (Paasi, 1996), which resulted in many studies on topics in this field. One of the most noteworthy and influential authors – also in this study - are for example: Paasi (1996), van Houtum (1998) and Newman (2003). Also, other authors such as Martin van der Velde and Ton van Naerssen devoted several studies to the explanation of this subject by mainly focusing on the Dutch-German border region. Cierco and Da Silva (2016) recently wrote a study on contemporary perceptions of borders within the European Union.

Using the primary research, it contributes to the understudied field and topics – which are explained in more detail below – but moreover also supports and reinforces the argument of the academics mentioned above, that borders matter; and that borders are and remain always present. As

borders are constantly dynamically changing, it is important to study different cases at different times. Understanding strengths and weaknesses of – in this case - the Dutch-German borderland is useful for comparison and can lead to recommendations for similar cases.

Nevertheless, little attention has been paid to the *measurement* of 'border perception' among citizens. In his dissertation, Henk van Houtum (1998) developed a methodology for measuring the perception of the border. Later on, among others, Martin van der Velde (1998, 2000), Joan Anderson together with Egbert Wever (2003), and Jos van den Broek (2015; 2018) further developed and used this method in several studies.

Using their methods, this research is an important evaluation - and scientific contribution - to the measurement of current border perception of Dutch and German border residents. Moreover, it adds to existing theories on cross-border cooperation and behavior of citizens living near an open and stable border. The last point makes this research area – in light of a constructivist perspective - an even more suitable and interesting one to study the 'mental' borders, as this border evidently still exists in different ways. This is what in INTERREG ''Deutschland-Nederland'' is meant by ''the perception of the border as a barrier''.

Even more relevant is a new variable that has been added to this study and to what extent this variable relates to the border perception: the perception of the arrival and presence of refugees. Apparently, there is a void among theoretical questions being asked about borders, refugees and identities (during a crisis or conflict). Many literature searches related to "border perception'' and/or the ''perception about refugees'' yield results, researched and written in a separate context, which obviously have become less relevant when observing the typical, modern refugee or migrant (coming) in the EU. This while the issue concerning (the perception of) arriving refugees and the (management of) external borders has been discussed extensively already.

In his article about the EU's *external* border regime, van Houtum (2010) critically pointed to the way in which the EU manages (irregular) immigration through the construction of fear. Especially in light of contemporary developments - like the recent 'refugee crisis' which is partly moved to internal Europe - it is important to not just focus on external borders, but ask new questions about border practices at the *internal* borders of the European Union. Gerrard (2018) pointed to the need for academic research to respond, address and critically reflect upon bordering and boundary making within the EU, within and between nations; borders which are creating distinctions between citizens and non-citizens. Especially in fields of research in which perceptions and ideas of 'global' citizenship and e.g. humanitarian assistance proliferate; critical comments are relevant. This is where this thesis hopes to contribute to. At its core, this thesis considers the contemporary functions of state borders and the ways in which the perception and imagery of refugees play a role in the creation of these or other borders.

By zooming in on the Dutch-German border, this linkage adds knowledge on the role of an internal (EU) border, whether and how these concepts relate and how they might influence each other in its (trans)formation. Moreover, it shows how Dutch and German border residents interpret 'their'

territory or imaged community - and the state borders that are part of it – and how they perceive the arrival of refugees. This will also tell us more about how these border residents perceive (their) identity. Since the study is focusing on two countries, it is therefore also suitable for comparison.

The importance of citizens' individual perception of borders and how it evolves is that it gives in-depth insights in – and might influence - socio-spatial practices (van der Velde and van Naerssen, et al., 2015; Durand, et al. 2017) and how border residents construct life. As a consequence, it can also influence different spatial dimensions such as the functional, institutional, structural and ideational dimensions of integration (Bürkner, 2015; Evrard, Nienaber, & Sommaribas, 2018).

Last, this research addresses two dominant public narratives and presents to what extent these reflect in Dutch and German border residents' perception (on refugees), which broadens knowledge on the role of 'narratives'; and on how and why borders are socially constructed (Van Houtum & van Naerssen, 2002).

1.4 Societal relevance

In terms of societal relevance, there are innumerable ways the perception of borders is socially relevant. Especially within the context of the European Union and its aim to diminish cross borders difference and the importance of borders, we should understand what the perception of borders looks like and how it (trans)forms.

The refugee crisis has been relevant for many years, in many areas. The following section describes the societal relevance of this research for topics such as cross-border cooperation and the refugee crisis.

1.4.1   The European Union and INTERREG

The knowledge of this study will in particular help the INTERREG secretariat (''Deutschland-Nederland'') with its evaluation, but also with the development of (more) effective projects aimed at cross border cooperation. To enhance this cooperation and interaction across borders, it is important to know what factors that relate to how it is being perceived. This study adds knowledge about Dutch and German border residents; how they function and construct their lives with regard to this 'open' border (region), and how this might relate to (their perception on) the refugee debate. Understanding the role of the so-called 'refugee crisis' in society and the possible differences between perceptions, might lead to recommendations for similar (INTERREG) projects. Moreover, the results of this research may create more awareness on the dynamic of perception.

This research is part of – and contributes to - a follow-up study for INTERREG. As part of the EU-plan, INTERREG focuses on enhancing and increasing cross border cooperation and interaction, which is important for a stronger position in the region. Knowing the (people in the) region, can lead towards an even more sustainable cooperation between the two countries in the context of cross-border

activities and cross-border cooperation. Also, knowing the differences and commonalities between the countries' residents might help and contribute.

Additionally, understanding the relation between the variables studied, contributes to knowledge on the conditions of different people living together, what effect encountering 'difference' has on the way people perceive 'others' and how 'us' and 'them' live together in an 'imagined community'.

1.4.2   European refugee crisis

In addition to the (possible) relation between the perception of borders and the perception about the arrival of refugees, this research takes on particular social relevance given the European refugee crisis. The societal relevance of the perception on the arrival of (undocumented) refugees - and migrants in general - to the European Union since the Arab Spring of 2011 is evident in the increased content of media coverage, policy-designs, voting trends, and reactions of local citizens throughout the EU. Especially, in combination with new border policies in the EU, the subject occurred a lot in public debate and concerns many people such as politicians, right-wing voters, and not to mention the individuals who are themselves in the difficult situation of fleeing (form) a country and finding a new home where they are and feel welcome.

Despite the fact that many conflicts are fought over territory and border markings outside of the EU, part of the conflict haunts the people fleeing it when as a consequence, the territories and (external) borders of the EU as well as individual states within the Union may be perceived and maintained differently. Therefore, even though the development of the global plight with regard to refugees still is not over, many national governments (recently) strengthened their borders. In some countries, national borders even became visible barriers again. As such, these topics are very current and alive in the EU, as well as in national politics and daily life.

The statement of German Chancellor Angela Merkel is part of the debate around the influx of (undocumented) migrants and the management of borders. It shows how this context of mass migration - including refugees - to the EU relates to border policy and even challenges the EU's 'solidarity' value. Accordingly, the (societal) debate is no longer solely focused on the external borders of the EU. Nevertheless, much attention has been paid to the 'negative' reactions, to 'issues' and xenophobic ideas; to approaching the situation as a security issue for host countries. So, the notable absence in public discourse of positive reactions, let me raise questions as: How did these events work out for the 'ordinary' citizen (in this specific border area)? How do these citizens perceive this and to what extent does it reflect in their (life)stories – having in mind how people reacted in other places? Did it affect their border perception as well? That is what this research will contribute to.

1.5 Structure

This Master thesis comprises multiple chapters. This chapter, chapter 1, comprises an elaboration of the research objective, the research questions and explains the scientific and societal relevance of this research. The second chapter outlines the existing theories and debates on the relevant topics, and places them in a conceptual framework. The presented theories in chapter 2 will be tested within the framework of the study on the Dutch-German border region, with help of the methods described in chapter 3. Chapter 4 gives a contextualization of the research area by describing what INTERREG means and which policies play a role in the European Union, and more specifically in Germany and the Netherlands. Chapter 5 to chapter 7 present and describe the results of inquiry which entail the main concepts of this research and then also shows the analyzes thereof. The final part of this thesis, chapter 8, touches upon answering the research questions and includes recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2 - Theoretical framework

This chapter represents the theoretical framework and contains the essential concepts that apply to this study. The Dutch-German border is objectively known as open and stable; a territorial demarcation on the edge(s) of two states. Yet – and especially in borderlands – 'borders' can be interpreted differently and therefore exist in many different ways. In this case, the question rises what kind of different dimensions and aspects a border has or can have.

Hence, this chapter shows insights on the concept of 'borders' – mainly from a constructivist perspective -, but also on the role of identity, (un)familiarity and Anderson's theory on imagined communities. Furthermore, the role of (social) narratives, the perception about the arrival and admittance of refugees within the EU and its (possible) relation to the perception of borders will pass. The end of the chapter contains a conceptual visualization of the theoretical framework.

2.1 Why do borders matter?

2.1.1 The meaning of borders

A border is a separation between two worlds. Yet, borders are not simple land divisions; they are complex phenomenona, which can be interpreted in many ways. As such, in today's increasingly 'borderless' world, the focus has ever more shifted from physical or geographical borders to institutional, 'perceived' and/or 'imagined' borders that continue to ''give order to our lives'' (Newman, 2006:172). The latter is also of paramount importance in this study.

Above all, there is a difference between borders as (somewhat) objective interpretations and borders as subjective interpretations. Borders as objective interpretations can be clarified as e.g. governmental lines on maps or (physical) barriers, whose 'reality' or 'presence' are affirmed on a political, social and economic level for example (Agnew, 2008; van der Velde and Spierings, 2010).
On the other hand, subjective interpretations of borders can be explained as constructions or as Paasi (1996) names it: 'borders in the mind'. As the next section further explains, especially these (mental) borders contribute to the 'us' versus 'them' division. From a constructivist perspective, this means that borders are outcomes of ''human practices that constitute and represent differences in space'' (van Houtum, 2005:672). This does not necessarily mean that a border has to be visible to the human eye (Newman, 2006). Van Houtum, Kramsch and Zierhofer (2005:3) state that: "… a border is not so much an object or a material artifact as a belief, an imagination that creates and shapes the world, a social reality". So, the relevance and reality of the border derives from the meanings and everyday practices that are associated with it (van Houtum, 2010; Besier & Stoklosa, 2016).

Paasi (2003) argues that a border is a dynamic cultural process and similarly, Fábián (2013:39) sees borders as a ''dimension of the cultural landscape''. So, besides the state and its security policy, also for example historiography, journalism and film play a role in the construction of borders since they

are part of everyday (cultural) life (Newman & Paasi, 1998). Hence, these 'cultural borders' offer 'protection' against incompatible values through the ruling habits of the majority, be they social, economic or religious associations. In this way, borders can both block and facilitate the mobility of people, things, knowledge etc. (Gerrard, 2018), which is discussed more extensively from section 2.1.3 onwards.

As explained in the next subchapter, the perception of borders therefore also includes and / or relates to the perception about ''others''.

2.1.2 Identities: Us versus Them

This constructivist interpretation of borders also contributes to the formation of (geopolitical) concepts like 'self' versus the 'other' and 'us' versus 'them' (Newman & Paasi, 1998; Newman, 2006), which increasingly characterize the border discourse (van Houtum & van Naerssen, 2002).

Because it is about ''social practices and discourses in which boundaries are produced and reproduced'' (Paasi, 2005:18), it can also be referred to with the verb 'bordering'; through which ''territories and peoples are respectively included or excluded within a hierarchical network of groups, affiliations and identities'' (Newman, 2003b:13). This means it is not just about separating territories, but also involves the separation of nations, identities and group affiliations; in which the degree of the 'us' - 'them' effect, fuels the 'mental distance' (van Houtum, 1999:333-334). By reflecting ''the existence of intergroup and inter-societal difference with the 'us' and the 'here' being located inside the border while the 'other' and the 'there' is everything beyond the border'' (Newman, 2006:172), the border represents a demarcation; almost 'promoting' the construction of these identities.

How the social distinctions between 'us' and 'them' relate to the construction of territorial identities is explained through a scheme – see figure 2.1 -, made by Paasi (1996).

	Here	There
Us	Integration within a territory	Integration over borders
Them	Distinction within a territory	Distinction between Us and the Other *across* borders

Figure 2.1 – Socio-spatial integration and distinction (Paasi, 1996:14)

Focusing on the distinction of 'them' in the territorially-bound 'here', Paasi (1996) brings forward the example of refugees as a minority - or multiple minorities - living together in one territory. More specifically, 'spatial identity' reflects the spatial entity (such as a village, city or country) with which the actor identifies to a certain degree and which also plays a role in determining the perception of others (van Houtum, 1998).

These notions reflect the idea that humanity is (socially) clearly categorized into who is included and excluded (ibid.). It does not mean that borders simply represent the world, but they are real in a sense that they create and limit it. Defining groups in terms of social, ethnic or religious features creates

a border that separates one from another. Being comfortable with one's 'own type', separating the 'self' from the 'other': 'this is the true essence of borders, past and present, territorial or aspatial' (ibid. p. 177-178).

National governments play an important role in this process. By emphasizing national cultural differences and advantages in comparison with (e.g.) other countries, this inevitably also promotes the 'own' nation and (id)entity (van Houtum & van der Velde, 2003). Because the nation is mentally incorporated as it is 'our practical logic; a *modus operandi'*, 'we (still) act according to this social structure and hence we tend to reproduce it' (van Houtum & van der Velde, 2003:105; Bourdieu, 2012).

2.1.3   Different interpretations of borders

Van Houtum et al. (2005:3-4) define this as the ''Janus-face'' of borders, which are able to gaze into space in two directions at the same time:

''A tension thus lies at the heart of performative border spacings, which reveal on the one hand practices of control, the production of inside and outside distinctions, the ongoing carving up of domains of knowledge and purified 'dreamlands' of id/entity (van Houtum, 2002); and on the other an escape into radical openness, into teeming border-crossing inventiveness (Kramsch, 2002)''.

Spierings and van der Velde (2013) make this ''Janus-faced'' character more concrete by explaining the ''double-edged interpretations of national borders'' (Williams & van der Velde, 2005; van Houtum et al, 2005; cited by: Spierings & van der Velde, 2013). One of these interpretations which is highly useful, basically means that borders can be interpreted as barriers and/or as opportunities:

''On the one hand, borders may be observed as guardians against threats from 'the other side'. Such barriers are seen as natural and logical instruments to provide for protection. On the other hand, borders can be regarded as creating differences between adjacent countries and territories. These differences may create opportunities for people to interact across borders'' (van der Velde and Spierings, 2010:197).

So, one of the main functions of a border is to act as a barrier; a protection against outsiders who are perceived to have negative impact on the 'inside'. This so-called 'protection' or 'barrier' function can take the form of protection against foreign armies, but also e.g. against other "harmful" (f)actors, such as migrants who come 'here' to for work. When perceiving the border as an obstacle that provides protection, it could result in people avoiding 'the other side'. However, if 'difference' of the other side is seen and used as an opportunity, borders can also function as bridges. The concept of (un)familiarity offers better understanding of socio-cultural and physical-functional differences between places and

people's motivation to participate in cross-border interaction (Spierings and van der Velde, 2013). To a certain degree, unfamiliarity of the 'other side' may attract people; meaning that borders are actually quite essential components in facilitating cross-border mobility. This insight offers critical thought about those objectives of the EU that are aimed at integration and diminishing difference across borders all within Europe.

Cierco and da Silva (2016) also looked at different perceptions of borders and explain that in Europe, we have two different perspectives: the neo-functionalist perspective and the intergovernmental perspective. The first perspective emphasizes the link between borders and integration; a perspective that is actually 'supported' by the European Union as an international organization. It focuses on cooperation, integration, the 'opening-up' of borders and the freedom of movement, which is considered a valuable benefit to states. From the second, intergovernmental perspective, the idea of security surpasses the freedom of movement. Accordingly, borders function as a symbol of states' sovereignty and can thus legitimately be controlled. This also means that from this perspective the border has a protective function.

They apply their theories to current situations in the EU related to the arrival of migrants, among which many refugees. On the one hand, the 'other' refugee can be perceived and approached as a humanitarian issue; people who need help, who can integrate and - on the long term – can also be an opportunity for the countries where they arrive and stay. On the other hand, these people can be perceived and approached as a security issue; people that are a threat to 'our' cultural and social identity and who may include irregular migrants and terrorists. Further explanation about this follows in section 2.3.

Below is explained how it is argued that the arrival of migration (in particular refugees and irregular migrants) to Europe has led to the realistic perception now prevailing (ibid.).

External versus internal borders of the EU

The emergence of globalization and regionalization has not actually contributed to a decrease in the importance of borders. Some even argue that it increased its significance (Rudolph, 2005). Even within the EU, several territorial demarcations of states are still contested, which shows how security and sovereignty continue to be meaningful to states. So, although borders seem more permeable than before and people can move freely in the EU, some borders and boundaries endure or are even created instead. Take for example the external borders with its dynamics of openness and closure that create identities as a matter of classification

Reflecting on the border situation within the European Union and its process of integration, there emerges a dual tendency. While European borders are gradually dissolving as a result of the open border policy - defunctionalisation of borders on the one hand -, new 'types' of borders are evolving – re-affectivation of borders on the other hand (van Houtum, 1998). To illustrate this, van Houtum (1998:36) mentions that ''the open border policy leads to emotional problems with regard to the integration and

fitting-in of immigrants in a society''. As nations are afraid of losing their culture and sovereignty, they might emphasize their national identity more strongly to preserve it, hence also strengthening the affective (mental) borders. Paasi (1996) similarly explains his theory by using the example of movements of displaced people and refugees, which - as a result of e.g. nationalism - may create new boundaries between different groups of people, and challenge relations between existing social and physical spaces. It may give rise to conflicts as it may spark ''a fear to lose the own identity, and to lose the control over the own space and undividedness'' (van Houtum, 2011:58).

During the years, but especially since 2015, the European Union felt more pressure to do something about the major number of refugees as well as the growing 'threat' of terrorism within the EU. Following Brexit, President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, encouraged the 'protection' of the EU's 'external' borders in his ''Bratislava letter'' (Tusk, 2016), which evidently have become of great concern. Constantly monitored because of e.g. irregular migration and smuggling, they are used as an instrument in migration policy; functioning as a sort of 'filter' (van der Velde and van Naerssen, 2011). Earlier ''Fortress Europe'' became a common term in border studies already (van Houtum and Pijpers, 2007:292; i.e. Favell & Hansen, 2002) as priority seemed to be protecting borders, instead of protecting refugees.

Despite strengthening the Union's external borders by setting up border checks and the deployment of FRONTEX, many people came through. In 2015 alone, nearly 1.5 million undocumented border crossings took place within the EU (European Commission, 2015:2). Once in the EU, one is supposed to move freely. Since this is a fundamental right within the EU, the member states should function accordingly and make this possible by distancing themselves from border controls (European Commission, 2019; Cierco and da Silva, 2016). The external border should – as a sort of 'compensation measure' - be an effective barrier separating those who are included from those who are not, while EU's policies should ensure to keep those people labeled as 'unwanted' away from national territories and communities (Zaiotti, 2011). However, the securitization of migration and a lack of both thrust and consensus about the EU's capabilities, led some governments to believe that their nation and its sovereignty had to be – and maybe still should be - 'protected'. Some are fending off (irregular) migration from their territories and reintroduced (provisional) controls or even set up fences and walls at their internal borders (Scott & van Houtum, 2009). And although the European Union would support a neo-functionalist perspective, this shows that some of the member states no longer support this perspective and are now driven by a realistic perspective of the border (Cierco and da Silva 2016). This excessive fear for migrants recreates old, or generates new borders; some thus even by closing borders for these new 'barbarians' (van Houtum, 2011:58). The importance of the external EU borders has thus actually (partly) shifted to increasing the territorial or 'external' borders of the nation state (Bendixsen, 2016). As the external borders are not functioning as intended and with the solidarity of member states in question, the Schengen agreement stands on loose grounds.

2.1.4 Individual perception: dynamic perceptions of the border

So, despite European integration, borders are still of significant importance. The question arises of how the inhabitants of these (different) countries – in particular those living in the border region - perceive these events, the context-dependent circumstances and the (state)borders that play a role in this.

Borders are perceived and evaluated by the actors and individuals who deal with it (van Houtum, 1998). As said, the border can function as a barrier and be perceived as an obstacle. Hence, it could result in people avoiding 'the other side'. However, if 'difference' of the other side is seen and used as an opportunity, borders can also function as bridges for cooperation and integration. Hereby it plays a role that - to a certain degree - unfamiliarity of the 'other side' may attract people.

But individuals thus construct their own opinions, thoughts and perception: ''boundaries also reflect selective filtering systems, in which differences are perceived differently by different actors in different spatio-temporal situations (Massey, 2005 in Szytniewski & Spierings, 2014:339). Moreover, borders and how they are perceived are dynamically changing. Hence, the border can for example become more/less important to people. Borders are social constructs and 're- and de-bordering' are ongoing processes that are constantly subject to change. Delanty (2006) explains: "borders, in the imaginary sense, should be seen as a reflection role in respect of territorial determined by the physical facts of the historically contingent situation and is an on-going process, as opposed to being fixed or territorially determined by the physical facts of geography'' (p. 186).

In times of globalization, internationalization and the so-called 'opening up' of borders this gets even more interesting as citizens still derive feelings of identity from national borders (van Houtum, 1998). Thinking in terms of 'we' or 'us' and 'the other' thus also lives in individuals. As a result, borders and how they are perceived by individuals, can influence the process of starting and (the level of) maintaining cross-border relationships, it is important to see what it looks like and how it possibly unfolds and/or changes.

The perception of the border and related cross-border actions can be influenced by a few broadly distinguishable aspects: the general (physical), economic, social-cultural and legal-administrative aspect, which also relate to one another (van den Broek, van der Velde and ten Berge, 2015). These aspects all influence the individuals' perception of the border and his/her cross-border relations. Yet, the perception of the border can also be traced back to the individual itself as one builds its own regions or spaces bounded by ''mental'' borders. According to van Houtum (1998) this specific individual perception of and attitude towards the border as a barrier is rather of symbolic value than it is a function of the border. So, borders can thus be reinforced materially as well as symbolically. They are mobilized through e.g. laws, institutions and cultures (ibid.).

In order to study the effects that the border has or can have, one has to look at the regions close to the borders: the border region(s) or the borderland(s). More precisely, we have to look at (groups of) individuals in the regions and their perception of the border; both the perception of the 'self' and the perception of the 'other'. Borderlands are regions which include and connect state borders (ibid.). In

such regions, (self-)awareness of being different and awareness of otherness could be more present as the other may be felt near (Anderson & O'Dowd, 1999:595). In turn, this may cause unfamiliarity, but as integrated borderlands can function as if no border exists at all, it may as well cause unfamiliarity (Bauman, 1995). These 'mental' borders – or borders in the mind – ''should be understood as socially (re)produced phenomena, which are imaginative, but not less genuine in experience and consequences (Szytniewski & Spierings, 2014:342)''.

Moreover, according to Anderson and O'Dowd (1999) the stability of state borders and the degree of the relevant border's "openness", affect everyday life of the individuals living in borderlands. Szytniewski and Spierings (2014:344) assert that ''stable and (institutionally) open state borders have a different impact on the ways people interpret and deal with perceived differences than troubled or strictly controlled state borders''. This shows how (the perception of) borders and 'others' can have a reciprocal working.

2.2 The imagined community

It is clear that difference and identity play a role in the creation of today's borders (Anderson, 1991; Paasi, 1996). Since the Dutch-German border region includes parts of two countries, it also includes two nations which role are important to understand when examining the perception of the border and linking it to the perception about refugees.

2.2.1 Anderson's theory on imagined communities

The theories above bring us to Anderson's theory on imagined communities. According to Benedict Anderson (1991:6) the nation:

> ''is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow is members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion''.

This idea of the 'imagined community' in which one is living, may lead to the emergence of a communal social identity. The identity of the nation is according to Tajfel (1982), another form of social identity: an identity that is part of the self-perception and is predicated upon the (imagined) 'belonging' to one or more social groups (van Houtum, 1998). Hence the nation and its identity are not just produced; these are mentally reproduced. Accordingly, the 'national' space becomes a social construct and its borders are 'socialized and institutionalized' (van Houtum, 1998:29; Paasi, 2003). The created borders thus become relational and represent the lines of 'us' versus 'other' (neighboring) social identities (ibid.).

The strangers 'inside' are conceived to be part of the whole, hence part of the so-called 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983). But why do we distinguish the strangers 'inside' a place - that forms our

territorially formatted and/or perceived order - and the strangers outside that place?

Bauman (1995) reminds us of how unfamiliarity and uncertainty can sometimes be kind of exciting. As such, living with strangers becomes too: ''it is thanks to the preservation of the strangehood of the strangers, freezing the distance, preventing proximity; pleasure is drawn precisely from mutual estrangement, that is from the absence of responsibility'' (p. 132). In this way, 'strangers' can also induce excitement and/or pleasure. According to Bauman this generates a strong and orderly imagined community as it confirms the cohesion of the familiar in-group and its social identity.

At the same time, he also indicates that the freedom of choice for 'the other' outside the borders of this community is limited. Consequently, frequent social and cultural encounters can generate feelings of familiarity, recognition and security (Wilson et al., 2008; Szytniewski, Spierings and van der Velde, 2017).

Still, it should be noted that when cultural differences are too great, people may not be able to make sense of others and do not know what to expect when using existing knowledge and representations of otherness (Moscovici, 1988). Eventually this may cause feelings of discomfort and threat (Spierings and van der Velde, 2013; Szytniewski, Spierings and van der Velde, 2017). This is where the previously mentioned ''Janus-Face'' of borders comes around (van Houtum, 2005:3-4).

2.2.2   Imagined communities and the arrival of refugees

The foregoing showed that the refugee crisis enhances the differences felt in society between native and non-native citizens: ''Refugees are quintessential outsiders in a society whose non-belonging is inherent in their refugee status and lack of citizenship'' (McConnachie, 2018:314-315). That is why it is highly relevant to study whether the perception on the arrival of refugees relates to the perception of inner EU borders, in this specific case the Dutch-German border.

The notion of bordering, ordering and othering is well applicable to the big movements of refugees - and migrants in general - coming to the EU, in which the border is a demarcation of 'us' versus the refugee 'other'; as something unknown and/or unfamiliar. Contemporary politics contribute to these processes by 'reacting' very pronounced to the plight of 'others'. Consequently, boundaries of feeling and action are developed based on a belief of tolerance, bounded by the nation state or the ''imagined community'' (Anderson, 1991:50). But, as explained, the border can be interpreted differently and border perceptions can (dynamically) change. Moreover, different 'types' of borders can exist within the same space, for example, borders dividing the new ''refugee'' groups and the ''host'' groups who determine the extent to which the new groups will be integrated and/or included within the imagined community. McConnachie (2018:315) explains: ''Belonging is a negotiated condition forged between refugees and their host communities''.

As the ''imagined community'' is related to the nation state, one should also consider the national space. This socially 'constructed' space, where (land)borders are part of is actually the delineation of

this 'community' and its members (Anderson, 1983). Taking this into account, the following border interpretations emerge.

On the one hand, the border – in this case, the national Dutch-German border - could be understood as protection against the 'other' (refugee) as long as the refugee is not yet 'inside'. In this sense, the perception of the border is led by a security perspective, and the border is functioning as a protective – maybe even a desired physical - barrier. 'Bordering' relates to emotions, fears and sometimes memories in relation to the interaction with others (Paasi, 2009). As will be explained in more detail in section 2.3, there are many different attitudes towards refugees, amongst which feelings of fear and humanity. These are feelings and attitudes which frequently interact with the bordering of the nation state (Gerard, 2017). As described and explained in section 2.1.3, the external borders - and recently some internal borders of the EU - show that: "Borders are increasingly discriminatory and designed to allow easy passage for some while forming a barrier to the movements of others (refugees, 'terrorists', and traffickers)'' (Bialasieviewcz et al, 2009:85). When these ideas and portrayals of 'them' as a threat to 'us' are reinforced, refugees are marginalized from the rest of European society.

On the other hand, the border can also be seen as a demarcation of the imagined community in which refugees can get a place. When asylum seekers are recognized as 'refugee' in a nation state and receive asylum, it is expected that they integrate and somehow adapt according to 'our' standards, so they eventually become part of our perceived order; our ''imagined community''. The perception of the border is then led by an integration perspective and - as differences can be exciting - the border might even be seen as an opportunity.

However, it should be noted that when refugees continue to be (mainly) seen as outsiders within the community, it may imply that they are seen as 'precarious elements' within the borders of the nation state (van Houtum and van Naerssen, 2002).

More clarity about how this works for the residents of a well-connected and 'open' border region such as the Dutch-German one, will be apparent from this research. This study uses a bottom-up approach and focuses on what the thoughts of citizens in these states. What is their perception? How important is the border for citizens and is it still sufficient?

In the following subchapter, the other variable - and therefore an important part of this research - is discussed in greater depth: the perception of the arrival and presence of refugees. Related to this, the role of narratives will be discussed.

2.3 The 'other' refugee: different perceptions and the role of narratives

It is clear that the formation of identities is closely related to the construction and existence of borders (Wilson and Donnan, 1998). Because one of the central variables of this research is the perception with regard to the arrival of refugees, this subchapter specifically focuses on the refugee as the 'other'. However, the term 'refugee' can cause confusion sometimes. Related terms such as migrant and asylum-seeker are often used interchangeably in politics and media as well as in society. Since the media is

focusing on the term 'migrants' after the increase of people arriving in the EU, it also generated a debate on terminology (Spencer, 2015; Travis, 2015). Because this confusion may contribute to their highly debated status, it is important to first stress what different 'migrant types' can be identified and what the terminology means for their status.

Furthermore, the role of narratives is discussed: what are narratives, what effect can they have and how are they related to perception. Thereafter, I will discuss the current dominant narratives and coherent attitudes that, according to literature, play a major role in the general perception of citizens with regard to the arrival and presence refugees.

2.3.1   Migrant (definition) types

Although terms like 'refugee' and 'migrant' are increasingly used interchangeably, there is a crucial difference between both terms. Confusing them can lead to (public) misconceptions about asylum and migration, and moreover have negative consequences for refugees and asylum seekers, since the responsibility of states more or less depends on their categorization.

Generally, the term 'refugee' represents a vulnerable individual who is forced from home, while the term 'migrant' implies that one has voluntarily left home. Because their movement is voluntary, they do not have a right of admittance in a host country and are mostly perceived as not necessarily needing help and accommodation. Hence, they - deemed to be just 'migrants' - can be easily sent back (Duarte, Lippert-Rasmussen, & Parekh, 2016). Different studies indeed showed that ''people tend to be more favorably disposed towards those recognized as refugees than they are towards asylum-seekers and other migrants'' (Mayda, 2006; O'Rourke and Sinnott, 2006; and Hatton, 2016; cited by Dempster and Hargrave, 2017:10). In 2017 for example, a study conducted in Germany, showed that the majority of respondents agreed that accepting and accommodating refugees was a national responsibility (Purpose Europe and More in Common, 2017). However, its more 'favored' status may be starting to erode, as refugees are more often linked to security threats (Dempster and Hargrave, 2017). In this sense, another study shows that feelings of compassion towards refugees often go together with feelings of anxiety about refugee admissions (TENT, 2016).

A universal definition of the term 'migrant' does not yet exist, because it concerns a wide range of people who find themselves in all kinds of different situations and who cross the border for various reasons, but still have a common factor (Koser, 2007). But in general, a migrant can be defined as ''any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and has acquired some significant social ties to this country'' (UNESCO, n.d.). The International Organization of Migration (IOM) defines a migrant as ''someone who is moving across borders or within a state, despite their legal status, the reasons and causes of the movement, or the length of the stay in the host country'' (IOM, n.d.).

Van Houtum and van Naerssen (2002:130) identified four different kind of ''strangers'': the foreign entrepreneurs/managers, tourists, low-rated immigrant workers, and refugees/asylum seekers. Since the

latter two received the most attention in recent years - especially during the 'crisis' – and are most relevant to this study, it is those I will clarify.

Anyone who fled their country of origin and registers in a nation-state with the purpose of seeking refuge, is considered an asylum-seeker. After looking into someone's motives for migration, the authorities determine whether one is really seeking refuge and classify them as a refugee. The term ''refugee'' is strictly defined in article 1 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees as:

''A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it''.

A more direct definition was given by Salehyan (2006:341): "anyone who flees a country of origin or residence for fear of politically motivated harm, which could include war, persecution, and violence''. Although both the legal definition and the daily use of language with regard to the term 'refugee' bear relevance, I prefer using the legal definition in this study.

During the crisis, a big movement of 'other' migrants merged with the 'political' refugees. Often referred to as 'economic' migrants or refugees, can be defined as individuals who: ''…choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons''. (UNHCR, 2016) While their situation may be ominous, legally they are not considered refugees. The latter shows the difficulty of categorizing migrants. As commonly acknowledged in literature, Van Houtum & van Naerssen (2002:130) point to the difficulty of tracing and categorizing the numerous and diverse incentives for persons to migrate. Based upon this complicacy of motives, a ''binary policy distinction'' such as 'allowance vs. refusal' seems insufficient to preserve. It induces an unequal bifurcation in international migration politics. Moreover, several issues - such as economic security and/or (limited) access to natural resources - are not mentioned in the 1951 Convention's definition, while also being important motives for people to migrate (Wood, 1994; European Asylum Support Office, 2016).

Nevertheless, this research focuses primarily on the 'political' refugee, which is why I use the legal definition from the 1951 Refugee Convention.

2.3.2 Narratives: meaning and impact

''If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences'' (W.I. Thomas, 1928).

''All dividing lines that have an effect in society, even if they correspond with pronounced physical differences and very likely to go back to genetic differences are still 'through and through social'. That means that they are constructed and elaborated in the stories that people tell each other, and be redesigned and applied in government measures''.[6] (De Swaan, 2014:100)

As the citations above show, the way situations are defined and stories are told, have real consequences, which makes it important to understand them better when inquiring and explaining 'perception'. This is especially the case when discussing controversial topics such as 'refugees' in the European Union. Therefore, one of the research objectives is to explore and 'test' the perceptions about refugees by reproducing and describing the 'narratives' – simply defined as stories that help shape the way we perceive the world - that live among Dutch and German border residents. Before, I explain in detail how narratives can be defined, how they relate to perception and what they can mean to people in daily life, first a clear distinction needs to me made with regard to the term 'discourse' which is also used occasionally in this study. The terms 'discourse' and 'narrative' are often used interchangeably and also in literature the difference between the two terms is not very clear. By writing an article on the role of narratives that dominate the ''public discourse'', Autesserre (2012) implies that a discourse is ''broader'' than a narrative. Jabri (1996:94-95) defines it in detail that:

> "discourses are social relations represented in texts where the language contained within these texts is used to construct meaning and representation (…) The underlying assumption of discourse analysis is that social texts do not merely reflect or mirror objects, events and categories pre-existing in the social and natural world. Rather, they actively construct a version of those things. They do not describe things, they do things. And being active they have social and political implications''.

Yet, as an operational definition in this study, I will only use this term in relation to borders, while the term 'narratives' are used in relation to the perception of refugees.

Focusing solely on the narratives, Autesserre (2012) defines a narrative as ''a story that people create to make sense of their lives and environments. (…) they help shape the way we perceive the social and material worlds, and thus orient how we act upon our environment'' (p. 206). Furthermore, she

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[6] ''Alle scheidslijnen die effect hebben in de samenleving, zelfs als ze overeenkomen met uitgesproken lichamelijke verschillen en heel waarschijnlijk op genetische verschillen teruggaan, zijn nog steeds 'door en door sociaal'. Dat wil zeggen dat ze worden geconstrueerd en uitgewerkt in de verhalen die mensen elkaar vertellen, en omgewerkt en toegepast worden in overheidsmaatregelen''.

recognizes that – among other things - narratives ''authorize, enable and justify'' action, specific practices and policies (ibid, p. 206-207). Through narratives humans organize their experiences. It is both a mode of reasoning and a mode of representation. This shows the importance of the identification and understanding of these 'narratives'.

The stories that shape people's lives can be found by various ways of communication, such as spoken words, radio, television, internet (etc.) and in a specific cultural context. Moreover, narratives are 'interpreted' by the audience, so the way they are represented are (partly) shaping their meaning(s). Dominant narratives can thus enable certain actions, but may also lead to misconceptions as they do not have to be equal to realities on the ground. Even though stories and imaginations might be false, it does determine the consequences. That is why it is important to know how people see and judge situations; to know the perspective they have. Because on the basis of that certain image of reality, people judge and make decisions from which certain actions will arise.

However, we are not completely 'free' in this decision-making process. As said, people 'select' from the dominant 'stories' that politicians and (part of) society have of a situation. Officials and leaders, such as the head of state, are decisive (geopolitical) factors in this, especially during national crises. They have great political influence over a state's foreign policy and have an advantage by speaking from a national podium. They are supposed to speak for their population. As such, their statements are 'more likely to resonate with the public than the opinions of leaders voicing a more local outlook' (Cohen, 1997:32). These 'glasses' through which we look at things, are also determined by what we see and hear through TV and (social) media. Our 'glasses' are thus always colored.

Dominant narratives have caused problematic perceptions and attitudes with regard to the European refugee crisis. This is apparent from secondary sources, but the (primary) sources of research also showed that citizens struggle with overreaction and dominant narratives in news and social media compared to reality. One example of such narrative is the big emphasis on the ''genuine'' refugee versus the ''economic'' refugee and/or migrant. In this narrative, every refugee is labeled and categorized in a big group, which somehow erases their individual characteristics and stories.

Accordingly, as the way they are presented is enclosed in the broader politics of borders, the use of images and narratives is connected to the formation of 'borders' (Butler, 2004; Gerrard, 2017).
In 2016, during an UN-high-level plenary meeting about the crisis, it was mentioned that the ''toxic'' narrative about these movements of refugees and migrants should be changed. Martin Pluim of the ICMPD states: ''If we cannot change the narrative, then we cannot solve the problem'' (International Peace Institute, 2016).

2.3.3 Dominant narratives and related public perceptions

Perception and narratives are extremely complex and difficult to describe in general terms. However, in the EU, comparable debates are taking place regarding the arrival and admittance of refugees. And although their phrasing may be different, broadly two main narratives – with their coherent attitudes -

can be identified in these debates: a security and a humanitarian narrative towards refugees. This means that the portrayal of refugees and their position in society 'generally' remains limited to either passive and preferably grateful recipients of governmental or societal 'help', or as precarious subjects undermining national sovereignty and threatening (imagined) communities.

Below, it is explained in more detail what these narratives entail and what they are based on.

Security narrative

Reasoning through the glasses of a security narrative means thinking in strong us-them contradictions and may even cause feelings of being threatened by 'them' and/or 'the other'. This 'threat' perception plays a big role in today's outlook of the world, particularly within the EU. Generally, it affects anti-immigration attitudes and reactions of distance, often then used by populist groups to further intensify these sentiments.

Economic threat - Discussions go from economic migrants who might mix with 'real' (political) refugees and 'threaten' labor and welfare, to migrants being privileged ''at the expense of the tax-paying citizens'' (Betz, 1999:314).

Irregular migrants - But the concerns go beyond this, as many people feel that refugees move 'illegally' or undocumented. These irregular means of immigration seem worrying and may cohere with less support towards the admission of refugees (Collier, 2014).

Cultural threat - Another concern that lies within the security narrative and may complicate perceptions about refugees, is the country of origin which coheres with the extent to which migrants (or refugees) are culturally and ethnically different. An example may be visible religious objects, like clothing. As such there is dispute about 'the others' who infringe 'our' cultural space and identity with difference. The past few decades, especially migrants from Muslim origin had a hard time avoiding negative prejudices. Goodwin et al. (2017) show and describe the results of a Chatham House survey (distributed in 2016) to which 55% of people in ten EU states responded that they agreed with the following assertion: ''all further migration from mainly Muslim countries should be stopped''.

Terrorism - Many even link the arrival of (Muslim) refugees to the threat of (Islamic) terrorism in the European Union. The 'threat' of terrorism is a security discourse on its own which has been active post 9/11 and influenced law and (open) border policy assessments since (Newman, 2006; Dempster and Hargrave, 2017). As a result of stricter policies towards asylum seekers, getting the refugee status has also become more difficult.

Numbers - Last, the size of the (perceived) refugee group and the idea that they might bring disease and violence, contribute to negative attitudes and bias towards refugees.

One or a combination of these potential 'threats' – whether imagined or real - to the members of (possible) host countries, can shape attitudes about/to refugees and increase the support for 'restrictive immigration policies' (Esses et al, 2017:82; Hartley & Pedersen, 2015). Within this narrative, refugees and asylum seekers are constructed as different or unfamiliar to the host country, disrupting (e.g.)

example its cultural identity and/or values (Gilbert, 2013). So, polarization between -and thinking in terms of- 'us' and 'them' is strongly encouraged if individuals experience the 'other' culture as a threat or incompatible problem.

Humanitarian narrative

The humanitarian narrative focuses on supporting the admittance of and help for refugees. Reasoning through the glasses of a humanitarian narrative means 'avoiding' us-them contradictions and makes sure that (e.g.) refugees are (re)humanized again. As refugees are perceived as fellow human beings it goes together with feelings of compassion, empathizing and arguments that people who (are forced to) flee violence or oppression and seek protection, simply need 'help' and therefore must be accommodated. Thus, the ability to empathize is related to the support for the arrival and admittance of refugees (Verkuyten, 2004). The following classification is partly based on a study on the support of migration policy (Postmes et al., 2017).

Re-humanizing "us" - In the first place, this way of thinking comes from *not* focusing on the characteristics of migrants and asylum seekers, but on the values and norms of one's own group and/or of the person himself. Basically, the lines drawn (and fences built) around citizens and 'non-citizens' differentiate the values of humanity and care of others. That is why the factors focusing on humanity are central in dealing with others.

Striving for equality – According to research, the belief that prosperity or wealth should be equally distributed and that no group has more right to prosperity, one tends to take more account of the interests of disadvantaged groups, minorities and (e.g.) asylum seekers (Smith & Matějů, 2012; Anderson, Stuart, and Rossen, 2015). Hence, 'humanity' is central.

Positive appreciation of cultural differences - A way to (re)humanize refugees, is embracing the positive aspects of cultural differences and diversity, such as enrichment or complementation of the own culture. Also, it can be reasoned that the arrival of 'others' is an opportunity to not only bring newness and knowledge, but also the possibility to bolster aging populations and niches in the labor market (Legrain, 2007). Reasoning from this perception, ensures that people are also more positive towards (the arrival of) migrants and refugees. As a result of this 'form' of multiculturalism, people do not experience competition and threat from ''them'', but have confidence in ''others'' so they can also positively appreciate cultural differences (Berry, 2006).

This way of reasoning and perceiving, can be achieved by increasing knowledge about the personal circumstances and motives of migrants, asylum seekers and/or refugees, which could counteract dehumanization and contributes to the ability not to perceive ''them'' as fundamentally different from ourselves. This process is particularly effective when one recognizes characteristics that are not specific applicable to migrants or asylum seekers, but that are also characteristics of the own group (Hall & Crisp, 2005). The effect of this is that people no longer focus on ''them'', but approach them as individuals. Hence, migrants and asylum seekers are no longer experienced as a large hostile

group. As prejudices and hostility will decrease, the distinction between ''us'' and ''them'' will too (Prati, Crisp, Meleady, & Rubini, 2016).

Yet, it remains important to make a distinction between refugees and people who migrate for other reasons. Referring to section 2.3.1, 'refugees' are protected by international law which means that their protection is an international responsibility as they flee for 'valid' reasons. Empathy among citizens of host countries is therefore more related to these 'genuine' refugees. This was also mentioned in the previous section about the security narrative, in which it turned out that with the asylum-seekers that migrate for other reasons, such as 'economic' refugees, empathy plays a less important role.

Of course, the range of local responses is not restricted to either hospitality or hostility; this distinction is not black and white and one can also adhere to both perspectives. So, although refugees are rarely perceived as political subjects with claims to rights and recognition, most narratives and perceptions are intertwining. Hence the largest part of the public would often hold mixed, sometimes even contradictory attitudes and opinions (Dempster and Hargrave, 2017). The existence of this large share – known as the 'conflicted' or 'anxious' middle - underscores the complexity of concerns around which public attitudes towards refugees are shaped.

2.4 Conceptual model

From the theoretical framework, several core concepts can be highlighted that are connected to each other and relate to the research question(s). As shown below in figure 3, a simplified version of the conceptual framework is displayed:
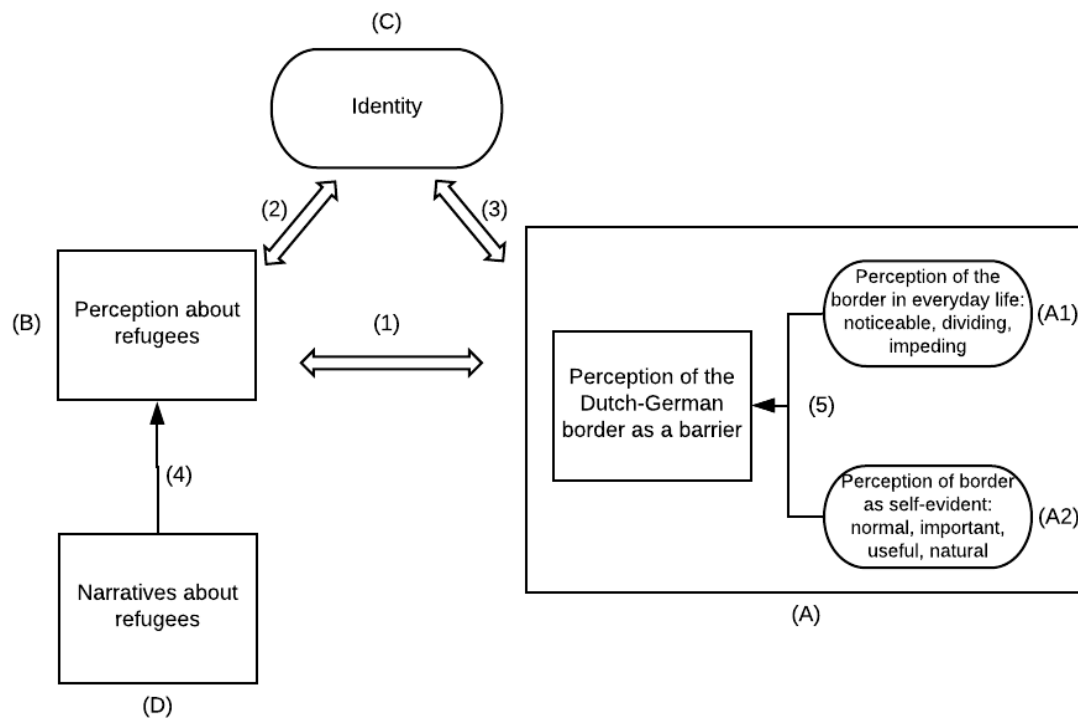
Figure 2.2: Conceptual Model

The number of forced migrants, asylum seekers and refugees coming to the European Union increased tremendously the past couple of years and is widely discussed in the EU, national politics and daily life. The outer borders of the EU including its control function became highly debated. When refugees came closer and moved to many other member states, the attention (partly) shifted from the external to the inner EU borders. Through the idea of 'othering', forced migration as well as border spaces seem to have become 'fault lines' posing risks to society. But, also on (e.g.) national and regional level, responses were divided. Some enhanced the borders controls, while others opened their borders and welcomed thousands of refugees. Given the context in Germany and the Netherlands - countries that both received and had to host many refugees, this study zooms in the (internal) Dutch-German border.

The perception with regard to refugees (B) and certain thoughts about 'managing' them, might have changed and possibly relate (1) to a certain perception of the border and its function A. Arrow 1 shows it is assumed to be a reciprocal relation.

The perception of the border as a barrier can be explained through two dimensions: the perception of the border in everyday life (A1) and the perception of the border as self-evident (A2) which both can be expressed in their corresponding semantic differentials. Since these are values of the concept 'the perception of the border as a barrier' – indicated by arrow 5 - these are brought together in box A.

Another concept is identity (C) which implies ideas of 'us' versus 'them'. As it is part of (the creation of) today's (mental) borders, it is assumed to reciprocally relate (3) to the perception of the border – as demarcation of their imagined community - and to how they perceive the refugee 'other' (2).

As mentioned before, the debate can broadly be divided into two narratives about refugees: a security and a humanitarian narrative (D). Since narratives are both (re)produced and consumed by people, it is related (4) to the perception of refugees in - or coming to - the Netherlands and Germany (B). That is why this research also unfolds the in-depth thoughts and stories to subsequently interpret which of these narratives reflect in the perception of these border residents.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

The measurement of 'perception' is a fairly complex task. So, to sufficiently measure this, the decisions was made to approach this research by mixed methods. Hence, the different strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative methods could be combined to provide validating evidence (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). By using a convergent parallel design the data is collected separately while in the end both are equally important and complement each other where possible (Creswell, 2012).

Based on the mixed methods approach, two primary research methods are chosen to explore border residents' perception of the Dutch-German border, their perception regarding the arrival of refugees, and whether these relate. For the quantitative research method, an external organization distributed the survey and guaranteed a number of at least 1000 respondents. For the qualitative method, four municipalities were selected to then approach potential interviewees through Facebook (groups) and snowball sampling.

This chapter therefore explains the two research methods used, the objectives of these methods, the preparation of research, data gathering, and data analysis for respectively the quantitative and qualitative method. At last, it will be explained how the two research methods and its results are combined for this research.

3.1 Research strategy

Even though this research is not a case study in the strict sense of the word, the choice is made to approach the research as a case study. This because the focus lies on a specific border region (with its own history etc.) and the need to outline and understand the (complex) relations of this particular case (Yin, 2009:4). Yin (2009:18) describes the case study as follows: "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context". Simons (2009:21) uses her own, more detailed definition and defines it as ''an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a "real life" context".

Though using the results of an online survey, also qualitative interviews are being conducted. First, the online survey will provide some relevant attributes and characteristics of the Dutch-German border population. Since surveys are connected to 'breadth' (Verschuren and Doorewaard, 2010), its results are part of the broader context of perceptions within the Dutch-German borderland.

Subsequently, the interviews will give deeper insights into complex phenomena within this specific case. Because the interview questions are partly based on the survey questions, the results will provide a broader and deeper understanding of people's way of thinking about the Dutch-German border and the arrival of refugees.

To operationalize this, four municipalities were chosen, each with its own context but with similar characteristics to ultimately illustrate (possible) relations and show (different) perceptions amongst citizens (Creswell, 2012). The selection of these municipalities is a way to find out what we want to know about the border residents in the region. This means they are (used as) examples to sketch an image of the perceptions and relations within the Dutch-German border region (as the 'case' of interest).

3.2 Survey

The choice for distributing an online survey was made because a large quantity of data could be collected within a short time frame, which is then also be processed quickly as all data is immediately available for analysis (Boeije, 2016). The online survey, which was meant for citizens from the whole border area, provided information about the characteristics of the population living at and near the Dutch-German border.

The original survey only measured the ''perception of the German-Dutch border as a barrier'' to eventually evaluate whether border perceptions may have changed for citizens. However, to measure the research objectives of this study, an extra dimension has been added to the survey which dealt with the ''perception about the arrival of refugees'' over the past couple of years. As such, it was possible to study how the perception about refugees looks like and how it relates to the perception of the border.

3.2.1 Preparation

Operationalization

For an earlier study in 2015 (van den Broek, van der Velde, & ten Berge, 2015), the notion of perception was operationalized in a number of latent variables. There are four types of barriers for citizens to be distinguished: general / physical, economic, socio-cultural and legal / administrative. Indicators have been developed for each type of barrier and converted into questions to respondents. This concerns so-called semantic differentials, each of which should express part of the perception of the border (van Houtum, 1998; van der Velde, 1998). It concerns the following seven pairs of concepts:

Noticeable – Unnoticeable   Normal - Abnormal

Impeding - Not impeding   Dividing - Uniting

Important – Unimportant   Useful - Useless

Natural – Unnatural.[7]

To determine the perception of the border, the respondents were confronted with questions – and answers to be filled in – largely based on these concepts in a positive and negative version (cf. van

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[7] 'Merkbaar – niet merkbaar', 'normaal – niet normaal', 'belemmerend – niet belemmerend', 'verdelend – niet verdelend', 'belangrijk – onbelangrijk', 'nuttig – nutteloos', 'natuurlijk – onnatuurlijk'.

Houtum, 1998; van der Velde, 1998; 2000). Once again, a seven-point Likert-scale was used. A factor analysis reduces these seven pairs of concepts into two dimensions, which methodology is explained extensively in section 3.2.3.

Sample

The survey was launched by an externally engaged organization on the 21th of May and ensured at least 500 respondents (proportionally) living in the INTERREG-operational area of the Netherlands and 500 respondents living in the German part of that work area. An advantage of this was that the company took care of the equal spread of respondents throughout the border region, hence contributing to the representativeness of the data(results).

Online survey

First of all, the survey was made available in Dutch as well as in German language. Most questions were multiple choice so completion took less time. On the one hand, this made it easier for us to have a lot of people complete the survey and get a clear image of their perception of the border. On the other hand, this might not entirely expose their 'own' perception, when one had to choose from pre-selected answers. Moreover, this may impose a certain way of thinking and answering. Still, this way was more suitable for the analysis and the interview results will give further interpretation to this.

The 'original' questionnaire – also used in 2015 - was already available, but underwent a number of small adjustments for the current situation and was supplemented with three questions about the refugee issue (in other words: an extra dimension). By adding these questions, we gained some insights on the perception about the arrival and presence of refugees in Germany or the Netherlands. Only a limited number of questions to the survey could be added as otherwise the survey would be too long and could no longer be supported by the internship organization and the external company, which still had to distribute the survey to 1000 respondents. Initially, the selection of questions became quite difficult, but this careful selection was indeed necessary to make sure the survey was not too long for respondents and prevent them from dropping out of the survey.

So, the eventual survey explores how people perceive the Dutch-German border, how they perceive the arrival of refugees before, whether they think their views on these themes have changed recently, and if these perceptions relate. During the analysis, the questions focused on border perception will be linked to the questions about refugees, to see if there is a relation.

Because there is no data on what people thought a couple of years ago, a direct way of asking the respondents about it was chosen, which resulted in adding a question to the survey that is focused on how the respondents perceived refugees about three years ago and to what extent they think this perception has changed so far.

3.2.2 Data gathering

Participants and representativeness

Online distribution of the survey resulted in 1055 respondents. The distribution and data gathering was done by an external organization that is experienced in collecting and analyzing data. This organization delivered the data in the form of an Excel-output. After a careful check of the data, a useful sample of 1048 respondents was left.

The characteristics of the respondents are shown in table 4.1 (chapter 4). Because it was not allowed by the external organization, no people under the age of 18 were approached. That is why it was deliberately chosen to largely leave the age group 'above 65' out of consideration.

As mentioned earlier, the organization also took care of the equal spread of respondents throughout the border region, hence contributing to the representativeness of the data(results).

Online survey

Eventually the survey consisted of thirty questions and took around ten minutes to fill in. The English version of the survey can be found in appendix 1. Questionnaires that were not completely filled in or were not considered usable have been removed from the database.

3.2.3 Analysis

The results of the questions that were added to the original survey - questions focused on the perception with regard to refugees and whether this perception changed - will be used and analyzed in combination with the other survey results.

The 'perception of the border as a barrier' of Dutch-German border citizens was already measured once in 2015 for INTERREG. For this study and the ability to measure the 'perception of the border', a methodology was developed (van den Broek, van der Velde, & ten Berge, 2015) based on earlier studies (van Houtum, 1998; van der Velde, 1998). In order to properly measure the perception of the border and display the survey results for this research, this previously developed method was used. With this methodology, it is possible to indicate specifically in the future where the greatest challenges lie, and where the changes have taken place specifically.

The survey results can be divided in two 'units'. First, descriptive statistics are shown, such as averages, percentages etc. in tables that clearly arrange the percentages next to each other. These tables present a description of how and what was answered to the individual survey questions. Hence, insightful comparisons can be made between the Dutch and German population, but also based on gender, age and education for example. The most relevant tables are included in the results chapter. An overview of all the tables can be found in appendix 5.

As previously mentioned, the latent variables and indicators – or: semantic differentials - were converted into questions. The study carried out in 2015, showed that the 'perception of the border as a barrier' can be evaluated from two different dimensions, which are determined through a factor analysis. The first dimension can be described as 'the perception of the border as a barrier in everyday life', and is formed by three indicators 'noticeable', 'dividing' and 'impeding'. The second dimensions can be described as 'the perception of the border as self-evident' and is formed by four indicators 'normal', 'important', 'useful' and 'natural'. This concurs for a large part with the findings of van Houtum in his research on entrepreneurs in the Dutch-Belgian border-area (1998).

To verify whether these dimensions and their related indicators are the same for this dataset and, perhaps even more important, for the (survey) part with regard to the added variable 'perception about the arrival of refugees', the factor analysis had to be performed again. Here it turned out that both dimensions can still be used to explain and evaluate the border perception.

Each dimension has a score for each of the four aspects (economic, socio-cultural etc.) which can be calculated by taking the average of the dimensions' related three respectively four indicators per respondent and rescaling them on a scale of zero to hundred (0 to 100). The higher this score, the *less* the border is considered a barrier. And the other way around, this means the *lower* this score, the *higher* the border is considered a barrier.

It requires clarification that the more the border is perceived as 'self-evident' (indicated by a *lower* score), the more the border is considered normal or natural; as being 'just there'. As this is assumed to mean that the respondents have less doubt about the usefulness and/or the importance of that border, it also indicates a stronger perceived 'barrier effect' of the border.

The different scores for the added variable (or: aspect) 'perception about the arrival of refugees' in relation to the scores for the 'perception of the border as a barrier', show the (possible) change of border perception in recent years, in relation to the perception of refugees, thus indicating the presence of a relation. For this reason, these scores are rescaled on a scale of -100 to 100. When a score reaches 100, one can speak of a *decreased* barrier effect, while a score approaching -100 describes an *increased* barrier effect. A score of zero means that there is a constant barrier effect (unchanged).

So, besides a 'descriptive' part of the survey results, the analysis also provides a set of scores to compare. Hence, a score is 'calculated' for:
- Every aspect (economic, socio-cultural etc.) per dimension;
- The total of the two dimensions per aspect (an average number);
- The overall perception (average of the total scores of the four aspects);

In chapter 5 to chapter 7, these will all be presented in tables and explained in more detail. Thereby variables such as gender, age, etc. are taken into account. If a 'statistical significance' of the scores is indicated, the following notation is used:

** = Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).

* = Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

3.3 Interviews

Interviewing is a well-known and widely used method in qualitative research, as it is a suitable way to gain in-depth insights in what people are thinking. This makes it a very helpful method for a case study research (Yin, 2003). This way of qualitative research "attempts to make sense of and interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:3).

As the results of the survey form the broader context of the border region, the aim of the interviews is to embrace the complexity of 'perception' and gain in-depth information about the Dutch-German border perception. Additionally, it will provide insights about how border residents perceive refugees that are coming towards Germany or the Netherlands and whether they think it relates to their perception of the border. As previously mentioned, the interview results thus form a further 'explanation' of the quantitative results, through which we can better understand the reasoning of people. Especially because the survey could only contain three questions about the refugee-dimension, the interviews gave us the opportunity to get a really good image and understanding of the perception about refugees.

Eventually twenty-four interviews – six in each municipality - were conducted. These interviews are analyzed through coding the transcribed interview texts and show how people describe their perception and how they explain it by interpreting their stories and presenting the narratives that came by during the interviews. This last way of interpretation and analyzation is especially relevant for explaining the perception of the arrival and presence of refugees.

3.3.1   Preparation

Purposeful sampling

Based on preliminary research, it has been determined in which municipalities it is most interesting to ask people about their perception regarding the Dutch-German border as well as their perception on the arrival of refugees (purposive sampling). Because only four municipalities have been selected as sample for the border region, it is important to indicate and argue well why we think these municipalities lead to good statements.

Looking at the research objectives and the larger context of this study, it is desirable to make a comparison between the perceptions of Dutch and German citizens. Hence it was logical to select two municipalities in the Netherlands and two in Germany. As such, they differ nationally, but might also differ with regard to refugee policy for example. In Germany, 'Kleve' and 'Rees' was selected. In the Netherlands, it was 'Berg en Dal' and 'Winterswijk'.

There were however more criteria that eventually led to the selection of the municipalities in question. These were necessary to select the municipalities that were most helpful for the aim of this study and moreover led to the most representative results for the research area. First of all, 'distance' is looked at, which is why we selected municipalities close to the border, where 'difference' is at closest

reach and the chances of people 'getting in touch' with the border are bigger. This may provide more useful information about the concept of border perception.

Furthermore, the 'size' of the municipality based on its population was focused on. As, in general, the Dutch-German border region has predominantly (relatively) small municipalities, this led to the choice of these smaller ones which make sure the results are more representative for the municipality in question and hence for the overall case.

At last, as also different perceptions on the arrival of refugees are inquired, municipalities that are engaged in the reception and accommodation of refugees have been looked into. In both countries, municipalities must receive and house a certain number of refugees, (mostly) based on the population of the municipality. Nevertheless, each country has 'first admission facilities' – also known as: asylum centers - in which refugees are grouped, waiting for a residence permit. As these are not located in every municipality, the choice was made to select Dutch and German municipalities with and without such a facility. Thereby it is assumed that the presence of an asylum center involves the proximity of a larger number of refugees, than where an asylum center is missing.

Preliminary contact

Facebook groups aimed at citizens of the selected municipalities were searched to find citizens willing to do an interview. This means of communication was used with the idea that a considerable larger and more varied audience would be reached.

The administrators of various Facebook groups were sent a message and asked permission to place the request. In the Facebook groups for which permission was given, a message was posted. As can be seen in appendix 4, the potential interviewees were informed in advance about the study on the Dutch–German border region, and the particular interest in personal dialogue about people's daily experiences with - and their perception of - the border. It was deliberately chosen not to mention the refugee 'aspect' of the research in advance, as it is a controversial theme which could for example lead to bias, negative response, politically correct answers or no response at all. Eventually, there were quite some responses, making the selection of respondents quite easy.

Furthermore, the desired number of twenty-four participants were found via objective informants - who did not take part in this research themselves - from the own social network and through snowball-sampling. In this way, it was easier to reach people who were suitable on the basis of the selection criteria (mentioned below). 'Snowball-sampling' is a way of purposive sampling, which contributed to a more diverse sample.

To all Facebook respondents, a private message has been sent, which can also be found in appendix 4. The selection of participants was well-considered and based on these following objective criteria: 1.) Residing in one of the four selected municipalities for at least 5 years 2.) Gender 3.) Age; for this I have used the age categories similar to those in the survey: "18 to 30 years", "30 to 50 years", "50 to 65 years", "Older than 65 years", and 4.) Level of education; with the categories ''primary

education'', ''secondary education'' and ''higher education''. By including a number of demographic characteristics, the sample is representative and the results could sketch a varied and representative image of people's perception. Moreover, the comparison between the two countries and four municipalities would be easier and validated.

The use of Facebook was very helpful in finding respondents. The downside of using Facebook and sending people a request about a certain subject, is that more people (will) respond who have a (specific) interest in research and/or the subject in question. On the other hand, it can also turn out advantageously, because people may be less reserved and possibly more able to tell the interviewer what they think about the subject.

Interview questions

To keep an overall consistency, an interview guide was used (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). This meant that all interviews were semi-structured by listing some themes and corresponding questions. An example of the structure we adhered during an interview, can be found in appendix 2. Partly based on the survey questions, the interview questions were built. In this way, the results of the interviews gave deeper insight into the survey result - which are more 'contextualizing' - and created better consistency in the results. Also, several other questions were made, keeping them as broad and open as possible, so that one's answers would not be steered in a certain direction.

It was deliberately chosen to keep the interviews *semi*-structured, so that it remained possible to 'adapt' the questions a bit to the interviewees' individual situation and ask follow-up questions when interesting understandings or interpretations appeared (Boeije, 2016).

On top of that, the interviewees were asked the direct question whether they saw a relation between their interpretation of the border and their perception about refugees, as this would be helpful to the research. The downside of using this way of questioning, is that it may have steered their way of thinking a little bit.

3.3.2   Data gathering

Interviewees

As planned, all interviews were conducted during April, May and June of 2018. In the end, twelve men and twelve women ranging in age from 20 to 75 years were interviewed. An overview of all interviewees, can be found in appendix 3.

The methods used to select the interviewees – as mentioned earlier - facilitated trust between interviewer and interviewee, which sometimes even resulted in having a more personal conversation with those interviewees before the interview started.

Interviewing

All interviews were conducted by travelling to the selected municipalities and took place during weekdays in an informal setting; mainly at people's home. The interviews were of an average length of 45 minutes, but varied from 25 to 80 minutes.

Before each interview, people were shortly informed about 1.) who we were and what this research was for 2.) the theme of research and the order of passing subjects 3.) the importance of people not changing their answers or their style of speech to give 'politically correct' answers or to accommodate a certain audience; so, the importance of their own opinion is emphasized. Also, the interviewees were asked for permission to audiotape the interviews. As such, a transcript could be written for the subsequent analysis and use of quotations.

Furthermore, it has been agreed with the respondents that their name(s) are not mentioned in this thesis and that they thus remain anonymous. All the interview transcripts are available at request.

3.3.3   Analysis

Transcription

All interviews are audio taped and subsequently fully transcribed. Some conversations in German and/or in English, were occasionally misunderstood. Therefore, those pieces – but also parts that were irrelevant to this research - were omitted from the transcription. Fortunately, this did not result in important or large pieces of interviews being lost.

Coding

First of all, every interview transcript is coded, as coding makes it easier to identify and understand meanings behind the data to eventually find explanations and insights that could help explain the data from the survey. A systematic approach has been chosen for coding. This approach is based on Strauss and Corbin (1990) and consists of three phases: open, axial and selective coding. The reason for choosing this approach is because it brings structure to analyzing the large amount of data, which then makes it easier to discover similarities or connections between the results of the two methods used.

Before the start of coding, all the data was explored to make sure it was complete and to get a general sense of the data. By means of 'open' coding, free categorization of the text has been started. This means examining the transcript and 'describing' what was read in the transcript. As such, codes were made of initial ideas and thoughts. Moreover, subcategories that suggest several perceptions about the categories were coded. A big part of the codes is based on the individual questions that came by during the interview.

Because the huge amount of data, the also many codes had to be reduced. So secondly, axial coding was started in which different main categories from the open coding 'phase' were identified. The selected code or category is mostly one that is much discussed or one 'of particular conceptual interest

because it seems central to the process being studied' (ibid., p. 160). Eventually, there were multiple rounds of open and axial coding, but mainly the themes that came by during the interview were discussed, which is actually named a '*literal description method'*. Additionally, a '*manifest content analysis*' was performed- especially for the interview theme 'perception about the arrival and presence of refugees' - which means the data was sometimes searched for visible answers and words (e.g. ''threat'', ''integration'', ''terrorism'') (Dunn, 2010).

The third and final phase normally consists of selective coding in which interrelations between categories are proposed so in the end, a story can be developed. This was not done precisely because the research objective is not aimed at creating new theories. Instead, the themes that emerged from the first two phases of coding, are used to describe the final 'story'. The formation of these themes makes the data easier to understand and the results easier to interpret.

After bringing all findings together, the results were compared with the theoretical framework. As such, the data results are interpreted and eventually conclusions on the research questions were drawn. The results of this analysis can also be found in chapters 5 to 7.

In the description of results, quotations of individual interviewees are used to reinforce certain arguments or interpretations. One should note that only the Dutch and German interview quotations have been translated into English. The original quotes can be found in a footnote. Some of the interviews with German respondents were conducted in Dutch, which means that the transcriptions and original quotes are also shown in Dutch.

When relevant, a sort of 'quantifying' language is applied to indicate the extent to which certain ideas and opinions are shared (Think of: '*a majority found that...*' or '*only two of the respondents described...*').

Narratives

To gain an even more in-depth picture of the perceptions about the arrival of refugees, several personal stories of the interviewees are presented. After interpreting these stories, the results are presented in the form of ''general'' narratives derived from these individual interview transcripts. These narratives thus represent experiences and life stories of some of the interviewees and are expressed through their daily use of language. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000:20): ''Narrative inquiry is stories lived and told''.

Chapter two explained that there are two 'dominant' narratives with regard to the arrival and presence of refugees: the humanitarian and the security narrative. The narratives that will be presented thus show whether and to what extent these ''dominant'' narratives reflect in the interviewees' stories.

Because this research did not specifically focus on narrative research, the interviewees were given some space to tell about their vision and opinions. Yet, some of them wanted to tell a story or experience; others were more closed and did not let go much. As Creswell (2012:54) explains: ''Narrative (…) might be text used within the context of a mode of inquiry in qualitative research (Chase, 2005), with a specific

focus on the stories told by individuals (Polkinghorne, 1995)''. According to Creswell, there is not a specific structure or writing strategy for representing narratives. Because narrative research has many forms, many authors suggest flexibility in structure and analytic practices.

Although this is not a 'narrative research' in the strict sense of the term, guidelines were needed, which is why it was chosen to use Clandinin and Connelly's three-dimensional space approach (2000). This means analyzing the data for three elements: ''interaction, (personal and social), continuity (past, present, and future), and situation (physical places or the storyteller's places'' (p. 56). Based on this approach, first (life) stories were illustrated on the basis of quotes to then interpret and retell them in the form of narratives. As a result, this way of both describing and analyzing will express in-depth insights in feelings and experiences of individuals and will clarify their perception about refugees.

Word clouds

Visualizing the results is an important method to capture findings and can even help with seeing new aspects of these findings. The results of one specific interview question are visualized in a word cloud. This means that the number of certain words which were mentioned is visualized by the size of the words. The interview question focused on three words, which came up in people's minds when thinking of the arrival and presence of refugees. This frequency calculation was meant to get a sense of how often a topic or theme occurred. It is actually a quantitative analysis of qualitative data. The words that needed to be visualized, were then coded, counted and visualized in a word cloud. Additionally, through this method the differences between the German and Dutch respondents could be visualized.

Limitations

During the analysis of the data there were some limitations related to inference and self-reporting, which both were sometimes necessary to make sense of the data.

According to King (2000:602) inference can be defined as ''the process of using facts we know to learn about facts we do not know''. This was now and then necessary when studying and analyzing the perceptions, stories and narratives of the interviewees.

Similar is 'self-reporting' from the interviewees. Especially when trying to evolve people's perception on the topics of interest, self-reporting was sometimes necessary (Dodd-McCue & Tartaglia, 2010). As the respondents revealed their opinions (of others), their values and motivations, their answers sometimes contained implicit results. Secondary and follow-up questions were asked as well as possible to prevent conclusions being drawn on the basis of ambiguity, own prejudices or assumptions. Yet, every now and then it was necessary to derive some implicit answers and results from the overall responses.

3.4 Conclusion

As methods, an online survey method as well as a semi-structured interview method are used. The online survey will provide an image of the broader context, while the interviews will give deeper insights into complex phenomena within this specific case. As these methods are combined, the results should give a broader understanding of people's perception of the Dutch-German border and the arrival of refugees.

The concepts described in chapter 2 are used as a framework by grouping the results from each method into the three main concepts of research: the perception of the border, the perception with regard to refugees and the relation between these two. The objectives were 1.) To discover, analyze, and conclude what the interpretation of the Dutch-German border looks like and to what extent it (recently) changed 2.) To discover what the perception with regard to refugees looks like and whether it (recently) changed 3.) To show whether and to what extent this can be explained by two dominant public narratives and 4.) Find out to what extent the perception about refugees relates to the perception of the border.

The results are discussed in two ways. Chapter 5 and 6 are descriptive chapters, which mainly outline a description of relevant outcomes of the survey questions, calculated values and the interview results that all together indicate the perception of the border (as a barrier) and the perception of refugees. Then the last results chapter 7 combines the results of the quantitative and qualitative research. This analytical chapter will empirically review the descriptions of the first two chapters and (where possible) explain whether the variables cohere. The 'how' and 'why'-questions are leading in this section. In this way, the qualitative results are used to supplement the quantitative results, but also to dig deeper and perhaps clarify or even contradict it.

As mentioned before, the 'statistical significance' of correlations is – whenever relevant - indicated in all three chapters.

Chapter 4 - The Dutch-German border region

This chapter addresses the chosen case and its most important characterics. To contextualize the empirical findings, the European refugee policies as well as the policies of the two countries involved are discussed. Moreover, the refugee crisis is briefly sketched from a German and Dutch perspective. The last section of this chapter discusses the implementation of the refugee policy in the selected municipalities: Berg en Dal, Winterswijk, Kleve and Rees.

4.1 Research area

In line with the research aim to examine the interpretation of a border and whether this might have changed over the past three years, the Dutch-German border region, and more precisely the geographical border area of INTERREG, was selected for this study (see figure 4.1).

The reason for choosing this area is the institution of INTERREG which is working and managing their cooperation program ''Deutschland-Nederland'' over here. Together with 60 other cooperation programs, the program ''Deutschland-Nederland'' is part of 'INTERREG A' as it is located along and focuses on a national border (Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland, n.d.).

Figure 4.1: INTERREG working area Deutschland-Nederland

INTERREG consists of 79 programs in which cooperation takes place in different ways: across borders (INTERREG A), transnational (INTERREG B) and interregional (INTERREG C). Through this project that is founded in 1990, the EU creates a large network and promotes cross-border cooperation between national, regional and local parties from different member states. So, commissioned by the EU, it is coordinating the barrier effect of the border and to what extent it is seen as a barrier by citizens, in order to reduce this effect as much as possible and stimulate cross border cooperation.

As this is very related to this study, there was close cooperation with the INTERREG secretariat during the execution of this research. Eventually, the current INTERREG project ''Deutschland-Nederland'' is planned to continue until 2020, with a final evaluation at the end of the period.

This (INTERREG) border area has around 14,3 million inhabitants, of which 7,3 million in the Netherlands and 7 million in Germany (Landesamt für Statistik Niedersachsen, 2017; Information und Technick Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2018; Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2018). The Dutch part of the area includes the entire provinces of Drenthe, Groningen and Friesland, and a large part of the provinces Limburg, Noord-Brabant and Gelderland. The German part of the area includes a large part of the federal states Niedersachsen and Nordrhein-Westfalen. Whether a Dutch municipality or a German 'Kreis' wants to participate in INTERREG Deutschland-Nederland, they determine themselves.

This region has a rich history with the Second World War and the period afterwards as probably most relevant, since the (physical) border underwent a number of changes. For example: during the Second World War, Germany annexed the Netherlands for more than five years, causing a large flow of refugees from both the German and Dutch parts of the border area. Another noteworthy example is that until today, there is still controversy about the precise location of the border and the demarcation of Dutch and German territory around the Ems-Dollart Estuary. We are talking about a status quo since 1559.

Nevertheless, when looking at post-war Europe, cross-border cooperation and integration within the EU has been going on the longest at the Dutch-German border (Strüver, 2004), which according to Szytniewski, Spierings and van der Velde (2017:67) ''has contributed to stable and open borders and everyday cross-border practices''. Besides, they are both member of the EU and the Schengen agreement, so Dutch and German citizens should not encounter too much ''hard'' obstacles to cross-border interaction (Spierings and van der Velde, 2013:12). Despite the occasional border controls, many residents of the area have experienced or heard of the transition from daily border controls to free movement of people and goods. Such major developments may relate to a change in/of the border perception of the 'ordinary' citizen(s).

In the region, many people frequently cross the border for e.g. leisure, functional shopping, family and/or work-related activities. Differences in facilities, price or the quality of products are familiar examples of attractive reasons to cross the border. According to a recent study (Szytniewski, Spierings, and van der Velde, 2017) border residents feel regional attachment to the Dutch-German border region. As such, proximity may be construed through feelings of familiarity and comfort, while on the other hand the 'unfamiliarity' of the other side contributes to attracting people.

But, differences are present. As Spierings and van der Velde (2013:12-13) state: 'Both sides of the border are also not (yet) completely similar where it concerns cultural aspects' which makes them somewhat 'unfamiliar' to each other. And as the states of Germany and the Netherlands differ in size and language, and know different national policies, the possibility exists that German and Dutch border residents differently perceive the border or differently perceive the arrival of refugees. It makes this region very useful and interesting for the purposes of this research. That we are dealing with an open and stable border makes it even more interesting to study whether certain developments cohere with the

perception of the border and may even change it. Notable differences will be reflected in the results chapter.

In table 4.1 an overview of the survey respondents' characteristics level is provided. Three objective factors where used: gender, age and education level. An overview of the respondents' residency within the border region can be found in appendix 6 (on NUTS-3 level). The distribution with respect to residence is representative, but unfortunately this is less so for the distribution with regard to age and education. Although this slightly affected the representativeness of the survey, the results show that this had no major consequences for the research.

Table 4.1: Distribution of respondents over gender, age and level of education

	The Netherlands		Germany		Total	
Gender	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	260	49,8%	254	48,3%	514	49,0%
Female	262	50,2%	272	51,7%	534	51,0%
	522		526		1048	
Age						
18 - 30	120	23,0%	107	20,3%	227	21,7%
30 - 50	152	29,1%	211	40,1%	363	34,6%
50 - 65	247	47,3%	202	38,4%	449	42,8%
above 65	3	0,6%	6	1,1%	9	0,9%
	522		526		1048	
Education						
Lower	68	13,1%	170	32,4%	238	22,8%
Middle	291	56,0%	251	47,9%	542	51,9%
Higher	160	30,8%	101	19,3%	261	25,0%
Different	1	0,2%	2	0,4%	3	0,3%
	520		524		1044	

4.2 Refugee policies

To manage the increase of refugees coming to the EU effectively, the countries of the EU have agreed to divide the arriving refugees across the various member states.

Refugees entering the EU are subject to the laws of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). These laws state that the member states should offer protection to those who are at risk of persecution and are granted refugee status. Besides, when arriving in an EU Member State, people seeking refuge and a 'status' are also subject to a thorough evaluation of life in their country of origin. In the end, the CEAS determines whether one/an individual is truly considered a refugee and is granted international protection. The procedure under the CEAS, is shown in figure 4.2 (European Commission, 2019).
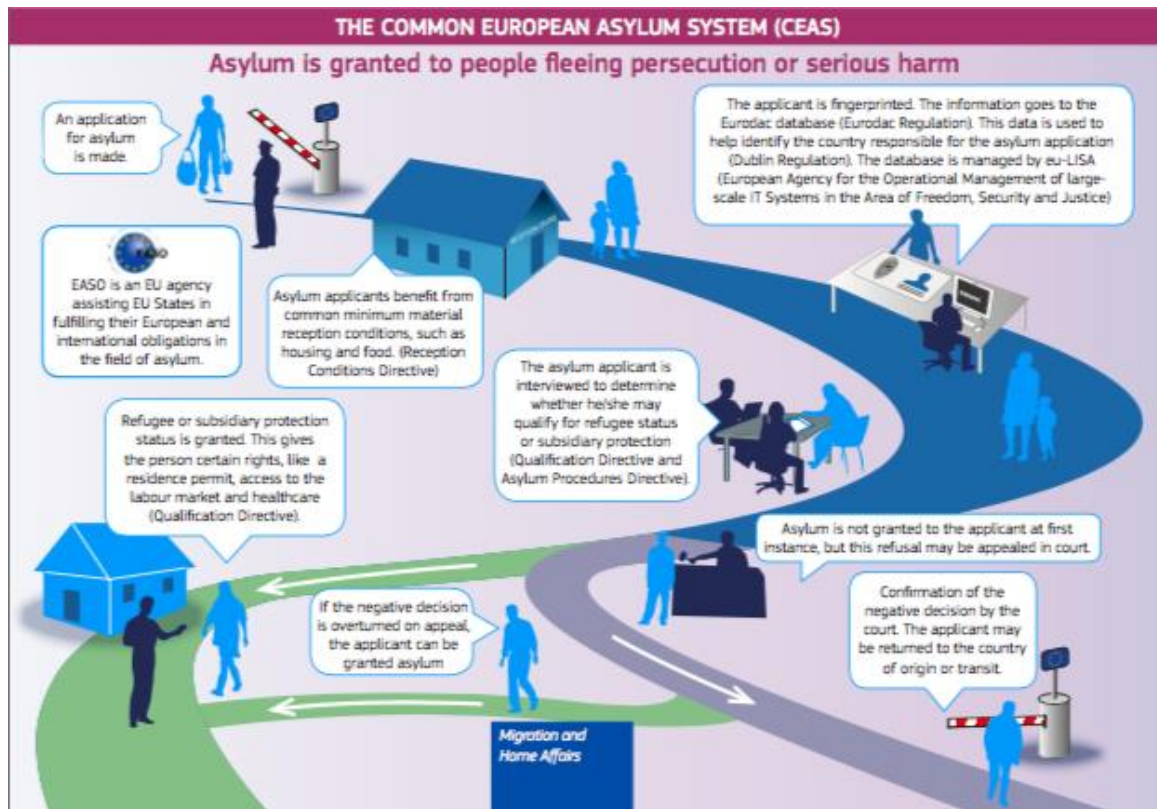
Figure 4.2: A visualization of ''The Common European Asylum System'' (CEAS)

Another type of migration policy within the EU, is the outsourcing of asylum through relocating the reception and accommodation of asylum seekers in places at the outer borders of the EU or even in regions around the countries of which asylum seekers originate or the countries through which they pass. These policies have resulted in overcrowded camps, a proliferation of exile camps and several intense anti migration policies in and around the European Union. The Dublin Regulation has a share in this, as it determines which State is responsible for examining the application. The regulation's objective is to prevent an applicant from submitting applications in multiple Member States and to lower the number of "orbiting" asylum seekers. In most cases, the responsible states are those where the asylum seeker first enters the EU (European Commission, 2018).

How the policies regarding reception, admission and housing are arranged in the Netherlands and Germany, will be discussed below.

4.2.1   Policy in the Netherlands

The Dutch governmental website says: ''The Netherlands grants asylum to people who would be in danger if they were to return to their own country. First, however, special procedures are followed to determine whether an asylum seeker genuinely needs protection'' (Rijksoverheid, n.d.).

After arrival in the Netherlands, foreign nationals seeking asylum have to identify and register in Ter Apel, located in the province of Groningen, where they report to the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND). For asylum seekers who are entering the Netherlands by plane, different rules apply.

After identification and registration, the asylum procedure can start and asylum seekers are transferred to a reception center. The Netherland has a number of Asylum Centers (also: 'Azielzoekerscentrum' or 'AZC') throughout the country which are set up after agreement between Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) and the relevant municipality. The COA is not only responsible for the reception and guidance of asylum seekers but also for their departure from the reception center. After the IND assesses and determines that an asylum seeker is a 'refugee' and needs protection, they will grant an asylum residence permit. Others have to return to their country of origin.

After obtaining a residence permit, the 'refugee' becomes part of Dutch society and will be assigned to a municipality by the COA. Subsequently, these municipalities must offer suitable accommodation. The number of refugees assigned to a municipality and to be housed by the municipality depends on the population of the municipality and is communicated every six months from a national level to the respective municipalities.

4.2.2 Policy in Germany

The asylum system in the Federal Republic of Germany is based on and embedded in a system on different levels. This does not only include laws and regulations at EU or national level, but also at federal state and municipal level (El-Kayed & Hamann, 2018). The combination of these laws and regulations determine how refugees are housed during the asylum process and from what moment and in what way they can enter the housing market when they have received refugee status.

Asylum seekers entering the Federal Republic of Germany are relocated to the closest reception center of the relevant individual federal state (or: 'Bundesland'). The admission procedure for asylum seekers is ruled by the Asylum Procedure Act (AsylVfG), which also indicates what reception center the arriving asylum seekers are assigned to. They are allocated to one of the federal member states, through a process known as the ''Königsberger Schlüssel''.[8] This distributional process is based on both the population size and the tax income of the federal states (Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, n.d.).

From then on, asylum seekers are housed in '*Erstaufnahmeeinrichtungen*' (EAE or 'initial accommodation facilities'). Here, they have to stay for up to six months during which period asylum seekers usually are not allowed to leave the '*Bezirk*' (district) of the assigned '*Ausländerbehörde*' (Foreigner's office) unless they have permission to leave the district. This 'restriction' is also known as the '*Residenzpflicht*' ('residency requirement').

The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) is responsible for examining and deciding on the asylum applications. During the asylum procedure and the wait for permission to stay, asylum seekers obtain a certificate of permission to reside by means of which they are granted

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[8] §45 AsylG.

a preliminary right of residence in Germany. If the asylum application then is accepted, individuals that are granted a refugee (or asylum) status, will also receive a provisional residence access and are given the equal status as Germans within the social insurance system.

From the moment they receive a status, the ''refugees'' are allocated and should usually stay in a shared or mass accommodation (*Gemeinschaftsunterkünften*; GU). However, they can also be housed directly in apartments when there is no obstacle to that according to the interpretation of the regional and local administrations in the relevant federal state. Normally, refugees are relocated to municipalities based on population and surface area (Flüchtlingsrat Nordrhein Westfalen, n.d.), after being accommodated in a GU or 'Zentrale Unterbringungseinrichtungen' (ZUE) - or central accommodation facility. It is allowed that there are differences in the internal border regimes in different federal states. Furthermore, this can differ between municipalities in the same federal state (El-Kayed & Hamann, 2018). After the large increase in arriving and applying asylum seekers and/or refugees around the year of 2015, decisions on this were often made based on 'whatever worked'.

In the federal state where both of the selected German municipalities for this study are located, refugees often stay for just one week in one of the eight EAE's. After this period, they are moved to a ZUE, where they may have to stay for up to six months. Of the selected German municipalities for this research, Kleve did not have ZUE in recent years, where Rees had two.

4.3 Public attitudes in Germany and the Netherlands

Focusing on the refugee debate, discussions and developments in Germany and The Netherlands are a relevant context when studying perception in the Dutch-German borderland.

Germany is known for its open-door policy under the guise of Merkel's ''Wir schaffen das'' (Hommes, 2016). As one of the countries that welcomed the highest number of refugees, Germany adopted an integration politics between 2015 and 2016 (Eurostat, 2016).

Despite the positive sentiment, some serious issues with or related to refugees occurred which caused critique and intense debates about Germany's capacity, security and culture. Moreover, with e.g. container villages being set up, appropriate registration and reception appeared no longer possible. After a while, the welcoming culture seemed to come to an end, when politics even demanded a maximum of asylum claims (Funk, 2016).

In the Netherlands, not everything went smoothly either as there have been protest actions against the admittance of refugees in several municipalities. Yet the country received relatively fewer refugees and the attention to the presence and arrival of refugees has decreased considerably.

Noteworthy is that Germany suffered from multiple terrorist attacks since 2015. In the Netherlands, only recently an attack has taken place that is believed to be a terrorist attack.

Using tables, the Pew Research Center (2016) shows what public perception regarding refugees in European countries looks like. Although some differences are small, it shows that the 'negative'

public attitudes and fear of terrorism - and other threats associated with refugees – is relatively lower in Germany and the Netherlands than in other European countries (figure 4.3). However, just focusing on Germany and the Netherlands, it became clear that there are differences; Germans are less anxious and negative than Dutch citizens.

Many Europeans see refugees from Syria and Iraq as a major threat

% saying large number of refugees leaving Iraq and Syria is a major threat to their country

Country	%
Poland	73%
Greece	69
Hungary	69
Italy	65
UK	52
France	45
Spain	42
Netherlands	36
Germany	31
Sweden	24
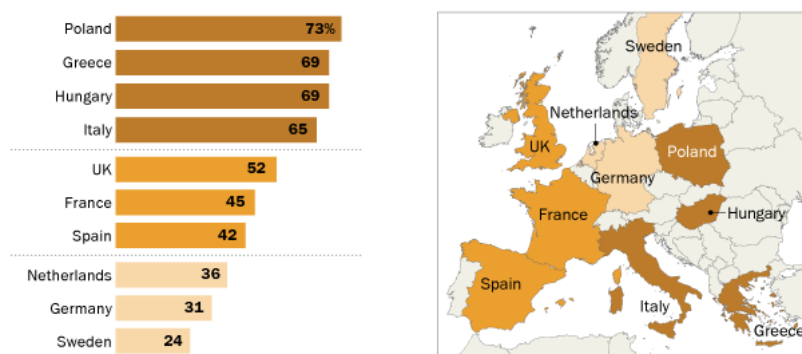
Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 4.3: Threat assessment among European countries. Source: http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/16/european-opinions-of-the-refugee-crisis-in-5-charts/ (accessed 27 February 2018)

Another chart (see figure 4.4) showed how these opinions resulted in a negative perception towards growing diversity as 36% of the Dutch and 31% of the German citizens think it makes the country a 'worse place to live in'. Only 17 percent among Dutch respondents thinks diversity makes their country 'a better place to live', compared to 26 percent of German citizens (see figure 4.4).

Few Europeans say growing diversity makes their country a better place to live

Overall, do you think having an increasing number of people of many different races, ethnic groups and nationalities in our country makes this country a better place to live, a worse place to live or doesn't make much difference either way?

Country	A worse place to live	Doesn't make much difference	A better place to live
Greece	63%	27%	10%
Italy	53	25	18
Hungary	41	39	17
Poland	40	33	14
Netherlands	36	46	17
Germany	31	40	26
UK	31	34	33
Sweden	26	38	36
France	24	48	26
Spain	22	45	31
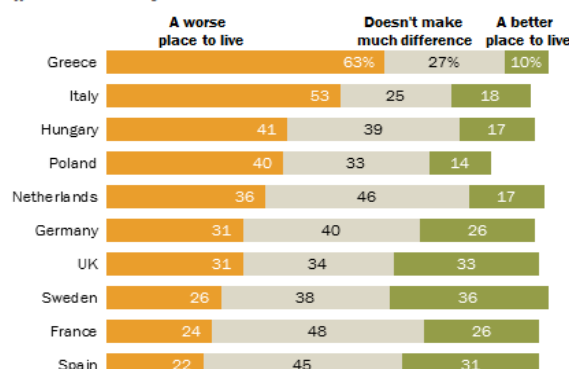
Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 4.4: Public opinion about diversity. Source: : http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/16/european-opinions-of-the-refugee-crisis-in-5-charts/ (accessed 27 February 2018)

A survey conducted in 2017 (CBS, 2018) shows that 77 percent of the Dutch, adult population believes that the Netherlands should receive refugees who have fled their country due to war or persecution. There is less support for economic migrants. Although this large part is in favor of the reception of refugees, there is some fear for negative effects of their arrival. For example, 22 percent of the population sees refugees as a threat to security in the Netherlands and 27 percent thinks that refugees are a threat to Dutch standards and values.

The enormous growth in the number of refugees was accompanied by the rise of far-right politics in parliaments and certain 'attitudes' in civil society. In the Netherlands, the Party for Freedom (PVV) and in Germany, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) are most known for its populist or anti-immigration ideas. The Bertelsmann Institute commissioned research on populism – which it describes as: ''pro national sovereignty'' - by having a survey conducted among German voters between 2015 and 2017 (Vehrkamp and Wratil, 2017). From the results, it could be concluded that populism is certainly present. However, the study put things in perspective, as it showed that only 29.2% were deeply populist, which means that ''populism in Germany is relatively moderate''. Then the survey also showed that immigration and 'refugees' are the biggest concern of right-wing populists. Vehrkamp (2017) even states that: "if we hadn't had this refugee crisis in Germany, then we wouldn't be talking at all in Germany about populism and the AFD at this moment".

4.4 Sample of municipalities

As mentioned in chapter 3, a sample of four municipalities has been chosen to illustrate (possible) relations and to show deeper insight into different perceptions amongst citizens (Creswell, 2012). These are Berg en Dal, Winterswijk, Kleve and Rees. Figure 4.5 shows where these four municipalities are located. The criteria for the selection of these municipalities were: distance, the size of the municipality and engagement in the reception and accommodation of refugees. Based on these criteria, a brief description of each chosen municipality is given below.

Berg en Dal

The municipality of Berg and Dal is located in the southeast of the Dutch province of Gelderland at the Dutch-German border. In January 2019, Berg en Dal counted 34.766 inhabitants (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2019). Based on its population, Berg and Dal must also accommodate a number of refugees. The municipality did not facilitate an Asylum Center or 'AZC' in recent past years.

Winterswijk

The municipality of Winterswijk is also located in the Dutch province of Gelderland, but then in the east. Like Berg en Dal, the municipality is also largely bordering with Germany. Winterswijk counted 28.907 residents in January of 2019 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2019). In addition to facilitating

an AZC since 2012, the municipality also houses a certain number of refugees, also based on its population.

Kleve

Kleve is actually the largest town of the sample, based on both size and population. This 'city' is capital of the '*Landkreis*' Kleve, which is a 'layer' of governance in Germany. This layer of '*Landkreis*' is between the lower layer of 'municipality' and the higher layer of 'federal state'. It is located in the northwest of the German federal state Nordrhein-Westfalen and its northwest side frontiers the Dutch-German border. In June 2018, Kleve counted 51.426 inhabitants (Landesbetrieb IT NRW, 2018) and based on its population, the town had to accommodate a certain number of refugees. It did not facilitate a so-called 'Zentrale Unterbringungseinrichtung' (ZUE)[9] where refugees can be 'accommodated' for the first six months after arrival in Germany.

Rees

The municipality of Rees is located in the northwest of the German federal state Nordrhein-Westfalen and is also part of the '*Landkreis*' Kleve. A small part of the north side of the municipality touches the Dutch-German border. The municipality counted 21.052 inhabitants in on June 30th of 2018 (Landesbetrieb IT NRW, 2018) and in recent years, Rees has had two ZUE's.
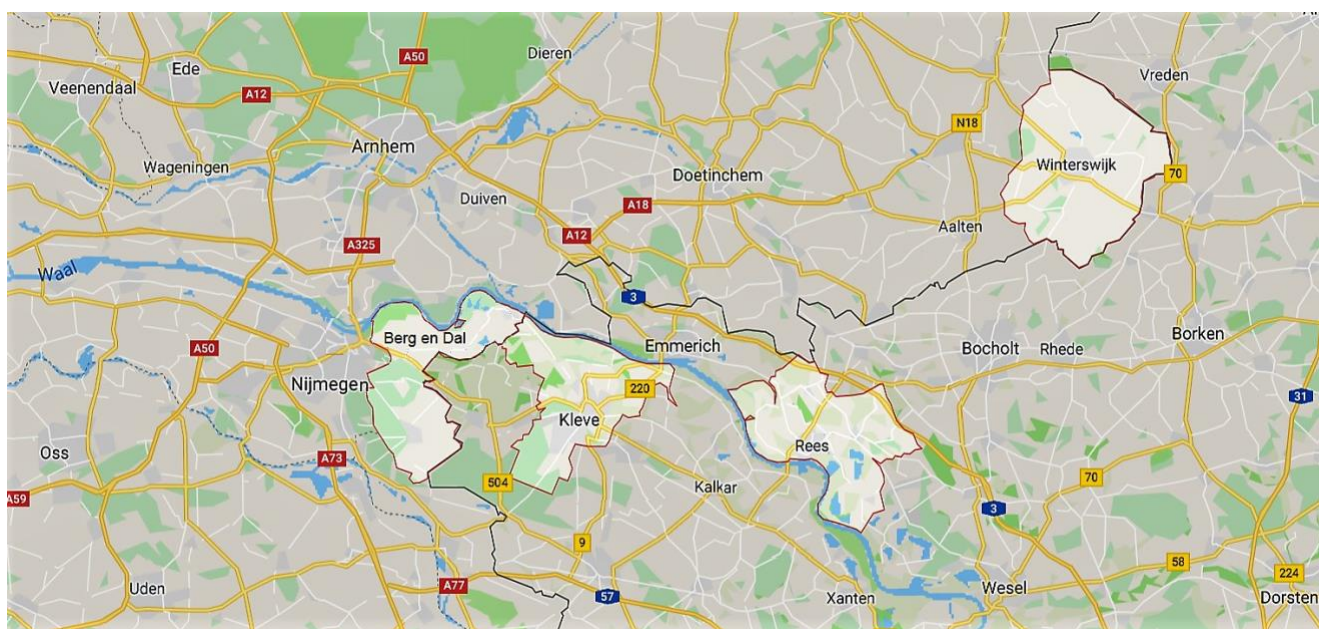
Figure 4.5: Map of the four selected municipalities - Berg en Dal, Winterswijk, Kleve and Rees (source: Shauni Drost)

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[9] Translation: Central Accommodation Facility.

4.5 Conclusion

The Dutch-German border region, and more precisely the geographical border area of INTERREG, was selected for this study. INTERREG is part of an EU-program and the EU aim to lessen the significance of national state borders within the EU and eventually establish European unification.

To manage the increase of refugees, the EU member states have agreed to divide the arriving refugees. Refugees entering the EU are subject to the laws of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). These laws state that the member states should offer protection to refugees.

Focusing on the (national) refugee policies within the research area, both Germany and the Netherland had serious issues and know some criticism concerning the arrival and admittance of refugees. Yet, Germany is known for its open-door policy and welcomed the highest number of refugees in the EU. Additionally, research shows that - although differences are small - Germans are less anxious and negative towards refugees than Dutch citizens.

To execute this study and make comparisons between Dutch and German citizens, four municipalities were selected on the basis of distance, size and refugee policy of the municipalities (with and without a refugee facility).

Now that the research subject and objectives have been introduced, the theoretical framework has been explained, the methods used and the relevant context of this study have been described, the attention is shifted to the empirical chapters.

Chapter 5 - Perception of the Dutch-German border

This chapter discusses the perception of the Dutch-German border among survey respondents and interviewees and is divided in two sections: the current perception of the border and the change of border perception. As explained in chapter 3, the online survey results produce an image of the broader context – the perception of the border and the perception of refugees - while the in-depth interviews provide a deeper understanding and explanation of people's thoughts and reasoning about the Dutch-German border and the arrival of refugees.

Both the survey results and the calculated 'perception scores' are presented in tables. These are limited to the data that are most relevant to this research.[10] The presented tables below will have additional commentary when necessary or relevant. So, relevant (statistically) significant correlations or anomalies are also described. They are supplemented by descriptive and explanatory text fragments, as well as clarified, explained, contradicted or in other ways supported by the interview results. Other relevant interview results that are not directly related to the quantitative results will be described separately. Furthermore, the deepening and supplementation from the interviews is partly done through the use of quotations.[11] All Dutch and German interview quotes have been translated into English and the relevant respondents are represented by means of a respondent code. The original quotations can be found in the footnotes.

5.1   Current perception of the border

The theoretical framework, shown in chapter 2, explained that the perception of the border can be measured by looking at the 'barrier' effect that the border has or can have in various ways for individuals. The methodological chapter 3 showed how this barrier effect can be described and measured by means of two dimensions, which can be seen in many of the tables.

As mentioned before, the perception scores are indicated on a scale of 1 to 100. The higher this score, the *less* the border is considered a barrier. For the perception of the border as self-evident this can be explained as follows: a lower score indicates a stronger perception of the border as self-evident, which means that respondents perceive the border as more, normal and/or natural; as being 'just there' and thus - it is assumed – they have less doubt about the usefulness and/or the importance of that border.

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[10] Other tables can be found in appendix 5.

[11] Each code contains the initial letter from the municipality in which the respondent lives. The respondent codes can be found in appendix 3. In this schedule, one can also find the characteristics per respondent (gender, age, education and municipality).

5.1.1 Survey results

Border perception from all different aspects and dimensions

In table 5.1 the perception of the border is displayed, taking into account different aspects (general, economic, socio-cultural and legal administrative) and the dimensions everyday life and self-evidence.

Table 5.1: Border perception: scores in all different aspects and dimensions, and total

Border perception	Everyday life		Self-evidence		Total	
General (physical)	72,8	*(N=1026)*	40,7	*(N=1021)*	56,8	*(N=1018)*
Economic	61,9	*(N=1047)*	41,0	*(N=1046)*	51,5	*(N=1046)*
Socio-cultural	64,5	*(N=1047)*	43,5	*(N=1046)*	54,0	*(N=1046)*
Legal-administrative	51,1	*(N=1037)*	45,1	*(N=1030)*	48,1	*(N=1028)*
'Overall'	62,6	*(N=1016)*	42,6	*(N=1003)*	**52,7**	*(N=998)*

The 'overall' score of 52,7 is the outcome of a very diverse set of perception scores, that however does show certain interesting 'patterns'. One of these found patterns is that for all aspects (general, economic etc.) 'the perception of the border as a barrier in everyday life' scores significantly higher (meaning that it corresponds with a lower barrier effect) than the perception of the border as a self-evident phenomenon (or: 'self-evidence of the border'). The difference between these dimensions is biggest when looking at the general (physical) aspect and the smallest when looking at the legal-administrative aspect.

Looking at the perception of the border in everyday life, the barrier effect is *strongest* from the legal-administrative perspective (given the lowest score of 51,1) and *weakest* from the general (physical) aspect (given the highest score of 72,8).

The perception of the border as self-evident manifests itself most from the general aspect of the border (given its lowest score of 40,7), and the least from the legal-administrative perspective (given the highest score of 45,1), meaning that, within this dimension, the barrier effect is strongest from the general aspect.

Border perception: differences between Dutch and German respondents

Table 5.2 and 5.3 below present and describe the scores for the border perception divided to country of origin.

Table 5.2. Border perception and country of origin - scores per aspect and dimension

Country	General**		Economic		Socio-cultural		Legal-administrative	
	Daily pr.	*Self-evidence*	*Daily pr.***	*Self-evidence*	*Daily pr.***	*Self-evidence*	*Daily pr.*	*Self-evidence*
Netherlands	70,9	38,8	58,9	40,0	62,5	42,6	50,2	45,8
Germany	74,7	42,7	64,9	42,1	66,5	44,3	52,1	44,3
Total	72,8	40,7	61,9	41,0	64,5	43,5	51,1	45,1

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

It is striking that all perception scores of German respondents concerning the perception of the border in everyday life are higher than for Dutch respondents, meaning that the barrier effect of the border in everyday life is *lower* for German respondents than for Dutch respondents. This applies to the perception scores of German respondents concerning 'the self-evidence of the border', except for the legal-administrative aspect, which has a score of 44,3 compared to the Dutch score of 45,8.

Table 5.3. Border perception and country of origin - scores per aspect, per total component, and overall total

Country	General**	Economic**	Soc.-cult.**	Leg.-admin.	Daily pr.**	Self-evidence.	Total**
Netherlands	54,8	49,4	52,6	48,0	60,7	41,9	51,3
Germany	58,7	53,5	55,4	48,2	64,5	43,4	54,0
Total	56,8	51,5	54,0	48,1	62,6	42,6	52,7

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

Looking at the 'total' perception scores (of all aspects per country), it shows that German respondents perceive a *lower* barrier effect (higher perception score of 54,0) than Dutch respondents (lower perception score of 51,3). This is mainly due to differences from the economic and general (physical) aspect, while from the legal-administrative aspect the difference between Dutch and German respondents' perception is small. The differences between the perception scores of Dutch and German respondents concerning the 'barrier effect in the everyday life' are bigger than the differences between the perception scores of Dutch and German respondents concerning the 'self-evidence of the border'.

The importance of the border

The tables below concern the importance of the border within a specific aspect of the border. The perception about the 'importance' of the border is part of the dimension ''perception of the border as self-evident''. The 'importance' of the border is divided into two components. Table 5.4 shows the importance of the border's 'existence', while table 5.5 represents the importance of 'experiencing' the border.

The tables show the percentages of respondents that answered the corresponding survey question on a scale from 1 to 3. When relevant, an explanation is given about the statistics comparing individual groups.[12] However, in general the differences between different groups are small so there is no need to go into that further.

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[12] Most of the tables that visualize these comparisons can be found in appendix 5.

Table 5.4. The importance of the border's existence

How important is it to you that the Dutch-German border exists?		General		Economic		Socio-cultural		Legal-administrative	
		N	*%*	**N**	*%*	**N**	*%*	**N**	*%*
Important	*1*	364	*35,0%*	322	*31,4%*	290	*28,2%*	300	*29,2%*
	2	321	*30,8%*	375	*36,5%*	390	*37,9%*	511	*49,7%*
Unimportant	*3*	356	*34,2%*	330	*32,1%*	348	*33,9%*	217	*21,1%*
	Total	**1041**		**1027**		**1028**		**1028**	

Table 5.5. The importance of experiencing the border

How important is it to you to actually experience the Dutch-German border?		General		Economic		Socio-cultural		Legal-administrative	
		N	*%*	**N**	*%*	**N**	*%*	**N**	*%*
Important	*1*	256	*24,5%*	418	*40,0%*	300	*28,7%*	283	*27,2%*
	2	326	*31,2%*	358	*34,3%*	430	*41,1%*	538	*51,8%*
Unimportant	*3*	462	*44,3%*	269	*25,7%*	315	*30,1%*	218	*21,0%*
	Total	**1044**		**1045**		**1045**		**1039**	

The tables above show that the answers are quite divided, especially in table 5.4, as about one third perceives the existence of the border as important, about one third perceives it of moderate importance and about one third perceives it as unimportant.

A striking result is that a relatively large part of the respondents perceives the legal-administrative aspect of moderate importance. Besides, the statistics comparing individual groups show that Dutch respondents perceive the existence of the border as a little more important than German respondents[13].

5.1.2   Interview results

For the qualitative part of this study, interviews were conducted during which the interviewees were asked several questions with regard to their cross-border experiences and perception of the border.[14] It is indicated which themes and answers say something about which component of ''the perception of the border as barrier''.

Cross border experiences in everyday life

The interviewees were asked to tell about their *experiences* with and the *noticeability* of the border, which two indicators say something about ''the perception of the border as a barrier in everyday life''. About their experiences with the border, the interviewees mention they quite often cross the border, some of them even weekly. This corresponds to the survey results, which shows that about 60% of the respondents crosses the border at least twice a year. [15]

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[13] This can be found in appendix 5.
[14] These semi-structured questions can be found in appendix 2.
[15] For survey data on the amount of border crossings by respondents living in the research area, see table 1 in appendix 5.1.

The reasons for crossing the border vary from economic reasons such as (functional) shopping and refueling to recreational reasons such as cycling, skeet shooting or other hobbies. Other motives are work, visiting family, studying abroad, vacation, leisure and/or the quality of certain products.

Most people recognize that there is not a physical border between Germany and the Netherlands. Some people even describe that for them, there is not a 'real' border anymore: ''The Dutch-German border? There is no border anymore, for me'' (K5).[16] Similarly, another respondent (K1) says: ''And the border itself, is no border for me; no more for a long time''.[17]

Yet, the border is still noticeable. This was often substantiated on the basis of visual differences, which would show how the two countries are different and separated from each other. Examples of the visual differences mentioned are: traffic signs, building styles of houses and other buildings (architecture), the streets and the construction/decoration of the landscape. Respondents also notice differences such as (policies with regard to) speed limits, the presence or absence of windmills and so-called 'flying controls'.

Others associate it with the presence of (a certain number of) border controls: ''Occasionally I am checked, but that is when I drive from the Netherlands to Germany (...) and then we drive on the highway and then you may suddenly drive 130 km/h. So that is the only difference I notice'' (R3).[18] Overall, the respondents mention that they hardly see or experience border controls. On the one hand, this so-called ''openness'' is considered positive and desirable, but on the other hand, many of the interviewees consider occasional border checks as equally desirable and sometimes necessary. Main reasons for these opinion(s) are tackling crime and maintaining security: ''I really do not need to many checks, except if there is a threat or if they are looking for someone or whatever'' (B2).[19]

The border is perceived noticeable - and is actually 'experienced' - by differences in language, culture, prices, products and laws: ''A little bit about the streetscape and architecture, and a little bit also in culture I think, how people interact with each other'' (K4).[20] Someone else explicitly referred to the presence of a 'border in the mind' (Paasi, 1996): ''In a mental sense, yes. If I haven't been in the Netherlands for a long time, it is very difficult for me to switch again. I notice that in the Dutch language, because somewhere you get an accent'' (R2).[21]

The extent to which the border has an *impeding* and/or a *dividing* effect also says something about the perception of the border as a barrier in everyday life. During the interviews, it appeared that people's experiences with the Dutch-German border generally sound ''positive''. Most respondents did not experience the border as 'obstructive' or 'hindering', especially because they have the opportunity to

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[16] ''De Nederlands-Duitse grens? Er is geen grens meer, voor mij''.
[17] ''En de grens zelf, is voor mij geen grens; allang niet meer''.
[18] ''Heel af en toe word ik gecontroleerd, maar dat is dan als ik van Nederland naar Duitsland rij (…) en dan rijden we over de autobaan en dan mag je ineens 130 rijden. Dus dat is het enige verschil dat ik merk''.
[19] ''Van mij hoeft daar echt niet veel gecontroleerd te worden, behalve als er dan dreiging is of als ze iemand zoeken of wat dan ook''.
[20] ''Een beetje aan het straatbeeld en architectuur, en een klein beetje ook in cultuur vind ik, hoe mensen met elkaar omgaan''.
[21] ''In mentale zin, ja. Als ik een lange tijd niet in Nederland ben geweest, is het weer heel moeilijk voor mij om om te schakelen. Dat merk ik in het Nederlands taalgebruik, want ergens krijg je een accent''.

easily cross the border: ''You can cross the border without problems and as a German you can also come to Winterswijk without any problems, so yes, it is not really controlled as far as I know. So, in that sense it does not work impeding'' (W5). This is also apparent from the following statement (R4): ''We can travel there without problems. There are a lot of people from the Netherlands who live in Germany. So, there is no obstacle; nothing no''.

Remarkably, language is considered as a (possible) impeding factor of or due to the border: ''(…) a speech boundary obviously stops''.[22] Another respondent (R5) formulated it like: ''I followed Dutch class, and after I did this, there was no problem for me to go there; because I was able to speak the language appropriately''.

Also, culture is mentioned as a possible impeding factor: ''And culture can also be a barrier; the cultural differences caused by the border'' (R6).[23] Similarly, someone said (B3) affirmative: ''Yes, I think so. I still think mentality, language (…)''.[24]

Perception of the border as self-evident: importance and function

As mentioned in the survey results, the 'importance' of the border tells something about the dimension: 'the perception of the border as self-evident'.

Part of the interviewees seemed unaware of their immediate thoughts on the importance of the border, because they did not see it due to the lack of a physical aspect. Yet, they later on seemed to sort of recognize its importance in the sense of a territorial or mental demarcation which represented ('incompatible') differences. This might explain why some of the interviewees answered that they thought Germany and the Netherlands should not be united and be one country when this question came up: ''Of course that is not possible. Every country has its traditions and habits, so in that respect it seems difficult to me. I would not mind that, but politically and regulation wise; that would take years to get together'' (B3).[25] One of the respondents (K1) even mentioned the attractiveness of these differences: ''There are of course differences between states, between the Netherlands and Germany is of course a difference. That makes it interesting. I do not want everything to be the same, for example. I find that very positive (...) but without physical borders or something''.[26] As appears from both the last sentence of the previous statement and the following statement, the physical boundaries or barriers are not considered desirable: ''That the Netherlands is 'the Netherlands', and Germany 'Germany'. That border is important to me, but it must be so free that you can simply cross over and make mutual use of each

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[22] ''(…) een spraakgrens houdt natuurlijk tegen''.
[23] ''En cultuur kan ook een barrière zijn; de cultuurverschillen die veroorzaakt worden door de grens''.
[24] ''Ja, dat denk ik wel ja. Ik denk toch mentaliteit, taal (…)''.
[25] ''Dat kan natuurlijk niet zomaar. Ieder land heeft zo zijn tradities en gewoontes, dus in dat opzicht lijkt me dat moeilijk. Daar zou ik niet veel op tegen hebben. Maar politiek gezien en regelgeving; dat zou jaren nodig hebben om tot elkaar te komen''.
[26] ''Er zijn natuurlijk verschillen tussen de staten, tussen Nederland en Duitsland is natuurlijk verschil. Dat maakt het interessant. Ik wil niet alles gelijk hebben bijvoorbeeld. Ik vind dat heel positief (…) maar zonder fysieke grenzen of zoiets''.

other (W5).[27] This respondent seems to refer to the presence of a clear 'demarcation' which territorially separates the countries, as long as people are not bothered by it in daily life.

On the other hand, there were also interviewees who immediately considered the border as important. Just because the two countries are different, a distinction – thus in the form of a border - between the two countries is important: ''Yes, if he is not there at all, then you will no longer have any separate countries. Then you just get one country. That is not necessary. I want to stay Dutch, not become a German. It is just some patriotic pride'' (W2).[28] As the latter quotation also shows, some link it to the existence and importance of nationality which is perceived to be part of their ''identity''. For them, the border is a demarcation of the nation, hence inherently also their identity. Someone else (R2) perceives the border as important ''because you also describe a piece of history, a piece of culture. The boundaries are fading in the border area, but beyond those differences are even bigger''.[29] Although the differences between countries are perceived to be fading in the border region, the border still stands for 'differences' linked to identity, which is perceived important.

Related to the importance of the border, is the perception about the *function* or *usefulness* of the border, which (indirectly) refers to the 'perception of the border as self-evident'. The border is perceived to function as separation and/or demarcation of countries, in particular, from an administrative point of view: ''In administrative terms, a border is still a necessity. Somewhere boundaries have to be drawn, even if you want to make things Europe-wide (…). I think in (…) how people interact with each other, a border is not necessary. I think it is very difficult, for example, when we use politics or regulations, to maintain that for a super-large area'' (W6).[30]

But one also perceives the border as having other functions: ''The function is a separation between two countries and since the European Union is the traffic between those countries of course free, so I do not really need controls that much, except if there is a threat or if they are looking for someone or whatever'' (B2).[31] The border can thus also be perceived as having a security function. In line with the foregoing, respondent K2 explains: ''That is a bit for safety; that there is not too much nonsense going back and forth. It is a bit for safety when it comes to being controlled. It should stay open, but there is still a need for a bit more control''.[32]

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[27] ''Dat Nederland 'Nederland' is, en Duitsland 'Duitsland', die grens vind ik wel belangrijk, maar het moet wel zo vrij zijn dat je gewoon kunt oversteken en wederzijds gebruik kunt maken van elkaar''.

[28] ''Ja, als hij er helemaal niet is dan heb je geen verschil meer in land. Dan krijg je gewoon echt één land. Dat hoeft dan ook weer niet. Ik wil wel Nederlander blijven, geen Duitser worden. Dat is gewoon een beetje vaderlandstrots''.

[29] ''Want je beschrijft natuurlijk ook een stukje geschiedenis, een stukje cultuurgoed. De grenzen vervagen in het grensgebied, maar daarbuiten zijn die verschillen nog veel groter''.

[30] ''Bestuurlijk gezien heeft een grens nog steeds een noodzaak. Er moeten ergens grenzen getrokken worden, zelfs als je Europa-breed dingen aan wil maken (…). Ik denk in (…) hoe mensen met elkaar omgaan, is een grens niet nodig. Ik denk dat het heel moeilijk is om, als we bijvoorbeeld politiek gebruiken of regelgeving, om dat voor een supergroot gebied te handhaven''.

[31] ''De functie is een scheiding tussen 2 landen en sinds de Europese Unie is natuurlijk het verkeer tussen die landen is gewoon vrij, dus van mij hoeft daar echt niet veel gecontroleerd te worden, behalve als er dan dreiging is of als ze iemand zoeken of wat dan ook''.

[32] ''Das ist ein bisschen für die Sicherheit; das nicht al zu viel Blödsinn hin und her gemacht wird. Es ist schon ein bisschen Sicherheit dabei, wenn mal kontrolliert wird. Soll offenbleiben, aber muss gezielt mal in wieder etwas mehr kontrolliert bleiben''.

That the boundary is not only seen as administrative demarcation is evident from the following statements: ''You see it in all countries; people still want to have their own identity. And when the boundaries go away, then people still long for that identity'' (B5).[33] And: ''I think it's good that the borders are there (...) that you know what the difference is, and especially that it deals with: ''you are one people, and that is what you want to represent''. You also want to show: ''well, that belongs to me'' (B6).[34] Few cannot think of a function or at least do not see the added value of it: ''Personally, I do not really see a real function or a necessity. But she is just there'' (R6).[35] The existence of the European Union and the free movement of goods and persons within the Union plays a certain role in the formation of this perception: ''The external border of the EU is a barrier and really has a necessary function; the border between the Netherlands and Germany does not have that anymore because within the EU everything is free'' (W6).[36]

5.2   Change of border perception

Because the border perception must be looked at in a comparative sense, this subchapter will display and describe the change of perception in the past three years through the survey and interview results respectively.

5.2.1   Survey results

As table 5.6 shows, a big majority of the respondents considers the barrier effect of the border as about the same, compared to three years ago. This applies to all aspects (general, economic etc.) of the border perception, making the differences between the aspects negligible.

Table 5.6. Changed barrier effect of the Dutch-German border over the past three years:

	General (physical)		Economic		Socio-cultural		Legal-administrative	
	N	*%*	**N**	*%*	**N**	*%*	**N**	*%*
Decreased	146	*14,0%*	124	*11,9%*	121	*11,7%*	80	*7,7%*
About the same	770	*73,8%*	776	*74,5%*	769	*74,3%*	814	*78,5%*
Increased	128	*12,3%*	141	*13,5%*	145	*14,0%*	143	*13,8%*
Total	**1044**		**1041**		**1035**		**1037**	

These results were also compared based on objective factors, but did not show any interesting differences between groups.[37]

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[33] Je ziet het in alle landen; mensen willen toch hun eigen identiteit hebben. En als de grenzen weggaan, dan verlangen mensen toch nog steeds naar die identiteit''.

[34] ''Ik denk dat het goed is dat de grenzen er zijn (…), dat je weet wat het verschil is, en vooral dat het te maken heeft met: je bent één volk, en dat wil je ook uitstralen. Je wil ook laten zien van: nou, dat hoort bij mij''.

[35] ''Echt een functie of een noodzaak, die zie ik persoonlijk eigenlijk niet echt. Maar ze is er gewoon''.

[36] ''De buitengrens van de EU is een barrière en heeft echt een noodzakelijke functie; de grens tussen Nederland en Duitsland niet meer want binnen de EU is alles vrij''.

[37] These results can be found in appendix 5.

5.2.2 Interview results: hardly to no change

The survey results correspond with the interview results. To the question whether their perception of the border has ever changed, most of the interviewees responded the question in the negative. Some of the interviewees have regularly experienced border controls in the past and referenced to the disappearance of these controls which is perceived to cause a change of/in their border perception: ''I think that it used to be quite a lot when you went into Germany; that you really crossed that border. And as a child you lived up to it like ''we are almost at the border; the border is there and we are now in Germany'' and it was very special. (…) then there were barriers and the customs were there so that was really something, but now that all is gone, it basically is not a big deal anymore'' (W2).[38]

Furthermore, changes occurred in experiences and contact with the 'other' side, which makes one more familiar with it. These perceptions however, have not changed over the past three years and – as shown in the above quotation - sometimes only changed after a very long time; sometimes even after a lifetime.

As can be seen in the table above, a small percentage of respondents perceive the barrier effect of the border as slightly or clearly changed. In line with the changes of the general (physical) border aspect, there were some interesting statements about border controls during the interviews. There were some who would like to see a change: ''Yes, a little bit more controlled'' (K2).[39] Another interesting and more conscious explanation about the (small) change(s) of border perception is the following: ''Well, it adjusts itself over and over again. Every day is a bit exaggerated, but yes, new impressions keep coming up, so in that sense it always changes. But it is not that it has changed from black to white; I had a certain image, and that is where nuances come in'' (K4).[40]

5.3 Conclusion

Summarizing, the following appears from previous results:

The dimension 'perception of the border as a barrier in everyday life' produces a much lower barrier effect than 'the perception of the border as a self-evident phenomenon'. This corresponds to the interview results. Focusing on the physical aspect of the border, the interviewees recognize that it is not there. The border is overall perceived as open and non-dividing or impeding. Nevertheless, there were a lot of examples that showed that there is a border; the border exists and can be noticed in daily life. For example, there are visual, cultural and experiential differences between Germany and the

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[38] ''Ik denk dat het vroeger, toen was het heel wat dat je Duitsland in ging; dat je echt die grens over ging. En als kind zijnde leefde je daar naartoe van ''we zijn bijna bij de grens, de grens is er en we zijn nu in Duitsland'', en was het heel bijzonder. (…) Toen stonden er nog slagbomen en zat de douane er nog dus dat was echt wat, maar nu dat allemaal weg is, nu stelt dat in principe niks meer voor''.

[39] ''Ja, ein bisschen mehr kontrolliert werden''.

[40] ''Nou ja, het past zich steeds weer aan, dus. Elke dag is een beetje overdreven, maar ja, er komen steeds weer nieuwe indrukken bij, dus in die zin verandert het steeds. Maar het is niet zo dat het van zwart naar wit is veranderd; ik had een bepaald beeld, en daar komen nuances in terecht''.

Netherlands that cause one to notice the border. Sometimes, these differences (can) cause dividing and/or impeding (border) experiences.

The perception of the border's (un)importance – which is part of the border as self-evident - is quite (equally) divided among survey respondents. This corresponds with the interview results, in which a dichotomy/two groups can be identified. It appeared that the respondents who perceive the border as unimportant, connect it to the (lack of) physical aspect of the border. The respondents who describe the border as important, connected it mostly to differences between both countries, its function in demarcating identity, administrative and security matters.

The perception of the border has hardly - or not - changed in recent years, as appears from both survey and interview results. The twenty-four interviewees link this to the decrease in border controls and them becoming more familiar with differences of the 'other side' (during past decades).

Although differences are small, the German respondents perceive the border – overall - less as a barrier than the Dutch respondents. This was shown, among other things, by the results regarding the ''importance'' of the border, as the Dutch perceive the border a bit more important than the Germans.

Chapter 6 - Perception about the arrival and presence of refugees

This chapter discusses the perception of the arrival and presence of refugees and is divided in two sections: 'the current perception about refugees' and the 'change of perception about refugees'. Again, each section first presents the survey results. After, three word clouds will give a first impression of the thoughts of the interviewees, before moving on to a more extensive description of the current perception and the (possible) change of perception about the arrival and presence of refugees. The interview results are – like in chapter 5 – presented on the basis of several themes that form the essence of the perceptions told. Additionally, this section unfolds several experiences and life stories told by individuals.[41]

6.1 Current perception with regard to refugees

6.1.1 Survey results

As can be seen in table 6.1, almost 60% of the survey respondents sees the arrival and presence of refugees in their country of residence as noticeable. Looking at the other categories (normal, natural, worrisome), the survey respondents are equally divided as about a third of the people perceive the arrival and presence of refugees as normal, natural and not worrisome, as well as about a third that perceives it as abnormal, unnatural and worrisome. In addition, there is also about one third of the respondents who have a moderate view with regard to these indicators on the perception refugees.

Table 6.1. Current perception on the arrival and presence of refugees

	Noticeable		Normal		Natural		Worrisome	
	N	*%*	**N**	*%*	**N**	*%*	**N**	*%*
1	620	*59,4%*	352	*33,8%*	414	*39,8%*	393	*37,8%*
2	201	*19,3%*	337	*32,4%*	341	*32,8%*	274	*26,3%*
3	223	*21,4%*	351	*33,8%*	284	*27,3%*	374	*35,9%*
Total	**1044**		**1040**		**1039**		**1041**	
	Unnoticeable		**Abnormal**		**Unnatural**		**Not worrisome**	

The perception of individual groups – such as gender, age and country of origin - has also been looked at and compared. All results based on comparing these individual groups can be found in appendix 5.

The most interesting and striking finding is that the percentage of Dutch respondents that sees the arrival and presence of refugees as very noticeable and very natural is much *lower* than the percentage of German respondents that perceive refugees as very noticeable and natural. Also, the percentage of Dutch respondents seeing the arrival and presence of refugees as worrisome is relatively *high* compared to German respondents, which is the other way around for respondents that do not consider the refugee situation as worrisome.

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[41] As mentioned in chapter 3 and 5, only the Dutch and German interview quotations have been translated into English and the original quote can be found in a footnote. Some of the interviews with German respondents were conducted in Dutch, which means that the original quotes are also shown in Dutch.

6.1.2 Interview results

The interviews did not reveal much about the specific indicators used in the survey (noticeable, normal, natural, worrisome). However, the open questions resulted in a wide range of answers and perceptions.[42] Several overarching themes can be distinguished and describe the essence of what passed during the interviews: 'tolerance', 'anxiety' and 'integration'. It must be stated that most themes and sayings, need nuance to really understand the differing perceptions. Additionally, personal stories – represented by longer quotes – show how respondents describe more deeply where certain opinions and perceptions come from.

Initial thoughts

During the interviews, each interviewee was asked which three words (first) came up when he/she thought about the arrival of refugees. In this way, they could think about the subject and their initial feelings concerning the subject. Based on all those words, the following visualization was made in the form of a word cloud:

Figure 6.1: Overall word cloud

As shown by the size of the words, the following words were mentioned most often: ''integration'' and ''fear''. Other words that were mentioned more frequently, are ''war'', ''uncertainty'', ''cultural differences'', ''reception'', ''help'', ''emergency'', ''welcome'' and ''language barrier''.

From figure 6.2 and 6.3 it can be deduced that the twelve German respondents mostly think of ''integration'' and ''fear'' when they think about the arrival and presence of refugees. For the Dutch respondents – see figure 6.3 - these are the words ''reception'' and ''language barrier'' and ''cultural differences''.

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[42] For example: ''What do you think about the arrival and presence of refugees (in Germany / the Netherlands)?''

Figure 6.2: Word cloud based on German respondents

However, some nuance is necessary, since these words can be interpreted differently. Mentioning the word ''fear'' for example, was explained in different ways. Some people explained this word as ''fear'' among Dutch and / or German citizens for (the arrival of) refugee, while others explained it as fear among refugee(s) themselves.

Some of the interviewees had to think a while about their answers to this first question: ''All right. Then I have to think twice. ''Asylum seekers center''. Pfff, that is not really something that I have concerned myself with'' (W6).[43] Someone else (B1) even stated: ''Yes, there are no words that come to mind''.[44] This could mean that they either did not want to tell their opinion or they were not completely aware of their thoughts. Perhaps they did not think about it before. It indeed appeared that some of the

Figure 6.3: Word cloud based on Dutch respondents

respondents are not very busy with the subject in daily live and that they do not immediately have thoughts about it in the sense of a clear opinion. But, when asked about this specific, they do have an opinion: ''You say it, it does not interest me. Let's face it, I'm a single earner. I have a wife and three children, that comes to me first. (...) And of course I have an opinion, of course, but I have never thought about it because I do not have the time for it'' (R2).[45]

The following 'themes' are based on the word clouds and moreover describe the essence of the different perceptions that passed during the interviews. Based on the other words, the decision was made to name the last theme 'tolerance'.

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[43] ''Oké. Dan moet ik even goed nadenken. 'Asielzoekerscentrum'. Pff dat is niet echt iets waar ik mij mee bezig heb gehouden''.
[44] ''Ja, er komen bij mij helemaal geen woorden in me op''.
[45] ''Je zegt het al, het boeit me niks. Laten we eerlijk zijn, ik ben een alleenverdiener. Ik heb een vrouw en drie kinderen, dat komt voor mij op de eerste plaats. (…) En natuurlijk heb ik een mening, natuurlijk, maar zo ver heb ik er nooit over nagedacht, omdat ik de tijd er niet voor heb''.

Partly due to one of the interview questions, a lot has been said about integration and adaptation. When talking about this theme it is noticeable that, whether one seems positive or negative about the arrival of foreigners, the wording is often nuanced by the idea of 'integration'. The motivation in the background does not usually seem to be that refugees have to leave the country, but that a 'well behaving' refugee is welcome and that a proper integration is paramount. Given its importance, integration seems to be seen as more or less a condition for residence: ''I do think that you may require those people to integrate and also at least, for example, master the Dutch language and that kind of things'' (W6).[46] Language is part of this: ''But I do think that if you come here in shelter and we pay your food and your pocket money, you may also make an effort to learn the language. That in any case you can also say your piece at the bakery for example'' (W5).[47] Integration can thus be seen as a condition for receiving help and accommodation in the host country.

Nonetheless, it is recognized that integration is difficult because of the many differences between 'us' and 'them': ''Integrate. Exactly. Speech, for example. It is of course difficult. We live differently. But, in principle, I think it is okay if they then integrate. Of course, hundred percent does not work. They grew up differently, live differently, different ideas, different attitudes. Religion. If they try a lot to integrate, then it is good for me'' (K5).[48] Following this, these differences and different ways of living are perceived as incompatible: ''Well, integration: refugees must be integrated. If you want to prevent problems, you have to integrate as well as possible'' (K4).[49]

Some perceive refugees as not willing to integrate and/or as people that participate in (self)segregation: ''But I have a bit of trouble with those migrants who then all stick together and impose their laws of religion or their country or their faith (...). Then I think 'yes, do it there'. We do not do that either'' (B4).[50] From such statement, a fear of cultural differences can be recognized.

This might be because of experiences with refugees who have lived 'here' for a longer period of time:

''With this adaptation, that bothers me a lot. That no decent word of Dutch comes out while those people have been living here for ten years. Because of those refugees you have already formed a certain image about those people who are coming here new. (…) I used to have more - because I had grown up with those families - respect for them and felt sad about where they came from. (...) And I now have the idea that, because you also see many refugees who do not speak Dutch at all

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[46] ''Ik vind wel dat je mag verlangen van die mensen dat ze mee integreren en zich ook in ieder geval bijvoorbeeld de Nederlandse taal machtig zijn en dat soort dingen''.

[47] ''Maar ik vind wel dat je als je hier komt in opvang en wij betalen jouw eten en je zakgeld bij wijze van, dan mag je ook wel moeite doen om de taal te leren. Dat je in ieder geval ook ja, bij de bakker bij wijze van, je woordje kan doen''.

[48] ''Integreren. Precies. Spraak, bijvoorbeeld. Het is natuurlijk wel moeilijk. Wij leven anders. Maar, in principe vind ik het oké, als ze zich dan integreren. Natuurlijk, 100% gaat niet. Zij zijn anders opgegroeid, leven anders, andere ideeën, andere mentaliteit. Religie. Als ze proberen veel te integreren, dan is dat voor mij goed''.

[49] ''Nou ja, integratie: vluchtelingen moet geïntegreerd worden. Wil je problemen voorkomen, dan moet je zo goed mogelijk integreren''.

[50] ''Maar ik heb een beetje moeite met die migranten die dan allemaal samenklitten en een beetje hun wetten van hun religie of hun land of hun geloof (…) op gaan leggen. Dan denk ik "ja, doe dat daar". Doen wij ook niet''.

and think that they can do everything, it has changed a bit. That you no longer look at it so sweetly'' (B6).[51]

Another perceived difficulty with regard to integration is that both refugees and citizens of the host country are unwilling to eventually form a whole: ''But it is also not the case that those people who live there will mix with us. At the same time, we do not go there, we keep ourselves away from them. (...) That you avoid each other; they are still looking for their own; often their own family or friends. Yes, you look up your own kind a bit. (...) I think that's difficult. Also for them; I think it is more difficult for them than for us, because it is more difficult if you are a stranger. If you come here as a foreigner and you have to live with the rest'' (W3).[52] The respondent talks about refugees living in an asylum center within the Netherlands. It appears that living 'there' in a different 'space', is perceived as somehow living in a 'different' community while actually living in the Dutch territory.

Anxiety

As mentioned before, the word 'anxiety' as visualized in the word cloud can be interpreted differently. Yet, it is now used to group ideas and images of certain anxieties towards refugees.

Most common among interviewees is the distinction between 'genuine' refugees and the so-called 'economic' refugees. This distinction translates into the politically motivated refugees who are considered 'welcome', and the economically motivated refugees who usually are not: ''If they really are refugees, who really have problems in their country, like Syria, then I think it is good. But, of course, they must learn to live here'' (K5).[53] Similarly, another respondent (W5) says: ''But I do have a problem with economic refugees, because areas where nothing is going on in fact and they come here, I have more trouble with that. The war refugees from the conflict countries, I think that is necessary. And that other, you just have to look at the situation; assess individually''.[54]

One of the reasons why economic refugees are not considered welcome is because one assumes that they come here to benefit from the social care system: ''And if they have work, then they do not feel like it. Here in Germany they get so much money, so that they can live well. And then they do not go

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[51] ''Met dat aanpassen, dat stoort me heel erg. Dat er geen fatsoenlijk woord Nederlands uit komt terwijl die mensen hier al tien jaar wonen; ik denk dat je door die vluchtelingen ook al een bepaald beeld hebt gevormd over die mensen die nou hier nieuw komen. Vroeger was ik wel meer, omdat ik met die families was opgegroeid, dat je wel respect voor ze had en het zielig vond waar ze vandaan kwamen. (…) En ik heb nu het idee dat, omdat je ook veel vluchtelingen ziet die helemaal geen Nederlands spreken en maar denken of ze alles kunnen, het wel een beetje veranderd. Dat je er niet meer zo lief tegenaan kijkt''.

[52] ''Maar het is ook niet zo dat die mensen die daar wonen zich met ons gaan mengen. Tegelijkertijd gaan wij er niet naartoe, wij houden ons af van hun. (…) Dat je elkaar beide ontloopt; ze zoeken toch hun eigen, toch vaak hun eigen familie of vrienden. Ja, je zoekt je eigen soort een beetje op. (…) Ik denk dat dat lastig is. Ook voor hun; ik denk dat het voor hun lastiger is dan voor ons, want het is toch lastiger als vreemde. Als je als vreemdeling hierheen komt en je moet met de rest zien te leven''.

[53] ''Als het echt vluchtelingen zijn, die echt problemen hebben in hun land, zoals Syrië, dan vind ik het goed. Maar, dan moeten ze natuurlijk hier leren te leven''.

[54] ''Maar ik heb wel een probleem met economische vluchtelingen, want gebieden waar niks aan de hand is in feite en ze komen hier wel, daar heb ik wat meer moeite mee. De oorlogsvluchtelingen uit de conflictlanden, dat vind ik noodzakelijk. En dat andere moet je gewoon kijken naar de situatie; individueel beoordelen''.

back. They do not want to work either'' (K2).[55] Someone else expressed this concisely: ''Lot of money without working''. Their reception is considered to cost a lot of money which is not economically feasible and goes at the expense of the own population.

Also, the (legal) definition of 'refugee', under which 'economic' refugees cannot be considered, plays an important role: ''Well yes, those who are really on the run, they are welcome, why not. Well, there is only just, as you can see, there are a lot between them that are not considered to be refugees, but they then also come'' (B1).[56] Refugees (in the sense of the legal definition) have the status that they 'must' be helped and gratefully accept this help, while economic refugees have no 'right' to stay here and therefore become perceived as not welcome: ''Those who are entitled to it will be granted asylum, and those who are not entitled to it, yes, they are unlucky'' (B1).[57] This statement shows how the degree of 'acceptance' by the state, plays a role in forming perceptions among citizens.

Another form of 'threat' is the cultural threat, which involve the idea that refugees somehow threaten our way of life because of cultural differences. It also includes the belief that they cannot assimilate, which eventually may cause problems: ''You grew up in a certain culture, and you maintain those cultures. Three, four generations pass, including their mentality before those people change. So yes, they can flee and come here, but what's the point of that? On the one hand, the Middle East, it is in those people. (…) Too many different thoughts. The economy is not good, so you just go out on the street and make each other's life sour'' (B5).[58] The last quotation also suggests a particular 'fear' for refugees - or probably people with this culture in general -, coming from the Middle East.

Sometimes the arrival and presence of refugees is associated with the threat of terrorism: ''Yes, the threat is currently with (...) all attacks within Europe, and that you do notice that the perpetrators, or the ones behind it, that they can find a safe haven in the Netherlands'' (W2).[59] As such, terrorists are perceived to be among refugees. Still, it is indicated that this is caused by just a small part of people and that one is aware that not 'all' refugees are a threat in the sense of (potential) terrorists: ''Yes, if you hear that then, like in Paris and (…) Look, most will be good who are here, they are really fleeing, but yes, of course there are a few of those bad apples between them. And you also have those in the Netherlands'' (W3).[60] It seems that, as a result of terrorist attacks, (a share of) refugees are perceived to be a threat to safety.

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[55] ''Und wenn sie Arbeit haben, dann haben sie keine Lust. (…) Hier in Deutschland kriegen sie so viel Geld, damit die gut leben können. Und dann gehen die nicht mehr zurück. Die wollen auch nicht arbeiten''.
[56] ''Nou ja, degene die dan werkelijk op de vlucht zijn, die zijn welkom, waarom niet. Nou ja, er is maar net, zoals je nou ziet, zitten er een hoop tussen die eigenlijk niet als vluchteling aangemerkt zijn, maar die komen dan ook mee''.
[57] ''Degene die er recht ophebben, die krijgen asiel, en degene die er geen recht op hebt, ja die heeft dan pech''.
[58] ''Je bent in een bepaalde cultuur opgegroeid, en die culturen behoud je. Daar gaan drie, vier generaties overheen, ook over de mentaliteit van mensen, voordat ze gaan veranderen. Dus ja, ze kunnen daar wegvluchten en hierheen gaan, maar wat schiet je ermee op. Aan de ene kant, het Midden-Oosten, het zit in die mensen. (…) Te veel verschillende gedachtes. De economie is niet goed, dus dan ga je maar gauw de straat op en elkaar het leven zuur maken''.
[59] ''Ja, de dreiging is momenteel met (…) alle aanslagen binnen Europa, en dat je toch wel merkt dat de daders, of de degene die er verder achter zitten, dat die toch wel heel makkelijk in Nederland een veilige toevlucht kunnen vinden''.
[60] ''Ja, als je dat dan weer hoort dan ja, zoals in Parijs en (…) Kijk de meeste zullen goed zijn die hierheen zijn, die zijn ook echt wel op de vlucht, maar ja, er zitten natuurlijk een paar van die rotte appels tussen. En die heb je in Nederland ook''.

Two similar stories give deeper insight into why one can feel this fear. The first from a middle-aged, woman from Rees (R1):

‘‘Because there is one thing that also bothered me a little since this situation with refugees, and terrorist attacks that might have been carried out from their side (…) only a few maybe, but you no longer feel so sure everywhere. So, if you are in big cities like Cologne. And everywhere you have those big blocks, those concrete blocks where those big places are shielded or there is another car from the police. You do not feel as free as before. (…) You are considering it twice whether to go to the Christmas market with the children or prefer to stay at home. A little bit of that doubt’’.[61]

The second story, comes from a middle-aged man, also living in Rees (R3):

‘‘Here we have a very nice festival, that has been there for thirty years already. Two years ago, it was the first time I saw police officers with military rifles walking around. In a village of 5000 inhabitants, and in the weekend of the festival, there are then another 5000 people. The whole village is there, that is always great. Always peace, never arguments. And then you do that and then you think ‘wow, that is shocking. It scares you. I have never seen anything like it. With the police, heavily armed at such a small festival, that is what scares you. And then you get a little bit of fear of something you cannot immediately see and feel well. And then I even get anxiety. I can honestly say that’’.[62]

Besides this ‘threat’ of terrorism, there is a perception that refugees are more inclined to engage in crime, and therefore that the arrival of refugees also brings more crime: ‘‘I think those people are less likely to work, and they have to earn their money somehow. Yes, at some point you have to steal’’ (W3).[63] It thus happens that one assumes that refugees have little money and for that reason have to 'commit' criminal activities to get money.

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[61] ‘‘Want er is 1 ding waar ik ook een beetje last van heb sinds de situatie zo is van vluchtelingen en terroristische aanslagen die misschien vanuit hun kant uitgevoerd werden (…), weinig misschien, maar je voelt je niet meer zo heel zeker overal. Dus als je in grote steden bent zoals Keulen. En overal heb je die grote blokken, die betonblokken waar die grote plaatsen afgeschermd zijn of dan staat er weer een auto van de politie. Je voelt je niet meer zo vrij als vroeger. (…) Je overweegt twee keer, ga ik nu naar de kerstmarkt met de kinderen of blijf ik liever thuis. Zo'n beetje die twijfel’’.

[62] ‘‘Hier hebben we een heel mooi festival dat er al dertig jaar is. 2 jaar geleden was het de eerste keer dat ik politieagenten met militaire geweren zag rondlopen. In een dorp van 5000 inwoners, in het weekend waarin dat festival is zijn er dan nog eens 5000 mensen. Het hele dorp staat er, dat is altijd supermooi. Altijd vrede, nooit ruzie. En dan zie je dat en dan denk je wow, dat is heftig. Dan schrik je. Ik heb zoiets nog nooit gezien. Met de politie, zwaarbewapend op zo'n klein festival, daar schrik je van. En dan krijg je ook een klein beetje angst voor iets wat je niet goed kunt zien en voelen. En dan krijg zelfs ik angst. Dat kan ik eerlijk zeggen’’.

[63] ‘‘Kijk ik denk die mensen komen minder snel aan het werk, en die moeten toch op de een of andere manier hun geld verdienen. Ja op een gegeven moment moet je wel gaan stelen’’.

A young woman living in Berg en Dal (B6), told about hearing disturbing ''stories'' about refugees which caused an uncomfortable feeling with the proximity of refugees as a whole:

''It was always Heumensoord in Nijmegen, that those refugees came close to the residential areas; and you often heard some bad stories about it, that there were robberies or such things. I am scared pretty quickly, so I did not think it was a great idea that those people would come there. That does affect my image a bit, and also what I said, they are very close here. And then you hear from those stories that they rape people and all that, and then I think: nice then, then I am here and they will be here at the door when I am here at night''.[64]

Another female respondent from Winterswijk (W2) told a story about how she had an unpleasant personal experience during her voluntary work with refugees:

''I did volunteer work in the old asylum seekers' center before. But (…) they want to keep it very 'own'. They flee to a country, but they want to basically change the country. (…) I have already had a big fight with a man. (…) I wanted to help him. And first he says, ''that is fine'' and then - yes, if he misunderstood me or something, I still do not know - when I walked up to him to help, nothing was right anymore: ''and you women this, and Dutch people that'', well then, he went so rage and then he wanted to hit me. I think that is just that, if that language had been better or if there was more understanding of both sides for culture, that it would happen less common.
I think I had a different attitude towards it after that happened. I think that the moment I stepped in, I was very positive and I had something like, 'I am going to do this and mean something for my fellow man', but I do not think I would do it a second time now''.[65]

Due this 'conflict', the respondent formed a perception about refugees as one group; about the incompatible differences between us and them. Unfortunately, this respondent has not told us more about her (perhaps good) experiences during her voluntary work.

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[64] ''Het was altijd Heumensoord in Nijmegen ook, dat die vluchtelingen dicht bij de woonwijken kwamen; en daar hoorde je vaak wat mindere verhalen over, dat er overvallen waren of zulke dingen. Ik ben nogal bang aangelegd, dus ik vond het niet echt een fijn idee dat die mensen daar kwamen. Dat heeft wel mijn beeld wat beïnvloed, en ook wat ik al zei, ze zitten hier heel dichtbij. En dan hoor je van die verhalen dat ze mensen verkrachten en al die toestanden, dan denk ik van: lekker dan, dan zit ik hier en staan ze straks hier aan de deur als ik hier 's nachts ben''.

[65] ''Ik heb eerder wel vrijwilligerswerk gedaan in het oude asielzoekerscentrum nog. Maar (…) ze willen het heel eigen houden. Ze vluchten wel naar een land maar ze willen in principe het land aanpassen. (…) Ik heb al een keer slaande ruzie gehad met een man. (…) Ik wou hem helpen. En eerst zegt hij "is prima" en daarna - ja, of hij mij verkeerd begrepen heeft of ja ik weet het nog steeds niet – toen ik naar hem toe liep om hem te helpen, toen deugde er niks meer: ''en jullie vrouwen dit, en Nederlanders dat'', nou toen ging hij zo tekeer en toen wou hij mij slaan. Dat is gewoon denk ik, als die taal beter was geweest of meer begrip van beide kanten voor de cultuur, ja dat dat minder vaak ook voorkomt. Ik denk dat ik er na die tijd anders tegenover stond. Ik denk dat ik het moment dat ik erin stapte, was ik heel positief en had ik zoiets van 'dit ga ik doen en wat betekenen voor de medemens', maar ik denk niet dat ik nu heel snel voor een tweede keer weer zou doen''.

Another respondent (R3) explains how, even for him, the negative experiences and events often outweigh the positive ones: ''Yes. That is unfortunate, but it is what it is. Because that over weighs a bit. If you have a scale, those problems are heavier than those fun or those beautiful things''.[66]

Tolerance

Based on the remaining words in the word cloud, an overarching theme was chosen, named 'tolerance'. The Cambridge Dictionary online defines 'tolerance' as follows: ''willingness to accept behavior and beliefs that are different from your own, although you might not agree with or approve of them'' (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.).

To begin with, there are people with humanitarian considerations when asked about their perception of refugees: ''They are people with human feelings, with human problems. So, that is always important. Because we often talk about 'refugees', that often sounds like people who are in second or third place'' (R6).[67] It is assumed that every person is equal and also deserve an equal basis: ''I think that these refugees should be given opportunities. (...) Because those people should just as well have a basis of safety and happiness'' (W4).[68] From such statements, it became clear that this is not a pragmatic or sober observation for many interviewees: ''Humanity says that we have to help. For humanitarian reasons'' (K5).[69] When we look at the way in which the interviewees explain this, they express empathy and understanding. As such they think refugees should be helped because they are in a difficult situation. Without any doubt, one older male respondent (W6) states: ''Those people have already experienced a lot more than we will ever experience. So, I think that, then you can also support those people''.[70] Similarly, this young man from Berg and Dal (B2) stated: ''So I think that people who flee violence in their own country should just be welcome somewhere. I think that these people should be well taken care of''.[71]

The acceptance of refugees is also indirectly related to the wealth of the state and to the ability of the state to receive and accommodate refugees here: ''I was glad for them that they had an opportunity to stay here. And I was like: we have so much place. I walked through Rees, and I saw the old hospital was empty, and this place is empty, and I thought: why can't they live here? We have the place, we have the money'' (R5). This emerged as a supporting argument, several times. That the reception of refugees did not always go well either is not always a more important counter argument. ''Well, I think it's good that Germany has taken in so many refugees. (…) So, a lot has gone wrong in the process, but basically,

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[66] ''Ja. Dat is jammer, maar het is niet anders. Want dat overweegt toch een beetje. Als je een weegschaal hebt, die problemen die zijn wel zwaarder dan die leuke of die mooie dingen''.

[67] ''Het zijn mensen met menselijke gevoelens, met menselijke problemen. Dus dat is altijd belangrijk. Want we hebben het vaak over "vluchtelingen", dat klinkt vaak zo alsof het mensen zijn die op de tweede of derde plaats staan''.

[68] ''Ik vind dat die vluchtelingen wel kansen moeten krijgen. (…) Omdat die mensen net zo goed een basis van veiligheid en van geluk moeten hebben''.

[69] ''Humaniteit zegt dat moeten we helpen. Om humanitaire redenen''.

[70] ''Die mensen hebben al heel wat meer meegemaakt dan wij ooit zullen meemaken. Dus ik vind dat dat, dan mag je die mensen ook wel ondersteunen''.

[71] ''Ik vind dus wel dat mensen die vluchten voor geweld in hun eigen land dat die wel gewoon ergens welkom moeten zijn. Ik vind wel dat die mensen gewoon goed opgevangen moeten worden''.

I think it is right that a rich country like Germany helps people in need, and receives them'' (K3).[72]

The acceptance and understanding of refugees can also stem from the history of the host country: ''I think that is important, because Germany itself was in that situation, in the World War. Where people from Germany had to go to another place and also were refugees. And then I find this arrangement very well. Very important. If I am in the same situation, I am also happy when there is another country somewhere, that says: Okay, you can stay here for as long as it is needed'' (K1).[73]

Related to this argument, a young and high educated woman from Kleve (K6), told a short but meaningful story:

''I myself came from Croatia to Germany when I was a small child. And yes, it was also important to us that we were 'welcome'. Yes, I think so, that I am so tolerant and say that the refugees are welcome because I came here from another country too''.[74]

On the basis of a personal, similar situation, understanding is thus created for the situation of refugees and the feelings that come with such difficult situation. As such, one as aware of the importance of an accepting attitude towards those who are forced to flee.

Another respondent, an older woman from Rees (R4), has developed her perception and understanding for refugees based on her parents' experiences who had to flee during the Second World War:

''My father was born in Königsberg and he also had to leave his home in the Second World War and he never told me, but I know he had a very bad experience, because they were too late and the Russians came from the back. And always said, ''I cannot speak about this, but it was a horror''. So, I think the refugees that are arriving here will have similar experience so I always see it in another context. And my mother in law came from Silesia and they also had to leave their home and she was 6 years old. (…) The soldiers came and took her. So, every time we see these people, I have to think about my father and my mother in law and think about them''.

So, experiences of people who are very close can be perceived as personal and hence create understanding of the situation of others and an accepting attitude to their admission and stay. Just like

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[72] ''Das ist schwierig natürlich, weil das auch gerade sehr aktuell diskutiert würde. Also, ich finde es gut das Deutschland so viele Flüchtlinge aufgenommen hat. Also, es ist vieles schiefgelaufen, bei der Abwicklung; aber grundsätzlich finde ich es richtig, dass ein reiches Land wie Deutschland Menschen hilft die in Not sind, und die aufnimmt''.

[73] ''Dat vind ik belangrijk, omdat Duitsland zelf in die situatie was, in de 'Weltkrieg'. Waar mensen van Duitsland naar een andere plek moesten en ook vluchtelingen waren. En dan vind ik deze regeling heel goed. Heel belangrijk. Als ik in dezelfde situatie kom, ben ik ook blij als er ergens een ander land is, dat zegt: Oké, u kunt hier blijven voor zo lang het nodig is''.

[74] ''Ik ben zelf ook uit Kroatië naar Duitsland gekomen toen ik een klein kindje was. En ja het was ook voor ons belangrijk dat wij 'wilkommen' waren. Ja, ik denk het toch, dat ik zo tolerant ben en zeg dat de vluchtelingen welkom zijn omdat ik zelf ook hier gekomen ben uit een ander land''.

that, also personal experiences with refugees and/or asylum seekers can contribute to a positive attitude towards the arrival and presence of refugees:

''I work in a hospital, and I know there is a lack of people who work there. Maybe this could be a chance, if there are people who say: 'I would like to work in a hospital and I have the medical experience'. We have a lot of people with migration backgrounds in the hospital where I work, and it is really 'enriching'. It is good for us to watch the people in a different way'' (R5).

These experiences led to the perception that the arrival of 'others' can be a chance and works enriching. Someone mentions that he thinks these positive personal experiences are important for the formation of perception:

''Yes, (…) I visited an asylum seekers' center in Winterswijk. Yes, you always look with a bit of a negative image to such AZC [Asielzoekerscentrum]; there is soon a message or a feeling about it that I do not have to come here in the evening, because then you are not safe. But if you go there, there are also a lot of people who are willing and also very happy, very enthusiastic about how things are going. No, it is good that people see that too. Especially if you are very negative towards asylum seekers'' (W5).[75]

A good representation of how (positive) close personal experiences with refugees through an internship at 'Vluchtelingenwerk' in combination with a study, can influence the formation and adjustment of an opinion, appears from the following story:

''Yes, when I went to work there, and really started at college (hbo). Then you go deeper into the law than at mbo. At first, I was just ignorant. And at a certain point you know how it is, and you hear everything and you see those people, and then my opinion has changed. I was not such a negative person anyway, but I also thought just go away or something'' (W1).[76]

Related to this, the following young, male respondent (W5) tells why he thinks his perception changed during the years:

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[75] ''Ja, ik was bij een asielzoekerscentrum in Winterswijk langs geweest. Ja, je kijkt toch altijd met een beetje een negatief beeld naar zo'n AZC; er gaat al snel zo'n bericht of zo'n gevoel rond van ik moet hier 's avonds niet komen want dan ben je niet veilig. Maar als je er langsgaat, er zijn ook heel veel mensen die wel bereidwillig zijn en ook heel graag, heel enthousiast zijn over hoe het hier gaat. Nee, het is juist goed dat mensen dat ook zien. Zeker als je heel negatief tegenover asielzoekers staat''.
[76] ''Ja toen ik daar ging stagelopen, en ook echt op het hbo begon. Dan ga je toch wat dieper in op het recht dan mbo, ja, ik was eerst ook gewoon onwetend. En op een gegeven moment dan weet je hoe het zit, en je hoort alles wat meer en je ziet die mensen, en toen is mijn mening wel veranderd. Ik was sowieso niet zo'n negatieveling, maar ik dacht ook, ja weet je ga lekker weg of zo''.

''I think I used to be a bit harder in the past. That I did think then, why do we have to help them. Yes, it might be a bit too, if you get older, I am only 25, but that you also think a bit differently about it and certainly when you talk with those people, and go visit them; then you also see other sides of the story. Your opinion will change then''.[77]

The following man from Rees (R6) also links his perception to his study in political science and what he learned there about the causes of migration and (forced) displacement:

''I studied political science, so I have also looked at how the relationships are going abroad. How do we deal with other countries? And if you then go a bit deeper into the analysis, you actually see very quickly that our economic growth is often at the expense of them. And then it is logical indeed; research also shows that the people then get moving. That they are willing to walk thousands of kilometers in the hope that where they end up then to find a better future. I just think, yes, that seems logical to me''.[78]

Other statements show how people actually believe that refugees do not belong here. One of the reasons for such opinions and thoughts is that there are too many refugees, which cannot all come here and that it is getting 'full' in the host country: ''You also have overpopulation, and the Netherlands is, in my opinion, becoming somewhat full'' (B5).[79] It is interesting that not necessarily the 'stranger' is seen as a problem, but the number. The latter argument actually only emerged among Dutch people. An explanation for this may be the following: ''In that respect, the Germans, I think a bit of their taxable past in that respect, more tolerant and say, yes, okay, we allow that. And there we are in the Netherlands, I have the idea (...) what we think, we already have such a small country with so many people, it is good for once'' (W6).[80] So, in principle, respondents do not think it is a direct problem when refugees make their home in the Netherlands and/or Germany. The real problem is the 'number' of refugees and drawing a line: ''No problem, but there is also a limit'' (R2).[81]

Another argument is the perception that refugees can be helped better in the region of origin where they can also rebuild the country: ''In my opinion, those people benefit more by helping that country

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[77] ''Ik denk dat ik er vroeger wel iets harder in was eigenlijk. Dat ik toen wel dacht van (…) waarom moeten wij ze helpen. Ja het is misschien ook wel een beetje, als je iets ouder wordt, ik ben dan wel maar 25, maar dat je er toch ook iets anders over gaat denken en zeker ook als je met die mensen praat en komt, ga daar eens op bezoekje; dan zie je ook andere kanten van het verhaal. Dan word je mening toch anders''.

[78] ''Ik heb politieke wetenschappen gestudeerd, dus ik heb ook gekeken naar hoe zijn de verhoudingen naar het buitenland toe. Hoe gaan we met andere landen om? En als je dan een beetje dieper in de analyse gaat, dan zie je eigenlijk heel snel dat onze economische groei vaak ten laste van hun gaat. En dan is het logisch inderdaad; uit onderzoeken blijkt dat ook, dat de mensen dan in beweging komen. Dat ze bereid zijn om duizenden kilometers te wandelen in de hoop, daar waar ze dan terecht komen dan een betere toekomst te vinden. Ik vind dat gewoon, ja, dat lijkt me logisch''.

[79] ''Je hebt ook overbevolking, en Nederland begint, naar mijn mening, enigszins vol te raken''.

[80] ''Wat dat betreft zijn de Duitsers, komt denk ik nog een beetje uit hun belaste verleden in dat opzicht wel, toleranter en zeggen, ja oké, wij laten dat toe. En daar zijn wij in Nederland, heb ik het idee (…) waarmee we denken, we hebben al zo'n klein landje met zo veel mensen, het is wel een keer goed''.

[81] ''Geen probleem, maar ook daar is een grens''.

where they come from, to do something there. Exactly the same with the Middle Eastern problems and all those refugees coming here. (…) Let those people be close to that country, because that country has to be rebuilt. And it makes no sense if there are only young men here who have fled while the children and the women are still at home. Then you also distort the image. The image is then wrong'' (R2).[82] This perception and a kind of ''irritation'' about young male refugees, also appears in the following statement: ''Send help there and rebuild your country and make it safer. And only the young people can make the land safe. The old people not, they cannot do that anymore. But the young ones, they do not have to be so financially supported here. The money has to go there. The old people will not come here anyway. (…) Those coming from the Eastern Bloc, Africa, Nigeria and Iraq, are just young men. They have to block that and say: ''stay home, work and rebuild.'' (K2).[83]

Furthermore, some have the perception that refugees should return after the situation in their country of origin is safe again: ''In itself, it will be okay with those countries and it becomes quiet again, but then I also think you have to go back again. And the Netherlands starts, in my opinion, to become somewhat full'' (B5).[84] For one, this stems from worries about the high number of refugees. For the other, it can stem from an idea about 'what is best for them': ''Imagine that in Spain war breaks out, then I think, just open the border and let them come. But as soon as it is quiet there, they have to go there again. (…) I mean, those people get into a culture shock. I think you can never get used to that. I try to imagine if war breaks out here and the Netherlands now, in Syria it was quiet now, and we will be here, actually you will be forced to leave here and then you will be placed in Syria. That is not possible, is not it? (B4)''[85]

6.2 Change of perception in the past three years

Because the ''perception of refugees'' must be looked at in a comparative sense, this subchapter will display and describe the change of perception in the past three years through the survey and interview results respectively.

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[82] ''Naar mijn mening zijn die mensen veel meer gebaat om dat land te helpen waar ze van stammen, om daar wat te doen. Precies hetzelfde met het Midden-Oosten problematiek en al die vluchtelingen die hiernaartoe komen. Laat die mensen dicht bij dat land zijn, want dat land moet weer opgebouwd worden. En het heeft geen zin als hier alleen maar jonge mannen zitten die gevlucht zijn, en de kinderen en de vrouwen zijn nog thuis. Dan verdraai je ook het beeld. De beeldvorming kom dan verkeerd over''.

[83] ''Nicht die hierhin schicken. Hilfe dahin schicken und dass Sie ihr Land wiederaufbauen und sicherer machen. Und nur die junge Leute können das Land sicher machen. Die alten Leute nicht, die können das nicht mehr. Aber die junge, die müssen hier nicht sosehr finanziell unterstützt wurden. Das Geld muss dahin. Die alten Leute die kommen sowieso nicht hierhin. Die von Ostblock kommen, Afrika, Nigeria und Irak, das sind nur junge Männer. Das musste man blockieren und sagen: zu Hause bleiben, arbeiten und wiederaufbauen''.

[84] ''Op zich komt het met die landen ook wel weer goed, en daar wordt het rustig, maar dan vind ik ook dat je weer terug moet gaan. En Nederland begint, naar mijn mening, enigszins vol te raken''.

[85] ''Stel dat er dadelijk in, ik noem eens iets, Spanje oorlog uitbreekt, dan denk ik, zet de grens maar open en laat maar komen. Maar wel zo gauw als het weer rustig is, weer mooi daar naartoe. (…) Ik bedoel, die mensen komen zo in een cultuurshock. Ik denk dat je daar nooit aan kan wennen. Ik probeer me maar in te denken als hier oorlog uitbreekt en Nederland nu, in Syrië was het nu rustig, en wij worden hier dan, eigenlijk wordt je hier dan gedwongen om hier weg te gaan en dan wordt je in Syrië geplaatst. Dat kan toch ook niet?''

6.2.1 Survey results

The results presented in the following table are about one's experiences with the arrival and presence of refugees in a comparative sense. When looking at (e.g.) the indicator 'noticeable', the respondents can experience the arrival and presence of refugees more (1), less (3) or equally (2) noticeable in their country of residence, compared to how they experienced it before the summer of 2015.

Table 6.2. Perception of refugees in 2015, compared to current perception of refugees (2018):

	More noticeable		More normal		More natural		More worrisome	
	N	*%*	**N**	*%*	**N**	*%*	**N**	*%*
1	214	20,5%	160	15,4%	147	14,2%	198	19,0%
2	446	42,8%	673	64,7%	679	65,6%	524	50,3%
3	382	36,7%	207	19,9%	209	20,2%	320	30,7%
Total	**1044**		**1040**		**1039**		**1041**	
	Less noticeable		**Less normal**		**Less natural**		**Less worrisome**	

A majority of around 65% of the respondents think they experienced the arrival and presence of refugees in 2018 as just as normal and natural as in 2015. Over a third of the respondents think they experienced the arrival and presence of refugees in 2018 as more noticeable. This is compared to (about) a fifth of the respondents who think they perceived the arrival and presence of refugees less noticeable in 2018. Besides, almost a third of the respondents think they perceived the arrival and presence of refugees more worrisome in 2018, compared to how they experienced it about three years ago.

When comparing the results of Dutch and German respondents, it appeared that a higher percentage of the Dutch respondents think they experienced the arrival and presence of refugees in 2018 equally noticeable, normal, natural and worrisome as in 2015, while a higher percentage of German respondents think they perceived refugees in 2018 as more noticeable, more normal, more natural and more worrisome than in 2015.[86]

6.2.2 Interview results

The final interview question on this subject explicitly asked whether there was a particular reason or moment when the respondent's perception or opinion had changed. Not much explicit information about precise turning points were given, because the majority indicated that they had always had this opinion or that it had not changed recently. This could be due to the fact that people are generally not so well aware of a change in their perception, or prefer not to admit or tell it. Nevertheless, few indications about factors that may contribute to the reversal of opinion were given. These were not only clear from the answers to this explicit question but appeared from the answers during the remainder of the interview.

For example, notable and impressive events. The large number of arriving refugees in 2015 and

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[86] Other comparisons are based on country of origin, gender, level of education and age, which can be found in appendix 5.

certain (terrorist) events of the last couple of years were mentioned by some interviewees as the reason that they had adjusted their opinion. This was influenced by the impression that too many refugees than manageable came to or wanted to come to the Netherlands and also stay here: ''I used to find it a little sadder, and you also thought: they will go back again. And a few does not matter. But now it is more and more, and I have the idea that they are not going back so soon. That they all stay'' (B6).[87]

Examples of references to the image-defining impressions that influence or changed someone's perception are significant. A middle-aged woman from Rees (R5) explained in detail about her experiences and thoughts:

> ''My personal opinion? I think it is a big development, from the beginning to today. A lot of things happened. (…) Of course, there were a lot of terrorist attacks; and I think it is just human to think: 'oh, that is not good, now I am afraid, maybe it would not be like this if we had not done this in this or this way'. Fear is a great thing. I don't want this, but I think it is just human. It influences you and your opinion. (…) It is just a feeling, and it is so deep in your head. What I said, you cannot turn the TV on without getting feared. And I always think: calm down, not everybody in this world is bad. (…) Maybe he is just as afraid is you. But, once again, I do not want to feel like this, but I feel it''.

In first instance, this respondent refers to terrorist attacks and the fear it causes. But implicitly there is also reference to the way this ''refugee stream'' is portrayed on TV and in the media, which is an important factor in the formation of thoughts, opinions and overall perceptions. Another respondent also clearly and impressively narrated that his opinion has changed. He explains (R3):

> ''Because of those events. I was on demonstrations, I did everything against nations, and I was always pro foreigners, pro refugees, but (...) I have become more critical. I look at it differently in recent years. I am not straight ahead anymore. And I say it once again, maybe 90% of the refugees are all great. They are nice people, and they really leave their country because they really have problems. And then of that 90%, maybe 10% of them (...) have a weird thought (...) and are all messed up. Yes, that destroys the whole sympathy again''.[88]

Here too it is an impression, but it refers more to the alleged threat of terrorism than to a specific aspect of the refugee crisis. These comments are very valuable because they indicate that 'imaging' and certain

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[87] ''Vroeger vond ik het wat zieliger, en dacht je ook: die gaan wel weer terug. En een paar erbij maakt niet uit. Maar nu is het telkens meer, en ik heb idee dat ze nu ook niet zo snel teruggaan. Dat ze allemaal blijven''.

[88] ''Door die gebeurtenissen. Ik was op demonstraties, ik heb van alles tegen naties gedaan, en ik was altijd pro buitenlanders, pro vluchtelingen, maar (…) ik ben kritischer geworden. Ik kijk met een ander oog de laatste jaren. Ik ben niet meer straightahead. En ik zeg het nog een keer duidelijk, misschien 90% van de vluchtelingen zijn allemaal tiptop. Dat zijn aardige mensen, en die gaan echt van hun land weg, omdat ze echt problemen hebben. En dan heb je van die 90% misschien 10% die (…) een rare gedachte hebben (…) die gewoon niet sporen. Ja dat maakt dan de hele sympathie weer kapot''.

'impressions' of a situation can indeed affect and sometimes even change perception. In this case, it happens for several reasons: on the one hand because ''they'' are a threat or problem, on the other hand because ''we'' cannot handle it and let fear prevail.

Of course, this does not apply to everyone. Hence a young man, living in Kleve (K4) said:

> ''Probably it has reinforced the opinion I have now. Because during the refugee crisis, the news tended much more towards the negative. And then I thought: that cannot be all right? There must also be something positive about it? And if you look at the decent media, the NPO or Die Zeit, a newspaper with lots of background information (…), then it is actually confirmed that it is not as bad as portrayed in the mass media, so to speak''.[89]

For this respondent, certain impressive events have even strengthened his sympathy for refugees. He also refers to the 'decent media' thereby saying that there are media sources that do not provide good background information and hence mainly distribute negative news.

Related to this, is the lack of information due to age or study which made sure that respondents formed their perception based on insufficient information. As they grew older and became more involved with the subject, their perception changed and became more tolerant: ''At first, I was just ignorant. And at a given moment you know how it is, and you hear everything a bit more and you see those people, and then my opinion has changed. I think if you communicate more, if you give people info then they know what to do, then they can form a much broader picture'' (W1).[90]

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter showed a rich insight into the – sometimes nuanced – descriptions of the positive or negative perceptions about the arrival and admission of refugees by the Dutch and German border residents. Summarizing, the following appears from previous results:

Perceptions about refugees can differ widely, which is what the overall theme of 'tolerance' covers. So, although there are always 'extremes' in society, from these twenty-four interviews it appeared that people often have mixed feelings and perceptions, which means that feelings of compassion and anxiety often go together.

'Integration' is mentioned a lot among interviewees and seems to be an important 'condition' for refugees to being perceived as welcome. One of the reasons is that differences and different ways of

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[89] ''Waarschijnlijk heeft het de mening die ik nu heb zelfs versterkt. Want in die vluchtelingencrisis, de berichtgeving erover neigde veel meer de negatieve kant op. En toen dacht ik van: dat kan toch allemaal niet kloppen? Er moet toch ook iets positiefs aan zijn? En als je dan naar de fatsoenlijke media kijkt, de NPO oftewel Die Zeit, een krant met heel veel achtergrondinformatie (…) dan wordt toch eigenlijk wel bevestigd dat het zo erg allemaal niet is als in de massamedia, om het zo maar te noemen''.

[90] ''Ik was eerst ook gewoon onwetend. En op een gegeven moment dan weet je hoe het zit, en je hoort alles wat meer en je ziet die mensen, en toen is mijn mening wel veranderd. Ik denk als je meer communiceert, als je mensen info geeft dan weten ze wat ze moeten doen, dan kunnen ze een veel breder beeld vormen''.

living are perceived as incompatible. Some of the interviewees believe this is well possible, while others do not believe that refugees are capable to 'fit in' or even are not willing to adapt.

From the theme 'anxiety' it appears that the interviewees link the arrival and presence of refugees to different threats: economic, cultural and security threats. Respondents tend to be more favorably disposed towards those recognized as refugees than they are towards asylum-seekers and other migrants. This is particularly evident from the distinction between 'genuine' and 'economic' refugees (based on their motives for fleeing).

'Tolerance' with regard to refugees includes the varying degrees of ''willingness to accept behavior and beliefs that are different from your own, although you might not agree with or approve of them'' (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Arguments for being (moderately) tolerant (while being doubtful) about the arrival and presence of refugees can overall be divided in two ways of thinking: (1.) the idea that we should help refugees, based on humanitarian arguments and feelings of compassion. (2.) the idea that refugees need help, but that we cannot include them 'all' and that the (large) number of refugees and their division is causing issues.

The perception about refugees has not changed a lot in recent years. A majority of the survey respondents answered neutral with regard to the 'change' of their perception. This also applies to most interviewees. Yet there were quite some percentages of survey respondents who did think their perception was changed. This corresponds well with some of the interviewees who explained their feelings, what impressed them and/or even changed their perception a bit (both positively and/or negatively). Shocking stories, experiences and/or events, whether or not in the media, seem to be an important reason that support for the reception of refugees is shifting to skepticism. Still it has to be taken into account that this often involves a longer process.

Chapter 7 - Perception on borders and refugees: a relation?

This chapter brings together the descriptive chapters about the perception of respectively the Dutch-German border (chapter 5) and the arrival and presence of refugees (chapter 6) and consists of different parts. First, in section 7.1, it looks back analytically on the previous two chapters and explains the results when possible. Thereby it also presents the narratives that could be found in the perception about the arrival and presence of refugees, based on the experiences and life stories, described in chapter 6.

Second, the perception of the border as a barrier and the perception on the arrival and presence of refugees are brought together in section 7.2. It describes the presence or absence of a (possible) relation by presenting the direct and indirect results about this relation. The direct survey results are presented in tables, again followed by the interview results. These now relate to direct questions and statements about the relation between both perceptions. The section closes with some indirect findings and parallels that indicate a (possible) relation.

At last, section 7.3 contains an analytical part about what is described in section 7.2. It presents the main findings and connections, which are interpreted and explained when possible.

As mentioned in chapter 3, the difference with the perception scores in previous chapters, is that these scores are rescaled on a scale of -100 to 100. When a score reaches 100, one can speak of a *decreased* barrier effect, while a score approaching -100 describes an *increased* barrier effect. A score of zero means that the perception is unchanged.

7.1 Insights from the perception of the border and the perception about refugees

7.1.1 Perception of the border: openness versus demarcation

The perception of the border as self-evident

As shown and discussed in section 5.1, the survey results contain relatively low scores for the perception of the border as self-evident in comparison to the perception of the border as a barrier in everyday life. These low scores represent a relatively high degree of perceived 'self-evidence' of the border, which indicates a relatively large number of respondents who perceive the border as normal, useful, natural and / or important.[91] The twenty-four interviews showed similar results as this can be recognized by the fact that initially some interviewees feel that the border does not 'really' stand out and that the boundary is 'just there'. An interesting comment regarding this matter, was the following (R6): ''I feel European, let me put it that way, so I do not *need* a border, but I know that the border is there and that I have to

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[91] As mentioned before, it is assumed, that the degree of perceiving the border as self-evident, indicates a (certain degree of) barrier working of the border.

deal with that''.[92] This quote shows that the border is not necessary for the person, but that the respondent sees the borders as something that is just there; as a self-evident phenomenon that just exists.

Comparing these results, based on country of origin, it was interesting that the Dutch respondents, perceive the border as a bit more self-evident and thus the barrier effect is stronger for them. Despite the small difference, this finding may be explained by the fact that the Netherlands is a much more smaller country (in size) than Germany cause feelings among persons and/or governments of countries to believe that they are structurally short-lived or not taken seriously because of their small(er) size; an effect that can be called the ''Calimero effect''.

The perception of the border's (un)importance is quite (equally) divided among survey respondents. This corresponds with the interview results, in which two ''opposing'' groups can be identified. Respondents who perceive the border as unimportant, connect it to the (lack of) physical aspect of the border. For some, this line of thought also applies to the perceived (absent) 'function' of the border. The respondents who describe the border as important, connect it to differences between both countries, its function in demarcating identity, administrative and security matters. In such statements, a desire to the feeling and/or idea of 'belonging' to a certain group can be recognized. Statements about (representing an) identity and patriotic feelings for example, clearly show that – according the perception of citizens - the Dutch-German (land)border can function as demarcation of difference; of ''us'' versus ''them''; separating the ''here'' from ''there'', thus contributing to the 'imaginary' or 'mental' border. So, despite the denial of its importance by a number of people, this actually shows that the Dutch-German border as demarcation of the Dutch and German nations - and territories - is considered important. This is reminiscent of the (desired) 'imagined communities'.

Perception of the border as a barrier in everyday life

The (comparatively) high scores for 'the perception of the border as a barrier in everyday life' mean a (relatively) low barrier effect, which - within this dimension - means that relatively many respondents perceive the border as unnoticeable, not dividing and as (somewhat) non-impeding. This corresponds to the interview results, as the interviewees recognize that the border is overall perceived as open and non-dividing or impeding. As can be seen they link their perception to the (presence or absence of) physical 'obstacles', which indeed are not usually present in this case. An example of this – and thus more related to this 'physical' presence of the border - is the occasional but limited occurrence of border controls, which number appeared to be a measure for respondents to describe the low level of perceived barrier working. Related to this dimension, is the cross-border behavior of interviewees – with sometimes weekly or even daily border crossings – which corresponds to the low perception score (as a result of the survey) for the border as a barrier in everyday life. Given the location of the four municipalities, this

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[92] ''Ik voel me Europeaan, laat ik het maar zo zeggen, dus ik heb geen grens nodig, Maar ik weet dat de grens er is en dat ik daarmee moet omgaan''.

may be explained by the close proximity of the open border by which it takes little time and effort to cross the border for different activities.

Still, the above requires some nuance, since there were some indicators that ensured that the 'border' is perceived noticeable. This noticeability of the border is (most) associated with physical and/or visual 'factors' or 'attributes' that represent the differences between both countries such as signs, buildings, speed limits etc. Also, social-cultural aspects, differences in price and quality of products are examples that are perceived to show the noticeability of the border; of the border 'in the mind'. Socio-cultural differences such as language, mentality and/or cultural differences are not only perceived noticeable, but also as possibly impeding or dividing. Addressing differences between the Dutch and Germans – also regarding e.g. language and culture - is partly indicative for the experienced mental bordering effect and connect to the theoretical base of imagined communities, representing 'us' versus 'them'. This is also shown by e.g. the following statement: ''And culture can also be a barrier; the cultural differences caused by the border'' (R6).[93] This last quote expresses a strong normative distance as a result of recognizing the state border in this way. It illustrates a continuous differentiation process between one group and the other and spatially between the 'here' and the 'there'. These perceptions may have developed as part of actual encounters with otherness, but may also be part of people's individual perceptions and life worlds (Szytniewski, Spierings, & van der Velde, 2017).

Moreover, the state border, was not totally 'useless' to everyone (as also shown by the ''importance'' of the border) because the presence of the state border continues to play a role in the way people approach cross-border differences.

Change of border perception: hardly any to no change

A big majority of the survey respondents consider their perception of the borders' barrier effect the same as three years ago. This corresponds to the interview results from which appeared that almost every interviewee did not see a recent change in their border perception. The changes that were mentioned were about the disappearance of border controls which is perceived as the 'opening up' of the border. This however did not happen in recent years, but was a process that took place over a longer period of time.

There were some who spoke up about their desired increase in the 'number' of border controls, which has to do with the border's perceived function and its (in)sufficiency. Strikingly, this perception of the Dutch-German border and possible changes therein is – according to interviewees - mainly linked to the presence or absence of a physical and/or visual border (aspects). This may be an explanation for the few changes in border perception – and the low percentage of survey respondents that think their

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[93] ''En cultuur kan ook een barrière zijn; de cultuurverschillen die veroorzaakt worden door de grens''.

perception has changed - since little – or even nothing - has changed to the (perceived) physical and / or visual (aspects of the) border; not even at the policy level.

Additionally, some interviewees mentioned that they became more familiar with differences of the 'other side' which changed their perception on the border over a longer period of time. This can possibly be explained by the openness of the border that ensures that people have been able to cross the border easily for a long time now.

7.1.2 The arrival and presence of refugees: opposing yet intertwining perceptions

A majority of the survey respondents perceive the arrival and presence of refugees as noticeable. This can probably be explained by the increased number of refugees arriving and staying in the Netherland and/or Germany and the many discussions about this theme in (social) media. Furthermore, the perceptions were quite divided, but can be explained on the basis of the interview results. As described in chapter 6, a distinction could be made by the themes 'integration', 'anxiety' and 'tolerance'. But what does this mean and how can these results be explained?

Integration seems to be an important 'condition' for the respondents. On the one hand this can be explained by Anderson's theory of the ''imagined community'' (1983) with its own habits, norms and values, in which the refugee 'other' should adapt and earn a place of belonging. This concept also has a spatial component as interviewees stress that integration is a condition for 'staying here', and otherwise refugees should 'leave' or 'go back'. The community is therefore connected to a specific territory. These (mental) 'conditions' for admission to society - which are often included in policies - are one of the most striking forms of the manifestation of the bordering and ordering of a place and identity in space.
Then people who think that the perceived differences are so great that they are incompatible or unchangeable, may be guided by strong nationalist ideas or by anxiety.

The theme *anxiety* mainly described the ideas of citizens that cause fear for and worries about refugees. Negative associations - as a result of personal experiences for example - can increase normative distance between two groups which then influences the way encounters with differences are perceived and experienced (Szytniewski, Spierings, & van der Velde, 2017). As ideas related to anxiety are normally quite strong and persistent, these evoke a kind of 'aversion' to the arrival and presence of refugees as a whole. That interviewees tend to be favorably disposed towards the 'genuine' refugee, because the economic refugee is probably seen as not entitled to receive 'our' help and their arrival would be – unjustified - at the expense of our prosperity.

Despite these themes, perceptions, opinions and motivations about the acceptance of refugees can differ widely. This is what the overall theme of '*tolerance*' covers mostly. It knows varying 'degrees' of accepting difference(s) among which reflections on humanity. Hence, arguments for being (moderately) tolerant about the arrival and presence of refugees can overall be divided in two ways of thinking: (1.) The idea that we should help refugees, explained by feelings of compassion and humanity which create a moral obligation to help refugees. Furthermore, personal experiences with refugees and

positive encounters or associations with regard to the others can lead to feelings of normative proximity, which also might explain the idea that 'we' should tolerate and even help 'others'. (2.) The idea that refugees need help, but that we cannot include them 'all' and that the (large) number of refugees and their division is causing issues. This can be explained by a 'fear' of possible consequences such as chaos or potential oppression, or by avoiding the (permanent) stay of refugees in their direct proximity; a phenomenon that can be named NIMBY or 'not in my backyard'.

Despite this categorization of statements, there is no simple subdivision possible between contrasting perceptions and/or attitudes such as humanitarian perspectives and security perspectives, because many have moderate ideas and/or certain ideas that sometimes intertwine.

In any case, it is evident that people think in terms of 'us' versus 'them' as refugees are simply perceived as being 'different'. But here too, not everyone thinks the same about this dichotomy and whether or how one should - or should not - get a place over 'here'. As shown above, certain thoughts or feelings suggest the presence of an 'us-them'-distinction but are not necessarily aimed at or meant to exclude others.

Change of perception with regard to refugees

For a majority of the survey respondents the perception on the arrival and presence of refugees, has not changed in the past couple of years. The arrival of refugees is of course nothing new and will always take place, which may explain why it has not changed for many people. Yet, according to a majority of the respondents, the indicator 'noticeable' has changed for them. As the number of refugees arriving and staying here differs per period and depends on the situation in other countries, this can influence the noticeability of present refugees.

During the interviews, there were some indications about factors that may have had some effect such as notable and impressive events (such as terrorist attacks, whether or not in the media), the number of arriving refugees and/or shocking stories. These factors are mostly related to anxiety, which is known to be a persistent emotion/feeling that may trigger a change in perception.

Although the survey results show that the respondents were able to indicate their perception of refugees in the past, it has to be noted that it remains difficult to be aware of one's own perception and to then put it into words. This is even more when it is about perceptions from the past and one has to compare his or her perception based on different moments in life. This might play a role in the difficulty of describing perceptions and the outcome of these results.

7.1.3 Narratives

Based on the experiences and life stories told by the individual interviewees, especially with regard to refugees, several narratives can be interpreted. Again, a narrative is ''a story that people create to make sense of their lives and environments. (…) they help shape the way we perceive the social and material

worlds, and thus orient how we act upon our environment'' (Autesserre, 2012:206). As these narratives help shape perception of the social and material words, they also shape the way people perceive the refugees that are arriving and staying in their country of residence. They show why people think the way they do and more specific, why they perceive refugees in the way they do, based on the experiences and life stories, described in chapter 6. As shown in chapter 2, there are two distinct 'dominant' narratives about refugees in society: the humanitarian and the security narrative.

The results showed, that indeed these two narratives can be recognized in the stories, opinions and overall perceptions of citizens. This means that both these (social) narratives play a role in - either direct or ambient – shaping the perception about the arrival and presence of refugees. As the previous section explained, perceptions are varied and complex, which makes it possible that they are 'shaped' by different narratives that may intertwine and thus lead to a nuanced and sometimes even contradictory image. Although it is important to keep this in mind, it can be said that the security narrative is least nuanced by respondents and thus comes out the strongest, as there were many anxieties and threats described, in which a security narrative could be recognized. Within this narrative, refugees and asylum seekers are constructed as deviant or alien to the host society, disrupting its cultural identity, language, and values, which further leads to a polarization between 'us' and 'them'. As explained before, these divisions are clearly present in statements about the problems with refugees, the fear of terrorist attacks, the high 'numbers' of refugees, their eventual return and their adjustment to the Dutch or German society (the latter also clearly reflected in the theme of 'integration').

Reflections on humanity – shown in section 7.1.2 under the theme of 'tolerance' - correspond with the humanitarian narrative. As said before, these create a moral obligation to help refugees, which is for example based on feelings of equality. This might be explained by their knowledge on refugees, their background and causes of their flight (Hickerson and Dunsmore, 2016), which creates more understanding for the situation. One finding that might explain why this 'humanitarian narrative' is less strongly reflected is because the degree of adhering to this narrative partly depends on whether and how well refugees integrate, and one's degree of tolerance for the arrival and presence of refugees. But how do (specifically) these narratives play such an important role in the perceptions of people?

A lot has been said about how and why people think that their current perception is become the way it is, which is largely depicted already in chapter 6. Talking about the perception on the arrival of refugees, on the one hand, interviewees often refer to ''stories'' or narratives. Many of those quotations say that ''you hear'' from irregularities, incidents or certain ''stories'' that leave a lasting impression. On the other hand, some refer to personal experiences or to experiences of others (such as family members or friends). In many cases, this type of content on the hand has triggered either empathetic and emotional responses and on the other hand created anxiety and worries in people. Hence, the general impression is that there are different 'sources' that can contribute to the perception and the change thereof. The following examples should illustrate and further clarify this.

Some stated that their perception comes from how they are as a person: ''The opinion is never actually changed. But, why do I have this opinion? No idea. I am just a very open person, and I think first of all: everyone is welcome, and everyone is fine; and then we have to see what we do with it'' (K4).[94] Similarly a female respondent from Rees (R1) stated: ''Yes, I am actually open to everything. And if someone does me no harm or something wrong, then I have nothing against that person. And certainly not against a group of people, who only because they come from there are bad. No, I do not understand that''.[95]

Another respondent (K3) explains it through the 'attitude' of her homeland towards 'foreigners': ''I think I always had it. I have always seen Germany as a foreign-friendly country and therefore always feel that we must always help people who do not have the privilege of being born here. Well, I actually see that as a great luck, and a great coincidence that I was born here and not three thousand kilometres further south or east. I do not deserve that more. And that is why I think that one should basically always help the people who are less fortunate''.[96]

Another interesting and certainly important thing mentioned is the idea that the media (coverage) has a share in the shaping of perception: ''Yes, (…) with the news reports and then you can get angry about an incident or an incident abroad and then you always read only the negative incidents about things; yes and because of that your opinion is formed. And I think many people in the country think that way. (…) And yes of course, if you always only read and see negative things, then that opinion will not change quickly'' (W5).[97] An older woman from Winterswijk (W4) states: ''Well, I think that is all inflated a lot. And what do you get: if it is in the news, that is the same as - I do not know if you have ever done that at school: a circle, then someone whispers something in someone's ear, and so it goes on and on. And then it comes back afterwards and something else comes out''.[98]

Apart from what they think of the credibility or representativeness of media coverage, about every interview respondent agrees that media is a powerful tool in forming images and perceptions. This clearly shows that ''narratives'' from others (including the media) can help shape perception.

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[94] ''Veranderd is die mening eigenlijk nooit. Maar, waarom heb ik deze mening? Geen idee. Ik ben gewoon een heel open mens, en denk ik eerste instantie: iedereen is welkom, en iedereen is prima; en dan moeten we maar kijken wat we daarmee doen. Misschien dat het daar vandaan komt''.
[95] ''Ja, ik sta open eigenlijk voor alles. En als iemand mij geen kwaad doet of iets misdoet, dan heb ik ook niets tegen die persoon. En zeker niet tegen een groep personen, die alleen omdat ze van daar komen dan slecht zijn. Nee, dat begrijp ik niet''.
[96] ''Ich glaube, die habe ich schön immer gehabt. Also, ich habe Deutschland eigentlich schon immer als ein Ausländerfreundliches Land erfunden und hat daher aber immer schon das Gefühl, dass wir Menschen immer helfen müssen, die nicht das Privilege haben hier geboren worden zu sein. Also ich sehe das eigentlich für mich als ein Großes Glück, und ein Großes Zufall, dass ich hier geboren bin und nicht dreitausend Kilometer weiter im Süden oder im Osten. Das habe ich mehr nicht verdient. Und deswegen denke ich schon das man Grundsätzlich den Menschen die es nicht so gut geht, dass man dem immer helfen sollte''.
[97] ''Ja (…) bij de nieuwsberichten en dan kan je boos worden om dat er een incident of een incident in het buitenland en dan lees je ook altijd alleen de negatieve incidenten om dingen; ja en dan wordt je mening daardoor gevormd. En ik denk dat heel veel in het land dat zo zien. En ja tuurlijk, als je altijd alleen maar negatieve dingen leest dan en ziet, dan wordt die mening ook niet snel anders''.
[98] ''Nou, ik denk dat dat allemaal heel veel opgeblazen wordt. En wat krijg je dan: als het zo in de berichtgeving staat, dat is hetzelfde als, ik weet niet of je dat weleens gedaan hebt op school: een kring, dan fluistert iemand iets in iemands oor, en zo gaat het dan verder en verder. En dan komt het naderhand terug, en dan komt er heel iets anders uit''.

7.2 A relation between variables: direct and indirect results

Now both perceptions have been described and interpreted separately from each other, they are now brought be compared to search for parallels and potential relations. Both the survey and the interviews contained a direct question on the change of border perception in relation to the perception of the arrival and presence of refugees: ''If you think back to the developments of recent years around refugees, how do you now consider the Dutch-German border compared to the situation before the summer of 2015?''. The results of this question are first shown in tables and subsequently described (through interview results).

7.2.1 Linking perceptions – survey results

Change in border perception from the perception about refugees

The corresponding survey question concerns whether and to what extent the respondents think their border perception has changed compared to three years ago, as a result of the arrival of refugees in recent years. Hence, the table below, presents to what extent the respondents see a direct relation between the two variables.

Table 7.1. Change in border perception from the perception about refugees. Dimensions, total, country of origin

		Change in border perception within the refugee aspect							
		Daily practice		*Self-evidence*		*Total*			
		N	*Score*	**N**	*Score*	**N**		*Score*	
	The Netherlands	518	*-12,74*	512	*-5,81*	511	*-8,95*		
	Germany	518	*-9,07*	516	*-0,63*	513	*-4,94*		
Total		**1036**	***-10,91***	**1028**	***-3,21***	**1024**		***-6,94***	

Table 7.1 shows that all the perception scores - not only in general but also for the variable 'country of origin' - are negative, which implicates a negative relation between the perception of the arrival and stay of refugees and the perception of the Dutch-German border. This negative relation indicates that people think and stated that the arrival and presence of refugees enhanced their perception of the border as a barrier. This is especially true for the barrier effect in everyday life, and to a lesser extent for the self-evidence of the border. It should be noted again that the scale of these perception scores goes from -100 to +100, so the scores in the table above and in the following table reveal relatively small changes. What further emerges from the table is that the negative relation between the variables is bigger for the perception of the border in everyday life than for the perception of the border as self-evident.

When comparing the answers from the Dutch with the answers from the German respondents it is clear that the negative relation for the Dutch respondents is stronger than for the German respondents (see e.g. the total 'Dutch' score of -8,95 against the German score of -4,94). Particularly in the dimension of 'self-evidence' the relative difference between the two countries is quite large and also statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

The scores were also compared for other groups, such as level of education, age group, gender and cross-border visiting frequency. One of the most interesting outcomes of these scores was that it appeared that the lower the level of education, the stronger the negative relation between refugee perception and border perception. The (total) border perception is relatively stronger related to the refugee perception for the age group 18- to 30 years compared to the age group 30- to 50 years.[99]

Since these are results of a direct question – whether the respondents think their border perception has changed as a (partly) result of the arrival and presence of refugees over the past three years -, it is important to keep in mind that this question may have led to guidance in their answers. It cannot be known for sure what the border perception of respondents was in 2015; we can only rely on how these respondents *think* their perception was in 2015 and how it has (possibly) changed. Therefore, the quantitative data in this table presents to what extent the respondents *think* their *perceived* border perception has changed, relating to the arrival and presence of refugees. Clarification on why respondents think this way, should be derived from the (qualitative) interview results in chapter 6.

Change in refugee perception related to the change of border perception

Related to the table above, table 7.2 below indicates whether and to what extent there is a statistically significant relation between the perception on refugees and the perception of the border. This is inquired by indirectly bringing together the data of two survey variables that focused on *changing* border- and refugee perceptions during the past three years. To be specific, it relates the tables 'perceived perception of refugees in the past (in comparison to the present)' (presented in chapter 6, table 6.2) and 'Changed barrier effect of the Dutch-German border over the past three years' (presented in chapter 5, table 5.6).

The table only shows the perception of the border as a barrier from the general (physical) aspect. The three other aspects certainly say something useful about the perception of the border, but in relation to the perception of refugees it did not show anything useful (e.g. when it comes to economic matters as shopping and refueling). In the case of the 'general' aspect this could still be the case, given that this actually includes an ''overall'' insight and also emphasizes the physical aspect of the border which – in relation to the arrival of refugees - also came back more frequently during the interviews.[100] Moreover, the other aspects focus on types of data (the economic aspect focuses e.g. on shopping) which are in no way 'logically' related to the perception of refugees, other than already covered by the border perception from a general aspect.

To show how this table should be read and interpreted, an example of the results shown above is that: the respondents who perceived the arrival and presence of refugees in 2015 as more noticeable than now, a majority of 68,5% responded that their perception of the border as a barrier (from the general (physical) aspect) has remained the same over the past three years.

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[99] All the (other) scores and relevant descriptions can be found in appendix 5.
[100] Again, the other tables can be found in appendix 5.

Perceived refugee perception of the past (in comparison to the present)		Perceived change in barrier effect for the general (physical) aspect											
		Clearly less		*Slightly less*		*About the same*		*Slightly increased*		*Clearly increased*		*Total*	
		N	*%*	N	*%*	N	*%*	N	*%*	N	*%*	N	*%*
Noticeable	*More*	20	*9,4%*	14	*6,6%*	146	*68,5%*	25	*11,7%*	8	*3,8%*	**213**	*100%*
	The same	14	*3,1%*	39	*8,7%*	355	*79,6%*	30	*6,7%*	8	*1,8%*	**446**	*100%*
	Less	22	*5,8%*	35	*9,2%*	267	*70,3%*	46	*12,1%*	10	*2,6%*	**380**	*100%*
Normal	*More*	8	*5,0%*	11	*6,9%*	106	*66,3%*	25	*15,6%*	10	*6,3%*	**160**	*100%*
	The same	29	*4,3%*	55	*8,2%*	526	*78,3%*	52	*7,7%*	10	*1,5%*	**672**	*100%*
	Less	19	*9,3%*	22	*10,7%*	135	*65,9%*	23	*11,2%*	6	*2,9%*	**205**	*100%*
Natural	*More*	7	*4,8%*	7	*4,8%*	104	*71,2%*	20	*13,7%*	8	*5,5%*	**146**	*100%*
	The same	29	*4,3%*	58	*8,5%*	523	*77,0%*	56	*8,2%*	13	*1,9%*	**679**	*100%*
	Less	18	*8,7%*	23	*11,1%*	137	*65,9%*	25	*12,0%*	5	*2,4%*	**208**	*100%*
Worrisome	*More*	18	*9,2%*	12	*6,1%*	133	*67,9%*	24	*12,2%*	9	*4,6%*	**196**	*100%*
	The same	17	*3,2%*	45	*8,6%*	420	*80,2%*	31	*5,9%*	11	*2,1%*	**524**	*100%*
	Less	22	*6,9%*	32	*10,0%*	213	*66,8%*	46	*14,4%*	6	*1,9%*	**319**	*100%*

The scores have been statistically tested. This showed that there is significance in the differentials 'normal' and 'natural', but because of the visible small differences we do not see them as relevant here. Furthermore, it appears that there is no statistically significant relation between the variable 'perception on the arrival and presence of refugees' and the variable 'the perception of the border as a barrier'.

7.2.2   Linking perceptions - Thoughts of interviewees about a relation

At the end of the interviews, each interviewee was asked whether they themselves saw a (possible) connection between their perception about refugees and their border perception.

Direct findings: little to no relation

When asking everyone directly whether they thought their Dutch-German border perception related to their perception on the arrival of refugees, almost everyone answered this question with a simple 'no', meaning that these interviewees themselves did not think their border perception relates with their perception on the arrival of refugees.

But, there were also more extensive answers that provided an 'explanation': ''No, not in relation to the influx of asylum seekers. Not about the Dutch-German border. I can sometimes imagine situations where people say that if the borders are closed, that it would have been better; that we could check more on that, but nowadays it is always a specific situation. So, when it comes to such cases someone says

the idea 'border control', and if they want the next day to a German supermarket, then everyone is happy that they can cross the border'' (W5).[101]

A female respondent from Berg en Dal (B3) says about this: ''No, I really did not hear anything about it that I think 'oh yes that is really because of the border'. Yes, I cannot say so, but you also really have countries where they have closed the border there in the south. But that is not really the case here''.[102] A similar way of thinking from a German man, living in Kleve, is the following: ''In principle not, no. It has not really become clear to me that there are many more controls, as might be the case in other places, in Beiern or in other EU countries. But no. I do not see any major negative impact of the refugee issue and the border. And I hope it stays this way''.[103]

Then another female respondent (R1) gives a different explanation: ''No actually not. In my opinion, the refugees do not come across the border from the Netherlands. Yes, perhaps you have from your feelings, rather that you think, they come from Italy (…) That you have those borders in your conception. But the Dutch-German border does not occur in it''.[104]

Yet, it should be mentioned that there was one person (B5) who did saw a direct relation: ''Yes, they can control a bit stricter. But yes, what do you want to check on? As long as the government allows everything. Yes, that also makes the border blur a little bit. Because you see that everyone can cross. Maybe yes. (…) You can still see that it is Germany and the Netherlands. (…) now that you think about it, you have a little more need for the border. (…) Yes, I think so.''.[105] This quotation is a nice illustration of how this respondent reasoned, and how that process led him to this conclusion. The arrival and presence of refugees showed him how 'open' the border actually is, which is – for this respondent - not perceived desirable. As a result, the respondent feels 'more' need for the border; implicitly saying that the Dutch-German border should not be so open and function more as a barrier to 'outsiders'.

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[101] ''Nee, niet ten opzichte van de toestroom van asielzoekers. Niet tegen de Nederlands-Duitse grens. Ik kan me soms wel van die situaties voorstellen dat mensen zeggen dat de grenzen dicht zijn, dat dat beter was geweest; dat we meer konden controleren daarop, maar tegenwoordig is het altijd voor een situatie specifiek. Dus als het om zulke gevallen gaat dan zegt iemand het idee 'grenscontrole', en als ze zelf de volgende dag naar een Duitse supermarkt willen, dan is iedereen blij dat ze zo de grens over kunnen gaan''.

[102] ''Nee, ook echt niks van gehoord dat ik denk 'oh ja dat is ook echt door de grens'. Ja, dat kan ik niet zo zeggen, maar je hebt toch ook wel echt landen dat ze daar de grens zo dichtgegooid hebben in het zuiden. Maar daar is hier niet echt sprake van''.

[103] ''In principe niet, nee. Is mij niet echt duidelijk geworden dat er veel meer controles zijn, zoals dat op andere plekken misschien wel meer het geval is, in Beiern of in andere EU landen. Maar nee. Ik zie zo geen grote negatieve invloed, van de vluchtelingenproblematiek en de grens. En ik hoop dat dat zo blijft''.

[104] ''Nee eigenlijk niet. Voor mijn gevoel komen de vluchtelingen ook niet vanuit de richting van Nederland over de grens. Ja, misschien heb je vanuit je gevoel, eerder dat je denkt die komen uit Italië (…); dat je daar die grenzen eerder in je voorstelling dan hebt. Maar de Nederlands-Duitse grens daarin niet''.

[105] ''Ja, van mij mogen ze wel wat strenger controleren. Maar ja, waar wil je op controleren? Zolang de overheid alles toestaat. Ja, dat de grens daardoor ook weer een beetje wegvaagt. Omdat je ziet dat iedereen over kan steken. Misschien wel. Je kan nog steeds aan alles zien dat het Duitsland en Nederland is. (…) nu je er zo over nadenkt, wel weer iets meer behoefte aan de grens. (…) Ja, ik denk het wel''.

Linking indirect findings: comparing border perception and refugee perception

The direct questions – in both the survey and interviews - which were aimed at a relationship between the two perceptions, yielded so far, the observation that there is little or even no relation between the variables. Yet, several interview results are worth mentioning and indicate that a relation might exist. For example, as one of the previous quotes showed, the refugee situation made some respondents more aware of the openness of the border. Therefore, this section links the indirect and individual results on border perception and refugee perception to present the parallels and see whether a relation is plausible. One of the respondents even mentioned to perceive a connection between borders and refugees in general: ''Well. If there were no borders, then we did not have any refugees, did we? So where do you want to go when there are no borders? Then you can just go anywhere. You are only a refugee if you leave a country somewhere illegally or legally. And if there are no borders, then you cannot leave anything. So, in that sense then you are not a refugee'' (K4).[106] Yet he also stated clearly that he did not see a relation between his perception of refugees and his perception of the Dutch-German border.

During the interviewees, it appeared that the perception about refugees was often discussed while also talking about 'borders'. This involved topics such as: border controls and borders being closed, refugees crossing borders on their way to other countries, and the perceived openness of the Dutch and/or German border. One of the other statements that is definitely worth mentioning, is the following: ''I think that there are many people who would say: 'close all borders so we feel safer', but as I said, a little bit more controls, so the people know it is not easy to get there. But not like it was in former times''. So, although this respondent answered the direct question negatory, she does think that others would like to see the border closed, and admits that she herself would like to see a small increase of controls. A similar finding can be seen in the following reply: ''Well, especially for passing refugees. I mean then they get in Germany, so they have a place where they can stay. And then I think, try to keep them there. (…) I find stricter controls, but first check why they want it. For example, do they have family here or whatever'' (B4).[107]

Another interesting statement from an older woman, living in Kleve (K2) is: ''But it would have to be possible to stem that a little better that the refugees come here in such transports. That should actually be possible at the borders. If they come from the Eastern bloc: at the border that would have to be checked again (…). And not simply by waving. Because most drive through today. In a way, it is good that we do not have 20km of traffic jams from the trucks, but to protect those people, you should

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[106] ''Nou ja. Als er geen grenzen waren, dan hadden we ook geen vluchtelingen, hè? Dus waar wil je heen als er geen grenzen zijn? Dan mag je gewoon overal heen. Je bent pas vluchteling als je illegaal, of legaal dan, ergens een land verlaat. En als er geen grenzen bestaan, dan kun je ook niets verlaten. Dus in die zin ben je dan geen vluchteling''.

[107] ''Nou, vooral voor doorreizende vluchtelingen. Ik bedoel dan krijgen ze in Duitsland, dan hebben ze dus een plaats waar ze kunnen verblijven. En dan denk ik, probeer ze dan ook daar te houden. (…) Dan vind ik toch strengere controles, maar ga eerst eens na waarom ze dat willen. Hebben ze bijvoorbeeld hier familie wonen of weet ik wat''.

better control them. The escape routes would have to be contained''.[108] This respondent seems to mean the ''irregular'' asylum-seekers in particular.

So, although these people do not see a direct connection, it does ''seem'' like there is *some* connection. Anyway, the following parallels seem the most obvious: the aware of the openness of the border and statements that showed thinking in terms of ''us'' versus ''them'', fitting within the framework of belonging to an ''imagined community'' which 'others' may enter.

Striking is that the perception of refugees could sometimes be linked to a corresponding perception of borders. This reminded of the different interpretations of borders, which were also described in theoretical chapter 2: ''On the one hand, borders may be observed as guardians against threats from 'the other side'. Such barriers are seen as natural and logical instruments to provide for protection. On the other hand, borders can be regarded as creating differences between adjacent countries and territories. These differences may create opportunities for people to interact across borders'' (Spierings and van der Velde, 2010:197). Cierco and da Silva (2016) similarly name these the intergovernmental perspective and the neo-functionalist perspective, which might explain a (possible) relation between perception of borders and perception about refugees. To illustrate, the following statement is reminiscent of the intergovernmental (security) perspective: ''What I think is that borders must remain. For example, for regulations and if things go bad in a country, you still have some protection''.[109] Coherent, he says about refugees: ''I also believe that they must check more strictly, wherever they enter. Whether they have made a boat trip or not. Those people know very well whether they are economic refugees or not. And whether they are entitled to come here as a refugee''.[110] These statements seem to show a parallel.

On the other hand, there are also parallel statements that are reminiscent of neo-functionalist perspective. This can be supported by the following quotes (R6): ''So I do not see the border as a limiting thing, let's put it that way. But for me there are also opportunities in it''.[111] About refugees, the same respondent said: ''So I always see it as an opportunity. For our society, actually. So, we have problems with shrinkage in Europe. Aging is an item, and so there is certainly an opportunity. But, there is only that chance if it is possible to integrate those people''.[112]

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[108] ''Aber es müsste möglich sein, das ein bisschen besser einzudämmen, dass die Flüchtlinge in solchen Transporten hierhin kommen. Das müsste eigentlich an den Grenzen möglich sein. Wenn die aus dem Ostblock kommen: An der Grenze müsste das nochmal kontrolliert werden. Und nicht einfach durchwinken. Denn die meisten fahren ja durch heute. Auf eine Art ist es ja gut, da haben wir keine 20 Kilometer Staus mehr von den LKWs, aber um diese Leute zu schützen, müsste man besser kontrollieren. Die Fluchtwege müssten eingedämmt werden''.

[109] ''Wat ik wel vind, dat grenzen moeten blijven. Om zeg maar, voor regelgeving en als het in een land slecht gaat, dat je toch enigszins bescherming hebt''.

[110] ''Ik ben ook van mening dat ze strenger moeten controleren, al waar ze binnenkomen. Of ze nou een boottocht gemaakt hebben of niet. Die mensen weten donders goed of ze economische vluchtelingen zijn of niet. En of ze recht hebben om hier als vluchteling te komen''.

[111] ''Dus ik zie de grens niet als een beperkend iets, laat ik het zo zeggen. Maar voor mij liggen daar ook kansen in''.

[112] ''Dus ik zie het ook altijd als kans. Voor onze maatschappij eigenlijk. Dus wij hebben in Europa, problemen met de krimp. Vergrijzing is een item, en dus daar ligt zeker een kans. Maar, die kans is er alleen, als het lukt om die mensen te integreren''.

Although these results do not necessarily demonstrate a relation between the perception of the Dutch-German border and the perception about refugees – especially since both respondents seem to speak of 'borders' in general -, they remain interesting.

7.3 No consciously perceived relation

As the data in chapter 7.2 shows, it appears from both the survey and the interview results that there is no strong and clear (perceived) relation between the perceptions studied. Explanations for these perceptions can currently only be derived from the in-depth interview results (based on a sample of twenty-four citizens).

Summarizing, the following results appeared: table 7.1 indicated a very light perceived negative relation between the perception of the arrival and stay of refugees and the perception of the Dutch-German border. This while table 7.2 does not show any sign of a relation. The small score that did show the presence of a light relation, may be explained by a small percentage of citizens that e.g. does like to see some more border controls when they think well about this theme.

The results of the direct interview questions correspond to these survey results and also do not indicate a relation. If otherwise, the interviewee(s) may not be fully aware of it. This finding may be explained by the fact that the arrival of refugees is more associated with 'other' borders than this particular border. The Dutch-German border is not one of the first crossing points and also is not necessarily known as a popular 'transit point' for refugees. Hence, most respondents do not perceive any relation between this border and the arrival of refugees.

Secondly, respondents link this question to a certain number of border controls on refugees, which would be a physical or visual representation of the border. Similarly, the perception exists that the recent (physical) closing of borders in other countries presupposes a relation between the perception of borders and the perception of refugees. However, in terms of policy the Dutch-German border has not really undergone (major) changes and can still be crossed just as easily as before. So, as we are still talking about a perceived to be 'open' and 'stable' border with only few border controls, the interviewees do not think this happens to be the case at this specific border.

Yet, it has to be noted that one of the interviewees stated that the awareness of how 'open' the border is, which is a result of the arrival and presence of many refugees, can also cause an undesirable feeling and 'more' need for a border; implicitly saying that the Dutch-German border should not be so open and function more as a barrier to 'outsiders'.

When comparing the answers from the Dutch with the answers from the German respondents it is clear that the negative relation for the Dutch respondents is stronger than for the German respondents. This is interesting, as in Germany the number of refugees arriving and being cared for there is much higher than in the Netherlands.

From the ''indirect'' results of bringing together the individual variables, two parallels emerged: awareness of the openness of the border and ideas that point to a perceived imagined community. Yet,

a parallel does not essentially imply a relation. It already appeared that when better looking at the individual variables again, they have hardly changed or have not changed at all.

There were however small percentages of respondents who thought that there had been change, and they should not be ignored. When talking to the interviewees about the change of perception, it emerged that the presence, absence and/or change in the number of border controls play a role, which in turn has to do with the openness of the border.

Looking at the ideas of the imagined community, these are not the same for the two individual variables. Although they do consist of an 'us' versus a 'them', imagined communities are everywhere and in different ways. When talking about the perception of the border, there was mostly talk in terms of us versus them with regard to the idea of what or who is on the ''other side'' of the border. Citizens on the other side are thus perceived as ''them'' who do not belong to the own residents and the imagined community. But, the Dutch and the Germans are despite their differences quite familiar with each other, their cultures and habits.

Discussing the perception about refugees, the imagined community seems to be most about the municipality, the host country and/or the EU in which the ''other'' refugee (tries to) come in and find a place of belonging. This discussion and the idea of an imagined community is obviously perceived differently when talking about it in different contexts, with different actors – or ''strangers'' – involved. But, as appeared from the interviewees, refugees are broadly perceived in the 'same' ways by both Dutch and German respondents. They are perceived different, not that familiar and are often seen as related to issues of integration, housing, security etc. In addition, they are perceived as the ones who have to adapt or even have to return to their country of origin again after they are not in danger anymore. Hence, reverting to the concept of the ''imagined community'', it seems like all border residents – Dutch as well as German - tend to feel part of the same imagined community (''us''), unlike the arriving refugees who are perceived as being the ''other''. In this context, the Dutch-German border is perceived differently than it is perceived when talking about it as a demarcation between the Dutch and the German nations and its residents. Hence the Dutch-German border is part of different imagined communities and is thus also being perceived in different ways.

As discussed in theoretical chapter 2.2, an ''imagined community'' can have a territorial aspect. From the sections about the perception of the Dutch-German border, it appeared that the border is – although not physically present – often perceived as only functioning as a (partial) demarcation of – the territory of - two countries, two nations and identities: the Dutch and the German. Furthermore, it is seen as a potential security barrier which can be 'used' whenever necessary, but not in relation to the neighboring country.

When linking the perception of this border to a different context - the arrival and presence of refugees in this case -, the function of the border is perceived differently. The border is still perceived a demarcation at the edge of a state's territory, but functioning as a security barrier to control refugee 'others', and/or as a demarcation of the imagined community in which the 'other' refugee should or

should not get a place (of belonging). However, it appears that 'borders' in general and on many different levels play a role in relation to refugees. It is not specifically the perception of the Dutch-German border that relates to this perception about arriving refugees, as the perception of refugees not necessarily and/or only plays a role on (Dutch-German) state level, but also on (e.g.) EU level, a municipality level and even on an individual level for example.

As mentioned before, only a small percentage of the respondents think their perception of the Dutch-German border has changed, just like the perception about refugees has not changed that much. Although this might say something about a possible relation, there is little that points to any relation between these perceptions.

7.4 Renewed conceptual model

Starting this research, a conceptual model – based on the concepts described in the theoretical framework - was created and presented in chapter 2 (see figure 2.2). The model was meant to show and structure how this research would be approached. With the knowledge gained and the conclusions drawn in this research, the conceptual model must be renewed and specified to generate a comprehensive and more specific model of what relates to and relates to the perception of this specific Dutch-German border by Dutch and German border residents.
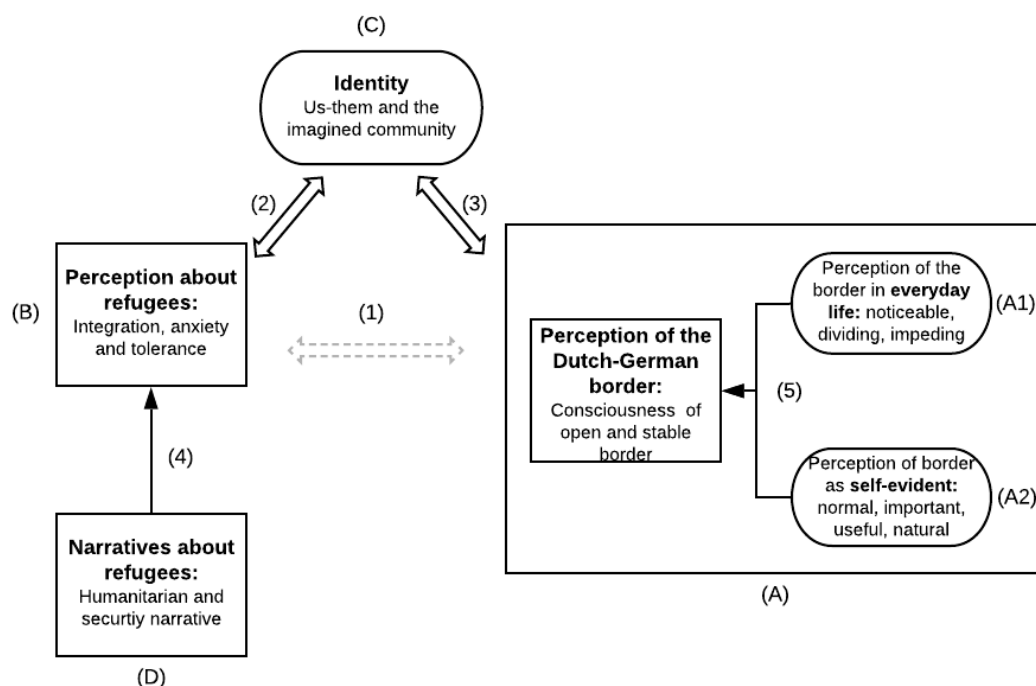
Figure 7.1: Renewed conceptual model

Figure 7.1 illustrates what the renewed conceptual model looks like. The main concepts - as can be seen in the original model - have remained the same. The renewed model therefore differs in specificity and one of the (assumed) relations changed.

The main objective of research – the possible relation between the perception of the border and the perception about refugees (1) – has actually changed. In the original model, a (strong) relation has been assumed and represented by an arrow with thicker and solid lines. During the research, it became clear that there is only a light connection between these variables (A) and (B); a slight relation that cannot be proven clearly. This is why the lines of the relevant arrow (1) are now dotted and made thin.

But there are other concepts, such as feelings of the own identity and the perception of the 'other', that do relate to the perception of the border. This is why those concepts have remained the same. Furthermore, some of the concepts are (more) specified as certain aspects of perception were of bigger importance to respondents and/or some emerged stronger than anticipated beforehand.

Borders can be objective and subjective interpretations, and they exist on different levels (Agnew, 2008; van der Velde, 2010). Hence, perception of borders differs. Borders are human practices and social realities, which dynamically change (Paasi, 2003; Delanty, 2006). This research strengthens the concept of border perception by highlighting that there are many different interpretations of borders. There is no one and single 'border perception' (van Houtum, Kramsch, & Zierhofer, 2005). Of course, there can be similarities between perceptions of different (groups of) people, especially when related to identity or the 'imagined community' for example. Yet, the perception of borders, can differ per person and certainly per context in which borders are perceived. This might be one explanation for the question why there is no clear relation between the perception of the Dutch-German border and the perception about the arrival and presence of refugees.

7.5 Conclusion

Subchapter 7.1 showed the analyses of chapter 5 and 6. Concluding, the most important findings were the following: First, the high degree of perceived 'self-evidence' of the border indicates a (degree of) barrier working of the border. The border does not 'really' stand out – connecting it to the (lack of) physical aspect of the border - but is still perceived to be 'just there'. The respondents who perceive the border as important, connect it to the border's function in demarcating (e.g.) different identity, administrative and security matters. Addressing the many differences between Dutch and Germans – also regarding e.g. visual differences, language and culture - is partly indicative for the experienced mental bordering effect and connects to the theoretical base of imagined communities, representing 'us' versus 'them'.

The (relatively) low barrier effect of the border in everyday life is mainly linked to the (presence or absence of) physical 'obstacles' - which indeed are not usually present in this case - such as border controls. This low barrier effect corresponds to the regular border crossings and can be explained by the ease of crossing the border. Furthermore, it can be explained by the fact that the respondents do recognize similarities and are kind of 'familiar' to each other, despite their differences.

Second, the perception of the border has hardly to not changed at all. Only few respondents spoke up about their desired increase in border controls, which says something about the perceived

(in)sufficiency of the border (function). Both results might be due to the border's continuing stability and openness, again linked to physical and visual aspects.

Third, the perceptions about refugees were mostly about themes like integration, anxiety and (different degrees of) tolerance. From all these themes, it was obviously that respondents perceive refugees in terms of 'us' versus 'them', whether they should adapt and integrate, are not welcome at all or are temporarily tolerated. Hence, there is a clear normative distance between refugees and the respondents. Furthermore, the idea of an 'imagined community' - in which refugees should or should not get a place - can be recognized, which is connected to a specific territory and has (mental) conditions for admission to the community. To what extent these ideas went differs per individual, and gets clearer from the stories and opinions told by the individuals.

At last, for a majority of the survey respondents the perception on refugees has not changed, except the indicator 'noticeable', which can be linked to the few explicit statements about notable and impressive events that might have caused a change.

Section 7.1.3 presented the opposing but yet intertwining narratives about refugees which reflect in the perception of respondents. The stories showed and explained several events and experiences of the interviewees that played a role in the formation of their perception about refugees. Both a humanitarian and a security narrative emerged from people's stories and opinions, which gave deeper insight into what shapes the respondents' perception. Still, much of what was told during the interviews must be nuanced. For example, although some of the respondents perceive the arrival and presence of refugees as somewhat worrisome or frightening (and possibly a security issue), they do believe that people in need should be helped somewhere (a humanitarian consideration). Therefore, many of the stories and opinions are intertwining.

The other sections show that collected data does not result in the presence of a clear relation between both perceptions. Yet, both variables clearly showed 'us' versus 'them' thinking, which points to the importance of identity and the presence of an ''imagined community''. Furthermore, it seemed as if that perception about the arrival and presence of refugees made some of the respondents more aware of the openness of the Dutch-German border since there are hardly any border controls at the border. For this reason, the original conceptual model has been adjusted (see figure 7.1).

Overall, it appears that respondents do think the presence of a border is (somewhat) important, but they do not want to be bothered by it – or its border controls - too much. A possible explanation for these results is that the border perception influences the perception about refugees and the extent to which it changes. Hence consciousness of the openness of the border, how it barely changes and the extent to which the border is still perceived important, might affect the perception of the arrival and presence of refugees. This would mean there is a reciprocal effect.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion and discussion

''I do see certain things separately. That the German have the border a little more open; that they are more accessible. But it has not specifically changed my image of the Dutch-German border''.[113]

- A young, high educated, female respondent (B6)

In general, the Dutch-German border is an open and stable border. Also, physically the border does not exist anymore. Yet, this research shows, this border still exists (mentally) in several ways. Just think of the economic, the legal-administrative border, but also the social and cultural ones for example. As refugees partly moved from the external to the internal borders of the EU and their visibility around citizens also increased, it may have led to a change in perceptions. As these developments are also relevant to the Dutch-German border region, the question rises, whether these events of displacement and crossing borders by refugees, affect the perception of Dutch-German border residents regarding the border(s) of 'their' perceived community. With this in mind, this research was started through the following research question: What is the relation between the perception of border residents regarding the Dutch-German border and their perception on the arrival and presence of refugees, and to what extent are the humanitarian and the security narrative reflected in the perception of refugees?

Accordingly, a theoretical framework with the relevant concepts to apply was build: (mental) borders, identity, the imagined community and the role of narratives in the formation of perception. The data was gathered by two research methods: a large-scale survey was launched online and twenty-four citizens were interviewed. This data resulted in three chapters in which the different perceptions are described and analyzed (chapter 5 to 7). This final chapter presents the results which are translated into the conclusion of this research. First, the research questions are answered and the renewed conceptual model is presented. Second, several issues and dilemmas regarding this research are discussed. This also means that recommendations on how to improve or even solve these in the future research are given. Finally, some recommendations for future research connected to this study are provided.

8.1   Conclusions

From the results and interpreting all data, there are some final conclusions that can be drawn from this study. First the research questions are answered.

8.1.1   Answering the research questions

First, the barrier effect of the border in everyday life is perceived (relatively) low, which corresponds to the regular and easy border crossings. This can mostly be explained by the (presence or absence of)

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[113] ''Ik zie bepaalde dingen wel los van elkaar. Wel dat de Duitsers de grens wat meer open hebben staan, dat ze er wat toegankelijker in zijn. Maar het heeft niet mijn beeld van de Nederlandse-Duitse grens specifiek veranderd''.

physical and visual aspects of the border, which are usually not present in this case - such as border controls. The border is open and stabile, and also e.g. also policy wise there is hardly to no change. Additionally, the border residents perceive each other as 'familiar'. All of these findings together probably explain why the perception of the border has hardly changed or has not changed at all recently. Yet – although the border is hardly physically present - many respondents perceive the border as a self-evident phenomenon, as being 'just there', which is assumed to indicate a higher degree of barrier effect. An explanation for this may be the many perceived differences between Dutch and Germans – also regarding e.g. visual differences, language and culture. This is indicative for (experienced) mental bordering and connects to the theoretical base of imagined communities, representing 'us' versus 'them'. Moreover, people are not aware of borders being 'man made' or human practices. They perceive it as 'natural', which is why they have less doubt of the border's function and/or importance, thus perceiving the border as self-evident.

A second conclusion my research reveals is that the perceptions and answers on this theme were quite divided, but that for most, feelings of compassion and anxiety go together or are even intertwining. Nevertheless, several 'main' themes that are related to the perception of refugees among the border residents emerged: integration, anxiety and various themes that can be classified as 'tolerance'. Overall, one thing was clear and that is that refugees are perceived as being essentially different, whether they are welcomed, tolerated temporarily, should adapt and integrate or are not welcome at all. There is a clear normative distance between refugees and the respondents, which might also be explained by Anderson's theory on the 'imagined community' in which refugees should not come in 'our' territory, and if they do, they should get a place in the 'territory' of the Dutch or the Germans. Although these perceptions are not per se static, just like border perception, the perception of refugees has hardly changed in recent years. The 'change' of perception usually does not happen the short term, but it is not clear how long it will take and what exactly is needed. How far these ideas or beliefs go and how long they will last, can thus differ per individual. This will become clearer through their personal stories and opinions, which are partly 'represented' by the narratives that live among citizens; and on which they base actions and reactions. Hence, they can tell a bit more about why people think in a certain way about refugees. Was it an intrinsic, human sense of duty? Do they know a refugee or do they feel these 'strangers' cause issues?

So, when looking at sub-question three, there are indeed two narratives that can be recognized in the stories, opinions and overall perceptions of citizens: the humanitarian narrative and the security narrative. This means that these (social) narratives play a role in shaping - either direct or ambient - perceptions about the arrival and presence of refugees. For a large part, this is due to (personal) stories of respondent's friends, family or acquaintances, but also the role of social media in "personalizing" the usually distant news stories, as well as the impact of mainstream media images with identifiable victims. In many cases, this type of content on the hand has triggered either empathetic and emotional responses and on the other hand created anxiety and worries in people. Still, much of what was told during the

interviews must be nuanced as those feelings, responses and opinions often intertwine. This can be explained by the following: first, the degree of adhering to a certain narrative is partly dependent on whether and how well refugees integrate. Second, the extent to which a humanitarian narrative in particular can be interpreted, is partly determined by the degree of tolerance for the arrival and presence of refugees. Nonetheless, it can be said that the security narrative is least nuanced by respondents and thus comes out the strongest.

Finally, sub question four can be answered by concluding that there is no clear relation has been observed between the perceptions studied. The quantitative results show a very slightly (interpreted) negative relationship, which is, however, not supported by further evidence. In relation to the perception about refugees, there seems to be (more) awareness about the open nature of the Dutch-German border, which is however an observation rather than a (causal) relationship. Yet, this consciousness can go two ways: either one finds this desirable or one finds this undesirable and even want to see a stronger border. This absence of a (clear) relation between the perceptions to be studied, might be explained by the fact that both perceptions hardly changed or have not changed at all. This and the other results actually make it seem like in this case, the openness and stability of the border, the awareness of which and how it hardly changes, might affect the perception of the arrival and presence of refugees. However, there is little that points to any relation between these perceptions.

Overall, respondents perceive the 'simple' existence of the border - the border being 'just there' - as (somewhat) important because it functions as a demarcation of 'us', of different identities and administrative matters, but it also protects what is perceived to be 'ours'. Yet, they also do not want to be bothered by the border too much. The freedom of crossing the border with ease – again, as a result of the border's continuing openness and stability - seems to play a major role in this perception. Furthermore, as was shown in earlier research (Szytniewski, Spierings and van der Velde, 2017) it now appears again that the Dutch and the German border residents perceive each other – despite some of their differences - as quite ''familiar'' and definitely not insurmountably or incompatible different. Only when their safety or feelings of security are compromised, then the (potential barrier) function of the border seems to play a more important role and border controls are considered necessary and/or become desirable. But, as the above already shows, this is currently not the case in relation to the context of the neighboring country.

8.1.2   Closing

From the conclusions above, a number of other conclusions can be drawn. This research shows clearly that the degree of thinking in terms of us versus them – mental distance – is different in relation to different groups: ''us'' versus the Germans/the Dutch and ''us'' versus others such as refugees in this case. As difference and identity play a role in the creation of today's borders, this explains why the perception of this specific border studied can be different. Indeed, there is a (perceived) state border between Germany and the Netherlands, which objectively exists in an institutional and administrative

way, also for citizens. Yet, this border also knows different perceived 'variants'; subjectively perceived (mental) borders which are dynamic and can be different for each individual. Hence, it can function as a security barrier according to some people, but it depends on the context. There is no one and only border perception. This also applies to the ''imagined community'' of which the border may be part: it exists in different ways and/or on different level; there is no one and single, static imagined community. As the quote at the top of this conclusion chapter shows, the two concepts are thus (perceived) separate from of each other.

Differences between Dutch and German respondents - Although differences are small, the German respondents perceive the border – overall – less a barrier than the Dutch respondents. Despite the small difference, this finding may be explained by the fact that the Netherlands is a much more smaller country (in size) than Germany which may cause feelings among persons and/or governments of countries to believe that they are structurally short-lived and/or not taken seriously because of their small(er) size; an effect that can be called the ''Calimero effect''.

Looking at the relation between border perception and perception about refugees, it appears that the light 'negative relation' – which indicates a relation - for the Dutch respondents is stronger than for the German respondents. This is interesting, as in Germany the number of refugees arriving and being cared for there is much higher than in the Netherlands, whereby one would expect that the relation between those perceptions is stronger for the Germans.

8.2   Changing the conceptual model

To show and structure how this researched would be approached, a conceptual model – based on the concepts described in the theoretical framework - was created and presented in chapter 2 (see figure 2.2). In chapter 7, a renewed model that is more specific was presented (see figure 7.1). Most of the 'original' concepts have remained the same, but some as certain aspects of the concepts turned out to be of bigger importance or emerged stronger than anticipated beforehand, so specification of the concept was needed in the renewed model. Additionally, the results that indicated whether there is a relation between the perception of the Dutch-German border and the perception about refugees, were 'incorporated'; showing only a slight relation.

8.3   Critical reflection and discussion

Despite the various and extensive results this research has led to, there were a number of things that could have been done differently or better. Though this research has succeeded in reaching its goal – to describe and explain perceptions of Dutch-German border residents and find out whether it relates to the perception of refugees – a researcher should be reflexive of his or her own work (Begoray & Banister, 2010). Therefore, this paragraph reflects on the research (methods) itself, the role of the researcher and the ethical 'issues' that played a role.

8.3.1 Methods

Measuring 'perception' - and especially measuring the perception of borders -, is a difficult task. And although there are a number of methods that can be used to perform such a measurement, improvement must also be considered.

The advantage of the survey method was that many people can be reached within a short time. Yet, there were some challenges. One was that many respondents commented they found the questionnaire vague or difficult. As such, it may be possible that some respondents did not fill in how they really 'meant' or interpreted it. Although measuring the perception and thinking of questions that are focused on requesting suitable information, is quite difficult, attention can be paid to this in the future; mainly with a view to a follow-up study by INTERREG in the near future. For example, the survey could be supplemented with more information and explanation about the survey questions.

During the interviews, sufficient questions were asked about opinions and arguments to get a good image of the perception. Still, it was noticeable that some people found it difficult and perhaps even a little overwhelming to suddenly talk and think about topics - and their opinions on those topics - which they are not (really) concerned with or think about in daily life. Of course, this also says something about the relevant topic(s) and therefore provides us information, but perhaps it can also be taken into account or changes can be made to the structure of the interview.

8.3.2 Role of researcher and ethical issues

Being aware of possible 'ethical issues' was important during this study, especially during the fieldwork. The 'refugee crisis' is a sensitive subject for some people, so there was need to be sensitive to possibly 'disturbing the site'. This was done by being open and clear about the interview process through, for example, asking permission for recording and transcribing the interviews. Moreover, confidentiality was taken into account by only noting the names of the interviewees with their consent.

Another important ethical issue to be aware of when studying and asking interviewees for their perception on a certain matter, subject or development – especially when it is about a sensitive matter as refugees for instance –, is that it could not be guaranteed that people were completely open and honest about their vision and feelings. I tried to reduce their possible restraint by making the respondents feel comfortable and asking the right questions. One example of making the interviewees feel comfortable is conducting the interviews on a location (private or public) of the interviewee's preference. Often this turned out to be their home.

Furthermore, one should remain on the ground of reality and consider the different 'truths' and perceptions involved (Fábián, 2013). After all, the analysis of narratives for example, is about trying to distance oneself from it. As such, it is important to keep in mind that there is no one and only truth and reflect upon my own position, as a researcher who is constructing the results.

When analyzing and reporting the data, I had to be aware and careful of the different languages involved when interviewing, such as German and English. This was sometimes difficult when transcribing and subsequently coding the interviews in clear language.

At last and as mentioned in chapter 3, there were some limitations during the analysis of the data, related to inference and self-reporting. Inference is ''the process of using facts we know to learn about facts we do not know''. Similar is 'self-reporting' which means some implicit answers and results had to be derived from the overall responses every now and then.

8.4   Recommendations for further research

Conducting this research and writing the master thesis, was a challenging, but also an interesting and instructive period. Not only did it make me want to continue this research, but it gave me ideas for other possible topics of study in the future. Possible subjects for future study are:

- *Impact of different factors on the perception of the Dutch-German border.* A lot has happened in recent years, some of which events still require a lot of attention and evoke discussions. Also, the well-known ''Brexit'', which directly concerns and affects (different) borders and boundaries, and is therefore certainly interesting to take into account when examining (changing) border perceptions. An example is the research of my colleague Maarten van Wel (2019, in progress) about the influence of municipal refugee policy on the perception of the Dutch-German border.

  Furthermore, one could focus on the effects of certain security issues and/or impressive events such as 'terrorist attacks'. Eventually these different factors may also be compared.

- *Different border perception in different border regions.* This study has proven an interesting case in examining the perception of the border in relation to different (spatial) identities in a border region with open and stable borders. As not all border regions are characterized by stable borders and a long history of institutional cooperation, further research should also focus on different perceptions in different types of border regions. Social and cultural adaptation and perception of otherness may be very different in regions without a tradition of extended daily life practices across the state border.

- *(Social) media impact and the formation of border perception.* The effects of (social) media about refugees was just one small aspect of this research. In future research this could be a central aspect to examine in greater depth what impact it has on the perception of citizens living in border regions.

Conducting this research has certainly taught me the never-ending opportunities for future research. These few conclusions are just a small part of what is possible in the field of human geography. What other is there to tell about the relation between (the perception of) borders, refugees and/or other related identities?

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey

The core of this questionnaire consists of several questions regarding your opinion on several aspects of the Dutch-German border. We discuss five different ways to view the border:
- *The Dutch-German border from a general perspective;*
- *The Dutch-German border from an economic perspective;*
- *The Dutch-German border from a social-cultural perspective;*
- *The Dutch-German border from a legal-administrative perspective;*
- *The Dutch-German border and the arrival and presence of refugees.*

An explanation on these can be found with the respective questions. The first questions consider the Dutch-German border from a **general perspective**.

Q1 How often have you crossed the Dutch-German border over the past three years? (please choose the answer that comes closest)

○ Never

○ Once a week

○ Once a month

○ Once a quarter

○ Twice a year

○ Less than twice a year

Q2 Can u give your opinion on the following statements?

The border between the Netherlands and Germany is:

	1	2	3	4	5	
Unnoticeable	○	○	○	○	○	Noticeable
Abnormal	○	○	○	○	○	Normal
Impeding	○	○	○	○	○	Unimpeding
Dividing	○	○	○	○	○	Undividing
Unimportant	○	○	○	○	○	Important
Useful	○	○	○	○	○	Useless
Natural	○	○	○	○	○	Unnatural

Q3 How important is it to you that the Dutch-German border *exists*? (So, that there is a border between the Netherlands and Germany?)

	1	2	3	4	5	
Important	○	○	○	○	○	Unimportant

Q4 How important is it to you to actually *experience* the Dutch-German border?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Important	○	○	○	○	○	Unimportant

End of Block: Role of the border

Start of Block: Border in economic perspective

The following questions regard the Dutch-German border from an **economic perspective**. In answering these questions, it is important that you consider the role of the border from an economic point of view. Here you could consider shopping, doing groceries, refueling, or working on the other side of the border.

Q5 Have you ever crossed the Dutch-German border to go shopping, buy groceries, refuel or work?

○ Yes

○ No

Q6 Can u give your opinion on the following statements?

The border between the Netherlands and Germany is, from an economic perspective (e.g. shopping, buying groceries, refueling or working):

	1	2	3	4	5	
Unnoticeable	○	○	○	○	○	Noticeable
Abnormal	○	○	○	○	○	Normal
Impeding	○	○	○	○	○	Unimpeding
Dividing	○	○	○	○	○	Undividing
Unimportant	○	○	○	○	○	Important
Useful	○	○	○	○	○	Useless
Natural	○	○	○	○	○	Unnatural

Q7 How important is it to you that the Dutch-German border *exists e*conomically? (So, that from an economic perspective, there is a border between the Netherlands and Germany?)

	1	2	3	4	5	
Important	○	○	○	○	○	Unimportant

Q8 How important is it to you to actually *experience* the Dutch-German border from an economic perspective? For example, through price differences in grocery shopping and refueling, or when working in the other country.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Important	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Unimportant

The following questions regard the Dutch-German border from a **social-cultural perspective**. In answering these questions, it is important that you consider the role of the border from a social-cultural point of view (for example going out, recreation, visiting friends).

Q9 Have you ever crossed the Dutch-German border to go out, visit friends, or recreate?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Q10 Can u give your opinion on the following statements?

The border between the Netherlands and Germany is, from a social-cultural perspective (e.g. going out, recreating):

	1	2	3	4	5	
Unnoticeable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Noticeable
Abnormal	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Normal
Impeding	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Unimpeding
Dividing	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Undividing
Unimportant	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Important
Useful	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Useless
Natural	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Unnatural

Q11 How important is it to you that the Dutch-German border *exists* social-culturally? (So, that from a social-cultural perspective, there is a border between the Netherlands and Germany?)

	1	2	3	4	5	
Important	○	○	○	○	○	Unimportant

Q12 How important is it to you to actually *experience* the Dutch-German border from a social-cultural perspective? For example, through differences in cultural-recreative offerings.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Important	○	○	○	○	○	Unimportant

End of Block: Border in social-cultural perspective

Start of Block: Border in legal-administrative perspective

The following questions regard the Dutch-German border from a **legal-administrative perspective**. In answering these questions, it is important that you consider the role of the border from a legal administrative point of view (for example, everything that has to do with regulations).

Q13 Do you have experiences with the other side of the border, from a legal-administrative point of view?

○ Yes

○ No

Q14 Can u give your opinion on the following statements?

The border between the Netherlands and Germany is, from a legal-administrative perspective (e.g. when closing an employment contract or purchase contract:

	1	2	3	4	5	
Unnoticeable	○	○	○	○	○	Noticeable
Abnormal	○	○	○	○	○	Normal
Impeding	○	○	○	○	○	Unimpeding
Dividing	○	○	○	○	○	Undividing
Unimportant	○	○	○	○	○	Important
Useful	○	○	○	○	○	Useless
Natural	○	○	○	○	○	Unnatural

Q15 How important is it to you that the Dutch-German border *exists* legal-administratively? (So, that from a legal-administrative perspective, there is a border between the Netherlands and Germany?)

	1	2	3	4	5	
Important	○	○	○	○	○	Unimportant

Q16 How important is it to you to actually *experience* the Dutch-German border from a legal-administrative perspective? For example, through differences in VAT levels, or differences in the conditions in an (employment) contract.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Important	○	○	○	○	○	Unimportant

The past years a lot has been said and happened with regard to the **arrival and presence of refugees**. Think for example of housing and integration of refugees. INTERREG Deutschland-Nederland studies the possible relation between how people think about the arrival and presence of refugees, and what people think of the Dutch-German border. The following questions consider this issue.

Q17 How do you experience the arrival and presence of refugees to your country of residence in general, **at this moment**?

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
Unnoticeable	○	○	○	○	○	Noticeable
Abnormal	○	○	○	○	○	Normal
Unnatural	○	○	○	○	○	Natural
Not worrisome	○	○	○	○	○	Worrisome

Q18 How did you experience the arrival and presence of refugees to your country of residence b**efore** the summer of 2015 (so, **before** the rise in refugee influx), compared to how you experience this now?

Before the summer of 2015:

	More	About the same	Less
Noticeable	○	○	○
Normal	○	○	○
Natural	○	○	○
Worrisome	○	○	○

Q19 If you think back about the developments over the last years concerning refugees, how then do you now consider the Dutch-German border, in comparison to the situation before the summer of 2015?

Now, compared to before the summer of 2015:

	More	About the same	Less
Noticeable	○	○	○
Normal	○	○	○
Impeding	○	○	○
Dividing	○	○	○
Important	○	○	○
Useful	○	○	○
Natural	○	○	○

End of Block: Border in relation to the arrival and presence of refugees

Start of Block: Closing questions

Q20 Please think back to the past three years. Has the barrier effect of the Dutch-German border changed in those three years, for the following aspects?

Compared to three years ago, the barrier effect of the border is now…

	Clearly less	Slightly less	About the same	Clearly less	Slightly less
Generally	○	○	○	○	○
Economically	○	○	○	○	○
Socio-culturally	○	○	○	○	○
Legal-administratively	○	○	○	○	○

Q21 Please indicate to what extent you feel connected to the following areas:

	Not at all	Not really	Neutral	Somewhat	Fully
Europe	○	○	○	○	○
My neighbouring country	○	○	○	○	○
My country of residence	○	○	○	○	○
My province	○	○	○	○	○
My municipality	○	○	○	○	○
My region (in country of residence	○	○	○	○	○
The border region	○	○	○	○	○

Q22 Do you know the INTERREG-program Deutschland-Nederland?

○ Yes

○ No

Q23 Have you ever been in contact with an INTERREG Deutschland-Nederland project?

○ Yes

○ No

Q24 With which INTERREG-project(s) have you been in contact in Nederland-Deutschland?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

This was the final question. We thank you for you cooperation. Your answers will be processed under full anonymity. The results will be published on the website of the INTERREG-program Deutschland-Nederland (www.deutschland-nederland.eu) in due course.

End of Block: Closing questions

Appendix 2: Interview guides

2.1 Nederlandse interviewgids

1. **Introductie**
   a. Wie zijn wij, waar gaat onderzoek en interview over. *Benadrukken dat dit interview 2 verschillende onderwerpen betreft, namelijk grensbeleid <u>en</u> vluchtelingen (dus niet de samenhang benadrukken of actief naar antwoorden zoeken).*
   b. Vermeld anonimiteit en privacy;
   c. Vraag toestemming voor audiorecording;
   d. Vermeld opslag data en transcript interview;
   e. Benadrukken dat het om *eigen* mening gaat;
   f. Nog vragen voor ons?

2. **Basisinformatie**
   - Naam (anoniem indien verzocht)
   - Geslacht
   - Leeftijd
   - Hoe lang woonachtig in gemeente?
   - Hoogste opleiding

Audio-opname starten

3. **Interpretatie van de grens**
   - Wat zijn uw ervaringen met de grens?
   - Hoe denkt u over de Nederlands-Duitse grens?
     - Merkbaar?
     - Vindt u het belangrijk dat deze grens bestaat?
     - Vindt u de grens belemmerend en / of verdelend?
     - Denkt u dat de grens een functie heeft of zou moeten hebben / noodzaak? Waarom/wat bedoelt u/kunt u dat uit leggen?

   - Denkt u dat uw beeld van de grens op een bepaald moment misschien veranderd is? Indien, ja, wat is er veranderd en waardoor komt dat?

4. **Vluchtelingenperceptie**
   - Welke 3 woorden komen in u op als u denkt aan de komst van vluchtelingen?
   - Kunt u uitleggen waarom deze drie woorden in u opkomen?
   - Kunt u uitleggen wat u zelf vindt van de komst en aanwezigheid van vluchtelingen naar Nederland?
     - Opvang
     - Integratie
     - Evt. vragen: Wat is volgens u de reden dat dit wel/niet naar behoren verloopt? (Eerst zien waar de geïnterviewde zelf mee komt, daarna pas inzoomen op het onderwerp.)

- Heeft u persoonlijke ervaringen met (een of meerdere) vluchtelingen, en zo ja, welke?
- Er is veel berichtgeving geweest over de komst van vluchtelingen; heeft u daar iets van meegekregen en zo ja, wat vindt u van de (media)berichtgeving omtrent de komst van vluchtelingen?
- Is er een bepaalde reden voor uw mening omtrent vluchtelingen of een bepaald moment waarop u van mening bent veranderd? Of heeft u deze mening altijd al gehad? Kunt u dat uitleggen/waarom wel/niet.

5. Gemeentelijk beleid
- Wat merkt u van het gemeentelijk beleid m.b.t vluchtelingen?
  - Merkbaar? Wat doet de gemeente m.b.t vluchtelingen?
- Wat vindt u van het gemeentelijk beleid m.b.t vluchtelingen?
  - Nuttig? Belangrijk? Voldoende/overbodig? Ervaringen?
- Hoe verloopt de communicatie vanuit de gemeente naar burgers, m.b.t tot vluchtelingen?
  - Ervaringen? Voldoende? Overbodig?

6. Mogelijke samenhang grens en vluchtelingen
- Wat heeft u meegekregen of gehoord over de rol van grenzen in relatie tot de komst van vluchtelingen? Kunt u een voorbeeld geven / beschrijven wat u bedoelt?
- Wat vindt u van het grensbeleid met betrekking tot de komst van vluchtelingen?
- Denkt u dat de vluchtelingen(situatie), en eventuele veranderingen hierin, mogelijk relateert aan uw beeld van de Nederlands-Duitse grens?

2.2 English interview guide

1. **Introduction**
   a. Who are we, what is the research and interview about. Emphasize that this interview concerns 2 different topics, namely border policy and refugees (so do not emphasize coherence or actively search for answers).
   b. State anonymity and privacy;
   c. Request permission for audio recording;
   d. Specify storage data and transcript interview;
   e. Emphasize that it is about the *own* opinion;
   f. Any questions for us?

2. **Basic information**
   - Name (anonymous if requested)
   - Sex
   - Age
   - How long have you lived in the municipality?
   - Highest education

Start audio recording

3. **Interpretation of the border**
   - What are your experiences with the border?
   - What do you think about the Dutch-German border?
     - Noticeable?
     - Do you find it important that this border exists?
     - Do you find the border impeding and / or dividing?
     - Do you think that the border has or should have a function / need? Why / what do you mean / can you explain that?
   - Do you think your image of the border might have changed at some point? If yes, what has changed and why?

4. **Refugee perception**
   - What 3 words come to mind when you think of the arrival of refugees?
   - Can you explain why these three words occur to you?
   - Can you explain what you think about the arrival and presence of refugees in the Netherlands?
     - Reception
     - Integration
     - Possibly ask: What do you think is the reason that this is / is not going well? (First see what the interviewee is coming up with, then zoom in on the subject.)
   - Do you have personal experiences with (one or more) refugees, and if so, which ones?
   - There has been a lot of reporting about the arrival of refugees; did you hear or see anything about that and if so, what do you think of the (media) reports about the arrival of refugees?
   - Is there a specific reason for your opinion about refugees or a specific moment you're your opinion has changed? Or have you always had this opinion? Can you explain that/ why yes / no.

5. **Municipal policy**
   - What do you notice about the municipal policy with regard to refugees?
     - o Noticeable? What does the municipality do with regard to refugees?
   - What do you think of the municipal policy with regard to refugees?
     - o Useful? Important? Enough / unnecessary? Experiences?
   - How does communication from the municipality to citizens, with regard to refugees, proceed?
     - o Experiences? Enough? Unnecessary?

6. **Possible relation border and refugees**
   - What did you learn or hear about the role of borders in relation to the arrival of refugees? Can you give an example / describe what you mean?
   - What do you think about the border policy regarding the arrival of refugees?
   - Do you think that the refugees (situation), and any changes in these, might relate to your image / perception of the Dutch-German border?

Appendix 3: List of interviewees

Municipality	Code	Gender	Age category	Level of education
Kleve	K1	Male	50-65	Higher
	K2	Female	65+	Middle
	K3	Female	30-50	Higher
	K4	Male	18-30	Higher
	K5	Male	50-65	Higher
	K6	Female	18-30	Higher
Rees	R1	Female	30-50	Middle
	R2	Male	30-50	Middle
	R3	Male	30-50	Middle
	R4	Female	50-65	Middle
	R5	Female	18-30	Higher
	R6	Male	30-50	Higher
Berg en Dal	B1	Male	65+	Lower
	B2	Male	18-30	Higher
	B3	Female	50-65	Middle
	B4	Female	50-65	Middle
	B5	Male	30-50	Higher
	B6	Female	18-30	Higher
Winterswijk	W1	Female	18-30	Higher
	W2	Female	30-50	Middle
	W3	Male	18-30	Middle
	W4	Female	65+	Middle
	W5	Male	18-30	Higher
	W6	Male	50-65	Middle

Appendix 4: Communication with (Facebook) respondents

''Beste mensen,
Momenteel ronden mijn medestudent Maarten van Wel en ik, onze studie (Sociale Geografie) af aan de Radboud Universiteit (Nijmegen) door middel van een afstudeeronderzoek.
Voor dit onderzoek zoeken wij een aantal mensen, woonachtig in de gemeente …, die wij mogen interviewen.
Het onderzoek gaat over de Nederlands-Duitse grens, wat mensen (wonend in het grensgebied) van deze grens vinden, hoe ze de grens ervaren en wat hierop van invloed is of kan zijn.

Daarom verzoeken wij iedereen die interesse heeft en/of ons graag verder helpt, onder dit bericht te reageren of mij een chatbericht te sturen via Facebook.

Wij horen graag van jullie!

Vriendelijke groeten,
Maarten van Wel en Shauni Drost

P.s. Onder de deelnemers, verloten wij een aantal lekkere repen Tony Chocolonely!''

Figure 2: Dutch version of Facebook post

''Liebe Leute,

Derzeit Runde mein Studienkollege Maarten van Wel und ich, unsere Studie (Human geography) von der Radboud Universität (Nijmegen) durch ein Forschungsprojekt.
Für diese Forschung suchen wir einige Leute die in der Stadt … leben, die wir interviewen können.
Die Forschung beschäftigt sich mit der deutsch-niederländischen Grenze, was Menschen (die im Grenzgebiet leben) an diese Grenze denken, wie sie die Grenze erleben und was diese beeinflusst.

Deshalb bitten wir alle Interessierten, die uns gerne helfen und (ein bisschen) Niederländisch oder Englisch sprechen, auf diese Nachricht zu antworten oder mir eine Chat-Nachricht über Facebook zu schicken

Wir würden gerne von Ihnen hören!

Mit freundlichen Grüßen
Maarten van Wel und Shauni Drost

P.s. Die Teilnehmer erhalten eine leckere Schokoriegel Tony Chocolonely!''

Figure 3: German version of Facebook post

''Hallo,
Voor we een interview afspraak maken, zouden we u eerst graag een paar korte vragen willen stellen:

Wat is uw leeftijd?
Wat is uw hoogst genoten opleiding? (Keuze uit onderstaande opties)
  a. Lager onderwijs (vmbo of lager)
  b. Middelbaar onderwijs (HAVO/VWO/MBO)
  c. Hoger onderwijs (hbo of WO)
  d. Anders
Hoe lang woont u inmiddels in uw huidige gemeente?

Alvast vriendelijk bedankt!
Maarten en Shauni ''

Figure 4: Private Facebook message

Appendix 5: Survey results – all additional tables

5.1 Additional survey results

General (physical) aspect

Table 1. How often have you crossed the Dutch-German border over the past three years?

	The Netherlands		Germany		Total	
	N	*%*	N	*%*	N	*%*
Once a week	46	*8,8%*	24	*4,6%*	70	*6,7%*
Once a month	84	*16,1%*	73	*13,9%*	157	*15,0%*
Once a quarter	101	*19,4%*	82	*15,6%*	183	*17,5%*
Twice a year	101	*19,4%*	141	*26,9%*	242	*23,2%*
Less than twice a year	114	*21,9%*	84	*16,0%*	198	*18,9%*
Never	75	*14,4%*	120	*22,9%*	195	*18,7%*
Total	521	*100,0%*	524	*100,0%*	1.045	*100,0%*

Table 2. Opinion: the border between the Netherlands and Germany is:

	Noticeable	Normal	Impeding	Dividing	Important	Useful	Natural
1	100	500	20	26	120	111	236
2	201	302	36	46	158	143	202
3	236	201	140	241	416	459	456
4	259	17	203	245	147	159	79
5	248	12	631	469	184	157	52
	Unnoticeable	Abnormal	Unimpeding	Undividing	Unimportant	Useless	Unnatural
Total	1044	1032	1030	1027	1025	1029	1025
	Noticeable	Normal	Impeding	Dividing	Important	Useful	Natural
1	9,6%	48,4%	1,9%	2,5%	11,7%	10,8%	23,0%
2	19,3%	29,3%	3,5%	4,5%	15,4%	13,9%	19,7%
3	22,6%	19,5%	13,6%	23,5%	40,6%	44,6%	44,5%
4	24,8%	1,6%	19,7%	23,9%	14,3%	15,5%	7,7%
5	23,8%	1,2%	61,3%	45,7%	18,0%	15,3%	5,1%
	Unnoticeable	Abnormal	Unimpeding	Undividing	Unimportant	Useless	Unnatural

Economic aspect

Table 3. Have you ever crossed the Dutch-German border to buy groceries, go shopping, refuelling or working?

	The Netherlands		Germany		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	*400*	*77,2%*	*400*	*76,8%*	*800*	*77,0%*
No	*118*	*22,8%*	*121*	*23,2%*	*239*	*23,0%*
Total	*518*	*100,0%*	*521*	*100,0%*	*1.039*	*100,0%*

Table 4. Opinion: the border between the Netherlands and Germany in economic terms is:

	Noticeable	Normal	Impeding	Dividing	Important	Useful	Natural
1	243	326	16	33	156	163	184
2	338	296	52	90	218	196	190
3	227	355	222	340	431	420	532
4	87	44	275	238	115	133	89
5	152	26	482	346	127	135	51
	Unnoticeable	Abnormal	Unimpeding	Undividing	Unimportant	Useless	Unnatural
Total	1047	1047	1047	1047	1047	1047	1046
	Noticeable	Normal	Impeding	Dividing	Important	Useful	Natural
1	23,2%	31,1%	1,5%	3,2%	14,9%	15,6%	17,6%
2	32,3%	28,3%	5,0%	8,6%	20,8%	18,7%	18,2%
3	21,7%	33,9%	21,2%	32,5%	41,2%	40,1%	50,9%
4	8,3%	4,2%	26,3%	22,7%	11,0%	12,7%	8,5%
5	14,5%	2,5%	46,0%	33,0%	12,1%	12,9%	4,9%
	Unnoticeable	Abnormal	Unimpeding	Undividing	Unimportant	Useless	Unnatural

Socio cultural aspect

Table 5. Have you ever crossed the Dutch-German border to go out, visit friends, or recreate?

	The Netherlands		Germany		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	*332*	*64,0%*	*334*	*63,7%*	*666*	*63,9%*
No	*187*	*36,0%*	*190*	*36,3%*	*377*	*36,1%*
Total	*519*	*100,0%*	*524*	*100,0%*	*1.043*	*100,0%*

Table 6. Opinion: the border between the Netherlands and Germany in socio-cultural terms is:

	Noticeable	Normal	Impeding	Dividing	Important	Useful	Natural
1	159	311	15	22	119	104	189
2	240	274	46	59	163	140	200
3	325	405	294	386	488	513	518
4	128	33	257	244	143	134	88
5	195	24	435	336	134	156	51
	Unnoticeable	Abnormal	Unimpeding	Undividing	Unimportant	Useless	Unnatural
Total	**1047**	**1047**	**1047**	**1047**	**1047**	**1047**	**1046**
	Noticeable	Normal	Impeding	Dividing	Important	Useful	Natural
1	15,2%	29,7%	1,4%	2,1%	11,4%	9,9%	18,1%
2	22,9%	26,2%	4,4%	5,6%	15,6%	13,4%	19,1%
3	31,0%	38,7%	28,1%	36,9%	46,6%	49,0%	49,5%
4	12,2%	3,2%	24,5%	23,3%	13,7%	12,8%	8,4%
5	18,6%	2,3%	41,5%	32,1%	12,8%	14,9%	4,9%
	Unnoticeable	Abnormal	Unimpeding	Undividing	Unimportant	Useless	Unnatural

Legal and administrative aspect

Table 7. Do you have experience with the other side of the border from a legal-administrative perspective?

	The Netherlands		Germany		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	*59*	*11,3%*	*88*	*16,8%*	*147*	*14,1%*
No	*463*	*88,7%*	*435*	*83,2%*	*898*	*85,9%*
Total	*522*	*100,0%*	*523*	*100,0%*	*1.045*	*100,0%*

Table 8. Opinion: the border between the Netherlands and Germany in legal-administrative terms is:

	Noticeable	Normal	Impeding	Dividing	Important	Useful	Natural
1	174	179	47	54	124	92	114
2	170	173	132	142	164	134	123
3	513	582	564	586	602	622	667
4	77	78	134	121	74	113	82
5	105	27	162	134	71	77	49
	Unnoticeable	Abnormal	Unimpeding	Undividing	Unimportant	Useless	Unnatural
Total	**1039**	**1039**	**1039**	**1037**	**1035**	**1038**	**1035**
	Noticeable	Normal	Impeding	Dividing	Important	Useful	Natural
1	16,7%	17,2%	4,5%	5,2%	12,0%	8,9%	11,0%
2	16,4%	16,7%	12,7%	13,7%	15,8%	12,9%	11,9%
3	49,4%	56,0%	54,3%	56,5%	58,2%	59,9%	64,4%
4	7,4%	7,5%	12,9%	11,7%	7,1%	10,9%	7,9%
5	10,1%	2,6%	15,6%	12,9%	6,9%	7,4%	4,7%
	Unnoticeable	Abnormal	Unimpeding	Undividing	Unimportant	Useless	Unnatural

Questions regarding the importance of the border's existence and experiencing the border

The perception of the survey respondents on this aspect of the border, is also compared for different, objective 'groups': country of origin, gender, level of education and age.

Compared for country of origin

Table 9. Importance of the existence of the border, for country of origin

How important is it to you that the Dutch-German border exists?		General				Economic				Social-cultural				Legal-administrative			
		Netherlands		Germany		Netherlands		Germany		Netherlands		Germany		Netherlands		Germany	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Important	1	87	16,8%	62	11,9%	56	11,0%	73	14,1%	52	10,2%	61	11,8%	64	12,4%	81	15,8%
	2	141	27,2%	74	14,2%	108	21,2%	85	16,4%	106	20,7%	71	13,7%	77	15,0%	78	15,2%
	3	155	29,9%	166	31,8%	212	41,6%	163	31,5%	210	41,1%	180	34,8%	287	55,7%	224	43,7%
	4	65	12,5%	79	15,1%	71	13,9%	74	14,3%	64	12,5%	72	13,9%	49	9,5%	61	11,9%
Unimportant	5	71	13,7%	141	27,0%	63	12,4%	122	23,6%	79	15,5%	133	25,7%	38	7,4%	69	13,5%
		519		522		510		517		511		517		515		513	

Table 10. Importance of experiencing the border, for country of origin

How important is it to you to actually experience the Dutch-German border?		General				Economic				Social-cultural				Legal-administrative			
		Netherlands		Germany		Netherlands		Germany		Netherlands		Germany		Netherlands		Germany	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Important	1	49	9,4%	48	9,1%	102	19,6%	82	15,6%	49	9,4%	64	12,2%	53	10,3%	67	12,8%
	2	94	18,1%	65	12,4%	124	23,8%	110	21,0%	97	18,7%	90	17,1%	76	14,7%	87	16,7%
	3	152	29,3%	174	33,1%	180	34,6%	178	33,9%	242	46,5%	188	35,8%	293	56,7%	245	46,9%
	4	96	18,5%	86	16,4%	71	13,7%	59	11,2%	61	11,7%	72	13,7%	59	11,4%	49	9,4%
Unimportant	5	128	24,7%	152	29,0%	43	8,3%	96	18,3%	71	13,7%	111	21,1%	36	7,0%	74	14,2%
		519		525		520		525		520		525		517		522	

Dutch respondents perceive the existence of the border - from a general and economic aspect – somewhat more important than German respondents. For the socio-cultural aspect, this is the other way around.

Compared for gender

Table 11. Importance of the existence of the border, for gender

How important is it to you that the Dutch-German border exists?		General				Economic				Social-cultural				Legal-administrative			
		Man		Woman		Man		Woman		Man		Woman		Man		Woman	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Important	*1*	70	13,7%	79	14,9%	60	11,9%	69	13,2%	57	11,3%	56	10,7%	67	13,4%	78	14,8%
	2	99	19,4%	116	21,9%	90	17,9%	103	19,7%	87	17,3%	90	17,2%	81	16,2%	74	14,0%
	3	143	28,0%	178	33,6%	159	31,6%	216	41,2%	163	32,3%	227	43,3%	220	44,0%	291	55,1%
	4	82	16,0%	62	11,7%	87	17,3%	58	11,1%	80	15,9%	56	10,7%	74	14,8%	36	6,8%
Unimportant	*5*	117	22,9%	95	17,9%	107	21,3%	78	14,9%	117	23,2%	95	18,1%	58	11,6%	49	9,3%
		511		**530**		**503**		**524**		**504**		**524**		**500**		**528**	

Table 12. Importance of experiencing the border, for gender

How important is it to you to actually experience the Dutch-German border?		General				Economic				Social-cultural				Legal-administrative			
		Man		Woman		Man		Woman		Man		Woman		Man		Woman	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Important	*1*	50	*9,8%*	47	*8,8%*	83	*16,2%*	101	*18,9%*	50	*9,8%*	63	*11,8%*	53	10,4%	67	*12,6%*
	2	79	*15,4%*	80	*15,0%*	105	*20,5%*	129	*24,2%*	79	*15,4%*	108	*20,3%*	87	17,1%	76	*14,3%*
	3	138	*27,0%*	188	*35,3%*	162	*31,6%*	196	*36,8%*	198	*38,7%*	232	*43,5%*	245	48,2%	293	*55,2%*
	4	97	*18,9%*	85	*16,0%*	79	*15,4%*	51	*9,6%*	83	*16,2%*	50	*9,4%*	62	12,2%	46	*8,7%*
Unimportant	*5*	148	*28,9%*	132	*24,8%*	83	*16,2%*	56	*10,5%*	102	*19,9%*	80	*15,0%*	61	12,0%	49	*9,2%*
		512		**532**		**512**		**533**		**512**		**533**		**508**		**531**	

The differences with regard to gender are small and therefore not that relevant.

Compared for level of education

Table 13. Importance of the existence of the border, for level of education

How important is it to you that the Dutch-German border exists?		General						Economic						Socio-cultural					
		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Important	1	40	16,9%	76	14,2%	32	12,3%	43	18,5%	61	11,4%	24	9,4%	31	13,2%	64	12,0%	17	6,6%
	2	39	16,5%	107	19,9%	69	26,4%	43	18,5%	95	17,8%	54	21,2%	34	14,5%	88	16,5%	55	21,5%
	3	73	30,8%	191	35,6%	54	20,7%	81	34,8%	218	40,9%	74	29,0%	86	36,8%	213	40,0%	88	34,4%
	4	25	10,5%	57	10,6%	61	23,4%	24	10,3%	70	13,1%	50	19,6%	26	11,1%	66	12,4%	44	17,2%
Unimportant	5	60	25,3%	106	19,7%	45	17,2%	42	18,0%	89	16,7%	53	20,8%	57	24,4%	101	19,0%	52	20,3%
		237		537		261		233		533		255		234		532		256	

Table 14. Importance of experiencing the border, for level of education

How important is it to actually experience the Dutch-German border?		General						Economic						Socio-cultural							
		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Important	1	24	10,1%	55	10,2%	17	6,6%	46	19,3%	103	19,1%	33	12,6%	35	14,7%	60	11,1%	17	6,5%	42	17,
	2	42	17,6%	78	14,4%	38	14,7%	56	23,5%	118	21,9%	58	22,2%	34	14,3%	100	18,5%	52	20,0%	38	16,
	3	80	33,6%	190	35,1%	55	21,2%	80	33,6%	202	37,4%	76	29,1%	93	39,1%	237	43,7%	99	38,1%	116	48,
	4	30	12,6%	85	15,7%	66	25,5%	27	11,3%	56	10,4%	46	17,6%	32	13,4%	58	10,7%	43	16,5%	17	7,
Unimportant	5	62	26,1%	133	24,6%	83	32,0%	29	12,2%	61	11,3%	48	18,4%	44	18,5%	87	16,1%	49	18,8%	24	10,
		238		541		259		238		540		261		238		542		260		237	

The percentage of lower educated respondents that perceive the existence of the border as important - within the economic and legal-administrative aspect – is higher than the percentage of middle and higher educated respondents.

Table 15. Importance of the existence of the border, for age groups

How important is it to you that the Dutch-German border exists?		General						Economic						Socio-cultural					
		18-30		30-50		50-65		18-30		30-50		50-65		18-30		30-50		50-65	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Important	1	38	16,8%	51	14,1%	59	13,3%	32	14,3%	49	13,7%	47	10,8%	27	12,0%	43	11,9%	43	9,9%
	2	80	35,4%	65	18,0%	70	15,7%	64	28,6%	57	16,0%	71	16,2%	58	25,8%	60	16,6%	58	13,4%
	3	52	23,0%	122	33,8%	144	32,4%	71	31,7%	142	39,8%	157	35,9%	81	36,0%	148	41,0%	159	36,7%
	4	33	14,6%	49	13,6%	60	13,5%	38	17,0%	49	13,7%	57	13,0%	35	15,6%	42	11,6%	56	12,9%
Unimportant	5	23	10,2%	74	20,5%	112	25,2%	19	8,5%	60	16,8%	105	24,0%	24	10,7%	68	18,8%	117	27,0%
		226		**361**		**445**		**224**		**357**		**437**		**225**		**361**		**433**	

Table 16. Importance of experiencing the border, for age groups

How important is it to actually experience the Dutch-German border?		General						Economic						Socio-cultural					
		18-30		30-50		50-65		18-30		30-50		50-65		18-30		30-50		50-65	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Important	1	20	8,9%	41	11,3%	36	8,0%	31	13,8%	60	16,5%	93	20,8%	30	13,3%	41	11,4%	42	9,4%
	2	48	21,4%	53	14,6%	57	12,7%	64	28,4%	80	22,0%	89	19,9%	53	23,5%	70	19,4%	64	14,3%
	3	72	32,1%	115	31,8%	136	30,3%	75	33,3%	132	36,4%	145	32,4%	90	39,8%	147	40,7%	190	42,3%
	4	50	22,3%	57	15,7%	73	16,3%	41	18,2%	44	12,1%	44	9,8%	31	13,7%	45	12,5%	54	12,0%
Unimportant	5	34	15,2%	96	26,5%	147	32,7%	14	6,2%	47	12,9%	77	17,2%	22	9,7%	58	16,1%	99	22,0%
		224		**362**		**449**		**225**		**363**		**448**		**226**		**361**		**449**	

Relatively seen, the age group of 18- to 30-year-olds perceive both the existence of the border and experiencing the border more important than respondents from other age groups.

Questions with regard to the change in border barrier effect

The change of perception with regard to the border's barrier effect was also compared, based on different objective groups/characteristics: country of origin, gender, level of education and age group.

Table 17. Changed barrier effect of the Dutch German border over the last three years, for country of origin

| | General | | | | Economic | | | | Social-cultural | | | | Legal-administrative | | | |
| | Netherlands | | Germany | | Netherlands | | Germany | | Netherlands | | Germany | | Netherlands | | Germany | |
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clearly decreased	27	5,2%	30	5,7%	14	2,7%	17	3,3%	16	3,1%	17	3,3%	17	3,3%	14	2,7%
Slightly decreased	43	8,3%	46	8,8%	42	8,1%	51	9,8%	35	6,8%	53	10,2%	22	4,3%	27	5,2%
About the same	391	75,2%	379	72,3%	384	74,1%	392	75,0%	393	76,2%	376	72,4%	413	80,2%	401	76,8%
Slightly increased	51	9,8%	51	9,7%	62	12,0%	47	9,0%	56	10,9%	58	11,2%	47	9,1%	62	11,9%
Clearly increased	8	1,5%	18	3,4%	16	3,1%	16	3,1%	16	3,1%	15	2,9%	16	3,1%	18	3,4%
Total	**520**		**524**		**518**		**523**		**516**		**519**		**515**		**522**	

Table 18. Changed barrier effect of the Dutch German border over the last three years, for gender

| | General | | | | Economic | | | | Social-cultural | | | | Legal-administrative | | | |
| | Man | | Woman | | Man | | Woman | | Man | | Woman | | Man | | Woman | |
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clearly decreased	35	6,8%	22	4,1%	20	3,9%	11	2,1%	15	2,9%	18	3,4%	19	3,7%	12	2,3%
Slightly decreased	58	11,3%	31	5,8%	49	9,6%	44	8,3%	56	11,0%	32	6,1%	32	6,3%	17	3,2%
About the same	350	68,4%	420	78,9%	372	72,8%	404	76,2%	368	72,0%	401	76,5%	379	74,6%	435	82,2%
Slightly increased	54	10,5%	48	9,0%	50	9,8%	59	11,1%	55	10,8%	59	11,3%	61	12,0%	48	9,1%
Clearly increased	15	2,9%	11	2,1%	20	3,9%	12	2,3%	17	3,3%	14	2,7%	17	3,3%	17	3,2%
Total	**512**		**532**		**511**		**530**		**511**		**524**		**508**		**529**	

A little more often than women, men state to perceive the border's barrier effect is decreased with the general (physical) aspect. More female respondents state that their perception has not changed.

Table 19. *Changed barrier effect of the Dutch German border over the last three years, for level of education*

| | General | | | | | | Economic | | | | | | Socio-cultu... | | |
| | Lower | | Middle | | Higher | | Lower | | Middle | | Higher | | Lower | | Middle | |
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clearly decreased	19	8,0%	29	5,4%	9	3,4%	7	3,0%	14	2,6%	9	3,4%	10	4,3%	18	3,4%
Slightly decreased	22	9,3%	40	7,4%	26	10,0%	20	8,5%	50	9,3%	23	8,8%	22	9,4%	41	7,7%
About the same	169	71,3%	409	75,7%	188	72,0%	174	74,0%	400	74,2%	198	75,9%	167	71,1%	410	76,8%
Slightly increased	20	8,4%	54	10,0%	28	10,7%	27	11,5%	61	11,3%	21	8,0%	26	11,1%	56	10,5%
Clearly increased	7	3,0%	8	1,5%	10	3,8%	7	3,0%	14	2,6%	10	3,8%	10	4,3%	9	1,7%
Total	**237**		**540**		**261**		**235**		**539**		**261**		**235**		**534**	

Table 20. *Changed barrier effect of the Dutch German border over the last three years, for age groups*

| | General | | | | | | Economic | | | | | | Socio-cultu... | | |
| | 18-30 | | 30-50 | | 50-65 | | 18-30 | | 30-50 | | 50-65 | | 18-30 | | 30-50 | |
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clearly decreased	12	5,3%	19	5,2%	26	5,8%	8	3,6%	8	2,2%	15	3,4%	8	3,6%	7	2,0%
Slightly decreased	32	14,2%	28	7,7%	29	6,5%	33	14,7%	28	7,8%	32	7,2%	24	10,7%	36	10,1%
About the same	152	67,6%	263	72,5%	346	77,4%	144	64,0%	269	74,5%	355	79,6%	137	61,2%	258	72,1%
Slightly increased	21	9,3%	42	11,6%	39	8,7%	30	13,3%	45	12,5%	33	7,4%	45	20,1%	45	12,6%
Clearly increased	8	3,6%	11	3,0%	7	1,6%	10	4,4%	11	3,0%	11	2,5%	10	4,5%	12	3,4%
Total	**225**		**363**		**447**		**225**		**361**		**446**		**224**		**358**	

On the one hand, the percentage of 18- to 30-year-olds is high for the perception that the barrier effect of the border economically decreased a little. On the other hand, another relatively high percentage of this age group perceive the barrier effect of the border as increased from a sociocultural aspect. For a quite high percentage of the 50- to 65 years old respondents, the barrier effect of the border from an economic and socio-cultural aspect remains unchanged.

The respondents' current perception of refugees was also compared, based on different objective characteristics: country of origin, gender, level of education and age.

Table 21. Current perception on the arrival and presence of refugees, for country of origin

	Noticeable				Normal				Natural				Worrisome			
	Netherlands		Germany		Netherlands		Germany		Netherlands		Germany		Netherlands		Germany	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	113	21,6%	184	35,2%	70	13,5%	66	12,7%	59	11,3%	117	22,5%	102	19,7%	73	14,0%
2	168	32,2%	155	29,7%	119	22,9%	97	18,7%	111	21,3%	127	24,5%	142	27,4%	76	14,6%
3	105	20,1%	96	18,4%	171	32,9%	166	31,9%	171	32,9%	170	32,8%	126	24,3%	148	28,4%
4	75	14,4%	49	9,4%	102	19,6%	95	18,3%	109	21,0%	60	11,6%	83	16,0%	102	19,5%
5	61	11,7%	38	7,3%	58	11,2%	96	18,5%	70	13,5%	45	8,7%	66	12,7%	123	23,6%
	522		522		520		520		520		519		519		522	
	Unnoticeable				Abnormal				Unnatural				Not worrisome			

The percentage of Dutch respondents that perceives the arrival and presence of refugees as very noticeable and very natural is significantly lower than the percentage of German respondents that perceive refugees in that way. Also, the percentage of Dutch respondents that perceives the arrival and presence of refugees as worrisome is relatively high compared to the percentage of German respondents.

Table 22. Current perception on the arrival and presence of refugees, for gender

	Noticeable				Normal				Natural				Worrisome			
	Man		Woman		Man		Woman		Man		Woman		Man		Woman	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	140	27,3%	157	29,6%	69	13,5%	67	12,7%	82	16,0%	94	17,8%	94	18,3%	81	15,4%
2	168	32,7%	155	29,2%	107	20,9%	109	20,7%	134	26,2%	104	19,7%	106	20,6%	112	21,3%
3	98	19,1%	103	19,4%	147	28,7%	190	36,1%	153	29,9%	188	35,7%	128	24,9%	146	27,7%
4	63	12,3%	61	11,5%	109	21,2%	88	16,7%	81	15,8%	88	16,7%	95	18,5%	90	17,1%
5	44	8,6%	55	10,4%	81	15,8%	73	13,9%	62	12,1%	53	10,1%	91	17,7%	98	18,6%
	513		531		513		527		512		527		514		527	
	Unnoticeable				Abnormal				Unnatural				Not worrisome			

Table 23. Current perception on the arrival and presence of refugees, for level of education

	Noticeable						Normal						Natural							
	Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	87	36,9%	151	27,9%	57	21,8%	27	11,5%	69	12,8%	40	15,4%	42	17,9%	90	16,7%	44	16,9%	40	16,9%
2	59	25,0%	181	33,5%	83	31,8%	40	17,0%	92	17,1%	83	31,9%	52	22,2%	116	21,5%	68	26,2%	35	14,8%
3	51	21,6%	102	18,9%	46	17,6%	73	31,1%	187	34,7%	75	28,8%	75	32,1%	185	34,3%	80	30,8%	72	30,4%
4	19	8,1%	58	10,7%	45	17,2%	49	20,9%	113	21,0%	32	12,3%	32	13,7%	90	16,7%	45	17,3%	41	17,3%
5	20	8,5%	49	9,1%	30	11,5%	46	19,6%	78	14,5%	30	11,5%	33	14,1%	58	10,8%	23	8,8%	49	20,7%
	236		541		261		235		539		260		234		539		260		237	
	Unnoticeable						Abnormal						Unnatural							

Low educated respondents more often regard the refugee situation as noticeable than high educated respondents. It can be noted that high educated people way more often consider the refugee situation as (quite) normal than lower educated people. Middle and higher educated people seem to worry more often about the refugee situation than lower educated people.

Table 24. Current perception on the arrival and presence of refugees, for age groups

	Noticeable						Normal						Natural							
	18-30		30-50		50-65		18-30		30-50		50-65		18-30		30-50		50-65		18-30	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	56	24,8%	102	28,3%	138	30,7%	29	12,8%	45	12,6%	61	13,6%	31	13,7%	70	19,6%	74	16,6%	21	9,3%
2	67	29,6%	112	31,1%	141	31,4%	59	26,1%	80	22,3%	75	16,8%	61	27,0%	74	20,7%	99	22,1%	53	23,5%
3	52	23,0%	67	18,6%	79	17,6%	76	33,6%	105	29,3%	152	34,0%	84	37,2%	118	33,1%	135	30,2%	68	30,1%
4	27	11,9%	46	12,8%	50	11,1%	37	16,4%	69	19,3%	90	20,1%	31	13,7%	57	16,0%	81	18,1%	49	21,7%
5	24	10,6%	33	9,2%	41	9,1%	25	11,1%	59	16,5%	69	15,4%	19	8,4%	38	10,6%	58	13,0%	35	15,5%
	226		360		449		226		358		447		226		357		447		226	
	Unnoticeable						Abnormal						Unnatural							

The percentage of 18- to 30-year old respondents is quite high for perceiving refugees as quite normal and natural. Moreover, the percentage of 18- to 30-year old respondents is also quite high for stating to perceive the arrival and presence as not worrisome. This while the percentage of 50- to 65-year-olds who perceive this as worrisome is quite high.

Question regarding the refugee perception in 2015, compared to the current perception

The respondents' thought on their former perception of refugees was also compared, based on different objective groups/characteristics: country of origin, gender, level of education and age.

Table 25. Refugee perception in 2015, compared to current perception, for country of origin

In 2015:	Noticeable				Normal				Natural				Worrisome			
	Netherlands		Germany		Netherlands		Germany		Netherlands		Germany		Netherlands		Germany	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less	118	22,6%	96	18,4%	77	14,8%	83	16,0%	64	12,4%	83	16,1%	112	21,5%	86	16,5%
About the same	275	52,8%	171	32,8%	364	70,0%	309	59,4%	375	72,4%	304	58,8%	299	57,4%	225	43,2%
More	128	24,6%	254	48,8%	79	15,2%	128	24,6%	79	15,3%	130	25,1%	110	21,1%	210	40,3%
Total	**521**		**521**		**520**		**520**		**518**		**517**		**521**		**521**	

The percentage of Dutch respondents perceiving the arrival and presence of refugees in 2015 as equally noticeable, normal, natural and worrisome compared to now was higher than the percentage of German respondents. German respondents more often think they perceived the refugee situation in 2015 as less noticeable, normal, natural and worrisome than now, than the Dutch respondents.

Table 26. Refugee perception in 2015, compared to current perception, for gender

In 2015:	Noticeable				Normal				Natural				Worrisome			
	Man		Woman		Man		Woman		Man		Woman		Man		Woman	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less	113	22,1%	101	19,0%	86	16,9%	74	13,9%	71	14,0%	76	14,4%	102	19,9%	96	18,1%
About the same	223	43,6%	223	42,0%	323	63,5%	350	65,9%	334	66,0%	345	65,2%	267	52,1%	257	48,5%
More	175	34,2%	207	39,0%	100	19,6%	107	20,2%	101	20,0%	108	20,4%	143	27,9%	177	33,4%
Total	**511**		**531**		**509**		**531**		**506**		**529**		**512**		**530**	

Table 27. Refugee perception in 2015, compared to current perception, for level of education

In 2015:	Noticeable						Normal						Natural					
	Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less	56	23,7%	114	21,1%	43	16,5%	34	14,5%	90	16,7%	36	13,9%	28	12,0%	86	16,0%	33	12,7%
About the same	103	43,6%	220	40,7%	119	45,8%	150	63,8%	340	63,0%	179	69,1%	147	62,8%	342	63,8%	185	71,4%
More	77	32,6%	206	38,1%	98	37,7%	51	21,7%	110	20,4%	44	17,0%	59	25,2%	108	20,1%	41	15,8%
Total	236		540		260		235		540		259		234		536		259	

Higher educated respondents relatively often state they perceived the refugee situation in 2015 just as natural compared to now.

The percentage of lower educated is higher for stating that they perceived the refugee situation in 2015 less natural.

The percentage of respondents stating that they thought to perceive the refugee situation to be less worrisome in 2015 is relatively small.

Table 28. Refugee perception in 2015, compared to current perception, for age groups

In 2015:	Noticeable						Normal						Natural					
	18-30		30-50		50-65		18-30		30-50		50-65		18-30		30-50		50-65	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less	45	20,0%	75	20,8%	92	20,5%	43	19,1%	57	15,8%	59	13,2%	45	19,9%	56	15,7%	45	10,2%
About the same	83	36,9%	153	42,5%	206	46,0%	136	60,4%	228	63,3%	303	67,9%	136	60,2%	230	64,4%	305	68,8%
More	97	43,1%	132	36,7%	150	33,5%	46	20,4%	75	20,8%	84	18,8%	45	19,9%	71	19,9%	93	21,0%
Total	225		360		448		225		360		446		226		357		443	

The group of 18- to 30-year old respondents show several striking numbers. For example, their percentage is high for perceiving the refugee situation in 2015 as less noticeable, and also as more natural and less worrisome than now.

Questions with regard to the border perception from the refugee aspect

Table 29. Perception of the Dutch-German border compared to the situation before the summer of 2015:

	More noticeable	More normal	More impeding	More dividing	More important	More useful	More natural
1	269	119	170	167	193	159	105
2	708	815	762	782	767	757	802
3	66	106	109	91	78	124	129
	Less noticeable	Less normal	Less impeding	Less dividing	Less important	Less useful	Less natural
Total	1043	1040	1041	1040	1038	1040	1036
	More noticeable	More normal	More impeding	More dividing	More important	More useful	More natural
1	25,8%	11,4%	16,3%	16,1%	18,6%	15,3%	10,1%
2	67,9%	78,4%	73,2%	75,2%	73,9%	72,8%	77,4%
3	6,3%	10,2%	10,5%	8,8%	7,5%	11,9%	12,5%
	Less noticeable	Less normal	Less impeding	Less dividing	Less important	Less useful	Less natural

The largest share of the respondent perceives the border about the same, compared to the situation before the summer of 2015. Yet, there are percentages of respondents that think their perception of certain aspects of the border has changed in recent years, related to the refugee situation. The group of respondents that think their perception has changed in relation to the arrival and presence of refugees, is (relatively) the largest for the aspect 'more noticeable'.

These scores were also compared, based on different characteristics: country of origin, gender, level of education and age. The most relevant outcomes can be described as follows.

The differences between groups are relatively small. A relatively large group of lower educated respondents perceive the border as more noticeable related to the refugee situation.

A relatively high percentage of 18- to 30-year old respondents perceive the border now as more normal and more natural than before related to the refugee situation, Moreover, these also perceive the border as less dividing and less important in relation to the refugee situation and compared to 2015.

Table 30. Please indicate to what extent you feel connected to the following areas:

	Europe	My neighbouring country	My country of residence	My province	My municipality	My region (in country of residence)	The border region
Not at all	60	29	19	19	27	19	32
Not really	91	78	35	46	41	46	83
Neutral	337	352	240	264	239	247	444
Somewhat	345	421	286	321	332	333	321
Fully	209	161	464	393	406	395	159
Total	**1042**	**1041**	**1044**	**1043**	**1045**	**1040**	**1039**

	Europe	My neighbouring country	My country of residence	My province	My municipality	My region (in country of residence)	The border region
Not at all	6%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%
Not really	9%	7%	3%	4%	4%	4%	8%
Neutral	32%	34%	23%	25%	23%	24%	43%
Somewhat	33%	40%	27%	31%	32%	32%	31%
Fully	20%	15%	44%	38%	39%	38%	15%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 31. Knowledge of and experience with the INTERREG program Deutschland-Nederland:

	The Netherlands		Germany		Total	
Knowledge	N	%	N	%	N	%
Ja	49	9,5%	41	7,8%	90	8,7%
Nee	468	90,5%	482	92,2%	950	91,3%
	517		**523**		**1040**	
Experience						
Ja	26	53,1%	17	41,5%	43	47,8%
Nee	23	46,9%	24	58,5%	47	52,2%
	49		**41**		**90**	

5.2 Additional perception scores

Border perception and level of education

Table 12. Border perception and level of education - scores per aspect dimension

Level of education	General		Economic		Socio-cultural		Legal-administrative	
	Daily pr.	*Self-evidence*	*Daily pr.*	*Self-evidence*	*Daily pr.*	*Self-evidence**	*Daily pr.*	*Self-evidence**
Lower	72,6	41,0	63,2	41,3	66,4	44,0	52,6	44,3
Middle	72,6	40,1	61,9	40,3	63,7	41,9	51,5	44,2
Higher	73,5	41,6	61,0	42,3	64,5	45,9	48,8	47,3
Total	72,8	40,7	61,9	41,0	64,6	43,4	51,1	45,0

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

The differences between levels of education are relatively and remarkably small. Hence, it can be states that the differences are not that relevant.

However, it (e.g.) can be noted that the higher educated respondents have the 'highest scores' concerning the 'self-evidence of the border'. It is assumed that this means, that they perceive the border as least self-evident. Regarding the barrier effect of the border, this means that relatively speaking, the border has a less strong barrier effect on them.

Table 13. Border perception and level of education - scores per aspect, per total component, and overall total

Level of education	General	Economic	Soc.-cult.*	Leg.-admin.		Daily pr.	Self-evidence		Total
Lower	56,7	52,2	55,2	48,4		63,7	42,9		53,3
Middle	56,4	51,1	52,8	47,8		62,4	41,7		52,1
Higher	57,5	51,6	55,2	48,1		62,0	44,1		53,1
Total	56,7	51,5	54,0	48,1		62,6	42,6		52,6

For the 'total' scores per aspect the differences between groups are even smaller. Most noteworthy is the relatively low score for middle high educated respondents within the sociocultural aspect, indicating a higher barrier effect of the border from a socio-cultural perspective. Looking at the overall perception score, middle high educated respondents also score lower.

Table 14. Border perception and age - scores per aspect dimension

Age group	General		Economic		Socio-cultural		Legal-administrative	
	*Daily pr.***	*Self-evidence**	*Daily pr.***	*Self-evidence**	*Daily pr.***	*Self-evidence*	*Daily pr.*	*Self-evidence*
18-30	65,9	38,2	56,3	38,3	58,6	42,5	51,2	44,0
30-50	73,2	41,1	61,2	41,4	63,4	43,9	50,8	45,2
50-65	75,9	41,7	65,2	42,1	68,3	43,5	51,2	45,4
Total	72,8	40,7	61,9	41,0	64,5	43,5	51,1	45,1

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

For the age groups, the following appeared: respondents aged 50 to 65 years old have the highest perception scores within all four aspects for both the perception of the border in everyday life and the self-evidence of the border, meaning they perceive a lower barrier effect from the border, whereas 18 to 30 years old respondents constantly have lower perception scores, meaning they perceive a higher barrier effect of the border. The differences between respondents of different age groups are thus relatively large. This applies in particular to the perception of the border in everyday life from a general, economic and socio-cultural perspective, and thus less from a legal-administrative aspect.

Table 15. Border perception and age - scores per aspect, per total component, and overall total

Age group	General**	Economic**	Soc.-cult.**	Leg.-admin.		Daily pr.**	Self-evidence*		Total**
18-30	52,0	47,3	50,5	47,6		58,1	40,7		49,4
30-50	57,1	51,3	53,6	48,1		62,1	43,1		52,7
50-65	58,8	53,6	55,9	48,3		65,1	43,2		54,2
Total	56,8	51,5	54,0	48,1		62,6	42,6		52,7

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

Looking at the overall 'total' scores of all aspects per age group, the age group of 50- to 65 years have the highest perception score (of 54,2) and thus indeed perceive the lowest barrier effect whereas the 18- to 30 years old respondents perceive the highest barrier effect (with a perception score of 49,4). These differences are biggest within the general (physical) aspect, and smallest within the legal-administrative aspect.

Table 16. Border perception and gender - scores per aspect dimension

Gender	General		Economic		Socio-cultural		Legal-administrative	
	*Daily pr.**	*Self-evidence**	*Daily pr.*	*Self-evidence**	*Daily pr.*	*Self-evidence**	*Daily pr.*	*Self-evidence*
Man	71,5	41,8	61,7	42,2	63,6	44,8	50,3	45,9
Woman	74,1	39,7	62,1	39,9	65,4	42,1	52,0	44,3
Total	72,8	40,7	61,9	41,0	64,5	43,5	51,1	45,1

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

Also, the differences between men and women are small, hence not that relevant. From all different aspects, female respondents perceive a lower barrier effect of the border in everyday life than male respondents (given the higher perception scores). Looking at the perception of the border as self-evident, female respondents' perception scores are in all aspects lower than those of male respondents, meaning that females respondents perceive a higher self-evidence of the border (meaning a stronger barrier effect). However, this must be nuanced and taken into account that it concerns relatively small differences.

Table 17. Border perception and gender - scores per aspect, per total component, and overall total

Gender	General	Economic	Soc.-cult.	Leg.-admin.		Daily pr.	Self-evidence*		Total
Man	56,6	51,9	54,2	48,1		61,8	43,7		52,8
Woman	56,8	51,0	53,7	48,2		63,4	41,6		52,5
Total	56,8	51,5	54,0	48,1		62,6	42,6		52,7

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

Looking at the scores of all aspects in total, the differences between the perception scores of male and female respondents are very small. With a slightly higher perception score of 52,8 male respondents perceive a (slightly) lower barrier effect of the border than female respondents.

Table 18. Border perception and cross-border visiting frequency - scores per aspect dimension

Visiting frequency	General		Economic		Socio-cultural		Legal-administrative	
	*Daily pr.***	*Self-evidence*	*Daily pr. ***	*Self-evidence***	*Daily pr. ***	*Self-evidence**	*Daily pr.*	*Self-evidence*
Once a week	75,0	40,2	66,9	41,2	67,0	45,6	49,5	46,6
Once a month	76,0	41,5	63,0	36,0	66,4	39,8	52,3	44,4
Once a quarter	74,9	42,6	61,1	42,3	64,2	43,7	50,9	46,3
Twice a year	72,9	39,2	63,7	40,9	66,7	42,2	52,0	44,3
Less than twice a year	72,1	39,9	60,2	42,2	63,6	44,4	52,0	44,3
Never	68,2	41,3	59,5	43,1	61,1	46,1	49,4	45,8
Total	72,8	40,7	61,9	41,1	64,6	43,5	51,2	45,1

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

Within the general, economic and socio-cultural aspect it can be noted that as one crosses the border less frequent, the perception of the border as a barrier in everyday life slightly rises (this is read from the slightly lower scores). This is the most evident from the perception score related to the perception of the border as a barrier in everyday life from a general (physical) perspective as the respondents that never cross the border perceive a significantly higher barrier effect (lowest score) than respondents who cross the border at least once a year.

For the legal-administrative aspect, no statistical trend has been observed.

The same goes for the perception of the border as self-evident as the scores vary and do not show a trend that is related to the visiting frequency.

Furthermore, it is noted that within the economic aspect respondents who cross the border once a month perceive the border as more self-evident.

Table 19. Border perception and cross-border visiting frequency - scores per aspect and total

Visiting frequency	General*	Economic	Soc.-cult.	Leg.-admin.		Daily pr.*	Self-evidence		Total
Once a week	57,7	54,0	56,3	48,2		64,4	43,5		54,2
Once a month	58,6	49,5	53,1	48,4		64,5	40,1		52,2
Once a quarter	58,7	51,7	54,0	48,6		62,9	43,8		53,5
Twice a year	56,1	52,3	54,5	48,2		63,8	41,8		52,8
Less than twice a year	56,0	51,2	54,0	48,2		61,9	42,7		52,3
Never	54,7	51,3	53,6	47,5		59,5	44,4		52,0
Total	56,8	51,5	54,0	48,2		62,6	42,7		52,7

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

For the total of all aspects it appears that the differences between perceptions of respondents with a different frequency of visits, are quite small. Overall it is observed that for respondents who cross the border most often, the perception the border a as barrier is the lowest, while for respondents that never cross the border this perception of the border as a barrier is the highest.

Border perception and knowledge of INTERREG

Table 20. Border perception and knowledge of INTERREG - scores per aspect dimension

Knows INTERREG	General		Economic		Socio-cultural		Legal-administrative	
	*Daily pr.***	*Self-evident***	*Daily pr.*	*Self-evident***	*Daily pr.***	*Self-evident**	*Daily pr.* *	*Self-evident***
Yes	66,8	51,5	55,1	54,1	62,6	55,5	29,9	56,5
No	73,2	46,9	57,2	47,5	62,5	51,5	36,3	50,5
Total	69,6	49,5	56,0	51,3	62,6	53,8	32,6	54,0

Table 21. Border perception and knowledge of Interreg - scores per aspect and total

Knows INTERREG	General	Economic	Soc.-cult.	Leg.-admin.	Daily pr. **	Self-evidence		Total
Yes	54,7	50,0	53,4	46,3	57,56	44,85		51,3
No	57,0	51,6	54,0	48,3	63,11	42,38		52,8
Total	56,8	51,5	54,0	48,1	62,62	42,60		52,6

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
 * Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

Border perception per aspect and cross-border experience within each aspect

Table 22. Border perception in economic aspect and cross-border experience within this aspect

	Border perception in economic aspect		
Economic cross-border experiences	*Daily pr.*	*Self-evidence***	*total*
Yes	62,5	40,1	51,3
No	60,0	44,2	52,1
Total	62,0	41,0	51,5

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
 * Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

Table 23. Border perception in socio-cultural aspect and cross-border experience within this aspect

Socio-cultural cross-border experiences	Border perception in socio-cultural aspect		
	Daily pr. **	*Self-evidence***	*total*
Yes	66,3	41,5	53,9
No	61,5	46,9	54,2
Total	64,5	43,4	54,0

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

Table 24. Border perception in legal-administrative aspect and cross-border experience within this aspect

Legal-administrative cross-border experiences	Border perception in legal-administrative aspect		
	Daily pr. **	**Self-evidence**	**total****
Yes	47,2	43,1	45,2
No	51,8	45,4	48,6
Total	51,2	45,1	48,1

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

Table 25. Change in border perception within the refugee aspect and level of education - both dimensions and total

Sector	Change in border perception within the refugee aspect		
	Daily pr.	*Self-evidence*	*Total*
Lower	-13,36	-3,68	-8,37
Middle	-11,65	-3,29	-7,31
Higher	-6,67	-3,09	-4,89
Total	-10,81	-3,34	-6,96

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

It can be noted that the lower the level of education, the more the negative relation between refugee perception and border perception occurs; for both dimensions and in total.

Change in border perception within the refugee aspect and age and gender

Table 26. Change in border perception within the refugee aspect and age - both dimensions and total

Age	Change in border perception within the refugee aspect		
	Daily pr.	*Self-evident*	*Total*
18-30	-11,21	-6,61	-9,18
30-50	-9,78	-2,99	-6,45
50-65	-12,18	-1,95	-6,62
Total	-10,91	-3,21	-6,94

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

The age groups show different results for the both dimensions. The border perception is relatively more negatively influenced by the refugee perception in both dimensions for the 18- to 30-year-olds, but less negatively influenced in both dimensions for the 30- to 50-year-olds. For the 50- to 65-year old respondents the negative relation was relatively stronger for the border perception in daily practice, but relatively less strong for the self-evidence of the border.

Table 27. Change in border perception within the refugee aspect and gender - both dimensions and total

Gender	Change in border perception within the refugee aspect		
	Daily pr.	*Self-evident*	*Total*
Man	-11,77	-3,87	-7,67
Women	-10,08	-2,58	-6,24
Total	-10,91	-3,21	-6,94

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

The differences between man and women are small. Man experience a slightly higher negative relation between their image of refugees and their perception of the border than women, for both dimensions.

Change in border perception within the refugee aspect and cross-border visiting frequency

Table 28. Change in border perception within the refugee aspect and cross-border visiting frequency - both dimensions and total

Visiting frequency	Change in border perception within the refugee aspect		
	Daily pr.	*Self-evident*	*Total*
Once a week	-13,53	-10,51	-12,25
Once a month	-15,58	-3,38	-8,78
Once a quarter	-7,00	-3,30	-5,09
Twice a year	-7,61	-2,18	-5,03
Less than twice a year	-14,29	-4,87	-9,60
Never	-10,76	-0,26	-5,31
Total	-10,94	-3,27	-6,99

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

Observing the border perception in daily practice, no clear relation can be detected between refugee perception and border perception. The scores for self-evidence of the border carefully might be interpreted as a sign that the lower the visiting frequency, the smaller the negative relation between refugee perception and border perception. More noteworthy is the relatively strong negative relation between these perceptions for respondents who cross the border once a week, within both dimensions; and this same strong negative relation for those who cross the border once a month, within the dimension of the border in daily practice.

Table 29. Perceived change in refugee perception (past compared to present) and perceived change in barrier effect for the economic aspect

Perceived refugee perception of the past (in comparison to the present)		Perceived change in barrier effect for the economic aspect											
		Clearly less		Slightly less		About the same		Slightly increased		Clearly increased		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Noticeable	More	10	4,7%	21	9,9%	143	67,1%	29	13,6%	10	4,7%	213	100%
	The same	7	1,6%	32	7,2%	352	79,3%	41	9,2%	12	2,7%	444	100%
	Less	13	3,4%	38	10,0%	279	73,6%	39	10,3%	10	2,6%	379	100%
Normal **	More	3	1,9%	15	9,4%	104	65,0%	30	18,8%	8	5,0%	160	100%
	The same	16	2,4%	55	8,2%	523	78,2%	58	8,7%	17	2,5%	669	100%
	Less	11	5,4%	20	9,8%	146	71,2%	21	10,2%	7	3,4%	205	100%
Natural **	More	4	2,7%	13	8,9%	100	68,5%	23	15,8%	6	4,1%	146	100%
	The same	15	2,2%	52	7,7%	524	77,5%	67	9,9%	18	2,7%	676	100%
	Less	9	4,3%	24	11,5%	148	71,2%	19	9,1%	8	3,8%	208	100%
Worrisome	More	9	4,6%	17	8,7%	131	67,2%	26	13,3%	12	6,2%	195	100%
	The same	11	2,1%	39	7,5%	411	78,7%	47	9,0%	14	2,7%	522	100%
	Less	11	3,4%	35	11,0%	231	72,4%	36	11,3%	6	1,9%	319	100%

Table 30. Perceived change in refugee perception (past compared to present) and perceived change in barrier effect for the socio-cultural aspect

Perceived refugee perception of the past (in comparison to the present)		Perceived change in barrier effect for the socio-cultural aspect											
		Clearly less		Slightly less		About the same		Slightly increased		Clearly increased		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Noticeable	More	11	5,3%	23	11,0%	128	61,2%	37	17,7%	10	4,8%	209	100%
	The same	8	1,8%	29	6,5%	364	82,2%	32	7,2%	10	2,3%	443	100%
	Less	13	3,4%	35	9,3%	274	72,5%	45	11,9%	11	2,9%	378	100%
Normal **	More	1	0,6%	15	9,5%	101	63,9%	31	19,6%	10	6,3%	158	100%
	The same	20	3,0%	49	7,4%	533	80,0%	52	7,8%	12	1,8%	666	100%
	Less	11	5,4%	22	10,8%	132	64,7%	31	15,2%	8	3,9%	204	100%
Natural **	More	3	2,1%	6	4,1%	100	69,0%	28	19,3%	8	5,5%	145	100%
	The same	15	2,2%	55	8,2%	526	78,2%	62	9,2%	15	2,2%	673	100%
	Less	12	5,8%	24	11,6%	139	67,1%	24	11,6%	8	3,9%	207	100%
Worrisome	More	10	5,2%	17	8,8%	122	63,2%	36	18,7%	8	4,1%	193	100%
	The same	13	2,5%	39	7,5%	418	79,9%	40	7,6%	13	2,5%	523	100%
	Less	10	3,2%	31	9,9%	225	71,7%	38	12,1%	10	3,2%	314	100%

Table 31. Perceived change in refugee perception (past compared to present) and perceived change in barrier effect for the legal-administrative aspect

Perceived refugee perception of the past (in comparison to the present)		Perceived change in barrier effect for the legal-administrative aspect											
		Clearly less		Slightly less		About the same		Slightly increased		Clearly increased		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Noticeable	More	10	4,8%	14	6,7%	147	70,0%	27	12,9%	12	5,7%	210	100%
	The same	9	2,0%	20	4,5%	372	84,0%	32	7,2%	10	2,3%	443	100%
	Less	11	2,9%	14	3,7%	293	77,3%	49	12,9%	12	3,2%	379	100%
Normal **	More	5	3,1%	5	3,1%	116	73,0%	24	15,1%	9	5,7%	159	100%
	The same	17	2,5%	33	4,9%	544	81,6%	58	8,7%	15	2,2%	667	100%
	Less	8	3,9%	10	4,9%	151	74,0%	25	12,3%	10	4,9%	204	100%
Natural **	More	3	2,1%	2	1,4%	112	76,7%	20	13,7%	9	6,2%	146	100%
	The same	17	2,5%	31	4,6%	550	81,8%	57	8,5%	17	2,5%	672	100%
	Less	8	3,8%	15	7,2%	148	71,2%	29	13,9%	8	3,8%	208	100%
Worrisome	More	9	4,6%	12	6,2%	134	69,1%	27	13,9%	12	6,2%	194	100%
	The same	12	2,3%	22	4,2%	440	84,3%	37	7,1%	11	2,1%	522	100%
	Less	10	3,2%	15	4,7%	238	75,3%	42	13,3%	11	3,5%	316	100%

Appendix 6: Origin of survey respondents at Nuts 3-level

	N	%
Oost-Groningen	15	1,4%
Delfzijl en omgeving	2	0,2%
Overig Groningen	35	3,3%
Noord-Friesland	30	2,9%
Zuidwest-Friesland	3	0,3%
Zuidoost-Friesland	16	1,5%
Noord-Drenthe	15	1,4%
Zuidoost-Drenthe	20	1,9%
Zuidwest-Drenthe	6	0,6%
Noord-Overijssel	22	2,1%
Zuidwest-Overijssel	13	1,2%
Twente	37	3,5%
Veluwe	56	5,3%
Achterhoek	32	3,1%
Arnhem/Nijmegen	43	4,1%
Zuidwest-Gelderland	13	1,2%
Noordoost-Noord-Brabant	28	2,7%
Zuidoost-Noord-Brabant	50	4,8%
Noord-Limburg	16	1,5%
Midden-Limburg	29	2,8%
Flevoland	41	3,9%
Ammerland	8	0,8%
Aurich	10	1,0%
Borken	26	2,5%
Cloppenburg	5	0,5%
Coesfeld	9	0,9%

	N	%
Delmenhorst, Stadt	10	1,0%
Duisburg, Stadt	36	3,4%
Düsseldorf, Stadt	48	4,6%
Emden, Stadt	6	0,6%
Emsland	19	1,8%
Friesland	6	0,6%
Grafschaft Bentheim	5	0,5%
Kleve	24	2,3%
Krefeld, Stadt	20	1,9%
Leer	16	1,5%
Mönchengladbach, Stadt	27	2,6%
Münster, Stadt	52	5,0%
Oldenburg, Stadt	15	1,4%
Oldenburg	14	1,3%
Osnabrück, Stadt	21	2,0%
Osnabrück	9	0,9%
Rhein-Kreis Neuss	27	2,6%
Steinfurt	14	1,3%
Vechta	18	1,7%
Viersen	22	2,1%
Warendorf	16	1,5%
Wesel	21	2,0%
Wesermarsch	12	1,1%
Wilhelmshaven, Stadt	6	0,6%
Wittmund	4	0,4%
	1048	**100,0%**