

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS IN THE BORDERLAND

The relation between refugee perception and border interpretation by residents of the Dutch-German borderland, and the effect of municipal refugee policy



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PREFACE

Dear reader,

In front of you, you have my master's thesis on the subject of Dutch-German border perception of borderland residents and its relation to refugee perception, and the effect of municipal refugee policy on these perceptions. Situated in the context of the Dutch-German borderland, so close to my own hometown yet so rarely visited by myself, this study opened my eyes for the special position of a borderland and its residents with regard to the meaning of a border. Criss-crossing through the borderland, from municipality to municipality, from country to country, I sometimes feel my own border perception has changed somewhat; addressing the borderland now more as a region of its own, with differences on the inside perhaps even smaller than differences with the rest of both countries.

This thesis forms the closure of a one-year master program in Human Geography at Radboud University Nijmegen, with a specialization in Globalization, Migration and Development. As such, this document represents a cumulation of several academic skills and knowledge in the various fields of Human Geography I gained over the course of the master's program. Following the various courses and ultimately performing this research I have trained my academic writing and have become more experienced in the ways of proper scientific research. I feel this master has enabled me to develop myself further, being an addition to my foreground as Bachelor of Education in Geography. The master and especially the thesis have been a challenge at times, but as the end of my career as student approaches I look back with satisfaction.

I want to use this opportunity to thank my supervisor, Martin van der Velde, who helped me through the process of writing this study and whose enthusiasm on the topic ensured for no lack of inspiration on what was all out there to examine, on our many meetings. I would like to thank the Interreg Secretariat in Kleve and my supervisor here, Julia Wengert, for the opportunities offered in this interesting learning environment. I want to thank all respondents for cooperating in this study. A special thanks to Shauni Drost, my friend, fellow student and sparring partner during this study, with whom I drove through half the country for interviews, and with whom I shared all insights, doubts, ups and downs that came with it, which we washed down with countless of café lattes. Finally I want to thank my friend Mark and my family and friends for listening to my frustrations, hearing me go on and on about perceptions; for supporting me during busy times, even helping me transcribe interviews; for putting things in perspective, and more.

I hope you will enjoy reading my report!

Maarten van Wel

Nijmegen, March 2019

SUMMARY

Borders do not only separate territories, but also identities; (groups of) people construct borders to demarcate and protect these identities. Local policy choices, for example on a municipal level, can influence feelings of identity; and therefore, the perception of a border. How a border is perceived can be made visible by measuring in how far it functions as a barrier to people. In that sense, the barrier effect of a border is thus linked to the feeling of identity; a demarcation between 'us' and 'them'.

The European Union works hard on diminishing the experienced barrier effect of its inner borders, through subsidy programs such as Interreg Deutschland-Nederland. However, external factors such as the high tensions surrounding the arrival and presence of refugees over the past years might have had their effects on the identity feelings of Dutch-German borderlanders, and therefore on the value they address to the inner borders. With refugee policy increasingly being organized by municipalities, the question arise what effects can be experienced on a local level.

A clear gap is present concerning the relation between the refugee situation and the inner borders of the EU, as research focusses mainly on the EU's outer borders. Furthermore the described barrier effect of the inner European borders, though well mapped from an economic viewpoint, is hardly described with concern to general opinions, perceptions and behavior of individual residents. This study therefore aims to map a possibly present relation between the refugee perception of the past few years and the Dutch-German border perception for residents of the Interreg DE-NL operational area. The study is based on theories discussing the mental production of borders in relation to demarcations of identity and the existence of imagined communities, and framing refugees into the position of the 'other'. Furthermore academic studies are consulted that involve the influence of municipal policy on public attitude. The research was executed with help of the following question:

What is the relation between the Dutch-German border perception and the refugee perception of Dutch and German border residents, and how does refugee-related policy of Dutch-German border municipalities relate to this?

To answer this question and the accompanying sub-questions, a mix of qualitative and quantitative research methods was applied. This consisted firstly of an extensive survey in the research area, to establish the current border perception and refugee perception of Dutch-German borderlanders and how these changed. This was followed by 24 in-depth interviews with residents from 4 selected municipalities on the same topic, to provide insightful, in-depth context tot the quantitative data. The interviews furthermore concerned the municipal refugee policy, as was also the case for 4 additional interviewees with municipal officials of each selected municipality.

Processing and analyzing the data led to the following conclusions and answers to the main research question, summarized in four main points:

- The Dutch-German border perception and the refugee perception of Dutch and German borderland residents show several parallels, mainly related to 1. feelings of identity, of 'us' vs. 'them', that one experiences, and the imagined community that is associated with this; and 2. the open character of the Dutch-German border.
- The found parallels do not indicate the presence of a clear relation between both perceptions. The parallel concerning the imagined community addresses a different imagined community for both perceptions, and with it, a different demarcation in which for the refugee perception there is no role per se for the Dutch-German border. The found parallel concerning the openness of the border

revolves around signs of awareness of this open character when addressing the refugee perception, which however not specifically indicates a relational connection.

- The municipal policy regarding the arrival and presence of refugees has the potential to influence citizens' refugee perception, but this was only marginally observed. In reverse, the refugee perception does clearly prove to be of influence on how one perceives the refugee policy.
- Direct proof for the presence of a relation between the carried out municipal refugee policy and the Dutch-German border perception of citizens in these four municipalities was not found. An indirect connection through the refugee perception could on the base of the above not be established. Therefore, there is not sufficient reason to accept the assumption of a relation between municipal refugee policy and the Dutch-German border perception of borderland residents.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Grenzen trennen nicht nur Territorien, sondern auch Identitäten. Menschen(gruppen) errichten Grenzen, um diese Identitäten abzugrenzen und zu schützen. Lokale politische Entscheidungen, zum Beispiel auf kommunaler Ebene, können das Identitätsgefühl beeinflussen und daher auch die Wahrnehmung einer Grenze. Wie eine Grenze wahrgenommen wird, kann sichtbar gemacht werden, indem gemessen wird, inwieweit sie als Barriere für Menschen fungiert. In diesem Sinne ist die Barrierewirkung einer Grenze somit mit dem Identitätsgefühl verbunden; eine Abgrenzung zwischen „wir“ und „die Anderen.“

Die Europäische Union arbeitet hart daran, die erlebte Barrierewirkung ihrer inneren Grenzen durch Förderprogramme wie Interreg Deutschland-Niederland zu verringern. Äußere Faktoren wie die hohen Spannungen, die in den letzten Jahren mit der Ankunft und Anwesenheit von Flüchtlingen verbunden waren, haben sich jedoch möglicherweise auf das Identitätsgefühl der Einwohner des niederländisch-deutschen Grenzgebiets und damit auf den Wert ausgewirkt, den sie der Binnengrenze beimessen. Nun, da die Flüchtlingspolitik zunehmend von den Kommunen organisiert wird, stellt sich die Frage, welche Auswirkungen dies auf lokaler Ebene haben kann.

In Bezug auf das Verhältnis zwischen der Flüchtlingssituation und den inneren Grenzen der EU besteht eine deutliche Lücke, da sich die Forschung hauptsächlich auf die Außengrenzen der EU konzentriert. Darüber hinaus wurde die Barrierewirkung der europäischen Binnengrenzen, obwohl aus wirtschaftlicher Perspektive bereits ausführlich dargestellt, bisher kaum unter Berücksichtigung allgemeiner Meinungen, Wahrnehmungen und Verhaltensweisen der einzelnen Einwohner beschrieben. Ziel dieser Studie ist es daher, den möglichen Zusammenhang zwischen der Flüchtlingswahrnehmung der letzten Jahre und der deutsch-niederländischen Grenz Wahrnehmung von Bewohnern des Arbeitsgebiets von Interreg Deutschland-Niederland darzustellen. Die Studie basiert auf Theorien, die die mentale Produktion von Grenzen in Bezug auf Identitätsabgrenzungen und die Existenz imaginierter Gemeinschaften diskutieren und Flüchtlinge in die Position des „Anderen“ einordnen. Darüber hinaus wurden wissenschaftliche Studien konsultiert, die sich mit dem Einfluss der Kommunalpolitik auf die öffentliche Haltung beschäftigen. Die Studie wurde auf Basis der folgenden Forschungsfrage durchgeführt:

Wie ist das Verhältnis zwischen der niederländisch-deutschen Grenz Wahrnehmung und der Flüchtlings Wahrnehmung von deutschen und niederländischen Bewohnern des Grenzgebiets, und in welchem Zusammenhang steht die flüchtlingsbezogene Politik niederländisch-deutscher Grenzgemeinden dazu?

Um diese Frage und die dazugehörigen Teilfragen zu beantworten, wurde eine Mischung aus qualitativen und quantitativen Forschungsmethoden angewandt. Dabei handelte es sich zunächst um eine umfangreiche Erhebung im Untersuchungsgebiet, um die aktuelle Grenz Wahrnehmung und Flüchtlings Wahrnehmung der Bewohner des niederländisch-deutschen Grenzgebiets und deren Veränderung zu ermitteln. Es folgten 24 ausführliche Interviews mit Bewohnern aus 4 ausgewählten Gemeinden zum gleichen Thema, um einen aufschlussreichen und tiefen Kontext zu den quantitativen Daten zu bieten. Die Interviews betrafen auch die kommunale Flüchtlingspolitik, was auch für vier zusätzliche Interviews mit einem Beamten aus jeder ausgewählten Gemeinde der Fall war.

Die Verarbeitung und Analyse der Daten führte zu folgenden Schlussfolgerungen und Antworten auf die zentrale Forschungsfrage, die in vier Hauptpunkten zusammengefasst sind:

- Die niederländisch-deutsche Grenz Wahrnehmung und die Flüchtlings Wahrnehmung niederländischer und deutscher Grenzgebietsbewohner zeigen mehrere Parallelen, hauptsächlich bezogen auf 1. Gefühle von Identität, von „wir“ gegen „die Anderen,“ die erlebt werden, und die imaginierte Gemeinschaft, die damit verbunden wird; und 2. den offenen Charakter der deutsch-niederländischen Grenze.
- Die gefundenen Parallelen deuten nicht auf eine klare Beziehung zwischen beiden Wahrnehmungen hin. Die Parallele bezüglich der imaginierten Gemeinschaft betrifft eine jeweils andere imaginierte Gemeinschaft für beide Wahrnehmungen, und damit eine andere Abgrenzung. In der Flüchtlings Wahrnehmung an sich spielt die niederländisch-deutsche Grenze keine Rolle. Die gefundene Parallele bezüglich der Offenheit der Grenze betrifft Anzeichen des Bewusstseins dieses offenen Charakters, wenn es um die Wahrnehmung von Flüchtlingen geht, was jedoch nicht ausdrücklich auf einen Beziehungszusammenhang hindeutet.
- Die kommunale Politik hinsichtlich der Ankunft und Anwesenheit von Flüchtlingen hat das Potenzial, die Wahrnehmung von Flüchtlingen zu beeinflussen, dies wurde jedoch nur in sehr begrenztem Umfang beobachtet. Umgekehrt erweist sich die Wahrnehmung von Flüchtlingen eindeutig als Einfluss auf die Wahrnehmung der Flüchtlingspolitik.
- Ein direkter Beweis für das Vorhandensein eines Zusammenhangs zwischen der durchgeführten kommunalen Flüchtlingspolitik und der niederländisch-deutschen Grenz Wahrnehmung der Bürger in diesen vier Gemeinden wurde nicht gefunden. Eine indirekte Verbindung durch die Flüchtlings Wahrnehmung konnte auf der Grundlage des zuvor Genannten auch nicht hergestellt werden. Es besteht daher kein ausreichender Grund, die Annahme eines Zusammenhangs zwischen der kommunalen Flüchtlingspolitik und der Wahrnehmung der niederländisch-deutschen Grenze durch die Bewohner des Grenzgebiets zu akzeptieren.

SAMENVATTING

Grenzen zijn niet alleen een afscheiding van territoria, maar ook van identiteiten; (groepen) mensen construeren grenzen om identiteiten af te bakenen en te beschermen. Lokale beleidskeuzes op bijvoorbeeld gemeentelijk niveau kunnen het identiteitsgevoel beïnvloeden, en zodoende dus ook de perceptie van een grens. Hoe een grens wordt gepercipieerd kan zichtbaar worden gemaakt door te meten in hoeverre de grens voor mensen functioneert als een barrière. In die zin is het barrière-effect van een grens dus gekoppeld aan het gevoel van identiteit; een afbakening tussen 'wij' en 'zij'.

De Europese Unie werkt hard aan het verminderen van de ervaren barrière-effecten van haar binnengrenzen, via subsidieprogramma's zoals Interreg Deutschland-Nederland. Externe factoren zoals de hoge spanningen rondom de komst en aanwezigheid van vluchtelingen in de laatste jaren kunnen echter van invloed zijn geweest op het identiteitsgevoel van bewoners van het Nederlands-Duitse grensgebied, en daarmee op de waarde die zij toekennen aan de binnengrens. Nu vluchtelingenbeleid in toenemende mate georganiseerd wordt vanuit gemeenten, rijst de vraag welke effecten dit kan hebben op lokaal niveau.

Er bevindt zich een lege ruimte in literatuur met betrekking tot de relatie tussen de vluchtelingensituatie en de binnengrenzen van de Europese Unie, aangezien onderzoek zich met focus op de EU's buitengrenzen. Verder is het barrière-effect van de Europese binnengrenzen, hoewel duidelijk in kaart gebracht vanuit economische invalshoek, nauwelijks beschreven met betrekking tot algemene meningen, beelden en gedrag van individuele bewoners. Deze studie stelt zich daarom tot doel de mogelijk aanwezige relatie tussen de vluchtelingenperceptie van de laatste jaren en de Duits-Nederlandse grensperceptie van bewoners van het Interreg DE-NL werkgebied in kaart te brengen. Het onderzoek baseert zich op theorieën omtrent de mentale productie van grenzen in relatie tot afbakening van identiteit en het bestaan van *imagined communities*, en het framen van vluchtelingen in de positie van de 'ander'. Verder zijn academische studies geraadpleegd die zich richten op de invloed van gemeentelijk beleid op de publieke attitude. Het onderzoek is ten uitvoer gebracht met behulp van de volgende onderzoeksvraag:

Wat is de relatie tussen de Nederlands-Duitse grensperceptie en de vluchtelingenperceptie van Duitse en Nederlandse bewoners van het grensgebied, en hoe relateert vluchtelingen-gerelateerd beleid van gemeenten uit het Nederlands-Duitse grensgebied hieraan?

Om deze vraag en de bijbehorende subvragen te beantwoorden, is een mix van kwalitatieve en kwantitatieve onderzoeksmethoden toegepast. Dit betrof ten eerste een breed opgezette enquête in het onderzoeksgebied, om de huidige grens- en vluchtelingenperceptie te bepalen van bewoners van het Nederlands-Duitse grensgebied en hoe deze is veranderd. Dit werd gevolgd door 24 diepte-interviews met burgers van 4 geselecteerde gemeenten over hetzelfde onderwerp, om inzichtelijke, diepgaande context te kunnen leveren bij de kwantitatieve data. De interviews betroffen verder het gemeentelijk vluchtelingenbeleid, wat ook het geval was voor vier extra interviews met een ambtenaar van iedere geselecteerde gemeente.

Het verwerken en analyseren van de data leidde tot de volgende conclusies en antwoorden op de centrale onderzoeksvraag, samengevat in vier hoofdpunten:

- De Nederlands-Duitse grensperceptie en de vluchtelingenperceptie van bewoners van het Nederlands-Duitse grensgebied vertonen enkele overeenkomsten, voornamelijk gerelateerd aan 1.

gevoelens van identiteit, van 'wij' vs. 'zij', die iemand ervaart, en de *imagined community* die hiermee geassocieerd wordt; en 2. het open karakter van de Nederlands-Duitse grens.

- De gevonden overeenkomsten wijzen niet op de aanwezigheid van een duidelijke relatie tussen beide percepties. De overeenkomst met betrekking tot de *imagined community* betreft voor beide percepties een verschillende community, en daarmee samenhangend, een verschillende afbakening; waarbij in de vluchtelingenperceptie niet per se een rol is weggelegd voor de Nederlands-Duitse grens. De gevonden overeenkomst met betrekking tot de openheid van de grens draait om tekenen van bewustzijn van dit open karakter wanneer men over vluchtelingen(perceptie) praat, wat echter niet specifiek een relationeel verband aanduidt.
- Het gemeentelijk beleid met betrekking tot de komst en aanwezigheid van vluchtelingen heeft de potentie om de vluchtelingenperceptie te beïnvloeden, maar dit is slechts in zeer geringe mate geobserveerd. Omgekeerd blijkt de vluchtelingenperceptie duidelijk van invloed op hoe men tegen het gemeentelijk vluchtelingenbeleid aankijkt.
- Direct bewijs voor de aanwezigheid van een relatie tussen het uitgevoerde gemeentelijk vluchtelingenbeleid en de Nederlands-Duitse grensperceptie van burgers uit deze vier gemeenten is niet gevonden. Een indirect verband via vluchtelingenperceptie kan op basis van bovenstaande ook niet worden vastgesteld. Zodoende is er onvoldoende reden de aanname te accepteren dat er een relatie bestaat tussen gemeentelijke vluchtelingenbeleid en de perceptie van de Nederlands-Duitse grens van bewoners van het grensgebied.

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1 INTRODUCTION

“But it is not as if the people who live there, that they come here and start to mingle with us. At the same time we also don’t go to them; we stay away from them. (...) Yeah, you do kind of try to find your own people. (...) I think that’s hard. Also for them; I think it’s harder for them than for us. Yes, it’s harder as a stranger to come here, and you have to get to live with the rest.”

(Interviewee from municipality Winterswijk)

1.1 PROJECT FRAMEWORK

In a world that is becoming ever more globalized, with more and more transnational, cross-border (global) interactions, borders themselves seem not to be losing in value. The effects of globalization seem to threaten individuals, communities, nations in their identity. Borders are therefore constructed not only to separate territories, but also nations and identities (van Houtum, 1999). In fact, all over the world patterns can be observed in which borders are strengthened, demarcating territories as intensive as always (van Houtum, Kramsch & Zierhofer, 2005). As Knox (2005) states, ‘people and places have been confronted with change on an unprecedented scale and at an extraordinary rate... Globalization has generated a ‘fast world’—a world of restless landscapes in which the more places change the more they seem to look alike, the less they are able to retain a distinctive sense of place’ (p. 3). the authenticity, the identity, the traditions of local communities have become undermined. Sustainment of these local identities is mainly carried out through local policies linking local identity to place identity (Friedmann, 2010), which for example can also take into account the role of a nearby border.

How individuals perceive and value these borders can be made visible by measuring in how far they think of and experience the border as a barrier (van Houtum, 1998). With regard to this, van Houtum describes certain types and level of barrier effect that a person associates with the presence of a border. This barrier effect thus also contributes to the demarcation of the imagined community an individual experiences to belong to, and therefore relates to the feeling of identity. The perception of borders is inherently linked to how people create the ‘Other’, by territorially establishing order. The ‘others’ are the essential determinants for the construction of borders; yet at the same time they are the outcome of this border construction (van Houtum & van Naerssen, 2002). This can be observed on a national level, comparing for example Germans to Dutchmen. The role of the border, and the nature of the imagined community, are however not only determined by differences or similarities experienced on this national level. Various other factors can play a role here, such as societal developments (local, regional, national, international); governmental policy implementations; people’s personal experiences, relations; etc.

An example of this could be the Brexit that was originally scheduled for March 2019, on which the current political and societal discussions now and in the future might make people think different about the meaning and experience of borders. Another example of such a present-day debate that has

been going on for the past few years and might have effected citizens' border perception is the arrival and presence of refugees in the EU, which has seen a large growth since the spring of 2015. The high refugee influx has led to a harshening in immigration policies on both national and EU-level. The refugee debate has dominated national elections and led to confrontations in the streets, for example when it came to the settlement of refugees in certain places. A call for renewed strengthening of the borders could be heard among especially right-wing politicians.

This refugee debate not only plays a role at European or national levels; at regional and local level too, political discussions and choices in policy steps can lead to certain reactions or created certain images with residents. This is particularly the case because mainly local identity has become ever more pressured (Knox, 2005), and because at the same time migration policies have increasingly become an issue of local politics:

"Issues related to migration policy, such as policies about receiving refugees, have increasingly become local political matters in which municipalities and other local political institutions have gained an increased importance. Today, much of the practical work related to migration is handled at the local level, and the pressure on municipalities across Europe to deal with problems associated with migration and to find pragmatic solutions has risen."

(Lidén & Nyhlén 2014, p. 547)

As borders seem to play an increasing role in demarcation nations, territories and identities (van Houtum, Kramsch & Zierhofer, 2005), policies such as those of the European Union strive to highlight the importance of cross-border regional identity instead of accentuating differences in borderlands. Within the European Union, specially developed programs are being carried out to work on improving the perception of borders within the EU for citizens and organizations in borderland regions; as also for the Dutch-German border region. The goal is to support transnational cooperation in the EU's borderlands (Interreg Europe, 2018). One of the programs used to establish this is Interreg. Interreg consist of three program lines, focusing A. on cross-border cooperation in border areas, B. cooperation over larger areas covering several countries, and C. cooperation throughout the whole EU. The above described EU goals fit within program line A. Interreg's programs are developed region specific. The context in which this study was set up applies to the Dutch-German Euregions, united under the cooperation of Interreg Deutschland-Nederland. The program in this region runs from 2014 to 2020. Various projects have been initiated to decrease the barrier effect of the Dutch-German border (Interreg Deutschland-Nederland, 2018). The success of the Interreg program will be traced during the program period. This means that in 2015 a baseline measurement was carried out which has been repeated in the early summer of 2018 and will be again at the end of the project in 2020. Goal is to measure if the various projects indeed will have had the intended success; a decrease in the perception of the Dutch German border as a barrier.

As stated, the border perception of borderland residents is not only related to the Interreg projects. With refugees being a very distinct group of 'others' actively discussed in the EU over the past years, they arguably could have had a significant influence on the mental formation of borders in borderland residents' minds. These are issues that European programs may not have a direct influence on, but which can have an effect on the sense of identity and the perception of a demarcation associated with this; the Dutch-German border.

This study wishes to contribute to the existing knowledge concerning peoples' perception of the Dutch-German border, by mapping whether, how and why the perception of both Dutch and German borderland residents regarding refugees somehow relates to the perception of the Dutch-German border. The study is carried out at the Interreg secretariat in Kleve, parallel to the evaluative border perception measurement of 2018, to collect relevant data for Interreg to contribute to their knowledge on the functioning of the border as a barrier and to expose with it possible differences and / or similarities between Dutch and German borderland residents.

As described, a possible relation with refugee perception might be extra relevant in a regional or local context because of the greater perceived threats to local identity and the regional and local nature of today's migration and refugee politics. In this specific research, a choice is therefore made to approach the question from the angle of local refugee policy. As both regulations towards borders and towards refugees and (irregular) migration are highly political, policy in these subjects can be expected to affect the refugee perception and border interpretation.

The Interreg Euregions are mainly build-up off actors on a municipal level (a municipality can make the decision to be part of an Euregion or not). With regard to the Interreg context of this project, it is therefore considered most useful to discuss these local policy influences (and differences between them) on municipal level as well. By mapping this policy for different municipalities (taking into account the expected and experienced influence this has had on citizens and refugees) and analyzing the perceptions of residents of these municipalities considering refugees and considering the border, an attempt has been made to prove a (possibly causal) relation.

In the remainder of this chapter, the research aim, questions and relevance will be discussed.

1.2 RESEARCH AIM

Taking into account 'local refugee policy' as a factor within the study on a relation between refugee perception and border perception, leads to the following research aim for this specific research:

- *To contribute to the existing knowledge concerning the interpretation of the Dutch-German border;*
- *by mapping whether, how and why the perception of both Dutch and German borderland residents regarding refugees relates to the interpretation of the Dutch-German border for these residents;*
- *With the focus on municipal refugee policy as a possible significant factor of influence.*

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research aim implies certain steps that needed to be taken to achieve this aim. These steps have been translated into research questions. The main research question has been formulated as follows:

What is the relation between the Dutch-German border perception and the refugee perception of Dutch and German border residents, and how does refugee-related policy of Dutch-German border municipalities relate to this?

As can be observed, this research question consists of several element that are interlinked. First, these elements need to be studied separately in order to describe and sometimes analyse them, as to provide all the data necessary to answer the main research question. This begins with mapping the border perception and the refugee perception of residents in the Interreg DE-NL operational area. A

thorough description of both is required to, in a later stadium, compare and interrelate these to one another. As the refugee situation has had a certain impact mainly since the sudden rise of the refugee influx since 2015, the perception on the arrival and presence of refugees (and thus possibly the perception of the border) might have undergone some changes over the past years. Therefore, for both perceptions also these changes will be studied. This results in the first sub-question:

1. *What is the perception of residents in these municipalities regarding a. the Dutch-German border and b. refugees, why is the perception like this, and how has it changed?*

These perception descriptions form the base to interrelate the refugee perception and border perception; do they relate, and if so, how? Why do they relate in a certain manner? Can a causal relation be observed, and if so, in what direction? These questions are combined in the second sub-question:

2. *What is the relation between the residents' perception of refugees and the residents' perception of the Dutch-German border, and why is the relation like this?*

As stated, refugee perception might be influenced by local policies regarding the arrival and presence of refugees. Therefore these policies need to be carefully mapped and described. What steps were taken? What did municipalities expect and experience regarding effects of their policies, their activities with regard to the arrival and presence of refugees? Were residents involved? Were residents effected? And especially: did the actions of municipalities on this matter in any way effect the perception these residents had of refugees? This is summarized through the third sub-question.

3. *What policy is implemented by Dutch-German border municipalities with regard to refugees, and what expected and observed effects with regard to residents are involved? Specific: (how) does the found municipal policy relate to residents' perception of refugees?*

Combining the outcomes of questions 2 and 3 delivers the base in answering the main research question. The relation between both perceptions is made clear; the relation between local refugee policy and refugee perception is made clear. Interlinking both answers should provide insight in whether the municipal refugee policy relates to the Dutch-German border perception, what this relation looks like, and why; for example through how policy and refugee perception relate, and in turn, how refugee perception and border perception relate. The last question therefore is:

4. *How does the found municipal policy relate to the resident's perception of the Dutch-German border, and why?*

1.4 RELEVANCE

1.4.1 Societal relevance

As mentioned, the aim of this study is to contribute to the knowledge on border interpretation, specific in the Dutch-German context, by mapping the relation between border interpretation and refugee perception. The mental perception of a border means a great deal for how people in the borderland construct their daily lives, their places and living spaces. Space is socially constructed, and 'the tension-laden qualities of borders are a specification of the inherent spatiality of social life' (van Houtum et al 2005, p. 4). It is therefore relevant to, through this research, broaden the knowledge on how society functions in relation to the border and how this is influenced by, in this particular context, the refugee debate.

As the perception study of Interreg showed in 2015, there are still bottlenecks for people regarding whether or not to cross the border or enter into cross-border relationships. This research can create more insight into the views and experiences of people with the functioning of the border. By mapping the border perception, these bottlenecks can be defined, as well as the value people in the border region attach to the existence and experience of the border at all. For example, do certain experienced differences automatically imply a sense of barrier effect, or are these differences in the eyes of citizens also interesting possibilities and opportunities (van Houtum et al., 2005; Spierings & van der Velde, 2012)? In this way, a contribution can be made to the European projects that try to improve these border experiences for people and reduce the barrier effect.

Border areas are often characterized as regions that are problematic because they have a peripheral location within countries and often have certain contrasts with the neighboring country. For overarching organizations such as the European Union, these border regions offer opportunities if they succeed in reducing these contradictions and promote cross-border cooperation (Corvers, 2000). The border region has therefore become a yardstick for the success of European integration, according to Corvers, and is therefore an important political theme to which this research can make a modest contribution by gathering information about the precise nature of the experienced barriers between the two sides of such a border region.

The refugee debate in recent years has focused on the external borders of the European Union. This means that in particular the discussions focus on how the European Union should deal with refugees who enter (or try to). A great deal of attention has been paid to problems in countries such as Greece and Italy, which primarily receive the refugees in the first instance, as well as to how the population in these countries responds and policies on how to deal with this. These are policy recommendations at national or European level. As said, migration policy is actually on the rise at the local level, something that is now underexposed in the European migration debate. This research tries to make a contribution at another side by studying the arrival and presence of irregular migrants at a local level, within municipalities; and to map the situation at European internal borders, with the example of the Dutch-German border region. In this way a more complete picture of these marginally exposed facets of the refugee situation in Europe can be outlined.

Summarizing, it can be said that this study provides knowledge about the effect of the border on citizens in the border region, with specific attention for the refugee situation in Europe and at local municipal level as an external factor of influence. Insight into the (functioning of the) border perception can therefore be of interest to policymakers at, for example, local (municipal) and European (Interreg) level, both in terms of boundaries and the arrival and presence of refugees. At a higher level, this

research contributes to providing insight into the possibilities and obstacles with regard to promoting European integration.

1.4.2 Scientific relevance

This study aims to gain insights that will be an addition to the existing research field of borders. Traditionally, borders are often approached as a demarcation of territories, thus playing a role in processes of territoriality (Newman & Paasi, 1998). The large increase in academic border research of the past decennia (see for example van der Velde & van Houtum, 2000) has led to broader insights which show that the border can also be observed as a mental construct, used for the demarcation of identity; already mentioned before in relation to the imagined community, the difference between 'us' and 'them', and the creation of an 'other' (van Houtum, 1999; van Houtum & van Naerssen, 2002). From this constructivist approach, the physical border is merely the result of a specific interpretation by a (group of) individual(s). The border has no meaning other than the meaning given to it through the conviction of certain actors concerning a certain territoriality; it only becomes real through the everyday practices of these actors (van Houtum et al 2005, p. 4). The current debate on refugees, who are sometimes approached as an invasive 'other', and on what to do with the outer borders of Europe, highly relates to this constructivist approach concerning borders.

Discussing the concept of 'others' on itself, Bauman (1995) describes them as strangers, who can live within or outside a person's territorially created order; in which a national border can also be the demarcation of this perceived order. This conceptualization of the other however creates a grey area when addressing the situation in the borderland itself. How does someone living directly at this border incorporate that border in his or her territorially perceived order, and what does this mean for the position of the stranger directly on the other side of the border; and furthermore, for the position of strangers from further away, such as refugees? Stanca (2006) speaks with regard to this of the special position obtained by borderlines and borderlands, as 'both barriers and places of exchange and communication (...), part of the inside and the outside.' Carefully mapping the borderlanders' perceptions could therefore be of addition to the concept of (types of) 'strangers' or 'others'.

Many scholars have written about Fortress Europe, about the debates on irregular migration (see for example van Houtum, 2010; Spijkerboer, 2007; Börzel & Risse, 2018). However, this is done on a much smaller scale when zooming in on borders *within* the European Union. The position of the 'other' is sometimes used to intensify concerns of national safety and sovereignty (Gerrard, 2017); and though this can be observed in e.g. the rise of populist parties such as PVV and FvD in the Netherlands, it could be an addition to research if such phenomena also take place in local municipalities, surrounding an inner European border such as the Dutch-German one. Furthermore, it has been pointed out by scholars (as is discussed in the next chapter as well) that, though Europe's policy on reducing the barrier function of borders is well-funded by economic arguments, it is much less so when it comes to the opinions, perceptions and behavior of individual residents. It is here that this study fills a significant void, by combining these two marginally addressed subjects in one combining research stressing a possible connection.

In this study, the imaging of the Dutch-German borders that citizens have takes a central role. It focuses not per se on a specific demarcation of the Netherlands vs. Germany or of Dutchman vs. Germans, but rather on (human geographical) developments on several levels that contribute to the forming of perception within this specific border region. Struver (2005) wrote: "an open border (...) results neither automatically in open minds, nor in suddenly changed everyday practices and spaces. That is to say that even along 'boring' (open) borders, life remains bordered." (p. 217). However, The European

Union, as said, strives to erase the barrier function of the border, and still works on this through a variety of projects. This research is therefore based on the assumption that the border between the Netherlands and Germany still exists, and is being felt / experienced by residents on both sides of the border; that the mental construct, despite the disappearance of a physically visible boundary on many fronts, is still perceptible.

1.5 READING GUIDE

The following chapter (chapter 2) provides the theoretical framework behind this study, discussing academic insights with regard to several relevant concepts such as border perception, refugee perception, identity formation and the imagined community, and local policy. In the end, the embedded and framed theoretical concepts that form the base of this specific study and their (proposed) interrelations are made visual in a conceptual model. The theoretical frame, together with the project context, forms the base for the methodological approach of this research and the choices made in it regarding research method, data sampling, data collection, data analysis; this is worked out in chapter 3.

Chapter 4 can be viewed upon as a case description. It first highlights the wider context of the DE-NL Interreg subsidy program and operational area. This is followed by a description of general (developments in) refugee policy on a EU and national level, and furthermore a section that highlights the selection criteria for municipalities based on the previous presented information along with a description of the selected municipalities. Chapter 4 is concluded with an explanation of some case-specific choices regarding the operationalization of concepts.

Chapters 5 to 8 present the research results. Chapter 5 and 6 respectively describe the border perception and refugee perception; what these look like, why, and how these have changed. Chapter 7 presents more analytical results, interrelating border perception and refugee perception to one another; whether such a relation is found, and what it looks like. Chapter 8 presents descriptions of municipal policy choices and effects with regard to refugees and the analytical results of interrelating these policies to refugee perception and border perception; whether these relations are found and what they look like.

Chapter 9 concludes with the most important findings of this study, reflections on these findings and on the limitations of this research, recommendations for European integration trajectories such as Interreg, and proposals for a further research agenda.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It is first necessary to establish and frame the main concepts that underlie this study. This starts with a discussion on the concept of borders, involving the different angles in which (mental) border interpretation is approached by various scholars and also how this might relate to the refugee situation in Europe over the past years. This is followed by a section on the perception of refugees, discussing scholarly work on the reasoning behind the formation of certain attitudes / perceptions towards refugees. The last main concept discussed is (municipal) policy, directed towards refugees and the (possible) effect such policy might have. At the end of chapter 2, the most relevant concepts and ideas from the project framework and theoretical framework will be connected to each other and made visual in the conceptual model that is representative for this study.

2.1 BORDER PERCEPTION – THE MENTAL CONSTRUCT OF BORDERS IN RELATION TO IDENTITY

First, it is necessary to establish what is meant here with borders, border interpretation and the (mental) barrier function of the border.

‘The exclusionary consequences of the securing of the ‘own’ (...) identity has gained a more central and just place in the geographical debate. It is this topic that we define as bordering, which we relate to practices of othering’

(van Houtum & van Naerssen 2002, p. 125)

Scholars have argued that when it comes to borders, studies not focus merely on the physical and visual aspects, but should put focus on ‘border landscapes as the product of a set of cultural, economic, political processes and interactions occurring in space’ (van Houtum 1999, p. 329). ‘Crucial to an understanding of borders is not so much their material morphology, but the various forms of interpretation and representation that they embody’ (van Houtum, Kramsch & Zierhofer 2005, p. 2). To place a focus on the physical dimension of borders would be a restricted view; a view that would indeed justify the EU claim that by dismantling borders, a borderless world can be created (van Houtum et al., 2005). However van Houtum et al. and others stress this does not represent reality. The physical border object is merely the outcome of a specific interpretation; meaning is given to it through actors’ beliefs in a certain territoriality, becoming reality through everyday practices. Space is socially constructed, and ‘the tension-laden qualities of borders are a specification of the inherent spatiality of social life’ (van Houtum et al 2005, p. 4). Van Houtum et al. even go as far as to state that the b/order is, in fact, an active verb; creating a social reality (p. 3).

In their extensive work on border regions, ‘B/ordering space’ (2005), van Houtum, Kramsch & Zierhofer describe in the introduction how, in a globalizing world with more and more transnational and cross-border (global) interactions, the actual number of ordered and bordered units has not decreased. The ever more globalized state of the world does not seem to be replacing these units with larger entities; in fact, the multitude of levels of identification has increased. Globalization is more and more observed as a threat to a territory, to sovereignty. ‘The social interaction with others in a bounded territory, provides individuals with feelings of familiarity, security and identity. Borders therefore not only separate different territories, but also different nations, systems of socialization, and identities’ (van Houtum 1999, p. 330). It is therefore that policies in for example the European Union, such as the Interreg programs, strive to highlight the importance of a cross-border regional identity instead of accentuating differences in borderlands (Nilsson, Eskilsson, & Ek, 2010).

Borders can be considered barriers; and it are these barriers that the European Union wants to get rid of. This idea forms the base for the establishment of the EU free market (van Houtum, 1999). International mobility of services, goods, people and capital is what the European policies strive for through diminishing these barriers, as otherwise these borders could obstruct economic development and social cohesion (Spierings & van der Velde, 2012). These ideas are still being carried out till this day; take the earlier mentioned Interreg program as an example. However, the focus is placed mainly on economic development. The opinion of individual residents on this opening-up of borders, their perceptions of these borders, and their actual behavior regarding it, has received little attention (van Houtum, 1999). The Interreg evaluation might be observed as a study that does take these individuals' perceptions and behavior into account. Though the EU still has these active policies on reducing the power of borders *within* the EU, a quite different situation can be observed when it comes to the EU's outside borders, with current attention mostly going to immigration policies. Van Houtum & van Naerssen (2002) discussed the harshening of contemporary migration policy in capitalist societies; referring to the adverse selection of access, way before the current refugee 'crisis' even occurred. 'There is an increase in the need felt to protect what is imagined as one's own cultural legacy and economic welfare, which in turn has again invited people to 'discover' or 'taste' more of these self-claimed and protected 'treasures' (p. 128).

Van Houtum (1999) argues that spatial behavior in relation to cross-border relationships is a result of three different spaces: action space, cognition space and affection space (p. 331). Especially the latter is relevant when it comes to border interpretations; it is the space 'determined by man's feelings towards and emotional connectedness with space'; concretized through, among others, 'one's evaluation of the phenomenon of the state border' (p. 332). In research on economic cross-border activity between the Netherlands and Belgium, van Houtum found that entrepreneurs working near the border do not necessarily perceive it as a barrier, but interpret them as 'more or less relevant, or as non-artificial and useful' (p. 333). Markets are not only perceived through spatial, but through mental distances as well. Actors might not always be willing to gather information, form contacts, trade, shop, across these borders.

Spierings & van der Velde (2012) too studied the interpretation of the border as a mental barrier by border area residents, through investigating (un)familiarity with the 'other side' of the border in relation to cross-border shopping mobility. (Un)familiarity is a useful concept when attempting to explain physical-functional and socio-cultural differences between geographical places in relation to the willingness of people to engage in cross-border interactions (Spierings & van der Velde, 2012). Scholars have described two sides to this story. On the one hand, familiarity in a strange place can be attractive since it provides a sense of comfort, producing mental links with the feeling of home. However the opposite can be stated as well; unfamiliarity provides the possibility of experiencing something new, which can be a motivation to search for this unfamiliarity (Spierings & van der Velde, 2008). Spierings & van der Velde (2012) stated that borders are in fact necessary elements for cross-border mobility, and therefore offer a quite critical reflection on the European Union's efforts to implement policies aiming to erase the differences across (national) borders between the EU states. The mentioned divide is reflected in the work of van Houtum et al. (2005) as well, who speak in this context of the 'Janus-face of borders' (p. 4); stating that:

“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).”

(van Houtum et al. 2005, p. 3)

At macro-level, borders function as a demarcation of national identity. It has a character of inclusion and exclusion, of us vs. them; in which ‘the force of the us-them effect feeds the mental distance’ (van Houtum 1999, p. 333-334). Van Houtum emphasizes the need to develop a geography of imagination within the European Union; a need to which this study on citizens’ perceptions and interpretations might become very relevant. An interesting insight here, for example, comes from Zygmunt Bauman (1995). He argues that people make a distinction between the strangers within their space, within our territorially created and perceived order, and the strangers outside of it. The strangers ‘inside’ are part of our imagined community, in which the unknown is imagined to be part of the whole, and therefore accepted and included. The strangers ‘outside’, on the contrary, are the strangers at and outside the borders of this space. But, how does this principle work out for people living *in* these borderlands? What do they perceive as their imagined community, and how does the border influence this community? A person living only a few kilometers from the border might perceive the other side as somewhat inside his/her community; but at the same time as a distant community as well, as the border still tends to bring certain divisions with it. Can the described distinction between strangers ‘within’ and ‘outside’ our imagined community not become blurred for residents of the border region? From a borderlander’s perspective, the question could arise: are people on the other side of the border ‘inside’, or automatically ‘outside’ the accepted unknown of the imagined community? And what about people from farther away, like the refugee ‘other’; might they be perceived as from a more distanced ‘outside’, of which the discussion could perhaps influence the position of the ‘inside’, yet other-side-of-the-border-stranger as well? In other words, can the refugee perception have an effect on the border perception, and vice versa?

Borders construct spaces and places, which can be observed as a strategic move to identify and shield-off the other (van Houtum & van Naerssen, 2002). It is precisely for this reason that makes it relevant to study the influence of the refugee discussion in the European Union of the past few years on people’s border perceptions. ‘Making others through the territorial fixing of order, is intrinsically connected to our present image of borders. Others are both necessary, constitutive for the formation of borders, as well as the implication of the process of forming these borders’ (van Houtum & van Naerssen, p. 134). With refugees being a very distinct group of ‘others’ actively discussed in the EU over the past years, they arguably could have had a significant influence on the mental formation of borders in borderland residents’ minds.

2.2 IMAGING REFUGEES — THE POSITION OF REFUGEES AS THE ‘OTHER’

Before the economic crisis hit Europe, the attitude regarding immigration tended to become more accepting, and the sense of solidarity grew. EU citizens tended to show a more accepting attitude in the migration debate than non-citizens. Yet the attitude still remained relatively dismissive and hostile; and when economic decline set in during the crisis, this hostile attitude grew and grew. This was especially the case for people from a lower socio-economic situation, but was also influenced through

ideological and political factors (Martín Artiles & Molina, 2011; van Houtum, 2010). The market research company IPSOS carried out an extensive poll on immigration and refugees in 22 western countries in June and July 2016. Their result showed that almost 40% of respondents in fact supported the sentiments and ideas of entirely closing borders to refugees. Furthermore, they found that well over half of respondents partly or even completely supported the statement that terrorists are hiding under refugees, trying to reach certain states to commit violent and destructive acts. 51% thought foreigners that wished to enter their countries are coming only for economic motives (IPSOS, 2016). Results like these show quite strong negative perceptions regarding refugees, possibly encouraging certain (re)actions towards them (Esses, Hamilton & Gaucher, 2017).

As the immigration discourse showed a shift towards a more tough tone, research has been starting to focus on the formation of native citizens' attitudes with regard to migrants. Through an extensive study for the Oxford University Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, Crawley (2005) for example found that attitudes towards asylum seekers and immigrants in more general terms are influenced mainly by 'labour market position and income, educational background, individual demographic characteristics including age, gender and race / ethnicity, contact with ethnic minorities groups, knowledge of asylum and migration issues and the context in which attitudes are formed, including dominant political and media discourses' (Crawley 2005, p. 2). Other studies show a greater role for the government; for example stating that, when it comes to producing the imagined community as discussed in the previous subchapter and maintaining it, the state can play an important role. Stuart Hall (1990) described with regard to asylum seekers in Great Britain how the state was closely linked to the process of defining what was true Englishness. The 'fear of difference has been a feature of colonial discourse and is a recurring theme within political discourse' (Gale 2004, p. 325). In 2001, Ruud Lubbers, as High Commissioner for Refugees of the UN, likewise discusses how refugee policy is often based on some sort of fear, and stated that 'we must overcome this fear. Political leaders are no leaders when they fuel anti-foreigner and anti-refugee sentiments, contributing to this cycle of fear and mistrust' (cited by Daley 2001, p. 2). The causes and nature of migration, the different ways in which migration occurs, and the consequences of migration, go lost in ongoing debates and discussions about the number of migrants coming to the EU and the accompanying border issues (van Houtum, 2010).

A recurring theme in the various studies on refugee perception, and attitudes towards migrants in a more general notion, is that of immigrants being a threat; and feelings of fear. Gorinas & Pytlikova (2015) put emphasis on the hostile nature these attitudes can have, stating that these are largely given in by economic concerns, ideology, and level of education. Esses et al. (2003) stated that the 'threat' that feeds many of these attitudes comes from refugees who 'need jobs, affordable housing, and access to healthcare. They may require other resources such as language training and settlement services. Refugees may even come from source countries with relatively higher levels of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. In addition, they may have a different cultural identity, religious identity, and value system than members of the host community (cited by Esses et al. 2017, p. 82).' All these conceivable different threats combined, whether true or imaginary, have the ability to influence peoples' perceptions of refugees (Esses et al., 2003). A study on such threats was done by Stephan & Stephan (2000), who developed the integrated threat theory of prejudice that states four types of threat can be distinguished that form the base of prejudicial) perceptions: symbolic threats, realistic threats, negative stereotypes, and intergroup anxiety. Since the development of their model it has been tested on various groups such as ethnic minorities, immigrants and refugees; and it was

stated that these threats can indeed lead to the forming or expanding of negative perceptions towards groups of immigrants (Stephan et al., 2005).

Migration and integration have stood very high in the agenda of news media over the past years, and news on immigration has come to a phase where a decrease in the number of immigrants coming towards the EU for help is being viewed as a success; showing how the focus of this success is purely on the border(ing) regimes of the EU and its states, but bypassing the nature of the immigrants and of the migration itself (van Houtum & Pijpers, 2007). The role of actors such as media in shaping the perception of refugees is highly significant, as the vast majority of people has only minor contact with refugees. People lack the experiences they might use to question the way in which the migration situation is being displayed. The way news media covers the migrant debate is therefore considerably high when it comes to the effects on peoples' attitudes towards these migrant (Crawley, 2005). With a study in the Netherlands, Van Klinger et al. (2015) for example found that the bigger the collection of received messages with a certain tone is, the bigger the effect can be on the attitudes of people. With regard to refugees, the notion of race still plays an important role in political discussions on identity, migration issues, etc., and in (news) media as well. With regard to the analysis of media reporting on the refugee 'crisis', the link between (national) identity and representations of 'whiteness' became a central issue (Gale, 2004). As Gale stated, 'the relationship between media discourse and political representations of asylum seekers reflects the intersection between the imaginings of national identity and populist politics' (p. 334).

With regard to refugees, the above discussed mental bordering, the notion of 'us vs. them', is particularly significant as refugees often take the role of the other, of something different, of unfamiliarity. It shows that all people are being grouped; one group consisting of those we know, those that are included in our own community, or 'us'; and those that we do not except as part of this group, those that become excluded; 'them' (Newman, 2006). Gerrard (2017) considered herself with the 'ways in which the imagery of the pain and suffering of Others is deployed to bolster concerns surrounding the sovereignty and safety of the nation state' (p. 880). Scholars who studied refugee perceptions (and attitudes towards (im)migrants more generally) show that the discourse behind these perceptions is largely based on notions of threats, on fear.

2.3 BORDERING PRACTICES IN REFUGEE PERCEPTION AND MEASURING BORDER PERCEPTION

When looking at studies on refugee perceptions, as described above, similarities can be drawn with the discourse on border interpretations (discussed in 2.1.); the fear of the unknown; the process of othering; the role of the state when it comes to shaping perceptions and attitudes. A border as a demarcation of (national) identity, to shut out threats, to separate us from the 'other' is therefore well applicable to the refugee situation. First, it can be observed as a 'protection' against the other (such as the refugee) for as long as this other has not entered the demarcated territory yet. This corresponds with Bauman's stranger outside of the territorially created and perceived order. Second, creating a demarcation for the 'other' can be applied to imagined communities, in which refugees should or should not get a place after they have been arrived; corresponding with what Bauman referred to as strangers within the created and perceived order, who are or are not to be accepted. As stated, this might be complicated when viewing the bordering practices of people living in a border area; for in how far do they consider the other side of the actual Dutch-German border, so close to their own homes, as outside of their territorially created order, their imagined community? And does this also affect the way they view 'different' outsiders, from further away, like the refugee; and vice versa?

Framing the concept of borders and bordering for this particular study therefore constantly questions whether or not people perceive the border as taking a certain amount of extra effort to cross. This mental barrier effect, as described above, can be seen observed e.g. on two sides of an administratively present state border such as between the Netherlands and Germany, or between different imagined communities; which for example could consider Dutch people vs. Germans, Dutch or Germans vs. refugees, Dutch & German together (perhaps even EU-citizen wide) vs. refugees, etc.

To map such a barrier effect, van Houtum (1999) speaks of evaluating the border by measuring the mental distance a person feels towards the other side of the border. This should be considered as measuring from a bottom-up point of view, as the mental distance is experienced on an individual level; which however can be collectively calculated. The mental distance as defined by van Houtum embraces all 'formal and informal conventions in a country that matter to a company' (1999, p. 99). One characteristic of mental distance is that it encompasses an estimation as to what consequences the perceived differences between both sides of the borders entail, aimed to value the success of the (potential) cross-border activity. 'Mental distance thereby also evaluates the conventions of another country' (van Houtum 1999, p. 99); and thus sheds light on the perception of an individual regarding the border. Van Houtum states border evaluation consists of two dimensions. The first is the role of the border as a barrier for individuals who have to deal with it. It values the role of the actors attitude towards the border in its capacity as a barrier. This does not consider the function of the border, but rather, its symbolic value. The second is the way in which actors consider the border itself to be of importance, of value. A person or a group can even experience feelings of identity from (national) borders. Van Houtum describes the second as the relevance of the border. He measured both dimensions through a set of attitudes or semantic differentials that express the perception of the border. Van Houtum focused with regard to the above on entrepreneurs in cross-border economic relations. His example however proved to be useful, too, to map the border perception of borderland residents from Germany and the Netherlands. Small additions were made resulting in a slight translation of the dimensions, that however still largely encompass the original meaning; now being formulated as 1. the barrier effect of the border in daily practice, and 2. the self-evidence of the border. This will be further explained in the methodology.

2.4 (MUNICIPAL) REFUGEE POLICY – THE INCREASED ROLE OF A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

"Issues related to migration policy, such as policies about receiving refugees, have increasingly become local political matters in which municipalities and other local political institutions have gained an increased importance. Today, much of the practical work related to migration is handled at the local level, and the pressure on municipalities across Europe to deal with problems associated with migration and to find pragmatic solutions has risen."

(Lidén & Nyhlén 2014, p. 547)

Though policy and its implications are highly studied on a national and international level, this is to a lesser extent the case for local level policy such as the municipal level; the policy level through which this study is approached. This becomes even more clear when narrowing down on policies that are related to (the coming of) refugees. Giugni & Passy stated in 2006 that though the role of politics is vital in studies on migration, it has often been neglected. Yet, several studies, descriptive reports and policy examples can be found and the attention towards the local level is growing as well (Lidén & Nyhlén, 2014).

When refugee integration is approached from a local perspective, several sorts of actors could be involved. Though in many countries (e.g. the Netherlands and Germany) municipal government is

responsible for the reception of these refugees, they work together with several other organizations such as NGO's, schools, housing corporations, social work organizations etc. These are all needed in order to help the refugee to build up a 'normal' life. The municipalities coordinate the collaboration between all these actors, and during the increased refugee influx of the last years they became the center in the coordination of new arrivals (Klaver, 2016).

Yet where for example in the Netherlands and in Germany municipalities are still bound to some national refugee regulations, this differs from country to country. An especially interesting case where the role of municipalities is particularly large is Sweden. Here, municipalities have received full autonomy in the acceptance or decline of refugees. This means the country does not draw one line; the refugee intake varies from municipality to municipality, and is largely dependent on the willingness of the local community to accept refugees (Lidén & Nyhlén, 2014). However it also works this way from the refugee perspective; a refugee (and his/her relatives) can decide for themselves where they want to go and live in Sweden, as long as they make sure to find their own accommodation there (Myrberg, 2017). The situation in Sweden is in that sense almost the opposite of for example Denmark, where the (state-controlled) refugee influx has to be spread as evenly as can be achieved over the municipalities in the country and are also obligated to stay there for a period of at least three years before they can move to a location of their own liking. It can therefore be stated that in the refugee influx in Sweden newcomers have quite a large agency themselves, whereas in Denmark this is controlled by the state (ibid.)

Though freedom for municipalities and refugees to decide for themselves can be viewed upon as a positive development, this poses difficulties as well. When looking at the described example of Sweden and Denmark and their contrasting approaches, Myrberg described that the notion of 'crisis' is widely felt in the refugee reception in Sweden, whereas in Denmark it is perceived as something that is in hand. Furthermore, the political climate on a local level can pose problems as local policies on (the welcoming of) refugees rely on the political will that dominates in each municipality (Lidén & Nyhlén, 2014). The political orientation of a community determines the political coordination in a democratic system, simply through the people's voting; so the people's preferences in that way might translate into a certain policy outcome (Boräng, 2012). Policy might therefore influence citizens' lives and perceptions, but this could also function the other way around.

A further obstacle in the independence of municipalities in refugee policy making is that processes on local and national level become separated. Policy on a municipal level might even contradict or conflict with policy on a national level. Municipalities in fact become more politically active, since they can form the base of policy innovation themselves in this area (Myrberg, 2017). Yet overall it can be stated that, if local policy proves to be functioning well, this has its benefits. Chatham House (2017) found that, if society is convinced that the government is in control of migration, the public attitudes and perceptions regarding the refugee situation tend to be more positive.

In the Netherlands, the decentralization of the government and the accompanying increase in power and responsibilities for municipalities that had started in 2015 immediately became challenging with the increased refugee influx. In August of that year, municipalities were instructed to create (additional) reception centers for asylum seekers and provide housing for those that gained a status as refugee (Klaver, 2016). Municipalities proved not to be able to keep up with the incoming requests for housing and the system jammed, resulting in a new agreement in which all layers of the government worked together in providing the necessary amount of accommodations as soon as possible (ibid.).

In Germany, each state can decide for its own how the distribution of refugees over the state is handled and which level of governance is responsible for what tasks. However, in the course of 2015 laws and policies and the way in which they were carried out continually changed. One of the major problems was insufficient staffing, causing long delays in the process of asylum applications (Funk, 2016). On a state level, in Nordrhein-Westfalen for example, municipalities struggled with the choice between centralized and decentralized housing of refugees; often having a preference for the later, but at the same time being thwarted by e.g. real estate owners not willing to rent out their property because of 'not in my backyard' (NIMBY) perceptions (Kürschner Rauk & Kvasnicka, 2018). The differences in distribution throughout the country for example distorted housing markets, having a serious effect on rental prices in regions experiencing a higher influx of refugees than others (ibid).

However, to work from the local level as a starting point did prove to have its merits in Dutch refugee policy innovation, with local success becoming elevated even into national policies. As problems are experienced most on the local level, the stimulus to innovate is also relatively high here (Scholten et al., 2017). Klaver (2016) stated that in general the larger municipalities receiving the highest numbers of refugees tended to show the most innovation in policy improvement with regard to these refugees; but that this still remained dependent on the political composition in the municipality itself. Furthermore, other bottlenecks limit the possibilities these municipalities have in developing policies. Over half of the Dutch municipalities have shown to be willing to work on the development of such policies, but they experience problems in funding (Razenberg & de Gruijter, 2016) or are limited in their possibilities because of national legislation (Klaver, 2016). In Germany, a large role in receiving refugees was not so much for the local politics, but for civil society itself. During the (relatively much higher) influx of refugees here, the state proved to have an inadequate administrative organization and insufficient resources; but civil society volunteers jumped in in high numbers as an act of solidarity, carrying out the countries 'Wirkommenskultur' (welcoming culture) that had started with Angela Merkel's 'Wir schaffen das' (we can do this) (Funk, 2016).

2.5 POLICY INFLUENCING PUBLIC ATTITUDES

Though policy implementation through laws, programs, regulations, have been inherent to decision makers as a way of influencing public behavior, the behavioral dimensions of policy have been an understudied field within politics for a long time (Schneider & Ingram, 1990). Schneider & Ingram stated that focusing on the behavioral dimensions of policy tools might enable to 'advance knowledge about the conditions under which target populations will contribute to preferred policy outcomes' (p. 527). Almost thirty years later, it has become increasingly clear that in a variety of complex policy fields a government cannot simply force a set of policy steps on a public not being actively involved; that active cooperation of individuals is required. Partnering with citizens, organizations etc., sharing activities, information, capabilities, is necessary to achieve goals a government cannot achieve on its own (Allen, 2018). In studies on economic behavior of individuals it was found that (lack of) sharing information plays a significant role here, as 'it is a truism that when individuals do not have information, that information cannot influence their decision' (Umpfenbach et al. 2014, p. 4). Yet according to Umpfenbach et al. providing information can also have countering effects and should therefore be approached with caution as a solution to influence behavior. Furthermore, the salience of information depends heavily on factors such as timing and presentation. Policy makers furthermore need to understand all different relevant attitudes and values in society when wanting to change behavior, to be able to respond to different responses from different groups; implying that certain policy steps should even be aimed to groups with specific attitudes. Policy in that sense should rather

try and target social norms (which affect attitude and behavior), rather than the desired outcome (Umpfenbach et al., 2014). An example of systematically evaluating policies as to how they might influence public attitudes was formulated by Dolan et al. (2012), who found that approaches based on changing the context in which individuals or groups form their decisions and responses can result in significant changes in attitude. This applies both to when making new policy to check how to ensure a behavioral effect, as well as to evaluate existing policy to check for (unintended) behavioral effects (Dolan et al., 2012). Thaler & Sunstein (2008) speak with respect to this that if a behavioral pattern results from habits, biases, (cognitive) boundaries, than policy makers are able to ‘nudge’ this pattern towards a better desired option by changing the ‘choice architecture’ surrounding this behavior. With regard to refugee policies and the possible relation this could have with residents’ refugee perception (and even border perception), it is interesting to take the above presented perspective of policy influencing attitudes into consideration in this study. When mapping the refugee policy of a local government such as a municipality, it is therefore useful to observe whether this policy in any way considers the citizen-side of this policy; how citizens perceive refugees, how citizens (will) perceive the policy measurements taken with regard to these refugees, and if and how these perceptions might be influenced through deliberate actions implemented in policy.

2.6 INTERRELATING BORDER PERCEPTION, REFUGEE PERCEPTION AND LOCAL REFUGEE POLICY

From the theoretical framework, interrelations can be made between different concepts and approaches concerning this research. Combining this with the project framework and goal of this study, these interrelations are shown below in a simplified form in the conceptual model of this research.

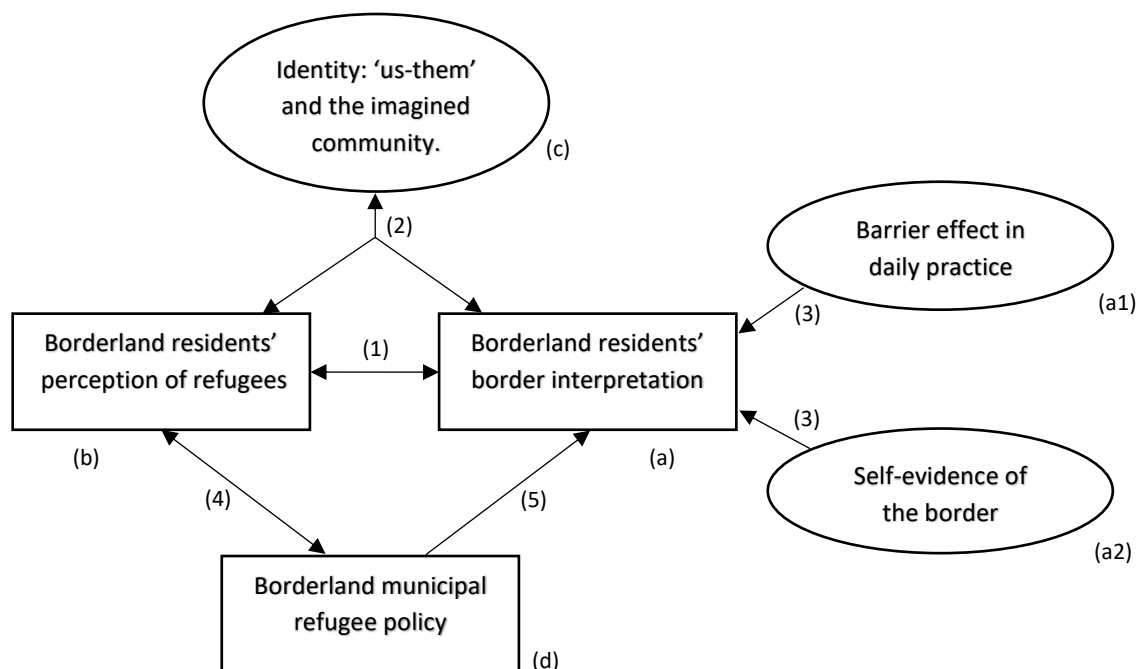


Figure 1 Conceptual model based on the theoretical framework

Explanation of the conceptual model:

(a) The borderland residents' interpretation of the border might have a relation (1) with the borderland residents' perception of the arrival and presence of refugees (b). The discourses on refugee perception and border interpretation contain an overlap (2) when it comes to issues of self-identity (c), for example in addressing an imagined community feeling, the portraying of an 'us' vs. 'them', and a fear of threats and unfamiliarity. This overlap justifies the assumed relation (1) and explains why it is made visual as a reciprocal link as well.

The border interpretation in itself can be measured as having a certain level of barrier effect, which can be described (3) through two dimensions: the barrier effect of the border in daily practice (a1), and the self-evidence of the border (a2)

(d) The recent refugee situation in the European Union has given rise to new municipal policies regarding refugees. At the same time, the refugee situation has given rise to new and stronger perceptions of (borderland) residents regarding this refugee situation (b). These (changes in) perceptions might have a relation (4) with the mentioned policy. As the theoretical discussion has shown, this relation can be reciprocal.

The presence of relations 1 and 4 together as implied by the theoretical framework above indicates an indirect relation might be present; the relation between refugee policy and refugee perception leads to the hypothesis that local refugee policy might affect border interpretation (5).

3 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

In this chapter is described how the research will be approached. The chapter starts with an explanation of the research strategy, describing the methods that will be used in this research. Then follow sections on data sampling, describing the selection of respondents and municipalities; and on data collection, which involves and explains the use of the Interreg survey and interviews. This will be followed by a description of what data will provide answers for the various sub-questions of this research, and then a section containing a description of how data analysis will take place. The methodology chapter will be concluded with a reflection on how the various choices made in the methodological approach might endanger the validity and reliability of this study and how this is dealt with.

3.1 RESEARCH STRATEGY

First the research strategy has been established. Which strategy to use depends on the nature of the research question and aim. Several choices need to be considered; for example qualitative versus quantitative research, or empirical vs desk research (Verschuren en Doorewaard, 2015). This research is executed as a combination of quantitative and qualitative research; therefore can be spoken of a mixed methods design (Creswell, 2012). Creswell states that 'you engage in a mixed methods study when you want to follow up a quantitative study with a qualitative one to obtain more detailed, specific information than can be gained from the results of statistical tests (p. 535), which is precisely why this research too seeks the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Both the qualitative and quantitative data are collected separately, and data from the one can elaborate or complement data from the other (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham 1989, p. 259). This type of mixed methods research is described by Creswell as the convergent parallel design.

The choice to go with this approach was made since an important aspect of this research type is the possibility of gaining in-depth knowledge through interviews, yet at the same time the possibility to gather large amounts of data in a relatively short and easy manner (Creswell, 2007) through a (already developed) survey. The research questions and aim suggest this research will have both a descriptive and analytical nature. To address the relation between municipal policy and borderland residents' perceptions regarding refugees and borders can be highly dependent on the context (differing from municipality to municipality within the borderland that is the subject of this study). This implies that a lot of information regarding the context will have to be obtained when interviewing respondents of the municipalities to bring as much detail as possible into the description of this relation. The combination of quantitative and qualitative research lends itself for answering questions not only considering the descriptive 'what', but also the more analytical approach of 'how' or 'why' certain things are (socially) constructed the way they are (Yin, 2003), in an environment rich of contextual variables (Schell, 1992).

Important to note is that this study does not necessarily represent a case study; though similarities can be observed. The focus is placed on a specific issue (resident's perceptions in relation to policy), and not on the INTERREG operational area or on the selected municipalities themselves.

The research aim and question indicate the importance of gathering data that is representative for the whole Interreg Deutschland-Nederland operational area. This is where the quantitative part of the mixed methods approach can be of great value. Respondents will have to be representative for the actual population, and unrepresentative peaks based on just a few residents' perceptions must be

avoided. This is why a choice is made to perform the quantitative part of this research in the form of an online survey, carried out by an external organization specialized in providing representative samples of respondents. Data is used from the already planned Interreg evaluative survey (described in the project framework). The original questions and structure of the survey have undergone some changes and additions to better suit the nature of this study.¹

For the qualitative part of this study, in depth one-on-one methods of collecting data in the form of interviews (see chapter 3.3) is most useful. As discussed, in-depth interviews gain extensive knowledge and provide context; this data can be used in complementary manner with another (quantitative) data source. In-depth interviews provide extensive data to process, and along with it an extensive data analysis. The focus within the Interreg operational area will be placed on four municipalities (two Dutch and two German). Because of the extensive amount of data per interviewee, six residents per municipality are deemed to suffice in order to gain the necessary information (a total of 24). With regard to gather data on (choices in) municipal refugee policy, one municipality official per municipality will be interviewed as well (a total of 4).

3.2 DATA SAMPLING

For the quantitative part of this study, respondents will have to be representative for the actual population; which has to be achieved through using criteria in selecting respondents. In the studied sample, a level of variation is therefore ensured that more or less matches the composition of the studied region. The criteria involve for example age, gender, education level and residency; the respondents should ideally be proportionally distributed over the Interreg Deutschland-Nederland operational area. To make sure different places within the region are each represented by a sufficient number of respondents as to avoid unrepresentative peaks based on just a few residents' perceptions, the quantitative part of this study involves a high number of respondents in total. As mentioned this is achieved through an online survey, the nature of which is further explained in chapter 3.3. Taking these criteria and steps into account will prevent the sample of respondents being biased. These criteria and steps are communicated to the external organization hired for the distribution of this survey and the collection of data.

For the qualitative part of this study, the in-depth interviews are lower in number and therefore require thorough purposeful sampling as to ensure that the interviewees consist of residents being the best possible representation of the Interreg operational area. As said the interviews take place in four different municipalities. First, these municipalities had to be selected. Criteria on which this selection took place are the distance to the Dutch-German border, the size of the municipalities, and the involvement of these municipalities in the arrival and presence of refugees in a broad sense. The selected municipalities will be described in chapter 4, involving also a more precise explanation of the selection criteria. The interviews within these municipalities consist of two lines: a first line to discuss municipal policy on refugees with municipal officials ('expert'-interviews), and a second line to discuss the refugee perception and border perception of borderland residents. These interviews will be semi-structured.

The first line of interviews is mainly of a descriptive nature and does not require extensive viewpoints from different angles. Therefore one interview per municipality is sufficient to collect the necessary

¹It is desirable for the evaluative Interreg research to be comparable to the baseline measurement of 2015. As this study made use of the same survey as used for this evaluative research, the changes were kept as marginal as possible.

data. The interviewees are selected based on their knowledge and involvement regarding refugee policy within their municipality.

The second line of interviews requires, as said, a more thorough way of purposeful sampling. As mentioned, six residents of each municipality are approached. Through careful selection these residents will be approached based on age, gender, and level of education. This way a maximum variation is tried to achieve in order to allow as little as possible for a biased sample of respondents.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

The instruments for this study consist of an online survey and of in-depth, semi-structured interviews. This subchapter describes and explains the use of these instruments in this research.

3.3.1 Survey

As said, the already planned Interreg survey is used for the quantitative data collection of this research. The survey is distributed among residents of the Interreg operational area through an external organisation, and small changes and additions have been made to fit the survey better within this study. The survey is used to collect information on the resident's border perception and on the resident's perception regarding the arrival and presence of refugees to the resident's country of residence. The survey starts off with several questions concerning the age, education level, gender and home country of the respondent. The substantive questions concern the border perception from a general (physical), economic, socio-cultural and legal-administrative perspective, and an additional set of questions based on the developments surrounding the arrival and presence of refugees in Germany and the Netherlands over the past few years. This resulted in an online survey of 30 questions (22 substantive questions) that took between 5 and 10 minutes to complete; distributed in both a Dutch and a German version. Data collection from the survey took place from May 21st to June 5th 2018, providing the results of 1055 respondents. The substantive questions are closed-ended for the purpose of analysis, and the organization hired for the distribution of the survey and collection of data provided this data in the form of Excel-output to the researchers. For the purpose of this document, the data is in the following chapters is all translated to English; and an English translation of the survey is added to appendix A. No respondents under the age of 18 were approached as these are not allowed to be approached for the database of the company that distributes this survey.

3.3.2 Interviews

The semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted in two lines, as explained before. Both interview lines were conducted using an interview guide, of which an English translation can be found in appendix B (policy interviews) and appendix C (resident interviews). All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The first line of interviews was conducted with 4 municipal officials (one for each selected municipality). These consisted (apart from two descriptive questions concerning the official him/herself) of six open-ended substantive questions which were asked in a quite broad manner and represented various themes regarding the municipal policy on the arrival and presence of refugees and the effect of these policies on the municipality's residents. Each question is accompanied by a short list of topics and follow-up questions to ensure the questions were thoroughly answered. Though mainly of a descriptive nature, the open way in which these themes are discussed allows for the interviewee to diverge from the questions and thus influence the course of the conversation. The interview was organized intentionally this way as to allow for the most possible relevant information

to be discussed (Creswell, 2012). The interviewees were selected by contacting the four municipalities and asking for the municipal official who could be of most 'help' with the topic (Creswell, 2012); in other words, who had the most knowledge of, and involvement in the municipal policy concerned with the arrival and presence of refugees. The interviews all took between thirty minutes and one hour.

The second line of (again, semi-structured) interviews was conducted with 24 residents (six for each selected municipality). These consisted (apart from a few introductory questions about the residents themselves) of approximately twenty questions divided over four main themes: the resident's border perception, refugee perception, experience with refugee policy, and their thoughts on a possible relation between these three themes. These themed questions are partly based on the sub-questions of this research, and furthermore line up with (the type of) questions asked in the survey as to make for more easy comparisons of the data in the data analysis. The questions are of both a descriptive and more analytical nature (involving the 'why' as well). The interviews were set up as on-going conversations, with room to diverge from the questions asked, and sometimes a different order to ask the questions in if the conversation gave rise to it. The interviewees were mostly approached via Facebook pages of the municipalities, in which a call was placed. Others were approached via acquaintances. Residents that responded were asked to share their age, gender and level of education in order to select a representative sample of the (local) community, after which the interviews were planned and took place in a location chosen by the respondent (usually their home). The interviewees were promised anonymity and encouraged to share their honest feelings and opinions, with the researchers giving no opinion or counter reaction of their own except potential follow-up questions. Within themes this sometimes led to very diverging outcomes of the interviews, which ranged between 25 minutes and one and a half hour.

An overview of the interview respondents there features is presented in chapter 4.5.

3.4 SUB-QUESTIONS IN RELATION TO RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Here a short overview is provided of how the collected data of the above described instruments can be used to provide answers for the various sub-questions of this study.

1. *What is the perception of residents in these municipalities regarding a. the Dutch-German border and b. refugees, why is perception like this, and how has it changed?*

This question is answered through the use of both survey and interview results. The survey questions ask about both the border perception and the refugee perception of residents; what this perception looks like now (seen from various aspects; in general, economic, etc.), and how this has changed over the last years. The large number of respondents will provide a representative but 'closed' view on the border perception and refugee perception. The interviews also explore the refugee and border perception of these respondents, and though from a smaller sample, these answers will be more in-depth and therefore can provide context for the survey results. The same accounts for the question as to how the border perception and refugee perception have changed over the years.

The question *why* the perception of a person is the way it is will be answered with the use of the interview results as well, as via follow-up questions in the interviews is asked why people perceive the border and the refugee situation the way they do.

2. *What is the relation between the residents' perception of refugees and the residents' interpretation of the Dutch-German border, and why is the relation like this?*

To answer this question, several sources are used. First, direct questions from both survey and interviews regarding this relation were asked. In the survey this is a direct and closed question, which

can again be supplemented with more in-depth answers from the interviews which might provide more context. Furthermore, the results as sketched above for sub-question 1 will be used to search for indirect proof of parallels and possible relations. The results for the refugee perception and the border perception were collected separately, but for this question they will be compared to each other to search for similarities and differences. Especially the questions about how the perceptions have changed might provide useful parallels or deviations by which a possible relation might be established.

3. *What policy is implemented by Dutch-German border municipalities with regard to refugees, and what expected and observed effects with regard to residents are involved? Specific: (how) does the found municipal policy relate to residents' perception of refugees?*

This question is answered through the use of related interview questions of both interview line 1 and 2. Interview line 1 consists of questions on the nature of refugee policy, the expected effects this might have, and the experienced effects (from the municipal point of view). This will provide an extensive description which can then be complemented with the results of questions from interview line 2, asking respondents what experiences they have with / what they notice of the municipal refugee policy. In the policy interviews (line 1) the direct question is posed whether the municipal official sees a relation between the policy and resident's refugee perception, which links directly to research question 3a. A choice was made not to ask this question directly to citizens, with the intention to avoid forcing an answer that might not have originally existed; instead, when asking citizens about the effects of policy, the researchers explored through follow-up questions if this might have had an effect on the perceptions of the respondent.

4. *How does the found municipal policy relate to the resident's interpretation of the Dutch-German border, and why?*

To answer this question is largely to answer the main research question of this study. The answer will consist largely of a combined result of the other sub-questions of this research. A possible relationship can be detected by comparing the answers to the questions '*(how) does the found municipal policy relate to residents' perception of refugees, and why?*' and '*What is the relation between the residents' perception of refugees and the residents' interpretation of the Dutch-German border, and why is the relation like this?*' An additional (but probably minor) source for answering this question can be found in interview line 1 (with the municipal official), in which quite directly is asked if a relation between municipal policy and residents' border interpretation occurs from a municipal point of view. As with the previous sub-question, a choice was made not to ask this question directly to citizens with the intention to avoid forcing an answer that might not have originally existed.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

In this part of the methodology, the various steps of the data analysis are discussed. As explained a choice is made for a mixed methods approach using a convergent parallel design. This implies that both the qualitative and quantitative data is collected separately, possibly simultaneously, as one dataset is not necessarily subordinate to the other; they are both equally important and complement each other (Creswell, 2012). For the practical working-out of the results a choice is made to first analyse and describe the results of the survey, then analyse and describe the results of the interviews, and finally compare the results by taking the survey results as a general statistical overview (representative for the whole Interreg operational area) and support these with qualitative themes that complement, contradict or otherwise relate to the survey results. This subchapter consists therefore of the following

build-up: first the analysis of the survey results is described (including an explanation of the use of perception 'scores'), then the analysis of the interview results, and finally how the two are combined.

3.5.1 Survey analysis

The data of the survey is collected by an external organisation and shared with the researcher in the form of output in an Excel document. After removing empty responses and responses from zip codes that do not belong to the Interreg operational area, a sample of 1048 respondents could be used for analysis. This data is analysed through the use of SPSS Statistics. The results can be divided in two major groups.

First, the analysis of the dataset results in a description of the answers given on the survey question (for example, questions about how one perceives the Dutch-German border from various aspects and how one perceives the coming and arrival of refugees). These are presented in tables which are, if not directly used in the results, to be found in appendix D. All these results are also checked for differences when comparing countries of residence, gender, age and education level so that divergent result for certain groups of people are not overlooked. When of relevance or importance to answering the sub-questions of this study, the tables and / or descriptions of the statistical trends, underlying relations etc. are included in the results chapter.

The answers to the survey questions are then used for further analysis, providing the second group of results. This analysis delivers an image of the border perception in numbers, for the general (physical), economic, socio-cultural and legal-administrative aspect. These numbers or scores are calculated based on the measurement presented by van Houtum (1999) as discussed in the theoretical framework, and the alterations made for the specific needs of this study. Due to these case-specific adaptations, the process of what is precisely done and how is described in the case description, chapter 4.4. The analysis thus gives, next to the description of the answers on the interview question, also a set of scores. These are: the score per aspect, for two dimensions: how one perceives the barrier effect of the border in daily practice, and in how far one perceives the border as self-evident; the scores for each aspect in total (the mean of the two dimensions per aspect); and a total perception score, by taking the mean of the total scores for the four aspects. These scores will be presented and described in tables (thereby taking into account various variables such as age and gender) in the results chapter, thereby highlighting statistical trends and possible underlying relations.

3.5.2 Interview analysis

The analysis of the interviews for both interview lines takes place partly differently. Interview line 1 (policy interviews with municipal officials) is relatively straight-forward and of a very descriptive nature, and therefore does not require an in-depth thorough analysis. The collected data in the transcript are coded summarized based on a set of themes. These themes are directly diverged from related questions and statements of the interview. Within each theme, comparisons will be made between the municipalities in order to describe similarities, differences and other noteworthy features.

The second line of interviewing is analysed in a more thorough way. The collected data in the transcript of the interviews, meant to provide more in-depth answers which can be complementary to the quantitative dataset, will be coded. Two ways described by scholars were most relevant to this research. One can use a very unstructured, open approach as suggested by Charmaz (2000), who formulated a more constructivist grounded theory approach. On the other hand one can use a more structured approach as provided by Strauss and Corbin in their more positivist grounded theory

approach (Creswell, 2012). Since there is no goal in this study to create a (full) new theory, choice has been made to partly follow the steps of the more structured approach in this matter.

The main step here is a process of semi-open coding. This step involves a 'free' kind of categorizing, based on what the researchers reads in the transcription; his first thoughts and ideas. It has a very explorative nature, and involves questions like: what is it about? Which elements are involved? What roles do they play? What aspects are addressed? Quotations addressing similar topics can be given the same codes (Creswell, 2012). Because the use of a mixed-methods approach a choice is made to bring a little structure in this open coding phase where the researcher also codes for the different interview questions and themes. This way it is made easier in the analysis to search for the overlap between the quantitative and qualitative dataset.

The created codes are numerous and are reviewed to search for overlap and create larger categories, summarizing several codes together in overarching themes. Codes are connected to each other. This is what Creswell (2012) describes as axial coding. Irrelevant codes are deleted, codes similar to each other can be merged and codes containing a very wide / large set of quotations might be split up in more specific codes.

The third step of selective coding as proposed by Creswell is not performed in this study as such, since the mixed methods approach does not require the distillation of core phenomena or 'head' themes (which can be used to create new theories). Instead the main codes and themes that emerged from the first two steps of coding are now described in a summarizing way, with the summaries relating to themes and questions of the interview which in turn relate to the questions of the survey. This way, comparison in a later stadium between the quantitative and qualitative dataset becomes more practical. These summaries will be presented in the results chapter, in which quotations of individual residents will be shown but also a more quantifying language can be used (for example, describing that *'several of the respondents described the border as having a very open character'*).

3.5.3 Combining results

To present the results in a comprehensive manner, the structure will follow the structure of the research questions. This will divide the results in four chapters. The first chapter will be about the border perception. The second will be about the refugee perception. These first two chapters will have a similar structure. First, a division will be made in larger themes within each chapter. For example, in chapter one a division between general image of the border, importance of the border, and change in border perception. Relevant quantitative data will be presented and described within each themes; tables displaying answers to relevant research questions or presenting perception scores. Then, interview results concerned with the same large themes will be presented, often divided into smaller themes that give different insights into the nature and reasoning behind residents' perceptions. Each larger theme will be concluded with a section on the most relevant findings and the similarities / differences between survey- and interview results.

In the third chapter, both perceptions will be brought in relation with one another. First new direct results from survey and interview will be presented, in the same manner as in the previous two chapters, that might lead to a direct observation of a relation between refugee perception and border perception. Second, the results of the previous two chapters will be reviewed again two search for more indirectly present parallels that might indicate a relation not shown by the direct results; concluded with a section on the findings regarding a relation between both perceptions.

The final results chapter focusses on municipal refugee policy. First, the results of the interviews with the municipal officials are described. What policy is implemented, how, why? How did this involve or

affect citizens? Second, the results of the citizens speaking about the refugee policy are presented. What do they know about it, how do they feel about it, what experiences do they have with it. This is followed by a section discussing the findings on how municipal policy might have effected refugee perception and, also addressing results of the previous chapters, how this policy might also relate to border perception.

3.6 REFLECTION ON METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The representativity of the respondent sample for the survey has already been discussed. By ensuring a large number of respondents and hiring a professional organization for the equal distribution across the Interreg operational area this has been taken care of. The selection of municipalities and respondents is not so large. The number of interviews has been sufficient to create a stable image of perceptions and relations between them and with municipal policy for local residents, but it should be kept in mind that the eventual outcomes cannot be assumed automatically to be widely representative for all municipalities alongside the border; making this study of an exploratory nature.

According to Creswell (2012), the differences in sample size involves a risk that the importance of a smaller sample size becomes minimized in relation to the larger dataset. This has been avoided by ensuring that both data sets are first analysed and described in the results separately as self-standing studies regardless of their sample size, and to, in combining the results, describe them in a complementary manner to each other; not making one dataset subordinate to the other. Therefore, the results section will show no sign of favouring outcomes of the survey over outcomes of the interviews.

This research focuses specifically on the relation between refugee policy and border interpretation. Such framing within the framework of a thesis is both necessary and logically. It is however important to keep in mind that any possible observed changes in perception and interpretation take might (and will) not only be due to refugee policy, but can also be related to other influencing factors. It is therefore important not to be too sure about seemingly logical interpretations that might follow from the results in this study, and reflect on the above again in the discussion of this thesis.

4 THE INTERREG OPERATIONAL AREA AND THE REFUGEE SITUATION

This research aim and context make clear that the study is partly induced by Interreg Deutschland-Nederland and as such will provide data for this organisation's operational area: the Dutch-German borderland. To ensure a representative study for this whole region, the quantitative part of this mixed methods research (the survey) has been distributed proportionally over the area as described in chapter 3. To provide in-depth data and context the qualitative part of this study (the interviews) has been set in four different municipalities within the Interreg operational area. As described, this study is not a case study in the strict sense of the word. The focus lies on a specific issue (resident's perceptions in relation to municipal policy) and not on the 'cases' (the Interreg operational area or the municipalities) itself. These subjects of research therefore can be considered instrumental cases within this research (Creswell, 2012).

As such, this chapter provides a case description in which first the Interreg Deutschland-Nederland as a program and as an area will be described in relation to this study, after which the same is done for the four individual municipalities and the criteria by which they have been selected. This will be followed by a description of the most relevant regulations, developments etc. regarding the arrival and presence of refugees in the European Union and for both countries, both on national and local level. An extra section is added to discuss the implications of the frame in which this study takes place for certain choices regarding the operationalization of concepts, including an explanation of how and why so the perception scores are measured. This chapter will be concluded with a short reflection on how the data collection has taken place, including overviews of the respondents to both survey and interviews and their characteristics.

4.1 INTERREG DE-NL SUBSIDY PROGRAM AND OPERATIONAL AREA

4.1.1 Interreg subsidy program

Interreg Europe is an organization funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) of the European Union, which aims to help regional and local governments of the EU in developing and implementing good policy. Interreg wishes to reach this through sharing and cooperating, as it is Interreg's belief that together better performance can be achieved and therefore better results will be obtained. To make this happen, Interreg offers local and regional public authorities the opportunity to share ideas and experiences related to public policy. Cooperation, collaboration and community engagement, being the 3 C's, are at the heart of Interreg. Interesting here is that the focus is not on states as a whole per se, but on (transnational) regional developments (Interreg Europe, 2018).

Interreg works through programming periods, and is currently in its fifth period; going from 2014 to 2020. The Interreg program is currently therefore referred to as Interreg-V. Interreg-V programs consist of three different types of partnerships. The first, Interreg V-A, aims at cross-border cooperation in border areas. These programs are of a more practical nature. The second, Interreg V-B, consists of cooperation over larger areas; for example the North Sea Region Program. The third is Interreg Europe (known as Interreg C in previous programming periods). This involves all member states of the European Union and is aimed at optimizing regional policies. The focus of this study lies with Interreg Deutschland-Nederland, which is an example of an Interreg V-A program. According to Interreg Deutschland-Nederland (Interreg DE-NL) increasing cross-border cooperation results in national borders within the EU losing meaning and function. Interreg as a subsidy program is meant to strengthen this cross-border cooperation. To achieve this in the Dutch-German borderland, 440 million

euro has been set aside in the 2014-2020 program period. Interreg DE-NL uses this money for two main goals within the program: 1. to increase the innovative potential of the borderland, and 2. to decrease the barrier effect of the Dutch-German border. The projects financed by Interreg DE-NL can be initiated by individuals, private corporations and organizations and public organizations as well (Interreg Deutschland-Nederland, 2018). The regions participating in the Dutch-German Interreg program (and therefore being the extended research area of this study) are shown in figure 2. The official partners of this Interreg region consist mostly of several Dutch and German national ministries, several Dutch provinces, and the Euregions of Germany and the Netherlands.



Figure 2 Interreg Deutschland-Nederland - participating regions (source: Interreg Deutschland-Nederland, 2018).

The focus of this research lies with the Dutch-German border perception of borderland residents. Therefore the further focus here now lies on the second main priority of the program: decreasing the barrier effect of the Dutch-German border. According to the program, the decrease of the barrier effect goes hand in hand with the strengthening of social-cultural and territorial cohesion in the borderland. Though residents of the Interreg operational area have many cross-border contacts and free travel has become the norm, the Dutch-German border can still be perceived as an obstacle in obtaining certain goals (Interreg Deutschland-Nederland, 2018). Problems perceived are, for example, an inadequate mobility system. To make sure the Dutch-German border will lose its barrier function, a cooperation is necessary that functions routinely; cross-border interaction between both residents and institutions needs to be intensified. Projects within this program line can function not only from a concrete set of activities, but also in a psychological manner (e.g. through education and culture). Themes in which the projects can be divided are:

- Work, education, culture
- Nature, landscape, and the environment
- Structure and demography
- Network-building at local and regional Level

To evaluate if the program has been successful, it must be shown that:

- attitudes towards the neighbouring country have become more positive;
- cross-border relationships have intensified;
- the inhabitants of the programme area regard the border as an opportunity rather than a barrier. (Interreg Deutschland-Nederland, 2018)

The common secretariat of Interreg Deutschland-Nederland has, among other tasks, the task of organizing and implementing evaluations of the Interreg program. Through an extensive survey in the Dutch-German borderland, the barrier function of the Dutch-German border will be measured and compared with the results of a previous baseline measurement performed in 2015, of which the results

can be found in the Interreg rapport *Tussenevaluatie van de resultaatindicator van prioriteit 2: 'Perceptie van de Duits-Nederlandse grens als barrière'* (not published). The second has been carried out in the late spring of 2018 by the researcher, of which the survey also provides the quantitative data for this study. A final evaluation will take place at the end of the program, in 2021-2022. Some of the central questions regarding priority 2 are: what is the impact of Interreg priority 2 projects in the program area? Does the intervention logic of the program function as planned? Do the projects achieve their goals, mainly: reduce the barrier function of the border for residents and institutions, and reduce the perception of the Dutch-German border as a barrier? (Interreg Deutschland-Nederland, 2017)

4.1.2 Interreg NL-DE operational area

The operational area of the Interreg program 'Deutschland- Nederland' stretches from the Wadden Sea in the north to the Lower Rhine region in the south, over a border length of about 460 kilometers long. The operational area of the subsidy program includes around 14,3 million residents; 7,3 million on the Dutch side and 7 million on the German side of the border (Landesamt für Statistik Niedersachsen, 2017; Information und Technik Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2017; Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2018). In the Netherlands this includes the provinces Groningen, Friesland and Drenthe as a whole, and large parts of Gelderland, Brabant and Limburg. In Germany this includes large parts of the federal states Nordrhein-Westfalen and Niedersachsen. The larger urban hubs on both sides of the border are Arnhem-Nijmegen, Eindhoven, Düsseldorf and Münster. Every municipality or *Kreis* can decide whether or not it wants to join Interreg Deutschland-Nederland. Other types of organizations such as regional water authorities can participate as well. In 2018 several hundreds of organizations are member of one of the Euregio's within the Interreg program area (Interreg Europe, 2018).

The Interreg area covers a large part of the Dutch-German border region, a region that has a rich history. With regard to this study the most important characteristics and developments are those since the time of the Second World War, since these might have directly affected how the current residents in the area perceive the border. An important moment in history is for example the German annexation of the Netherlands in the Second World War, which lasted for over 5 years and gave rise to a large refugee flow out of the borderland area from both the Dutch and the German side of the border. After this period of time, the physical border went to several significant changes. In 1949 the Netherlands for example negotiated 69 square kilometers for their country to compensate for the losses of World War II, which however almost fully were returned to West-Germany in 1963 except for the Duivelsberg by Nijmegen (the Geographer, 1964). Even to this very day a dispute over the boundary exist in the north, concerning the demarcation of the border in the Ems-Dollart Estuary; a dispute of which a status quo has prevailed since 1559. However, it should be noted that despite the above mentioned border issues the Dutch-German border is one of Europe's most stable, with the northern part being over 450 years old and the southern part dating back 200 years (the Geographer, 1964; van der Velde, 2015).

With both countries being member of the European Union and the Schengen Agreement, the hard border has diminished. On January 1st 1993, when the Schengen Agreement came in to force, the barriers were removed; and later also most of the custom houses. A soft border with occasional border patrols remains till this day. Many of the current residents in the borderland area have experienced this transition from control towards free movements of people and goods, which possibly has been of influence on their perception of the border as well.

4.2 ARRIVAL AND PRESENCE OF REFUGEES IN THE RESEARCH AREA AND GENERAL POLICIES

Though this study so far has spoken only of refugees in a general sense, it is with regard to regulations on housing etc. important to keep in mind at least one major distinction in two groups: those who are trying to obtain a refugee status and are awaiting their process in this matter, and those who already have been recognized as legitimate refugees. With regard to municipal policy, the research concerns both groups, which for convenience here (unless stated otherwise) will always be described as refugees. This chapter will shortly discuss the general approaches / responses to the arrival and presence of refugees on a European Union level and on state-level (the Netherlands and Germany)

4.2.1 European Union

The asylum policy of the European Union is meant to offer protection to every member of a country outside of the EU who is in need of international protections. These persons must get this protection by obtaining a refugee status in one of the EU member states, where they will also fall under the law of non-refoulement: a refugee or asylum seeker can never be forced to return to a country if they are in danger of persecution in that country (Europees Parlement, 2019). Large part of the asylum policy were drawn up in the 1990 Treaty of Dublin, among other things stating that asylum seekers should find asylum in the first EU country they enter. Because of the difficulties this already posed to several countries in the south of the EU, the 2009 Lisbon Treaty specifically points to the principle of solidarity and a fair distribution of responsibilities between member states (Europees Parlement, 2019).

The European migration 'crisis' of 2015 however exposed the shortcomings in the asylum system (Constant & Zimmerman, 2016). Millions of people fled to Europe over the past few years, with 1,2 million asylum requests in 2016. In march 2016, the European Union and Turkey reached an agreement to send all illegal migrants who arrive in Greek isles back to Turkey. This led to a sudden, strong decrease in the number of refugees, who however later began to find their way back; this time towards Italy, via Africa (Europees Parlement, 2017). The European Parliament is working on a new asylum policy, which is still under discussion. The aim is to keep the criteria from the Dublin Treaty, and supplement it with a corrective allocation mechanism to relieve Member States that are under disproportionate pressure (Europees Parlement, 2019).

4.2.2 The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, asylum seekers arriving in the country need to register themselves in the city of Ter Apel, in the province of Groningen. After registration there asylum procedure can start. The 'Centraal Orgaan Opvang Asielzoekers' (COA), or Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, controls the accommodation of asylum seekers. They are first allocated to various asylum centers ('*asielzoekerscentra*' or AZC's) throughout the country. These AZC's function on a municipal level, and municipalities and the COA discuss together whether a municipality will facilitate an AZC or not; it is thus up to municipalities themselves whether they decide to open a center. The state can only send out requests, which are coordinated by the COA. Do to this relatively voluntary nature, the number of AZC's varies from province to province. During the 'start' of the sudden rise of refugee arrivals in 2015, the government send out emergency calls throughout the country in order to find enough locations for AZC's. The main goal is to keep asylum seekers there for just 8 days (which is the time the standard asylum procedure can take), and for a maximum of six months (Rijksoverheid, 2018).

If asylum is granted, the now refugees will be distributed over the country's municipalities. The number of refugees depends on the population size of the municipality. This number is calculated and communicated every half year to the municipalities and is known as the '*taakstelling*' (task) of that

municipality (Rijksoverheid, 2018). Municipalities are then responsible for arranging appropriate housing and an income. Furthermore they must start up and guide integration trajectories that at least need to meet the requirements of the nation-wide participation trajectory; but how and in what time frame these criteria are met is up to the municipality.

4.2.3 Germany

Upon arrival in Germany, first has to be established if asylum seekers will be granted a refugee status or not. Immediately a first categorization is made between certain groups of refugees. This is not only to separate asylum seekers from immigrants, but also results in a type of sub-categorization between groups of asylum seekers to which different regulations might apply; thus in fact being a process of inclusion and exclusion, as your rights depend on the group in which you will be placed (El-Kayed & Hamann, 2018).

The asylum seekers are divided over the countries' federal states using a distribution tool called the 'Königsberger Schlüssel', which bases the distribution on both the population size of the state and the state's taxes income. Within the state, the asylum seekers are divided over 'Erstaufnahme-einrichtungen' (EAE), the first admission facilities provided for these refugees. They are not allowed to leave the districts in which they have been accommodated (El-Kayed & Hamann, 2018).

From here, asylum seekers are to be allocated to municipalities and districts within the state where they were first placed. They need to stay here for at least 3 years before they can freely move to another place in Germany.

However, the accommodation of these asylum seekers (or refugees, from the moment that they receive this status) is up to the interpretation of the states and even the districts and municipalities themselves (El-Kayed & Hamann, 2018). In Nordrhein-Westfalen, where both of the German municipalities of this study are located, asylum seekers often only stay one week in one of the eight EAE's. After this period they are allocated to 'Zentrale Unterbringungseinrichtungen' (ZUE) or central accommodation facilities, where they might stay up to six months. Afterwards, asylum seekers are distributed over the districts, and within it, over the municipalities, according to population size and surface area (Flüchtlingsrat Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2018). It is normal for asylum seekers to arrive in a community accommodation until it becomes clear whether they receive a residence permit. The municipalities in Nordrhein-Westfalen the municipalities are responsible for arranging housing and a type of income. The *Kreis* (district) arranges the asylum procedures.

Once asylum seekers have obtained a refugee status, again the distribution tool decides how many refugees a state and a municipality has to take in. A refugee placed somewhere as an asylum seeker, does not necessarily stay there after obtaining a refugee status. A first step towards integration in Nordrhein-Westfalen already starts with asylum seekers, as they can follow language courses. When obtaining status, they gain access to a whole package of varying integration courses, including a mandatory civil integration course.

Municipalities struggled with the question whether they should house asylum seekers and status holders centralized or de-centralized. Some municipalities provide in apartments and houses for refugees. Others place refugees in mass-accommodations. After the sudden rise in influx of 2015 even in states that had specific regulations on this, these were ignored due to the acute situation. Local and regional administrations decided for themselves, often settling for 'whatever worked' (El-Kayed & Hamann, 2018)

4.3 SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES IN THE INTERREG OPERATIONAL AREA

As explained in the methodological section of this study, two Dutch and two German municipalities are selected for the qualitative research: the interviews. A choice to take two of each country was made to illustrate differences and similarities between the two countries, as is also highly requested for the main research aim and by the larger context of this study; Interreg. However more criteria were necessary in order to choose municipalities that are representative for the aim of this research and for the research area. These criteria are partly shaped due to the specific context of this study as described above, concerning certain characteristics of the Interreg DE-NL operational area and the regulations concerning the arrival and presence of refugees. These criteria will now be explained.

The first criteria is the distance to the Dutch-German border. In each country municipalities have been chosen that lie close to the border, preferably directly connected to the border. This choice was made since one of the studied concepts is border perception, which is why an attempt is made to address people living in the direct proximity of the border; to ensure the possibility to interview people that actually have border experiences. Furthermore, from a policy point of view, the chance of encountering existing refugee policy involving one way or another the Dutch-German border will be higher for municipalities directly on the border. Therefore, doing research in border municipalities might provide some interesting insights in the relation between border perception and municipal refugee policy.

A second criterium involves the size of the municipality. The borderland has only a few larger cities, of which the German ones are located quite far away from the border. The region consists mostly of towns and communities that are relatively small in number of residents. Therefore a choice is made for the four municipalities to be relatively small as well.

A third criterium is the involvement of municipalities with the arrival and presence of refugees. In both the Netherlands and Germany, all municipalities need to house a certain number of refugees that often is proportional to the population size of the municipality itself. However, the *first* admission facilities, where refugees are often gathered in larger numbers (see also chapter 4.3) are not present in every municipality (as explained above). Therefore, the choice was made for both countries to select municipalities both with and without such a first admission facility.

Based upon the above criteria, four municipalities were selected. For the Netherlands these are Bergen Dal and Winterswijk, and for Germany these are Kleve and Rees. Their location within the DE-NL borderland is shown in figure 3. Now follows a short description for each of these municipalities, thereby also reviewing them according to the mentioned criteria.

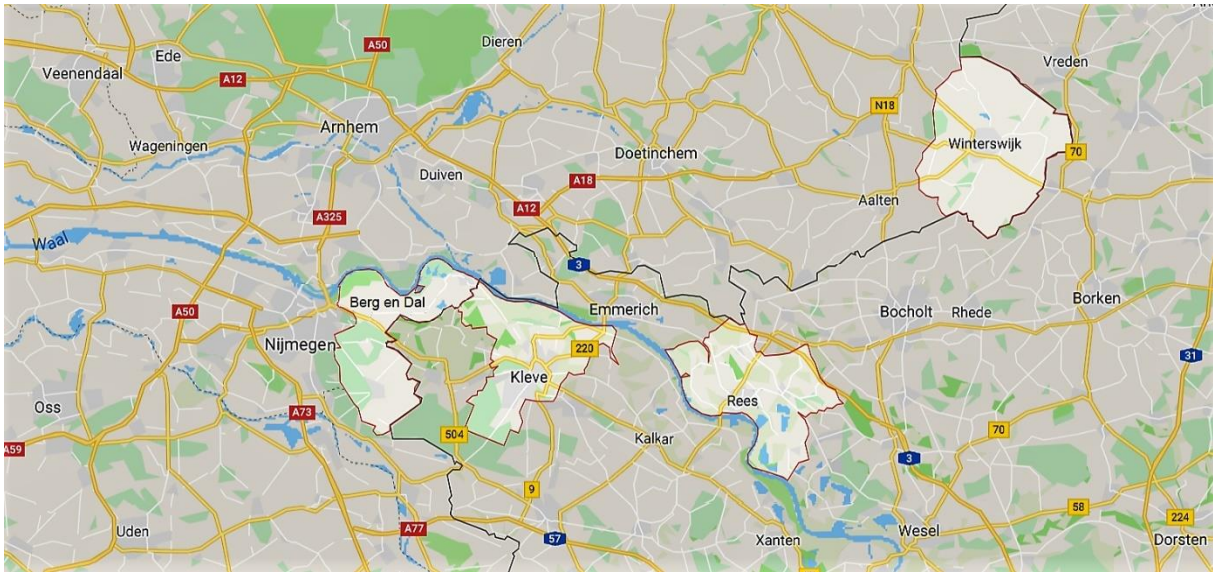


Figure 3 The four selected municipalities within a part of the Dutch-German border area (source: Google Maps)

Kleve

Kleve is a city in the northwest of the German federal state Nordrhein-Westfalen, and capital of the district or *Kreis* Kleve. The city lies with its northwest side at the Dutch-German border, just south of the river Rhine. The city had 51.047 residents in September 2018 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018). The city is governed by an elected city council, which answers to the Landkreis. Kleve is popular amongst Dutch people for shopping and buying groceries because of the cheaper German prices, resulting in a large dependency from Kleve's retailers on their Dutch customers.

Kleve has to house a certain number of asylum seekers and refugees based on its population size and areal size. It did not have a central accommodation facility, where asylum seekers might stay the first 6 months upon arrival in Germany (as clarified in chapter 4.2.3). The city is responsible for arranging housing and other facilities for refugees. Integration courses are carried out by the community college. Federal state and country finance most of this, via the district. Actions concerning refugees are orchestrated through a number of organizations and associations which function as a network, coordinated by the municipality.

Rees

Rees is a municipality that consists of several small communities in the northwest of the German federal state Nordrhein-Westfalen, the largest one being the town of Rees. The municipality lies on the banks of the river Rhine, and stretches out north from there until it touches upon the Dutch-German border. The municipality had 21.040 residents in September 2018 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018). Just like Kleve, the town has a chosen city council answering to the Landkreis. Rees has had two ZUE's in the past few years. Furthermore, as in Kleve, Rees has to house a certain number of refugees based on its population size and areal size.

Both Rees and Kleve belong to *Landkreis* Kleve, a layer of governance between city/municipality and the federal states that together form Germany. The Landkreis is represented by a chosen parliament, and is responsible for tasks such as hospitals, garbage disposal, issuing driver's licenses etc. Landkreis Kleve in turn is part of *Regierungsbezirk* Düsseldorf, an extra administrative layer between Landkreise and federal states that only in some of Germany's federal states exists.

Concerning asylum seekers, Rees had two ZUE's or central accommodation facilities over the past years. For the rest, their responsibilities are the same as for Kleve, as described above.

Berg en Dal

Berg and Dal is a municipality that consists of several small towns in the southeast of the Dutch province of Gelderland, the largest one being Groesbeek. The municipality borders for a large part with Germany on the eastside. On its northeast flows the river Rhine, which splits up and continues on the northside of the municipality as the Waal. The municipality was created in 2015 through the fusion of the former municipalities Groesbeek, Millingen aan de Rijn en Ubbergen. In Augustus 2018, Berg en Dal counted 34.691 residents. The municipality has an elected city council.

Berg en Dal has to house a certain amount of refugees, based on its population size. The municipality however did not host an asylum center in the past years, where refugees might stay the first 6 months upon arrival in the Netherlands. The municipality did consider this when the Dutch government sent out emergency calls in 2015, but put this on hold while in the neighboring municipality of Nijmegen already a large asylum center (Heumensoord) was being opened. When in a later stadium they picked up discussion on this again, consulting with real estate owners for a location, the arrival of refugees had already passed its peak and the COA communicated it was no longer necessary. All actions concerning refugees are not only carried out by the municipality, but by a variety of organizations. The municipality has a coordinating role in this.

Winterswijk

Winterswijk is a municipality in the east of the Dutch province of Gelderland, consisting of several small communities and towns; the largest one being the town of Winterswijk itself. In Augustus 2018, Winterswijk counted 29.610 residents. The municipality borders for a large part with Germany, on the east and southside. Winterswijk has its own chosen city council.

The municipality has to take in a certain amount of refugees, proportional to the population size. Furthermore, Winterswijk facilitates an AZC within its borders. They chose for this AZC themselves, with a lot of support from the public, years before the sudden rise in refugee influx of 2015. Many of the citizens had proposed themselves to open an asylum center; mostly because of the positive experiences with a former AZC that had been present in de municipality. The AZC itself is controlled by the COA.

Berg en Dal and Winterswijk lie in different parts of the Dutch province of Gelderland, one of the twelve provinces that together form the Netherlands, and placed in the east of the country. In contrast to Germany's hierarchical government structure, the Netherlands is a decentralized unitary state. This means the national government, the province and the municipalities work next to each other in a framework of equality, within a frame of national operating legislation.

4.4 CASE-SPECIFIC OPERATIONALIZATION OF CONCEPTS

As described in the methodological section, the quantitative analysis (analysis of the survey results) is based on van Houtum's approach (1999) to border evaluation. Case-specific adaptations were made to van Houtum's work in 2015 to fit the specific context of Interreg's definition of border perception, that have been evaluated for this study and have proven to be of suited as well; therefore being implemented in this study. A description of this process and the outcomes follows here.

As described in the theoretical framework of this study, van Houtum (1999) used a set of 9 semantic differentials or concept pairs to measure the concept op border perception, which through factor analysis resulted in two dimensions: the border as a barrier, and the relevance of the border. In the baseline measurement of 2015, the concept of border perception was similarly made measurable

through a set of variables or indicators; with some slight alterations which fitted better the context of this specific research. The survey presents a certain set of questions for four different aspects (general/physical, economic, socio-cultural and legal-administrative) asking how one perceives the Dutch-German border which the respondent has to indicate through seven indicators or semantic differentials: noticeable-unnoticeable, normal-abnormal, impeding-unimpeding, dividing-undividing, important-unimportant, useful-useless and natural-unnatural (van den Broek, van der Velde, & ten Berge, 2015). With the use of factor analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM), the answers to these questions were analyzed. This analysis showed that the perception can be assessed from two different dimensions, similar to those formulated by van Houtum (1999). The first one was formed by the indicators noticeable, impeding and dividing, and can be explained as how one perceives the border in daily practice. The second dimension was formed by the indicators normal, natural, useful and important and can be explained as how one feels about the existence of the border (the 'self-evidence' of the border) (van den Broek, van der Velde, & ten Berge, 2015).

This factor analysis has been carried out again on the current data, where it was found that the variance in this second measurement can still be explained through the two same dimensions. Furthermore this factor analysis was performed on the outcomes of an extra question comparable to the other survey questions, this time concerning the arrival and presence of refugees as an extra aspect (next to the general, economic etc.). This factor analysis showed that for the refugee aspect as well the variance can be explained by the same two dimensions. Therefore, this study continues to work with the same type of dimension 'scores' as were established in 2015.

The two dimensions give a score for each of the four original aspects (economic, socio-cultural etc.) which can be obtained by taking the mean for the three respectively four concepts per respondent and rescaling them on a scale of 0 to 100. The higher this score, the **less** the border is perceived as a barrier in daily practice, and the **less** a border is perceived as self-evident (van den Broek, van der Velde, & ten Berge, 2015). The scores for the refugee aspect in relation to border perception do not show a snapshot of the current border perception in relation to the arrival and presence of refugees, but rather a process of change in this perception over the last years. These scores are therefore rescaled on a scale of -100 to 100. As a score of 100 is approached can be spoken of a **decrease** in barrier effect, and a **decrease** in the perceived self-evidence of the border. Approaching a score of -100 describes an **increase** in barrier effect, and an **increase** in the perceived self-evidence of the border. A score of 0 then corresponds with no changes in barrier effect or self-evidence.

It is important to emphasize here that all these scores in itself have no meaning; the number can not be interpreted as being 'high' or 'low'. It is only in comparison with other scores (for example through time, or between dimensions and aspects), that these scores are of value for this thesis.

To make sure the data of the qualitative data (the interview)s could be correctly compared to the survey data, the interview questions contained the same semantic differentials (importance, noticeability, divisiveness etc.) that were used in the survey questions that form the base for the calculated perception scores. The interviewee was not asked per se about his or her opinion on every one of these semantic differentials; rather, they functioned as a guideline for the interviewer to structure the interview in the most useful way for this study.

In the quantitative results, several presented tables show the results of variables being put in comparison with one another, searching for a possible (co)relation. For variables where this is the case, the significance of these correlations has been measured for both significance at the 0,01 level (2-tailed), and at the 0,05 level (2-tailed). The results section therefore might contain evidence of

significant correlations; however, these shall not be made visible in the tables. As explained, the scores vary from 0 to 100 (or, for the refugee induced change in border perception, from -100 to 100). Even though small differences between groups or relations between variables might not be statistically measured as significant, they can still be observed as being of interest, and therefore relevant, for this study. Similar, if a relation between variables is proven to have a significant correlation, this does not always mean it will be given extra attention in the results; as this correlation in itself might not be of any relevant addition for the phenomena aimed to describe and explain in this study. Therefore, significance will not be shown in the table themselves as to avoid special attention being given only to certain results. Relevant statistical proof of significance will be addressed in the texts accompanying the tables that present such results. If mentioned, this will always be a significance at the 0,05 level (2-tailed) or higher.

4.5 SHORT REFLECTION ON DATA COLLECTION

The results of the survey were delivered to us by the external organization hired to set out the survey in the Interreg DE-NL operational area. After deleting empty records the survey results consisted 1048 useful responses. An overview of the respondents is presented in table 1².

Table 1 Distribution of survey respondents over country, gender, age and level of education

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

The municipality officials were contacted via e-mail and phone and were all interviewed at their work address (the municipality offices). For the German municipality officials, a German employee of Interreg attended the interviews in order to translate when necessary.

Through messaging on municipality's Facebook pages and via contacts of Interreg and the researcher, six interview respondents per municipality were contacted. In Kleve one older couple asked to be interviewed together, so they together count as one of the six interviews. Most of the respondents have been visited in their homes or at their work address, some at the Interreg office, and one in the researchers university. All interviews were conducted by the researcher and his research partner from a related study. With some of the German respondents, again a German Interreg employee assisted

² A full overview of where the respondents came from within the Interreg Deutschland-Nederland operational area can be found in appendix F (on NUTS-3 level).

for translation. An overview of the interview respondents is presented in table 2. In the results section, the interviewees will be addressed as, for example, 'Kleve A', corresponding with Kleve A in this table.

Table 2 Interview respondents showing municipality, gender, age and level of education

Municipality	Interviewee coding	Gender	Age category	Level of education
<i>Kleve</i>	Kleve A	Man	50-65	Higher
	Kleve B (couple)	Man & Woman	65+	Middle
	Kleve C	Woman	30-50	Higher
	Kleve D	Man	18-30	Higher
	Kleve E	Man	50-65	Higher
	Kleve F	Woman	18-30	Higher
<i>Rees</i>	Rees A	Woman	30-50	Middle
	Rees B	Man	30-50	Middle
	Rees C	Man	30-50	Middle
	Rees D	Woman	50-65	Middle
	Rees E	Woman	18-30	Higher
	Rees F	Man	30-50	Higher
<i>Berg en Dal</i>	Berg en Dal	Man	65+	Lower
	Berg en Dal B	Man	18-30	Higher
	Berg en Dal C	Woman	50-65	Middle
	Berg en Dal D	Woman	50-65	Middle
	Berg en Dal E	Man	30-50	Higher
	Berg en Dal F	Woman	18-30	Higher
<i>Winterswijk</i>	Winterswijk A	Woman	18-30	Higher
	Winterswijk B	Woman	30-50	Middle
	Winterswijk C	Man	18-30	Middle
	Winterswijk D	Woman	65+	Middle
	Winterswijk E	Man	18-30	Higher
	Winterswijk F	Man	50-65	Middle

5 DUTCH-GERMAN BORDER PERCEPTION

The results of this research are discussed in four separate chapters. This first chapter regards the Dutch-German border perception. Here, relevant outcomes of the survey questions related to this theme are described, including the calculated values that indicate the barrier effect of the border. This also includes further descriptions of certain variables if, for example, it appears that differences between groups exist (e.g. differences between levels of education, or age categories). These quantitative results are clarified, explained, or in other ways supported by the interview results from the qualitative part, including summarizing texts and relevant quotations, in a complementary manner. This chapter will be mainly of a descriptive nature.

A second descriptive chapter follows having the same structure, this time regarding the perception on the arrival and presence of refugees.

In chapter 7 both perceptions will be brought together to search for parallels and (potentially causal) relations, as to provide answers on the main questions of this thesis. First the findings of chapter 5 and 6 will be discussed and interpreted. Then, relevant survey results concerning the relation between both perceptions will be presented and described. This will be followed by a description of interview results concerning questions and statements that directly addressed the relation between both perceptions, that might also create a clarifying context for the presented survey results. Then, the possible connection between both perceptions will be examined more indirectly using the results from chapters 5 and 6 as well as other not yet discussed material. Chapter 7 will then be concluded with an analytical section, interpreting the findings of previous sections to determine whether a relation between both perceptions is present. Questions of how and why will be addressed.

The fourth chapter discussing results, chapter 8, will zoom in on the role of municipal policy regarding refugees. First, a summary of the carried-out policy as described by the municipal officials is presented per municipality, discussing policy steps, expectations and experiences regarding issues of housing, integration, and communication to / involvement of residents in the process. This will be followed by stories of citizens on what they know, experience, think of, and hear from the carried out municipal policy with regard to the arrival and presence of refugees. This chapter will be concluded with an analytical section on the possible presence of a relation between municipal refugee policy and the citizens refugee perception and border perception.

All used interview quotations are translated to English and presented with a number and interviewee identification tag; for example (Q1, interviewee Kleve A). The original quotations can be found in the original language in appendix G through their corresponding number, and more detailed information on the interviewees (such as age and education level) can be found in table 2, already presented on page 37.

The composition of the data meant that the choice was made for this chapter to discuss the border perception in three sections, concerning 1. the general image of the border, discussing what people in general observe and experience with the Dutch-German border; 2. the importance of the border, discussing how people value the (existence) of the border, therefore relating to its relevance to them; and 3. changes in border perception. For the change in border perception, also the general results of the evaluative Interreg report (developed parallel to this study and by this researcher) will be discussed.

The interview results within each section are presented through a set of themes that arose as a result of the asked questions and the nature of the responses given. The titles of these themes are derived

from citations from the interview data that represent the core of these themes, and as such give a general indication of the section to follow. As such, these title-citations are not given identification tags.

5.1 GENERAL IMAGE OF THE DUTCH-GERMAN BORDER

As discussed in the theoretical framework, the border perception can be viewed upon as an image of the border resulting from the barrier effect that this border in different ways can have on a person. In the methodological section has been explained how the barrier effect can be described using indicators, resulting in two components, or dimensions. In this section, the perception on the barrier effect of the border is presented through the two dimensions 'barrier effect of the border in daily practice' and 'self-evidence of the border', per aspect (general, economic, socio-cultural, legal-administrative) and in totals. The barrier effect has also been observed for the two sides of the border on which this research focuses, therefore presenting and comparing the perception for both Dutch and German respondents.

5.1.1 Survey results concerning the general image of the Dutch-German border

Border perception in all aspects and dimensions

The perception scores are presented in table 3. The overall score of 52,7 is the outcome of a very divergent set of scores, and in itself has no meaning; as explained on page 35, it is the comparison between different (sets of) scores that is of value for the analysis in this thesis.

Table 3 Border perception: scores in all aspects and dimensions and total

Border perception	In daily practice		self-evidence		Total	
<i>General (physical)</i>	72,8	(N=1026)	40,7	(N=1021)	56,8	(N=1018)
<i>Economic</i>	61,9	(N=1047)	41,0	(N=1046)	51,5	(N=1046)
<i>Socio-cultural</i>	64,5	(N=1047)	43,5	(N=1046)	54,0	(N=1046)
<i>Legal-administrative</i>	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)

These sets of scores show certain patterns. One of these is that for all aspects the barrier effect of the border in daily practices scores significantly higher (and therefore, corresponds with a lower barrier effect) than the self-evidence of the border. The difference between these is especially large within the general aspect, and the smallest for the legal-administrative aspect.

The barrier effect in daily practice is strongest within the legal-administrative aspect (lowest score) and weakest for the general aspect (highest score). The self-evidence of the border manifests itself most within the general (physical) aspect (lowest score), and least within the legal-administrative aspect.

The differences in total score per aspect are mostly caused by the differences between the scores for perception of the border in daily practice; these differences are significantly larger than for the self-evidence of the border. The total scores per aspect show that the barrier effect especially in the general, but also in the sociocultural aspect is lower (higher score) than the overall score, whereas the economic and particularly the legal-administrative barrier effect is stronger (lower scores) than the overall score.

Border perception and country of origin

The perception scores for country of origin are presented in table 4 (per dimension within each aspects) and table 5 (aspect totals and dimension totals).

Table 4 Country of origin – Perception scores per dimension within each aspect

Country	General		economic		socio-cultural		Legal-administrative	
	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	Daily pr.	self-evid.	Daily pr.	self-evid.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.
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

From table 4 it can be noted that the barrier effect in daily practice is lower for German respondents within all aspects; this difference also proved statistically significant for all aspects except legal-administrative. Furthermore, the border is perceived as less self-evident (higher scores) within the general, economic and sociocultural aspect for Germans than for Dutch respondents; but for the legal-administrative aspect this is the other way around.

The differences between the Netherlands and Germany are biggest for the barrier effect in the daily practice (especially within the economic aspect), but smaller for the self-evidence of the border; except for the self-evidence within the general aspect, where the difference is relatively large.

Table 5 Country of origin – Total perception scores per aspect, per total dimension, and overall total

Country	General	Economic	soc.-cult.	Leg.-admin.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	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

Regarding the combined score per aspect (table 5) it shows that German respondents perceive a lower barrier effect (higher scores) than Dutch respondents; especially within the economic and general aspect. For the legal-administrative aspect this difference is small. This trend can be seen in the overall score as well, with German respondents perceiving a lower overall barrier effect than Dutch respondents.

Apart from country of origin, the scores per aspect and dimension were also compared for level of education, gender, different age groups and cross-border visiting frequency.³ No significant differences were observed between groups; most interesting finding being that respondents aged 18-30 score a little lower (so, observe a little more barrier effect) on all aspects and dimensions than other age groups.

5.1.2 Stories of local residents concerning their general perception of the Dutch-German border

The findings from the interviews within the four selected municipalities provide context for the above presented scores, delving deeper into what border region citizens indicate to think about the border and why. As said, statements are presented through themes and will be concluded with a short recap. To provide a first insight of the relation the residents have with the Dutch-German border, they were asked about their direct experiences with it. The interviewees in general state they cross the border

³ Perception scores for these groups can be found in tables E1 to E8 in appendix E.

regularly. This is similar to the results of the survey, which showed about 60% of the people crosses the border at least twice a year⁴. The arguments of the interviewees for doing so differ, but mostly relate to (grocery) shopping & refueling, or going on vacation and other leisure activities. A few also mentioned to have cross-border experiences in a legal-administrative way, e.g. paying taxes in two countries or arranging family allowance because of working across the border. The regular border crossings might be explained as the result of all four municipalities being located directly next to the border. All interviewees therefore live in the border's direct proximity, making it fairly easy to get in touch with this border and experiencing less effort to cross it for various activities.

"Well... there is no border, for me"

At the start of the interviews, the general response of citizens in first instance was to say there is no border between The Netherlands and Germany; they do not see a border between these two countries. They for example speak of not visually experiencing the border, no reason to stop at the border, now differences between both sides of the border, or as for example this older, higher-educated man from Kleve describes:

- *"...There never was a border, really. No reason to stop or something like that, or to be controlled (...). And also the language barrier, was almost never present for me (...). So for me there was... is no border."* (Q1; interviewee Kleve D)

"You see it in everything"

As the conversation delves deeper into the subject, respondents start to show examples of how they do notice the existence of a border; for example by addressing how they notice that they drove into a different country. Frequently addressed examples here include a different style of buildings, different road signs, the former customs-buildings and the lay-out of landscapes, and even difference in people, as this young, higher educated man from Berg en Dal describes:

- *"...You see it in everything. What the people look like. If you place ten people in a row here and there is a German among them, I can pick him out immediately."* (Q2; interviewee Berg en Dal E)

"Very occasionally I get checked..."

Apart from these visual characteristics, respondents also state they notice the border crossing through (a difference in) experiences; incidental police controls, or differences in traffic regulations such as different speed limits, as for example this young, middle-educated man from Winterswijk said:

- *"I experienced a few times that I was stopped with my car, and that you had take out everything you had (...). That was the only thing I found truly impeding."* (Q3; interviewee Winterswijk C)

In this sense, the border is addressed as noticeable by most respondents.

"The cultural differences that are caused by the border, these are just there"

When speaking about noticeability of the border, residents address differences between Dutch and Germans. Most mentioned difference in this context is the language, but cultural differences (such as Dutch directness) are mentioned, too; as well as differences in behavior and in laws and regulations. Related to this it was furthermore noted that several respondents state that Germany and the Netherlands could and should never be united in one country as they perceive this as undesirable, on the basis of these experienced differences, as also felt by this young, high educated woman:

⁴ Survey results for number of border crossings can be found in table D1 in appendix D.

- *"I just do think that it is important to distinguish; that we do not slowly become one country or something like that, I really am not down for that. Then we would belong to Germany. (Q4; interviewee Winterswijk A)*

"We were looking right and left and nothing happens, and we thought "...and now we can go"

Respondents repeatedly address the open character of the border. One of the main arguments given for this open character is the low number of border patrols. This open character is described as desirable by the majority of respondents. At the same time, incidental border patrols are viewed upon as necessary and likewise desirable. Reasons for this primarily revolve around combating (drug related) crime and trade in illegal fireworks, also for this young, high educated man from Berg en Dal:

- *"For me there does not have to be a lot of control, except when there is a threat of if they are searching for someone, or whatever." (Q5; interviewee Berg en Dal B)*

"...and it was all mixed up, and I thought: no, there isn't any divide."

The respondents state the border does not work in a dividing or impeding way, because of the open character. Arguments as *'you can cross the border without problems'* and *'there are no more border controls'* were given regarding the non-dividing nature of the border. One illustrating story from a young, high educated woman from Rees:

- *"I worked there [city of Dinxperlo, MvW] a few weeks in a retirement home, and there is a bridge over the street, from the German retirement home to the Netherlands. (...) All the people could go by foot, and it was all mixed up, and I thought: no, there isn't any divide." (Q6; interviewee Rees E)*

However, a few respondents certainly do experience a degree of division, explaining this through earlier mentioned differences between both sides of the border and thereby again mainly addressing language. Language as a barrier *'obviously restricts you'*. In this same line of reasoning, learning the language was described as a way to overcome this barrier. Cultural and mentality / attitude differences are other mentioned examples of dividing features that involves the Dutch-German border. A middle-aged man from Rees experienced difficulty describing whether the border is divisive or not:

- *"...There are still people who say 'I am a Dutchman', 'I am German'. They just draw a solid line there. But meanwhile they do go and drink a German beer, or buy whiskey in Germany because it is cheaper. So, dividing..." (Q7; interviewee Rees B)*

One man and woman from Rees (both middle aged and middle-educated) described the legal-administrative problems with living and working on different sides of the border, in which the border worked impeding. The, in their eyes, lack of proper communication between both countries was felt as impeding when arranging health care and child benefit.

Recap - the Dutch German border: noticeability from different angels

At the start of the interviews, the general response of citizens in first instance was to say there is no border between The Netherlands and Germany. As the conversation delves deeper into the subject, respondents start to show examples of how they do notice the existence of a border; through visual differences, through (differences in) experiences on both sides of the border, or through cultural differences between the Netherlands and Germany. The border in general is described as very open, and many respondents therefore also address it as non-dividing; but there are several interviewees that do experience dividing or impeding border effects, mainly because of cultural and legal-administrative barriers.

5.2 IMPORTANCE OF THE DUTCH-GERMAN BORDER

5.2.1 Importance of the Dutch-German border in numbers, for the whole research area

The respondents were asked in how far they feel the existence of the border is important (table 6), and in how far they feel it is important to experience the border (table 7).

Table 6 Importance of border 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 7 Importance of border experience

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	

Overall it can be noted for the importance of existence of the border in table 6 that the group scoring ‘averagely important’ is biggest for all aspects, and groups are becoming quite equally smaller when scoring more or less important.

For the importance of experiencing the border (table 7) the same can be observed, though it should be noted that within the general aspect the group stating experiencing the border is unimportant are almost twice the size as the group stating that experiencing the border is important. For the economic aspect, this is exactly the other way around.

The respondents’ views on the importance of the border were also compared for groups: country of origin, level of education, gender and different age groups.⁵ Most interesting finding here is that 18- to 30-year-olds on average find the existence of and experiencing the border relatively more important than respondents from other age groups; the differences however are small.

5.2.2 Views of local residents on the importance of the border

“I wouldn’t know why, yeah, why it should be there”

When interviewing residents of the four municipalities about the importance of the border, a clear division could be observed. On the one hand, residents who state they e.g. do not experience the presence of the Dutch-German border, do not see a physical barrier, and therefore say the existence of this border is not important. An older, middle-aged woman from Rees sees both good and bad characteristics on both sides of the border, and therefore says with regard to the importance:

⁵ These survey results for different groups can be found in tables D9 to D16 in appendix D.

- *"I don't think so. (...) You cross it without controls. On every side are living very nice and very crazy people, so why should there be a border?"* (Q8; interviewee Rees D)

"It's fine that everybody goes everywhere, but a country should stay one country"

On the other hand, there is a group of respondents that does perceive the Dutch-German border as important. This is mainly because of earlier mentioned differences between Germany and the Netherlands that respondents experienced. This middle-aged and middle-educated man from Rees describes this as being obvious:

- *"Of course, because you also describe a piece of history, a piece of cultural heritage. The borders fade away in the borderland, but outside of it, the differences are even bigger."* (Q9; interviewee Rees B)

A few respondents discuss the importance of the own identity, and how the border forms a demarcation of this identity. This young, higher educated man from Berg en Dal in general states the border between Germany and the Netherlands is important to maintain, and says:

- *"You see it in every country; people just want to have their own identity. And when the borders disappear, the people still long for that identity."* (Q10; interviewee Berg en Dal E)

Others speak in relation to the importance of the border about 'traditions and habits', about a 'patriotic pride', about a 'national feeling', expressing quite strong opinions; like several statements from this high-educated, young woman from Berg en Dal, saying that:

- *"I think it is good there are borders (...). We are one people, and that's what you want to express. You want to show: that belongs to me."* (Q11; interviewee Berg en Dal F)

One older, high educated man from Kleve emphasizes that the preservation of differences between the countries is important under the guise of pluralism, which he sees as important; however not in the form of a physical boundary. The importance of the border is further mainly underlined with arguments of a legal-administrative nature: differences in laws and regulations, and the preservation of an institutional demarcation between both countries.

"Personally I don't really see a function. But it's just there".

Regarding the importance of the border, also its function was discussed with the respondents. Several times it was mentioned that the border has no function, or barely has a function anymore. One reason given for example was that the sporadic border patrols are useless, as one can easily go around them and cross the border in another place. A man from Berg en Dal said:

- *"Now it's European Union, so why still have borders. They want to open it all up. Way more useful."* (Q12; interviewee Berg en Dal A)

"It's a little bit for safety"

Some interviewees however did address a function to the border. A frequent assigned function was that of an institutional, administrative demarcation between both countries, and in relation to this, a demarcation in responsibility. A young man from Kleve for example stated European-wide legislation is too hard to maintain, therefore always keeping a need for administrative boundaries on a national level. Furthermore, some respondents still address a function of safety and control to the border. This was for example strongly felt and several times addressed by an elderly couple from Kleve, of which the man stated border patrols are necessary for safety;

"...so not too much nonsense will be made, here and there. (...) It should remain open, but should be controlled a little more often again." (Q13; interviewee Kleve B)

Recap - Importance of the border: a division in two groups

The found division between interviewees with regard to their perception of the importance of the border (important vs. unimportant) corresponds with the findings of the survey, showing on average equal sized groups for both the perception of the border being important as well as being unimportant. For people who described the border as unimportant, the importance is connected to the (lack of) physical existence of the border. For people who described the border as important, this is connected mostly to the earlier addressed differences between both countries. Furthermore, emphasis was placed by several respondents on the importance of demarcating identity, and a feeling of nationalism. Most respondents see no clear function for the border; but some state it to be useful as an administrative demarcation, or as having a function for control and safety.

5.3 CHANGED BORDER PERCEPTION

5.3.1 Change in border perception as measured for the whole research area

Table 8 shows the change in barrier effect as perceived by survey respondents over the past three years. Overall it can be noted for all aspects that a large majority of around 75% of the survey respondents indicated the barrier effect of the Dutch-German border has not changed over the past 3 years. The differences between the aspect are negligible.

Table 8 Changed barrier effect of the Dutch German border over the last three years

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

The respondents' views on their perceived change in barrier effect were also compared for groups: country of origin, gender, level of education and different age groups.⁶ These results did not show significant or interesting differences between groups.

5.3.2 Interview results concerning the change in border perception

"I had a certain image, and this becomes more nuanced"

In the interviews with residents of the four municipalities, Respondents were asked if their border perception changed over the past three years. This resulted in a division between the respondents. On the one hand, a group of people sees hardly to no change in their border perception. These people furthermore often state that their image of the border has always been the way it is now, or that it has deepened; as happened for this high-educated, young man from Kleve:

- Interviewee: *"Well, it keeps adjusting itself. It's not like it changed from black to white; I had a certain image, and this becomes more nuanced."* (Q14; interviewee Kleve D)

⁶ These survey results for different groups can be found in tables D17 to D20 in appendix D.

“You have less and less the feeling that you go abroad”

On the other hand, a group of respondents states their border perception certainly has changed. They attribute this to the abolition of (fixed) border security posts and border patrols, and furthermore to a sense of a growing familiarity with the other side of the border. For all these respondents, their stories described a decrease in barrier effect of the border. This was for example the case for this young, high educated man from Berg en Dal, comparing memories of his childhood with today:

- *“...When we went to play outside, we could play on the street but were not allowed to cross the border. (...) I think that I, would I have kids of my own, would not do that anymore. I would be a bit looser in it.”* (Q15; interviewee Berg en Dal B)

Both sides of the border are growing ever closer to each other, as this high educated woman from Kleve describes:

- *“Well, people are coming closer and closer, I find. And therefore you have less and less the feeling that you go abroad, or that you go in a foreign country.”* (Q16; interviewee Kleve C)

5.3.3 Change in border perception as derived from the Interreg evaluative report

Parallel to this study, the researcher also carried out the study for the Interreg evaluative report (February 2019, not published), comparing perception scores from 2018 with the baseline measurement of 2015; therefore providing some extra insights here concerning a change in barrier effect. The results can be seen in table 9.⁷

Table 9 Interreg evaluative report (2019, not published) - Perception scores of 2018 compared to 2015

Perception of the border		N	Aver. 2018	Aver. 2015*	Change
General	Daily practice	1499	73,1	74,1	- 1,0
	Naturalness ⁸	1491	41,9	46,3	- 4,4
Economic	Daily practice	1500	61,7	57,7	+ 4,0
	Naturalness	1495	42,3	47,6	- 5,3
Social-cultural	Daily practice	1478	64,4	63,9	+ 0,5
	Naturalness	1476	44,9	51,4	- 6,5
Legal-administrative	Daily practice	1405	49,5	37,8	+ 11,7
	Naturalness	1396	46,3	50,5	- 4,2
General	total	1488	57,5	60,3	- 2,8
Economic	total	1495	52,0	52,5	- 0,6
Social-cultural	total	1475	54,6	57,5	- 2,8
Legal-administrative	total	1394	47,9	44,2	+ 3,7
'Overall'		1348	52,9	53,4	- 0,5

*The scores from the baseline measurement of 2015 come from a different sample and are therefore not based on the same N-value.

Compared to 2015, the barrier effect of the border in daily practice is slightly lower for all aspects (higher scores), except the general (physical) aspect. Particularly in the case of the legal-administrative aspect, this has declined sharply. On the other hand, for all aspects the border is seen as more self-evident than in 2015.

The overall general, economic and socio-cultural barrier effect have all increased. Striking is the legal-administrative aspect; the only one where the barrier effect is greatly reduced. In total, the 'overall'

⁷ The Interreg evaluative report of 2019 consists of three versions. This table belongs to the version in which the respondents sample collected by Interreg is weighted to the sample collected by an independent organization. This choice of version and table does however not affect the conclusions presented in this text.

⁸ In the context of the Interreg evaluative rapport, 'self-evidence' is referred to as 'naturalness'

perception of the border as a barrier slightly increased (so, a decrease in the score); This is mainly due to an increase in the perception of the border as something natural, as something self-evident.

Recap - Changes in border perception: non-existent, or over long periods of time

Respondents regard their border perception either as unchanged, or as changed in the sense that the border in their perception has opened up. The latter is a result of the decrease in border controls, and furthermore a result of experiences and recognizances that makes one more acquainted with the country on the other side of the border. Comparing this to the results of the survey question, the interviewees' answers correspond mostly with the large group of people who state that the barrier effect has not changed, and with the (much smaller) group of people who states the barrier effect has become (slightly) less over the years. Looking at the result of the Interreg evaluative report, the overall barrier effect almost did not change; but within it, it was observed that the barrier effect in daily practice has declined (a little) over the past 3 years, whereas the self-evidence of the border increased somewhat.

6 PERCEPTION ON THE ARRIVAL AND PRESENCE OF REFUGEES

This chapter describes and discusses the perception on the arrival and presence of refugees from the findings of both survey and interviews, of which the way of presentation has been clarified on page 39. The composition of the data meant that the choice was made to discuss the refugee perception in two sections, concerning 1. the current perception on the arrival and presence of refugees and 2. changes in this perception. As in chapter 5, the interview results within each section are presented through a set of themes which are based on the asked questions and given responses.

6.1 CURRENT PERCEPTION ON THE ARRIVAL AND PRESENCE OF REFUGEES

6.1.1 Current refugee perception – Overview for the whole research area

Table 10 shows the current refugee perception of the survey respondent. Almost 60% sees the arrival and presence of refugees in their country of residence as noticeable. For the other concept pairs (normal, natural and worrisome), the survey respondents are quite equally divided. About a third of the people indicated the arrival and presence of refugees is normal/natural/worrisome; a third stated it to be abnormal/unnatural/not worrisome; and around another third has a more moderate, average look at the arrival and presence of refugees (category 3).

Table 10 Current perception on the arrival and presence of refugees

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

The respondents' current refugee perception was also compared for groups: country of origin, gender, level of education and different age groups.⁹ Most interesting finding here was that the percentage of Dutch respondents that sees the arrival and presence of refugees as noticeable and natural is significantly lower than for Germans, and that it could be noted that high educated people way more often consider the refugee situation as normal than lower educated people. Further descriptions can be found with the accompanying tables.

6.1.2 Current attitudes of local residents regarding refugees

The survey results present an interesting overall insight for the whole of the research region; however they do not give an in-depth understanding of how and why respondents perceive the arrival and presence of refugees in a certain manner. The findings from the interviews on this topic resulted in a diverse set of images and opinions, which can be summarized in a set of themes that cover the essence of the views of the interviewees. It is of course kept in mind to not make generalized conclusions for the whole research region based on this select number of interviews, but to use them as insightful examples of representative citizens of the Dutch-German border region.

⁹ These survey results for different groups can be found in tables D21 to D24 in appendix D.

The presented themes fit two types of statements; statements representing an understanding attitude towards refugees, and statements representing an attitude in which the arrival and presence of refugees is approached as more questionable. This division is also used to structure this chapter. Furthermore it was found that regardless of attitude, a recurring theme in this phase of the interviews was the process of refugee integration in society. Integration turned out to be such a vital topic for many respondents that a choice has been made to discuss it here as a separate theme, providing in this way also a more in-depth exploration of the ‘understanding’ and ‘questionability’ themes.

Attitude of understanding, regarding the arrival and presence of refugees

“in principle I think it is right that a rich country helps people in need”

A number of statements done in the interviews reflect a perception of refugees that might be interpreted as understanding, as coming from a humanitarian point of view, and often (though not per se) of a rather positive note when speaking about the arrival and presence of refugees. A simple but striking example of such a statement was done by a middle-aged, high-educated man from Rees, who wanted to emphasize refugees are no different than the people living here:

- *“They are people, with human feelings, with human problems. So, that’s always important. Because we often speak of ‘refugees’, which often sounds as if they are people standing on a second or third place.”* (Q17; interviewee Rees F)

He feels refugees should be equally treated as other human beings, having the same feelings, the same problems; making that a valid reason for him to accept the fact that these people come to seek refuge in his country. This situation of equality between refugees and local residents was underlined more often throughout the interviews. These feelings of acceptance, of understanding, also arise with persons who note in the interviews that refugees must have suffered under very bad conditions; for example with this older, middle-educated man from Winterswijk:

- *“Those people experienced a lot more than we ever will. So I find that... Than you should also support these people.”* (Q18; interviewee Winterswijk F)

The above statements show how feelings of equality can form a base for an understanding, accepting attitude. This was however also observed for experienced differences between refugees and residents. This is especially reflected in statements regarding the home country of the residents, being a stable, rich and developed place, and having the means to help people from abroad. One younger, high-educated woman from Rees expressed these feelings quite strong for several times, saying:

- *“I was glad for them that they have an opportunity to stay here. (...) I walked through Rees (...), and I thought: why can’t they live here? We have the place, we have the money.”* (Q19; interviewee Rees E)

Or this middle-aged, high educated woman from Kleve who recognizes much has gone wrong in the housing and integration process in Germany, but nevertheless states:

- *“A lot has gone wrong in the settlement process; but in principle I think it is right that a rich country like Germany helps people in need, and takes them in.”* (Q20; interviewee Kleve C)

Some interviewees even see potential for the receiving country in accepting and helping refugees, as does this young, high-educated man from Berg en Dal who showed to have a positive mindset regarding refugees throughout the interview and stated here:

- *“If these people can be an addition here, for themselves or for society, than I wouldn’t know why they can’t stay here. (...) They aren’t dumb, so they can learn all kinds of things.”* (Q21; interviewee Berg en Dal B)

Recap - A moral obligation to help those in need

Statements that say support should be offered simply because of feelings of humanitarianism arise both because of a felt equality between interviews and refugees, and because of felt differences between them. These feelings were expressed in a more or lesser quantity by most of the interviewees from the four municipalities.

Attitude of questionability, regarding the arrival and presence of refugees

The 'attitude of questionability' as a theme consists of a summary of statements that often approach the arrival and presence of refugees in a more negative manner. These statements address notions of e.g. not belonging, of threat, of security, of (cultural) differences, of fear, of unwillingness to help.

These thoughts are not per se opposed to statements from the previous theme on acceptance, and it should be noted that they were often made by the same interviewees; several interviewees either contradicted themselves or approached the refugee situation from different viewpoints, therefore making statements that are for example both understanding/accepting as well as doubtful or fearful with regard to the arrival and presence of refugees. Because of the larger variance in topics within this theme, several subthemes are presented below.

"If you are an economic refugee, then you of course also have opportunities in your own country"

When speaking about the reasons refugees flee to the interviewee's country, refugees who flee because of prosecution, of unsafety, are generally accepted by most interviewees. Refugees who come here because of economic reasons are unwanted by those same interviewees. The difference between political and economic refugees was seen as an important limit for who should or shouldn't be accepted into the country, by most interviewees. Several reasons are given by respondents for this selection. A young, high-educated man from Winterswijk states that refugees are considered unwelcome if there is not really danger in their home region;

- *"...I do have a problem with economic refugees; because areas where in fact nothing is wrong and they still come here, I do take issue in that. Refugees of war, from conflict countries, that I find essential." (Q22; interviewee Winterswijk E)*

Another reason was given by an elderly man from Kleve, as he described to have a problem with refugees only coming here to profit of the better living circumstances of the country, costing the country a lot of money, often of the expense of the country's own residents;

- *"And when they have a job, than they don't feel like it. (...) Here in Germany they get so much money, that they can live well. And then they don't go back anymore." (Q23; interviewee Kleve B)*

Differentiation between refugees turned out to be a theme often to return in the interviews. This process also proved to have another angle. Several interviewees found it difficult to differentiate between 'immigrants', 'foreigners' and 'refugees'; therefore sometimes making statements concerning all people from outside the country of residence of the interviewee as one group. One such moment occurred in an interview with a young, middle-educated man from Winterswijk:

- Interviewee: *"...But well, sometimes there are disturbances with the people that do not come from here. That is an issue of which I think: hmm, difficult."*

Interviewer: "Are you speaking about refugees now, or do you mean..."

Interviewee: *"No. Well, actually yes, almost... Or, well, in general." (Q24; interviewee Winterswijk C)*

“The Middle East, it is inside these people”

Another ‘problem’ sketched by interviewees are cultural differences; mainly the language barrier, but also religion, or norms and values. Interviewees state they feel it is difficult or not possible for refugees to fully adapt to ‘our’ culture, as expressed by this young, high-educated man from Berg en Dal, who showed throughout the interview to have many doubts concerning the arrival of refugees:

- *“You’ve grown up in a certain culture (...). It takes three, four generations, also for the attitude of those people, before they start to change. (...) The Middle East, it is inside these people.”* (Q25; interviewee Berg en Dal E)

For several residents, these differences, combined with media attention given to certain problematics such as acts of terrorism or criminality that are related to refugee flows, result in feelings of threat, of fear. See the following example showing the feelings of a high-educated, young woman from Berg en Dal, who also showed to be rather sceptic of refugees throughout the interview, about what she learned from news media:

- *“Then you hear stories that they rape people and all those kind of things, and then I think: well, nice, then I am here and then they will be at my door, when I am here at night.”* (Q26; interviewee Berg en Dal F)
- *“Well, if you hear those things, like in Paris... (...) Look. Most will be good people that come here (...); but well, of course there are a few rotten apples between them. And those are in the Netherlands as well.”* (Q27; interviewee Winterswijk C)

This last quotation from a young, middle-educated man from Winterswijk however also shows something else several interviewees stated: that the potential threat of criminality or terrorism usually comes from just a small group of people, and that not all refugees are a (potential) threat to the residents of the country where the refugees settle.

It is important to note that the statements presented above do not automatically mean that an interviewee does not want to receive refugees or thinks negative per se of their arrival and presence; but it does show the concerns residents might have with refugees. The most speaking example of this are residents that say it is important to help refugees and to accept them into the country, but not in their direct proximity; as e.g. expressed in the statement from the same young Winterswijk man as the previous quotation:

- *“I think it’s all fine that they are here, but preferably a little further away from me. (...) Everybody knows one another here, and it’s all rural here. And I think they don’t fit in here. (...) If you place them in a large city like Utrecht or The Hague or Amsterdam... There you have all nationalities mixed up; that combines better than it does here.”* (Q28; interviewee Winterswijk C)

“Dear people, young people, stay there and rebuild a city”

Some of the interviewees made clear that from their point of view, refugees simply do not fit or belong in the interviewee’s country. Several arguments were given here, one of which was concerned with the feeling that the distribution of refugees over (European) countries is uneven, that some countries take in more than others, and that this was perceived by residents as being unfair. Again this is an example of people who question the arrival and presence of refugees, but not the refugees themselves per se. This middle-aged man from Rees describes how the unproportionally large intake of refugees in Germany feels to him:

- *“It can’t be that in a country that just happens to be willing to, that all will be pushed there, until those people will also start saying: I’m sick of it.”* (Q29; interviewee Rees C)

Others also state that refugees should be helped, but that coming to The Netherlands, to Germany or any European country is not the right solution; it would be better to help refugees in the region where they originally from. A comprehensive statement from an elderly man from Kleve on this:

- *“Dear people, young people, stay there; rebuild a city, and factories (...). One just has to tell people to stay home. It is very dangerous in some countries if they stay at home; we know that too. But this just doesn’t work. Send help there so they rebuild their country and make it safer. (...) The money has to go there.”* (Q30; interviewee Kleve B)

Some residents were aware of a difference in view between Dutch and German people, relating this to Germany’s past. An older, middle-educated man from Winterswijk mentioned:

- *“With regard to this, Germans are, and that I think is still a little the result of their troubled past, more tolerant. We [Dutch people, MvW] feel, we already have such a small country with so many people, at a certain point it’s enough.”* (Q31; interviewee Winterswijk F)

Recap – Questioning the persons vs. questioning the situation

The arguments for having doubts with the arrival and presence of refugees can be divided in two major groups: those who experience problems with the refugee themselves, questioning their motives, their willingness to adapt, their capability to ‘fit in’ at all; and those who experience problems with the number and division of refugees, speaking about countries being crammed, money spend in a wrong way, or housing refugees in their own region as a better solution. As mentioned it was observed that several interviewees contradict themselves, or describe their perception on the arrival and presence of refugees from both a more understanding and accepting, and a more questioning attitude.

Perception on refugee integration

As said, the process of refugee integration was discussed by residents who spoke from a more understanding point of view as well as residents who spoke from a more questionable point of view (or both), which is why it is discussed here from both attitudes’ sides.

“If they try to integrate a lot, then it’s fine by me”

Both with interviewees who state refugees are welcome as well as interviewees who have their doubts concerning refugees’ arrival, integration is mentioned as a condition to be able to live in the country. This integration firstly focuses on learning the language, and furthermore on adapting to the existing norms and values of the society in which the refugee is arriving. Integration is also described as a manner for refugees to get (more) access to help and understanding. Overall, several respondents make clear that integration is a part of the process of acceptance; e.g. *if* refugees integrate, *than* they are welcome to stay. This was also observed in the statement of this young, high-educated man:

- *“I do feel that if you are housed here and we pay your food and your allowance, so to speak, then you should also put some effort in learning the language. That you can at least also, at a bakery for example, say your lines.”* (Q32; interviewee Winterswijk E)

For this older, high educated man from Kleve, it is important that refugees at least try their best.

- *“I think it’s okay, as long as they integrate. Of course, 100% will be impossible. They grew up differently, live differently, have other ideas, a different attitude. Religion. If they try to integrate a lot, then it’s fine by me.”* (Q33; interviewee Kleve E)

This also includes a willingness from the side of the refugee, which during the interviews was sometimes doubted by the interviewees; as by this young, higher educated woman from Berg en Dal:

- *“The adjusting, that really bothers me. That you go somewhere and not a decent word of Dutch comes out although those people have been living here for over ten years; that you have formed a certain*

image, because of those refugees, about the refugees that are new here.” Q34; interviewee Berg en Dal F)

What can be noted in most of the above presented quotations and what was noticeable throughout most of the interviews is that integration is mostly seen as a task for the refugees; adaptation from their side, not from the side of the residents.

“...And who does not behave, okay, he has to go back”

Interviewees several times tend to link success or failure of integration to the acceptance of the physical presence of refugees; e.g. if integration feels, they have to ‘leave’; if integration succeeds, they can ‘stay here’; or if the cause for their flight here no longer exists, they ‘should go back’.

This spatial component, in a different way, played a role not only at a national level, but also within a municipality; like this middle-educated young man from Winterswijk described concerning the asylum centre.

- *“But it is not as if the people who live there, that they come here and start to mingle with us. At the same time we also don’t go to them; we stay away from them. (...) That you both avoid each other; seek their own family or friends.” (Q35; interviewee Winterswijk C)*

This shows this man perceives integration as going hand in hand with the prevention of segregation; refugees seeking their own familiar community, their own norms and values, instead of adapting.

Recap – Acceptance through integration, with a territorial aspect

Whether an interviewee has an accepting attitude or has his doubts concerning refugees, most agree that integration is part of the process of becoming accepted in a receiving country. This is mostly seen as a task for refugees themselves, who at least need to make a proper effort. The physical presence of refugees is often linked to the success or failure of integration, therefore giving it a spatial component.

6.2 CHANGE IN PERCEPTION ON THE ARRIVAL AND PRESENCE OF REFUGEES

6.2.1 Change in refugee perception, measured for the whole research area

Table 11 shows the refugee perception of 2015 in comparison to the current refugee perception of survey respondents (so, in comparison to the data presented in table 10). A large majority of around 65% of the respondents indicated they perceived the arrival and presence of refugees in 2015 as just as normal and natural as they perceive it now. Over a third of the respondents indicated they perceived refugees in 2015 as less noticeable (so, more noticeable now), compared to a fifth who thinks the opposite. Also, almost a third of respondents indicated they perceived the arrival and presence of refugees as less worrisome in 2015 (so, more worrisome now).

Table 11 Refugee perception in 2015, compared to current perception

In 2015:	Noticeable		Normal		Natural		Worrisome	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Less</i>	214	20,5%	160	15,4%	147	14,2%	198	19,0%
<i>About the same</i>	446	42,8%	673	64,7%	679	65,6%	524	50,3%
<i>More</i>	382	36,7%	207	19,9%	209	20,2%	320	30,7%
Total	1044		1040		1039		1041	

The respondents' former refugee perception was also compared for groups: country of origin, gender, level of education and different age groups.¹⁰ It shows e.g. that Germans more often perceived the refugee situation in 2015 as less noticeable, normal, natural and worrisome than now, compared to Dutch respondents; and that 18- to 30-year old respondents relatively often state to have perceived the refugee situation in 2015 as less noticeable, as more natural, and as less worrisome than now.

6.2.2 Changed views of local residents regarding refugees

In their questions, the interviewers did not specify any kind of changes in perception, or any moment where these changes should / could have occurred; it was up to the interviewee to speak their minds on this topic. This resulted in a few different sets of images and opinions, that could be divided in two types of statements covering the essence of the views of the interviewees: those who state their image of refugees has not changed, and those who's statements indicate there has been a change in view. This division is also used to structure this chapter.

"I have my own image. And in that respect my opinion has not changed."

The first main reaction of interviewees was that they felt their perception of refugees had always been this way, and did not go through any significant changes in the past; e.g. because interviewees feel they can look past what is being 'shouted' in the media or in political debates, like this older middle-educated woman from Berg en Dal:

- *"[This image, MvW] I've always had, actually; it stands loose from all that happens in politics; then I think: shout out loud what you will, but this is my view."* (Q36; interviewee Berg en Dal D)

Or because they feel they themselves simply are, and always have been, open and accepting people, as this young and high-educated man from Kleve:

- *"This opinion actually never changed. But, why do I have this opinion? No idea. I'm just a very open person, and think in first instance: everybody is welcome, and everyone is fine; and then we'll have to see what to do with that."* (Q37; interviewee Kleve D)

"Fear is a great thing. I don't want this, but I think it is just human"

However, some of the interviewees did provide examples of changed views and opinions. Also, the arguments in previous chapters from other moments in the interviews show that certain experiences, behaviours, hear-says etc. are able to influence and therefore change the refugee perception. Already discussed examples are events of terrorism linked to refugee-influx, the large quantities of refugees that were accepted by Germany, or experiences with refugees unwilling to adapt from the past that altered the attitude towards new refugees. The statement below from a middle-aged man from Rees is an example of how a person has come to see the arrival and presence of refugees as less natural, less normal, over the years.

- *"I was at demonstrations, I did all kinds of things against Nazi's. And I've always been pro foreigners, pro refugees. But (...) I've become more critical. I've had a different view, the past years. (...) Maybe 90% of all refugees are all great. Those are nice people, who really leave there county because they are in trouble. And next to this 90% there's maybe 10% who are just nuts. Yes, that destroys all sympathy."* (Q38; interviewee Rees C)

Others clearly show to have become more concerned, worry more about the consequences; like this middle-aged and middle-educated mother from Winterswijk, who explained how the responsibility of having children made her perception change.

¹⁰ These survey results for different groups can be found in tables D25 to D28 in appendix D.

- *“Then you start to see things differently, also somewhat more protective, and you start noticing different things.” (Q39; interviewee Winterswijk B)*

A few individuals describe a positive change of opinion, like this young high-educated man from Kleve, who said the negative news media surrounding the refugee ‘crisis’ probably only strengthened his already positive opinion:

- *“And then I thought: this can’t all be true, can it? There has to be something positive about it, doesn’t it? If you then look very closely at the background information, then you are confirmed in your opinion that’s not all as bad as shown in mass media.” (Q40; interviewee Kleve D)*

One young, high educated woman from Rees provided a very detailed view on how (her) refugee perception formed, and how she feels about this process:

- *“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 wouldn’t be like this if we had not done this in this or that 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’s so deep in your head. (...) And I always think: calm down, not everybody in this world is bad. (...) Maybe he is just as afraid as you. But, once again, I don’t want to feel like this, but I feel it. I think that this is the problem for most people.” (Q41; interviewee Rees E)*

For the people who have been describing a change in their refugee perception, it turned out to be difficult to link this to a precise moment, period or situation when this change might have occurred. As mentioned before, most people stated that their perception on the arrival and presence of refugees has always been this way, not indicating an origin for this perception. Only a few individuals were able to link a change in perception to a certain moment of their life, like interviewee Winterswijk B, who stated in Q39 that having children changed her view. Another example is the following statement from a high-educated, young woman from Winterswijk:

- *“Yes, when I started (...) my higher education. And on a certain moment you understand how things are, and you hear a lot more and you see those people, and then my opinion has changed.” (Q42; interviewee Winterswijk A)*

Recap – No observed changes in refugee perception related to the past few years

The survey results show quite divided views for the research area regarding the change in refugee perception. Interviewees often stated their refugee perception has not changed. Some interviewees later on did provide examples of slightly changed views; perceiving the arrival and presence of refugees as less normal, less natural, more worrisome. An individual described a positive change. The few described changes were hard to pin to precise moments, but if so, date back several years and do not relate to the current refugee situation.

7 BRINGING BORDER PERCEPTION AND REFUGEE PERCEPTION TOGETHER

Chapters 5 and 6 presented a thorough description to define the border perception and the perception on the arrival and presence of refugees. In this chapter, both perceptions will be analyzed and then brought together to search for parallels, (potentially causal) relations, as to provide answers on the main questions of this thesis.

To do so, first the characteristics of both perceptions that follow from the previous descriptive chapters need to be analyzed, to interpret what the found results might implicate. Section 7.1 therefore contains a more in-depth analysis of what was presented in chapters 5 and 6. Section 7.2 will then bring both perceptions together. This section will be of a descriptive nature. First, relevant direct survey results concerning this (possible) relation will be presented and described. This will be followed by interview results concerning questions and statements that directly addressed the relation between both perceptions as well, to provide more in-depth examples from interviewees of the four municipalities that might create a clarifying context for the presented survey results. 7.2 thus searches for direct parallels and signs of relations between both perceptions. Section 7.3 delves beyond the direct results described in 7.2. It uses the analytical findings of 7.1 to search for possible other (indirect) signs of parallels and patterns between both perceptions, that were not detected in the direct results of 7.2. Finally, section 7.4 then will discuss the direct findings of 7.2 and the indirect findings of 7.3 to interpret whether certain found parallels or patterns indeed indicate a relation between refugee perception and border perception.

7.1 INSIGHTS FROM THE DESCRIBED BORDER PERCEPTION AND REFUGEE PERCEPTION

An analysis of the descriptive results of chapters 5 and 6 on both perceptions provides insights in why and how certain (patterns of) views concerning the Dutch-German border and concerning the arrival and presence of refugees might have formed. These insights can already shed light on the suitability of the different concepts of (a part of) the conceptual model presented in chapter 2. The implications of the results from these previous chapters are described here, following the same thematic build-up as was used in previous chapters.

7.1.1 Border perception: openness vs. demarcations

General image of the border

The survey results showed relatively low scores for the self-evidence of the border, in comparison with the barrier effect of the border in daily practice. These low scores correspond with a relatively high level of self-evidence, which indicates that many respondents experience the border as normal, useful, natural and/or important¹¹. In the interviews this is recognized as well, as the first general feeling expressed by local residents often turned out to be that of a border that is not noticeable, a border that is 'just there'; the degree of naturalness by which they perceive the border; the experience of the border in a normative sense.

The relatively high scores for the barrier effect in daily practice can be regarded as positive, since higher scores stand for a lower experienced barrier. Within the dimension of barrier effect in daily practice, this corresponds with a relatively high number of respondents stating to experience the border as (quite) unnoticeable, (quite) undividing and (quite) unimpeding. The interviewed residents of the four

¹¹ For survey results of respondents' opinions on all concept pairs, see tables D2, D4, D6 & D8 in appendix D.

selected municipalities share similar experiences, later on in the interviews. The border indeed is 'noticed' by respondents and they support this with practical examples of how the Dutch-German border is just a little noticeable border; mentioning that the border hardly works in a dividing or impeding manner. It shows that here the interviewees perceive the border at a different level than in the beginning of the interviews; they now discuss the functioning of the border in daily practice. These differences in views of respondents when addressing the border show that border perception as a whole exists of different forms of perception, which are comparable with the two dimensions addressed in the perception scores as described by van Houtum (1998).

Respondents making the border 'visible' by addressing differences between Dutch and Germans regarding language and culture connect to the theoretical base of imagined communities, representing a 'us' versus a 'them'. It is therefore indicative for the mental bordering effect that might be experienced by the border region citizens. Statements related to this that say the Netherlands and Germany are not to be united or that this is not desirable, or concerning the divisive way in which the language difference functions, support this theoretical base.

Importance of the border

For people who described the border as unimportant, the relevance of the border is connected to the (lack of) physical existence of the border. For people who described the border as important, this is most often connected in one way or another to the demarcation of identity, therefore addressing a feeling of 'us' vs. 'them', and a sense of belonging that encompasses an element of nationality; feelings that appear to be linked to a spatial component that is being demarcated by the Dutch-German border. What the interview respondents see as the function of the border also relates to how important they value that border. Several interviewees stated the border was not or no longer important because of the open character; the same type of argument used to illustrate why they perceive the border as not or no longer having a function. Likewise, the border being perceived by others to have the institutional demarcation as function lines up with arguments stating the border is important for institutional, administrative reasons. Similar comparisons can be made for the importance and function of the border regarding feelings of identity, of 'us' vs. 'them'. Statements such as the presented statements about identity or a national feeling show that the border might be perceived as having the function of demarcating groups of people; demarcating 'us' from 'them'; a boundary around the own identity, the own 'people'.

Comparing the interview statements of how people describe the border (the general image) vs. how they value the border (the importance) sometimes showed seemingly contrasting opinions. On the one hand, a person may attach a level of importance to the presence of the border. The border in that sense is, or should be, self-evident according to this person; as a demarcation, whether this is for issues of identity, legislation, safety etc. On the other hand the same person can have stated to be happy with the open character of the border, the ease by which he or she can pass it and carry out activities on the other side. So, though the border can be self-evident for people as a demarcation, they at the same time do not (want to) experience a barrier effect of this border in their daily practices; as also discussed in the theoretical framework considering the 'janus-face of borders' (van Houtum et al., 2005). This lines up with the survey showing relatively low scores for the self-evidence of the border, in comparison with the barrier effect of the border in daily practice.

Change in border perception

In the survey, most respondents state the barrier effect has not changed for them; whereas with the interview respondents, several have described a change in the sense that the border in their perception has opened up. However, the survey question only considered change over the past three years. The interviewees described their change in barrier effect often as happening over a long(er) period of time; for example as a difference between child and adult, a perception developing over a lifetime. A specific change in the last three years was not heard in the interviews and has only been experienced by relatively small groups of people according to the survey results.

7.1.2 Refugee perception: opposing yet intertwining attitudes

Attitudes of acceptance and questionability

The survey result showed a majority experiencing the presence of refugees as noticeable, and furthermore equally divided groups regarding refugees as (ab)normal, (un)natural, or (not) worrisome. Attempting to clarify this division through insights from the four municipalities, two 'camps' could be distilled; representing an attitude of understanding, and an attitude of questionability.

Statements that support should be offered simply because of feelings of humanitarianism suggest a moral obligation that is felt by several interviewees to help, which largely contributes to their acceptive attitude towards the arrival and presence of refugees. These feelings sometimes arise from a view of equality, showing that to some respondents, a feeling of 'us' vs. 'them' is not per se present with regard to the right to humanitarian aid. Sometimes these feelings arise from a view of difference, suggesting the presence of an 'us-them'-feeling, but not in an excluding way; rather as an argument for why those considered 'them' deserve to be helped.

The arguments for having doubts with the arrival and presence of refugees can be divided in two major groups: those who experience problems with the refugee themselves, and those who experience problems with the number and division of refugees. As mentioned it was observed that several interviewees contradict themselves, or describe their perception of refugees from both attitudes. These respondents seem conflicted with themselves; on the one hand willing to help refugees, on the other fearing (possible) consequences or avoiding the housing of refugees in their direct proximity (a feeling described as NIMBY or 'not in my backyard'). Or, approached from the other way around, people who have an overall negative opinion on refugees, their culture, their 'lack of integration'; but at the same time underline that they see the importance of helping these people because they are in need of care, and/or need to be saved from danger.

Both attitudes are recurring when discussing integration, which is related strongly to feelings of an imagined community that has different habits, different norms and values, than the arriving refugees. The refugee, perceived by interviewees as being the 'other', has to (try to) adapt through the process of integration; to take over elements of the imagined community as a condition to become accepted by that community. These feelings of 'they are different than us', of an imagined community that the refugees need to integrate in to, also have a spatial component. If integration fails, if the person is not capable / willing to adapt to the community, they have to 'leave', 'go back', go out of the country again; in other words, out of the territory that these interviewees apparently relate to their the imagined community.

Change in refugee perception

The survey results show quite divided views for the research area regarding the change in refugee perception. Trying to provide deepening insights from the interviews, it turned out that interviewees often stated their refugee perception has not changed. Before the topic of ‘changed perceptions’ was discussed in the interviews, the refugee situation in Europe of the past few years already had been addressed. It is interesting that this apparently did not affect the interviewees perceptions, or at least, that most are not aware of any change. A factor that could explain this might be that people are perhaps not that aware of their perceptions, especially perceptions from the past; therefore making it difficult to compare perceptions from different moments in their lives and describing a change. However, it can be noted from the survey results that people indeed have been able to describe their refugee perception of the past (as they think it was) in comparison to their present perception.

7.2 CITIZENS’ (DIRECT) VIEWS ON A RELATION BETWEEN REFUGEE- AND BORDER PERCEPTION

Both perceptions now have been described and interpreted. This section addresses the results of both survey and interviews that are directly addressing the relation between both perceptions, to search for signs of parallels and patterns that could indeed confirm or deny the existence of such a relation.

7.2.1 Linking both perceptions – Overview for the whole research area

In the survey the respondents were directly asked how the arrival and presence of refugees had influenced their Dutch-German border perception. Furthermore their described changes in barrier effect and described changes in refugee perception (as already presented in chapters 5 and 6) were compared. These are now presented and described.

Change in border perception within the refugee aspect

As discussed in the methodological section of this document, the two dimensions ‘barrier effect of the border in daily practice’ and ‘self-evidence of the border’ can be observed from the refugee-aspect as well in the same way as was done with the general, economic, socio-cultural and legal-administrative aspect (presented in chapter 5.1). For the refugee aspect this did not result in a fixed score but as a score representing a process of change, as explained in the methodological section as well. The scores could vary from -100 to +100, with 0 indicating no change in barrier effect, -100 meaning all respondents state the barrier effect of the border has increased because of the arrival and presence of refugees, and +100 meaning all respondents state the barrier effect has decreased. These scores are presented in table 12. The table also shows the scores per country of origin.

Table 12 Change in border perception within the refugee aspect for both dimensions, and for 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

The overall score of -6,94 is the outcome of a very divergent set of change-indicating scores, that however do show certain patterns. One of these is that all these scores, not only in general but also for the various variables such as country of origin, age group etc. are negative. A negative score implies a negative relation between the perception on arrival and presence of refugees and the perception of

the Dutch-German border. In other words, it means that respondents more often have indicated that the arrival and presence of refugees in their opinion increased the barrier effect of the Dutch-German border. Furthermore it is noteworthy that for all variables the negative effect is always stronger for the border perception in daily practice than for the self-evidence of the border; on average, the negative effect is approximately three times stronger for the barrier effect in daily practice.

It should not be forgotten that the scale of these scores goes from -100 to +100. With this in mind, note that all scores presented in the table above indicate relatively small changes.

Comparing Germany with the Netherlands shows that the negative change in border perception in both daily practice and self-evidence is much stronger perceived by Dutch respondents than by German respondents. Especially for the self-evidence the relative difference between both countries is very high, and also showed to be statistically significant at the 0,01 level. It is reflected in the total score per country as well, showing a stronger negative perceived relation for Dutch compared to German respondents.

The scores were also compared for other groups, such as level of education, age group, gender and cross-border visiting frequency.¹² The most interesting outcomes of these scores are described here. First it can be noted that the lower the level of education, the stronger the negative relation between refugee perception and border perception occurs. The total border perception is relatively stronger influenced by the refugee perception for 18- to 30-year-olds, but less strong negatively influenced for 30- to 50-year-olds. For 50- to 65-year old respondents the negative relation was stronger than with both other groups for the border perception in daily practice, but less strong than with both other groups for the self-evidence of the border. For the dimension 'self-evidence' it showed that the higher the cross-border visiting frequency, the stronger the negative relation between refugee perception and border perception; with a relatively extra strong negative relation for those who cross the border every week.

It is important to keep in mind that respondents in the survey were asked very directly here whether or not they feel their border perception has changed under influence of the arrival and presence of refugees over the past three years. We do not *know* what this border perception was in 2015; we can only rely on how respondents *think* their perception has changed. Therefore the quantitative data in the table presents not so much a change in border perception as a result of the refugee situation, but rather, the way in which respondents *think* their *perceived* border perception has changed as a result of the refugee situation. In-depth clarification on what and why makes respondents to think so should be derived from the (qualitative) interview data later on.

Change in refugee perception related to change in barrier effect of the border

To give a more indirect but more comprehensive overview of results that could indicate a relation between border perception and refugee perception, two other variables of the survey were brought together in table 13. The table relates the variables 'Perceived refugee perception of the past (in comparison to the present)' (presented in chapter 6.2.1, table 11) and 'perceived change in barrier effect for the general (physical) effect' (presented in chapter 5.3.1, table 8). They represent the perceived changes for both perceptions over the last three years. A choice was made to focus only on the general aspect as the other three aspects focus on a very different types of data (e.g. the economic aspect is concerned with grocery shopping) that do not logically relate in any way to refugee perception other than already covered by the border perception from a general aspect.

¹² These scores for different groups can be found in tables E14 to E17 in appendix E.

Table 13 Perceived change in refugee perception and perceived change in barrier effect for the general aspect

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%

For the variable ‘perceived refugee perception of the past’, the same pattern can be observed for all four semantic differentials (noticeable, normal etc.). Whether respondents state either of those to have been ‘more’, ‘the same’ or ‘less’ in the past does not show a relation with how these respondents perceive a change in barrier effect. This indicates that the *change* in refugee perception does not seem to relate to a *change* in border perception (in either direction). Statistical testing showed a significant relation for the relation between these two variables concerning the value labels ‘normal’ and ‘natural’, but because of the observed small differences these are not seen as relevant.

7.2.2 Views from local residents on a relation between both perceptions

During the interviews, the border perception and refugee perception of interviewees was thoroughly discussed (as seen in chapter 5 and 6); therefore providing a strong base for the final question in which the interviewee was asked if he / she experienced a relation between the refugee situation and the interviewee’s border perception.

“No. Not in any way, no.”

A striking majority of interviewees answered the direct question with a simple ‘no’. They are not aware of any relation between the refugee situation of the last years and their perceived barrier effect of the Dutch-German border. Often, no explanation for this view was given; interviewees like the following middle-aged and middle-educated woman from Winterswijk simply stated such a relation did not exist, and the interview ended.

- *“No, absolutely not. I wouldn’t know what more to say about it.”* (Q43; interviewee Winterswijk B)
A few individuals manage to explain why they feel such a relation is not present concerning their own perception of the barrier effect of the border, like this young man and young woman from Winterswijk.
- *“Refugees, for me, are completely separated from the border itself. (...) It is yet a different thing. (...) I go to Germany to refuel and I don’t know what all, but it’s not that I consider the refugee problem in that.”*(Q44; interviewee Winterswijk C)
- *“No, I think not with this border. That’s really separated from it. (...) The practically all enter through Schiphol [largest airport in the Netherlands, MvW], so... Yeah.”* (Q45; interviewee Winterswijk A)

Several state the refugee situation can indeed have a relation with the image people have of borders, but that this only happens in situations where a border is physically closed or when many border controls take place; therefore, not in relation to the Dutch-German border, as also this older, middle-educated woman from Berg en Dal and middle-aged middle-educated woman from Rees stated.

- *“No. Also, never heard anything that made me think: ‘ah yes, that’s because of the border.’ (...) There are of course countries where they have closed the border, in the south. But that is not really the case here.”* (Q46; interviewee Berg en Dal C)
- *“No, not really. In my opinion, the refugees don’t cross the border from the Netherlands. ”* (Q47; interviewee Rees A)

In one interesting case, a young high-educated man from Kleve describes his view that refugees are inherently linked to the existence of borders (but he as well states that this did not affect his own Dutch-German border perception):

- *“If there were no borders, then there would also be no refugees, would it? So, where do you want to go, if there are no borders? Than you can just go everywhere.”* (Q48; interviewee Kleve D)

“Perhaps you then also have a little more need for the border”

Amongst all interviewees, only one citizen gave a direct notice of a relation between the refugee situation and his Dutch-German border perception. On the question if such a relation exists for him, this young man from the municipality Berg en Dal answered:

- *“Yes. I would be okay with a little more strict controls. But, what should they control? As long as the government allows everything... That the border fades away a little because of that, because you can see everyone can cross it. (...) Perhaps you then also have, as I think about it, you have a little more need for the border. (...) Yes, I think so.”* (Q49; interviewee Berg en Dal E)

Recap - Little to no perceived relation directly detected

The results of the direct interview questions concerning the perceived relation between the refugee situation and the border perception overlap strongly with the results of the survey. Both data samples show an almost complete conviction of respondents that the way they experienced the arrival and presence of refugees over the past years has no relation with their border perception whatsoever.

An explanation for these opinions can at this point only be deducted from the interview sample of the four selected municipalities. First of all, it was stated several times that a relation with the border is not present simply because the Dutch-German border has no role in the refugee situation; it is the belief of several respondents that refugees simply do not cross the Dutch-German border. Furthermore, interviewees state that the Dutch-German border is ‘open’, without (much) control; and whereas ‘closed’ borders (often examples from southeast Europe were given) play a direct role in relation to the arrival and presence of refugees, this is perceived as not being the case for an open border as the Dutch-German one. A relation between borders and refugees certainly does exist, according to some interviewees; just not with the Dutch-German border, and anyway not effecting interviewees’ perception of it.

The next section delves deeper into the interviewee results from chapter 5 and 6, searching for indirect parallels and possible relations between both perceptions.

7.3 LINKING INDIRECT FINDINGS - COMPARING BORDER PERCEPTION TO REFUGEE PERCEPTION

Asking respondents in both survey and interviews directly about a possible connection between their perception of the refugee situation and the Dutch-German border perception lead to the impression that such a relation hardly exists, or may not exist at all; as discussed in section 7.2. Yet even the direct answers of interview respondents saying they did not perceive such a relation hinted a relation could indeed exist, as for example the refugee situation made some respondents more aware of the openness of the border.

This section delves deeper into the results from the extensive descriptions of the border perception and refugee perception of chapters 5 and 6, as analyzed in section 7.1. It aims to first search for and show parallels between both perceptions, and then to discuss for each parallel whether or not it implies the existence of (a) relation(s) between these perceptions.

“...Because the border is open; you don’t see anything”

When speaking with interviewees about the refugee perception, ‘borders’ were frequently discussed as well; both through direct questions from the interviewers as well as through statements made by interviewees independently. This concerns topics like refugees crossing borders on their way to other countries, borders being closed to prevent refugees from coming in (an often mentioned example being the borders of Hungary) and, most discussed, the openness of the Dutch and/or German borders in relation to the final questions of the interview. Especially this last topic shows parallels with the discussion on border perception itself, and emphasized the openness of the border, the lack of border controls, perceived by most interviewees. This is e.g. shown by the statement of an older, lower educated man from Berg en Dal, when asked if he sees a relation between the refugee situation and the border:

- *“Nothing. Absolutely nothing. No, because it [the border, MvW] is open; you don’t see anything.”* (Q50; interviewee Berg en Dal A)

Or by this middle-aged young man from Winterswijk, concerning refugees crossing borders ‘freely’ within Europe:

- *“I think this also is part of Europe. As soon as you’ve entered Europe, I think you are allowed to travel freely,. I mean, everybody is allowed to.”* (Q51; interviewee Winterswijk C)

What can be noticed here is that people on the one hand indicate they do not perceive a relation between both perceptions, yet on the other hand give arguments for this that implies a relation does exist. Apparently, the refugee situation made some interviewees aware of the openness of the Dutch-German border, as shown in the previous section; in that sense, a relation is present. The young man from Berg en Dal (Q49 above) even showed to be ‘aware of this awareness’, as the lack of patrols, the fact that ‘anyone can cross’, blurred the existence of the border; a situation unwanted by the interviewee, therefore longing more for a ‘functioning’ border.

“It’s fine that everybody goes everywhere, but a country should stay one country”

The discussions on border perception and refugee perception (chapters 5 and 6) have one large theme in common that kept recurring: interviewees doing statements that fit within the theoretical frame of this study concerning the feeling of an ‘us’ vs. a ‘them’; of belonging to an imagined community to which strangers try to seek access. Specific examples concerned with this that were mentioned in both discussions are the language barrier, or cultural differences. Often respondents seemed somewhat conflicted with themselves, on the one hand wanting to help and accept refugees, or happy to visit their neighbouring country and profit from advantages there, yet at the same time fearing the unknown; *“It’s fine that everybody goes everywhere, but a country should stay one country.”* (Q52;

interviewee Winterswijk C). Examples of statements expressing these feelings from both perceptions have been presented and discussed in chapters 5 and 6; they will not be repeated here.

“In everything here, you are used to dealing with strangers”

An individual but nevertheless interesting case derived from the interviews was a young, high educated man from Kleve who stated not to perceive a connection between the refugee situation and his border perception, but did see a connection between border region residents and the acceptance of strangers:

- *“...But if you’re talking about how people are received in in this region, and how they are taken in, then I think it does have influence. That there is a connection. Especially with an open border as here between the Netherlands and Germany; because in everything here, you are used to dealing with strangers. Then it might also be easier to take on someone new, and get used to it.”* (Q53; interviewee Kleve D)

This implies there *is* a relation between refugees and the young man’s border perception, even though he might not have been aware of it; his view on the border leads him to believe that refugees might be accepted faster in a borderland, where residents are already experienced in dealing with the ‘unknown’.

Recap - Parallels between refugee perception and border perception

When analyzing the interview results for (indirect) parallels and relations between both perceptions, a few were found; themes, topics, that resurfaced with both the refugee- and the border perception, and even other ways in which border- and refugee perception were connected to each other by interviewees themselves. These parallels concern consciousness of the openness of the border, feelings of an imagined community, and the influence of living in the borderland on dealing with strangers.

7.4 A BARELY EXISTING RELATION BETWEEN BOTH PERCEPTIONS

In the final section of this chapter, the direct findings presented in 7.2 and the indirect findings presented in 7.3 are brought together to discuss the presence of a (causal) relation between both perceptions.

The data collected from questions directly asking about a relation between both perceptions shows no sign of a relation. Summarizing, table 12 indicated a very light *perceived* negative relation between the refugee situation and the barrier effect of the border over the last three years, which however needs to be approached with caution because of the very direct proposed question to respondents; whereas table 13, presenting data that was collected more indirectly and focusing only on interrelating *changing* border- and refugee perceptions, shows no proof of a relation at all. The results of the direct interview questions overlap strongly with the results of the survey; no relation, because the interviewees simply do not see a role for the Dutch-German border in the refugee situation, because the Dutch-German border is ‘open’, without (much) control. A relation between borders and refugees certainly does exist, according to some interviewees; just not with the Dutch-German border, and anyway according to themselves, not effecting their perception of it.

The indirectly gathered results show several parallels between both perceptions. These parallels concern consciousness of the openness of the border, and feelings of an imagined community. However, a parallel does not necessarily imply a relation. When comparing the statements of ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ regarding both perceptions, it should be noted that they are not the same. One imagined

community is clearly not the other; and so, the groups and borders discussed within both perceptions differ as well. Discussing the border perception, expressed feelings of 'us' vs. 'them' consisted mostly of the fellow residents being 'us' and the residents of the neighboring country being 'them'. In the discussion about refugees the groups consisted of 'us' being residents from the imagined community (whether this was the country, the municipality, or even the European Union) and 'them' being outsiders seeking entrance into this imagined community. Though the latter could still regard Dutch vs. German people (or the other way around), the imagined community described in the refugee discussion is not the same; and neither are the outside 'strangers'. Here, the 'other' is regarded as the people posing possible issues when it comes to housing, integration, etc.; the ones that have to adapt, or otherwise (according to some residents) have to leave again. It is a situation both the Netherlands and Germany have to deal with, and as such residents often consider one country a partner of the other with respect to this situation, or as both being part of the European Union undergoing this situation. Reading through the residents' statements it seems that both countries therefore tend to be addressed as being part of the same imagined community ('us'), with refugees being the 'other'. It is therefore a very different situation than the imagined community that surfaces in the discussion with residents about the Dutch-German border perception. With respect to this, the question in the theoretical framework (page 11) that arose from the work of Bauman (1995) on strangers 'within' and 'outside' of a territorially perceived order could be answered by noting that in this study the territorial perceived order differs for both situations as well; and thus the position of the neighboring country residents and the position of refugees differs too, in the perception of people.

Furthermore (or maybe rather as a logical consequence of the above), the borders of these imagined communities likewise are not the same. It has already been discussed that an imagined community sometimes tends to have a territorial aspect with it as well (chapter 6.1.2, page 54; chapter 7.1.1., page 58). In the discussion on Dutch-German border perception, clearly the border is where most residents draw a line between groups of people; most often described as the Dutch vs. the German. This border however does not seem to have the same function with regard to the perception on arrival and presence of refugees. Here, interviewees might speak of refugees coming to the Netherlands or coming to Germany; coming to the European Union; coming to the municipality, fitting better in some municipalities than others. In the same spirit they speak about refugees 'leaving' again, or being forced to leave when they do not adapt well, for example. 'Borders' as a concept thus do play a role, but never specific the Dutch-German border. There is never a specific role in the refugee discussion involving the neighboring country.

It can therefore be stated that, though the theme of imagined communities, of 'us' vs. 'them', plays an important role in both Dutch-German border perception and in the perception on the arrival and presence of refugees, the data collected and presented in the previous chapters do not provide any proof of an actual relation between both perceptions with regard to this theme.

Furthermore it was observed that the arrival and presence of refugees and the open character of the border (as perceived by citizens) might touch upon one another. For a few individual respondents, the refugee situation seems to have created more awareness of the open character of the border. Apart from this it showed that the large majority of respondents sees no relation between the Dutch-German border image and the refugee situation because this border, being an open inner border of the European Union, plays no role in the refugee situation. It might however then also be stated that thanks to the image that respondents have of the openness of the border, they do not experience the free passage of refugees or the lack of border patrols / controls as an issue; therefore implying a light

connection between border perception and refugee perception. However, this is a presumption that cannot be substantiated based on the collected and presented data.

Summarizing it can therefore be noted that a clear relation between both perceptions, other than the very light perceived negative relation between both perceptions derived from the survey that however needs to be interpreted with caution, was not detected; let alone a clear causal connection between both perceptions.

8 THE ROLE OF MUNICIPAL REFUGEE POLICY IN BOTH PERCEPTIONS

As the border perception and refugee perception have been mapped in the previous chapters and their interrelation has been examined, now the focus will be placed on the second part of the research question; the interrelation of these perceptions with municipal refugee policy. This chapter describes and discusses the municipal policy concerned with the arrival and presence of refugees in the four selected municipalities Berg en Dal, Winterswijk, Kleve and Rees. For this topic, in every municipality a municipal official concerned with the refugee situation has been thoroughly interviewed to discuss the policy the municipality implements on this topic, and the expected and experienced impact of this policy; especially in relation to the citizens of that municipality. The citizens interviewed about the refugee perception and border perception were also asked about their knowledge of, experiences with, and opinion on the municipal policy concerning refugees. The aim here is to present an in-depth exploration of interview statements from both groups of interviewees that may clarify, explain, or in other ways support each other and shed light on whether or not a relation can be detected between this municipal refugee policy and the perception of residents on the arrival and presence of refugees; and if so, whether or not this also relates to these residents' perception on the Dutch-German border. In the first section the results of the interviews with the municipal officials are presented. In the second section this is done for the interviews with the residents. A final section discusses whether the above proposed relations have been detected, and if so, what the nature of these relations is or might be.

8.1 MUNICIPALITY OFFICIALS ON MUNICIPAL REFUGEE POLICY

As already addressed in the case description of this study, each country has its approach towards the intake and integration of refugees; and within this approach, each municipality has a certain level of freedom to act on it as well (as described in said chapter). In all municipalities, the start of the refugee 'crisis', the sudden influx of a much larger number of refugees, was received with tension. Suddenly, municipalities had to provide in housing and other facilities in much greater quantity than they were used to. Especially the first placement of asylum seekers happened in a chaotic manner. The main themes concerned with the arrival and presence of refugees in society were (and are) housing and integration, which were also topics discussed in the interviews with municipal officials. One of the difficulties that were for example mentioned by officials of all four municipalities is that they did not have enough houses for single persons, such as small apartments; and as especially Rees and Kleve pointed out, these sparse houses were also highly in demand by the own residents, especially for students and single elderly people. For every municipality a summarizing overview of the interview on this topic is presented describing how the municipalities, according to the views of municipal officials, approach(ed) the housing and integration of refugees, and how this involved and affected citizens. This is followed by a section on how the municipal officials view the possibility of a relation between the municipal refugee policy and the refugee- and border perception of the residents.

8.1.1 Berg en Dal

About the chaotic start of the rise in refugee numbers, the municipal official of Berg en Dal stated:

- *"I do remember that at one point at 4 pm an emergency call came from the government, from the COA: there are now many buses leaving, which will drive going through the country; who is registering? I had never experienced something like that."* (Q54)

In Berg en Dal, a choice was made to first do a thorough analysis of possibilities for the taking-in of asylum seekers. Citizens were invited to share their opinions as well; a survey showed an almost 50-

50% division pro or con an asylum center. At that time, the discussion was so intense that at an information evening for citizens extra security was hired in case any disturbances would break out, which in hindsight is viewed upon as an overreaction. However, by the time a consensus was reached to start small-scale asylum housing, the surge in influx already passed its peak and it proved no longer necessary.

The residents however have no say in the housing of refugees after getting asylum; they are equally distributed over the country according to municipal size. Berg en Dal worked closely with housing corporations and other owners of real estate to create enough living space for the refugees assigned to them. This proved to be difficult as the municipalities' backlog increased fast. The residents were informed on the increased refugee influx on another information evening. Where some residents showed to highly appreciate the arrival of refugees, others complained about nuisance; refugees not taking care of houses and their surroundings, etc. The official also added:

- *"People sometimes ask: why am I not informed if a status holder comes to live next to me? But then we say: it is an ordinary tenant. If normally a home becomes available, you will also not be told who will be renting."* (Q55)

The chaotic housing situation meant that at first there was hardly any attention for integration. At a certain moment a special management group was organized in the municipality to focus on integration, with a main focus on learning the Dutch language and on integrating into society via (sport)clubs and other associations. Several organizations are involved in the integration process. Vluchtelingenwerk, the Dutch independent refugee organization takes on all administrative tasks; the local social organization Forte Welzijn guides and helps with regard to more social tasks; another organization can help refugees to get a first job at the social work place, etc. An overarching case manager was assigned by the municipality to follow all refugees individually. He checks for example whether refugees follow a civic integration course, if they are working, etc. According to the official, the success of integration differs per person, but also depends on country of origin. He for example states that Syrian refugees adapt easier in the municipality, whereas e.g. Eritrean people have way more difficulty in integrating. Problems that occur here are e.g. not showing up on time for appointments or work, or for refusing to do certain types of jobs. Other problems involve not understanding how to deal with the Dutch money- and social system.

Regarding the municipalities' residents the official states to hear a lot of positive sounds; a lot of voluntary work initiatives who guide the refugees on an individual level, helping them with language, with writing, cooking and eating together, etc. Furthermore, the local sport clubs have a welcoming attitude towards refugees, providing a useful social network with it. The same goes for music associations and cooking clubs. Sometimes worried residents contact the municipality;

- *"...Concerned citizens, who said: "those children have been at home for a few months now, are they not obliged to be in school? "But if you checked that situation, there was a story behind it. And if you then inquired about it again, then (...) it turned out that they had not been left to their fate."* (Q56)

The municipality communicates about the refugee policy and refugee situation to residents through occasional information evenings when a certain development, such as plans for opening a new refugee housing location, is going on. Furthermore, the website of the municipality has a question-and-answer page regarding the refugee situation in Berg en Dal, where citizens can find information. They do not correspond about individual refugee housing, for example they do not inform direct neighbors.

With regard to refugee perception, the municipal official stated not to recognize if the refugee policy might have influenced the image residents have of refugees. When delving into the subject, he said:

- *"I think it has been very thorough, but many citizens will still have thought: seeing is believing. It must then be proven in practice."* (Q57)

Regarding a relation between the policy and the Dutch-German border perception, the official also was unable to detect a direct relation regarding his municipality; however, he did notice a relation between refugees and the Dutch-German border, relating to larger numbers of refugees in Germany living very close to the Netherlands:

- *"There were concerns like: 'what happens with all those people?'. Also all of those single young men who come to such a village, or to a post where there is nothing else to do. 30 meters from a Dutch village. There were those concerns, yes."* (Q58)

A specific example was that of a phone call from a border resident who asked the municipality to start border patrols again, as he feared for refugees squatting his holiday residence. In this sense the municipality official did sense a relation for his citizens regarding refugees and the border perception.

8.1.2 Rees

The official of Rees speaks extensively about the amount of work he and his co-workers experienced in the beginning of the risen refugee influx, to manage the housing; especially renting enough living spaces. According to him, one of the bigger problems in the refugee situation is the fact that Nordrhein-Westfalen decided to give every governmental layer (state, *Regierungsbezirke*, *Kreise*, municipalities) its own set of responsibilities, resulting in everyone pointing fingers to each other. The two large asylum centers in Rees are run by the state of Nordrhein-Westfalen and function as an intermediate station before refugees are divided over the municipalities. Rees is responsible for the housing and care for those that are assigned to the municipality itself. Normally these refugees would be placed together in a communal property, but because of the numbers and the social situation a choice was made to arrange individual housing for families and single women.

- *"If we were hardliners, we could say: 'I am organizing central housing, that is the most economically viable solution, and I do not care about the social consequences' (...). We did not do that and especially with regard to the future prospects, especially for the children, who can now go through a normal school life and will already have some education."* (Q59)

The families are very happy to receive their own homes. Thanks to this situation, the municipal official states ghetto forming was prevented and the integration promoted. According to the official, the housing of refugees received predominantly positive responses from citizens; and many neighbors were e.g. happy to get foreign neighbors. It however also poses an extra challenge, since there is a high demand for individual residential housing as well due to e.g. the high number of single elderly people. Sometimes this led to complaints from residents, who also sometimes show to have trouble with all the work that is done for refugees;

- *"We [the municipality, MvW] are the tenants, and have to the garden work until we've learned them to do it. Then the citizens see: 'you even mow the lawn for them.' So, there are issues that can also be taken in as negative."* (Q60)

The presence of both asylum centers and 'normal' refugee housing sometimes leads to unclarity. For example, there was a situation in which refugees were accused of assaulting women through hand gestures, whistling and so on. It was however not clear where these refugees came from; were they living in Rees, falling under the municipalities' responsibility, or were they from the asylum centres?

- *"...And so we went to phases of troubles, in which this group of people worsened the reputation of our own."* (Q61)

Other problems involved were for example damaging furniture in the asylum centers.

The integration process already starts with asylum seekers, and the number of courses becomes higher once they gain a refugee status; over 900 hours. These do not only involve language, but also simple behavioral education such as how to deal with types of garbage, what products to use for cleaning your house, etc. The refugees gain right to the same social benefits as German citizens and get personal assistance in finding a job. Most of the integration process is financed by the country.

According to the official, the integration process was carried very well by residents. A lot of volunteers started to take care of individual refugees and help them with integration. All volunteering initiatives are brought together under one coordinator to prevent initiatives from overlapping. For individual refugees the integration proved to be more difficult, and even problematic from time to time; during the rapid increase in refugee numbers, the courses were often full. Sometimes this led to single refugees becoming bored, turning to alcoholism or drugs, leading occasionally to nuisance. According to the official this however is no different than the behavior of several German man in the municipality. Many individuals integrated well by e.g. joining sport clubs, and families gained social contacts through their children in school. As in Berg en Dal, here too cultural differences had led to difficulties; like with refugees not being used to arrive at work at a fixed time early in the morning. Some refugees already know they will return in a few years and see no need for integration, but most of the refugees to their best and integrate quite well, according to the official. Still, a lot of work is still to be done:

- *"The integration is already capitalized; but often fails due to lack of capacity of the integration courses. (...) The actual integration work is only on the verge of beginning."* (Q62)

Communication towards citizens on refugee issues was mostly done through occasional information evenings; for example, when sharing the ideas for decentralized housing. Furthermore, information is shared through constant status reports.

The refugee perception is positively influenced by the decentralized housing approach of the municipality, according to the official:

- *"Because of this (...) the coexistence is more relaxed, and with it, the image of refugees is more positive, or could develop positively; because they could also settle in the local community in a normal way. (...) If we had not done that, I could imagine that here and there conflicts would arise between the local residents and the refugee groups."* (Q63)

The official cannot state a direct relation is present between municipal refugee policy and the residents' border perception. He for example indicates this is difficult because Rees is not directly on the Dutch-German border, but 'blocked' by Emmerich.

- *"The cross-border workers with us are exceptions. There are those who have been working in the Netherlands for years ... But if a permanent exchange at the moment has been positively influenced by the refugee policy here with us, is something I can't state."* (Q64)

8.1.3 Winterswijk

In Winterswijk, an asylum center was already present; it opened in 2002 after a call came from citizens who disapproved of the closing of the previous center. It is structured as a residential area, with housing blocks for citizens build around it. Therefore, the asylum center has already been an integral part of the city for quite some time. Still the government asked the municipality if they might be willing to take in more. As in Berg en Dal, this was first discussed with citizens;

- *"Then we had an evening that the citizens could come and talk about it, and then there was a feeling of: 'why should that be in Winterswijk, we already have an AZC.' There were negative responses, then; but also very positive responses. But in the end it was decided: okay, we'll do it in the old retirement center."* (Q65)

All residents were given a chance to individually speak with municipality officials and share concerns and questions. According to the municipal official, this was received well as the vast majority of the residents proved to be very supportive of the situation; though not all responses from the citizens are positive.

As in the other municipalities, Winterswijk also has its own share of assigned refugees that were given asylum, to house and to care for. Here too, finding sufficient housing and especially individual housing proved to be one of the major challenges. Another challenge was the match between refugees and municipality. The state government had the intention to match on needs; for example, technically schooled refugees for Winterswijk, as the municipality has a higher demand for this. However, this matching process failed according to the official, as refugees were placed just there where there was place at that moment.

The integration process in Winterswijk consists among other things of a program of 4 days with workshops in subjects like participation, democracy, lgbtq-rights, religion etc. Refugees need to sign a document at the end that they have understood the information and will participate accordingly in society. Not cooperating can lead to consequences. When refugees are housed, they are followed through the project 'Approach for integration of newcomers.' This is all about constructing and delivering the framework, the structure, to make sure refugees are guided and supported through all elements of society; work and income, leisure, social services, participating in clubs and activities, etc. This project also aims to bring refugees and citizens in contact. Volunteers, local organizations, churches, everyone can work in and with the project; it has become a network approach. One example is the discount on a sports card, not only for refugees but for residents with a lower income as well. A choir where refugees are welcomed to sing along, cooking clubs, a religious group that all together visit mosques, churches, synagogues, to learn from each other; many initiatives. All these activities are not only meant to help refugees to integrate, but also the other way around; to get residents involved and get them to know the refugees. Volunteers can become a 'buddy' for a refugee through the project 'good neighbors', to help them get to know the community and also befriend them. There are however also challenges; e.g. getting refugees to understand and work with the Dutch financial and social system, or to get refugees to ask the necessary help:

- *"The network is still fairly supply-oriented, because demand-oriented is difficult. They often have no demands. Or they are not aware of their demands. What we see is that people are in huge trouble with their finances, and don't ring the bell. (...) If you only ask: "do you need help?", they will almost always say no."* (Q66)

The success of integration differs and is, according to the official, dependent on e.g. the country of origin and the level of education; with lower educated individuals from a less developed background having a higher chance of fleeing into drug- and alcohol related problems and developing financial problems. In this sense, the individual integration is hardest, and also hardest to measure;

- *"Individual integration, I cannot say anything meaningful about that yet. I do not know whether we are more successful in this than other municipalities. (...) We did not set any standards."* (Q67)

The official states to hear mainly positive reactions from citizens; people being happy and grateful to get to know new people and different cultures, for example. Negative responses exist as well, e.g. a woman who complained about the noise from a large refugee family living next door, even though acknowledging how friendly and helping the refugees are to her. But overall, citizens and local organizations throughout the municipality are involved in a positive way.

- *"It are often people who are open to it. And others say, 'well, I suppose it's all fine by me. I'm staying out of it; it doesn't bother me, but it doesn't do me any particular good either.' You have those people too. And people who are by definition negative, you have those too." (Q68)*

What to communicate towards residents on refugee-topics is, according to the official, always the question, as the COA also spreads information. E.g. larger plans are being presented at information evenings, but situations of e.g. individual housing are not communicated to citizens.

- *"We have deliberately chosen not to do so, because then you actually label the people right away: 'note, something special is coming here.' While they are just people." (Q69)*

The refugee perception of some residents has probably got a positive impulse through the municipal policy and with it the project 'Approach for integration of newcomers.' Residents told the official that contact with the refugees resulted in more understanding for one another. The official states a true effect is hard to measure, but as a municipality you have...

- *"...a facilitating role, and that means from time to time that you have to put some money into it to keep activities going. I think that this has a positive effect." (Q70)*

On a likewise relation between policy and Dutch-German border perception, she states very short:

- *"I don't see the connection. It could well be there, but I don't see it." (Q71)*

8.1.4 Kleve

In the city of Kleve, asylum seekers arrived from central locations in Nordrhein-Westfalen and were placed in several locations. While in Rees this involved more structured locations such as the former military depot, in Kleve this were also emergency shelters in e.g. sports halls due to the fast-growing refugee influx, which was difficult to keep up with.

On top of this, Kleve is assigned refugees who obtained their refugee status. These do not necessarily come from the emergency shelters; a complete redistribution all over the state of Nordrhein-Westfalen is possible. The same goes for Rees. Kleve has tried to place them in normal houses;

- *"The city has set itself the goal (...) to accommodate the refugees as separately as possible. (...) There are almost 60 percent who live in their own living space and not in the larger accommodations. That is how the city has decided refugees should live with us." (Q72)*

As in the other municipalities, one of the first bigger issues was that all these houses are also wanted by students and other (elderly) individual residents of the city.

- *"They are all packed into the same area, and all of course experience the same problem; that they have to get housing. And even though principally it should not be the case, it is of course still the case that landlords prefer to re-rent to Germans." (Q73)*

Kleve was able to partly tackle this problem by renting real estate that was no longer going to be rent out by the owners, due to e.g. outdated quality of the houses etc.

As in Rees, the process of integration measures already starts with asylum seekers, in the form a first language course. Kleve's integration courses are all organized and carried out through its community college, in the same manner as all other courses that are organized for Kleve's own residents. The courses are financed through state and country. The integration is coordinated by the municipality; not only through official measures, but also through involved clubs and associations and otherwise involved citizens. Just as in Rees the main goal here is to prevent overlap and to work together were possible. The official finds it very important to emphasize the fact that once an asylum seeker gets the refugee status, he or she gets the same rights to social benefits as any other German;

- *“That is often not seen. Many citizens believe: ‘they get everything ,and we get nothing.’ Or the asylum seekers think they don’t get enough, and that they need to receive a lot more support. So, that’s the case for both sides.” (Q74)*

As in Rees, here too problems with refugees in daily behavior regarding e.g. waste separation or toilet hygiene are experienced; a lot of ‘small’ issues the municipality had to make the refugees aware of. According to the official there are many examples of successful integration; yet at the same time many who still have not integrated well and only stay in their own small community.

- *“So, integration is certainly far from complete. (...) It is said: ‘a person’s integration takes at least six years’, and I actually believe that the needed time goes beyond that. (...) The offers are gigantic, but (...) to reach the immigrants to actually really make use of these measures, that’s the hardest; in my view, at least.” (Q75)*

The citizens are not informed about every changing detail in the refugee situation, but rather from time to time through the media canals of political parties, through the local newspaper, and spreading flyers. Also, they are invited at special occasions, e.g. neighbors were invited to come and eat with refugees at the opening of a new housing location. The official is not aware of any complaints from citizens who do not feel informed or involved enough; she feels the ways of spreading information were sufficient. The official praises the welcoming culture and helpfulness of the residents. There have been very many donations, not only money but also e.g. clothing, toys, sport equipment, bikes etc. Furthermore, the willingness to care for the refugees and help them was great as well according to the official; resulting even in some kind of social ‘adoption’ of refugees by volunteers. Lately this willingness has declined a little, but according to the official this is because of the fact that most refugees have settled now, and the influx of new refugees is a lot smaller than it was before. But,

- *“on the other hand, of course, there are still many who try to help with the problems of the individual refugees in some way. (...) There are still many godparents on the way, who are trying to care for individual refugees; and are trying to help.” (Q76)*

The worries or complaints of residents were only seldom directly brought under the attention of the municipal office but came to attention anyway through politics and through the general mood in the city. A few times individual citizens brought in complaints about e.g. waste laying around a refugee house. These issues were however closely monitored by the municipality. Interesting: the municipality even operates cross-border with the integration management of municipality Nijmegen, exchanging information, experiences etc.

The official does detect a relation between the refugee policy and the residents’ refugee perception:

- *“I believe that this positive mood, which (...) predominantly still prevails here in Kleve, certainly has something to do with the fact that, as a city, we have been very much involved in integration measures; ensured that the refugees were well accommodated; have ensured that communication has always been true; always willing (...) to talk to the citizens.” (Q77)*

She however does not detect a likewise relation with the Dutch-German border perception.

- *“I actually do not believe that so much. So, the refugee problem had nothing to do with the Dutch, in my eyes. (...) I believe that the fact that we have taken in relatively many refugees here has in no way influenced the relationship with the Netherlands, and certainly not negatively.” (Q78)*

8.2 LOCAL RESIDENTS ON MUNICIPAL REFUGEE POLICY

In line with the topics discussed with the municipal officials, residents were asked if according to them policy exist in the municipality that is concerned with the arrival and presence of refugees; what the residents know if this policy; what communication takes place from the municipality on this topic; what the resident notices of this policy; and what the opinion of the resident is with regard to this policy and the communication. The responses of the residents to these questions are now presented and discussed in the following three sections, for each municipality. The last part of this chapter is concerned with similarities and differences between the stories of the municipal officials and the residents, and delves deeper into what results from these two respondent groups say with regard to a possible relation between the municipal refugee policy and the refugee perception and border reception of residents from these four municipalities.

8.2.1 Knowledge of the municipal refugee policy

In general, it was observed that the respondents are not well aware of if, how many and where refugees arrive in the municipality; if and how the municipality arranges some kind of housing for them; and if and how actions are taken concerning integration.

In Berg en Dal, most respondents do know that refugees are present in the municipality, but they proved to have no idea about the numbers or about the way of accommodation; in their eyes, the intake of refugees in the municipality is minimal. Several respondents are aware of activities organized by the municipality concerning the promotion of integration, such as (language) education, *Taalmaatje*, a 'language buddy'-system involving the personal assistance of a volunteering resident, or cooking groups to bring refugees and residents in contact with one another. In Rees, the image seems to be that the municipality mainly has a facilitating role in providing real estate for accommodation and financing livelihood. According to the respondents, other organizations such as the catholic help service *Malteser Hilfsdienst* and groups of volunteers mainly take care of guiding refugees with help and integration. In Winterswijk, the knowledge of municipal policy varies considerably. This could be explained as one of the interviewees works for the Dutch Council of Refugees and another for the municipality; these respondents had more knowledge on the municipal refugee policy than the other respondents. The municipal employee states he thinks that, would he have been 'just' a citizen, he would have known little or nothing. Though the other respondents were less informed, they all assumed the municipality made a positive contribution to the housing and/or integration of the refugees; like this older, middle-educated man.

- *"If there was a great deal of dissatisfaction, I think you would hear more about it; so for that matter, they do their best there. What you hear, see, read in the media, makes me think the municipality is doing well there, in that regard."* (Q79; interviewee Winterswijk F)

In the now discussed three municipalities, the residents were better aware of housing policy than of policy concerning integration; in Kleve the opposite was the case. The process of housing remained unclear to most interviewees, but almost all were aware of the language courses and other integration courses provided by the city. Several respondents indicate they generally do not have a clear view of the municipal refugee policy.

8.2.2 Opinion on communication concerning the municipal refugee policy

The opinion of respondents on the amount and quality of communication from the municipality on the arrival and presence of refugees varies between the four municipalities. In Berg en Dal and Kleve, the experiences vary more between respondents; in Rees and Winterswijk, the general opinion on the communication is quite negative.

In Berg en Dal, some respondents indicate to be aware of communication via newspapers or local weekly tabloids on e.g. information evenings; or that they feel that, if something important was going on, the municipality will definitely communicate this thoroughly. Others notice little of communication, or for example state to desire more transparency. One respondent, a higher educated young man, was disturbed by the, in his eyes, wrong communication about the involvement of citizens with refugees:

- *"Then they had organized such an (...) evening to tell their plans, and how to deal with refugees (...). And they wrote: it has been a busy evening. And then you look at those photos, and there you see 50 men, all elderly people who come there for coffee and cake because they have nothing better to do. And then I think: oh, come on."* (Q80; interviewee Berg en Dal E)

Respondents from Rees state there is hardly any communication. One respondent attributes this as typically for Rees; another states that the only communication he knows of, which was an information evening, only came about through pressure from the citizens. Two respondents state to think the communication is kept to a minimum on purpose, to avoid certain (negative) responses. Several respondents expressed a need for more communication. According to the Winterswijk respondents, there is hardly to no communication; or only afterwards. One respondent thinks the municipality is 'afraid' of possible negative responses. Another sees the lack of communication as proof that the municipality does not do useful work concerning refugees, because otherwise this would have been communicated. One respondent sees this as a pity, since in his eyes good work is being done; it's a shame no one gets to see this. More communication could after all lead to a better image of the refugee situation for citizens. More transparency is needed, according to several respondents. In Kleve, the opinions vary. Several respondents state to receive information from the municipality, for example via local newspapers. Others say they are not aware, and therefore feel there is insufficient communication. One respondent suggests a bigger role for local news media covering the refugee situation. Another respondent described a very informative information evening; but she thinks communication could be too much as well, only resulting in possible negative reactions.

8.2.3 Experiences with, and opinion on the municipal refugee policy

Discussing the municipal refugee policy with residents in relation to the arrival and presence of refugees, it was observed that respondents mainly focus on pros and cons of the policy itself. The interviewees hardly address the position of the refugee in this, or the view of the interviewee on the refugee situation with regard to the municipal policy.

In Berg en Dal, the expressed feelings regarding the policy and the refugee situation differ. Two interviewees state the municipality does useful and important work for refugees, e.g. with regard to the future; refugee children could be of great added value for society later. Two others feel the municipality communicates too positive on refugees, and should enforce integration more strictly. For them it could be observed that the municipal policy in this sense had a counterproductive effect. One elderly, lower educated man states to think the municipality does not do enough concerning language, education and employment; *'you get a house, and that will be it'* (Q81; interviewee Berg en Dal A). Another thinks the municipal work is sufficient, but would like to see the municipality to take in a larger

share of refugees altogether. In Rees too, opinions vary. Three respondents feel the municipality works hard on integration. These respondents e.g. also express to have gained a more positive connection with refugees as a result of refugee children being in school with their own children, or with a refugee neighbor placed next to their home by the municipality. Another, a younger, high-educated woman, however expresses to feel the municipality does not do enough;

- *“Well, by the fact that I don't know what they do, I think it is a little bit too less. They could do better, and they could do more.”* (Q82; interviewee Rees E)

According to her the municipality does what she can, but this is not enough to truly help the refugees. This opinion is shared with a respondent who states housing in Rees should take place more in the city Centre itself; not in *ghetto's* out of town. In Winterswijk, two respondents specially mention the important role of municipal policy as a connecting factor between all involved parties in the refugee situation. One of them, a young high-educated man, does feel the municipality has reached its top limit concerning refugee accommodation, and asks the maximum of social workers and citizens. Another respondent states municipal support should function more demand-driven. This is agreed on by a middle-aged, middle-educated woman, who however also states:

- *“But when I see and hear from people what they [the refugees, MvW] all get and have, while I think: there are plenty of our own people who are having a hard time... (...) And well, those asylum seekers who come here and get a house and they get clothes and they get food and well, then, I take issue in that.”* (Q83; interviewee Winterswijk B)

For her, the choices made in municipal refugee policy apparently have led to more negative associations with the refugees present in the municipality. In Kleve, all respondents emphasize good refugee policy is useful and important; with two refugees specially stating the importance of municipal guidance with integration. One respondent, a young high educated man, felt there had been poor governance concerning refugee accommodation, especially in the start of the refugee ‘crisis’. A different respondent on the other hand feels the municipality has delivered good work; yet that this could not have been very hard, in comparison with larger German cities who had to take in a considerably larger amount of refugees. One respondent, a young and high-educated woman, felt policy worked out well, simply because she did not hear about any problems. An older, high-educated man specifically mentioned the positive experiences he had with refugees who were given the room to mingle and integrate in local society; in his case because of a refugee that joined his football team. He also states:

- *“I sometimes see them walking here, but it's also mixed in Kleve; with all those students, you don't know... (...) Who is a refugee now, and who is a student?”* (Q84; interviewee Kleve E)

Because refugees can move freely through the city and mingle, the difference with other groups of people (such as (international) students) had somewhat faded away for this respondent.

8.3 RELATING MUNICIPAL REFUGEE POLICY, REFUGEE PERCEPTION AND BORDER PERCEPTION

When the results of the interviews with the municipality officials are compared with the stories of residents, a certain amount of difference is observed. The municipality officials are mainly positive on the executed policy, on the effects it had, and state their municipality has the best intentions for refugees and also acted on this as best they could. Concerning the opinions of residents, the officials are more careful; recognizing both positive and negative responses. The citizens are considerably less positive on the way the municipality deals with the arrival and presence of refugees. Many feel the municipality does too little, or carries out wrong policy. It should be kept in mind here that many of these respondents stated to know little to nothing on the municipal policy; perhaps this means they do not

have a clear image of the quality of the policy. A few respondents state the municipality does too much for refugees, or communicates too positive about them. About the effects of the policy, the residents are (as the municipal officials also stated) mixed positive and negative.

Apart from the discrepancy between the stories of these two respondent groups, that seem to arise mainly due to the way of communication between municipality and citizens, now an effort is made to see if municipal policy and refugee perception perhaps relate to one another. The previous section shows that every municipality, coincidentally, has one example of a respondent whose refugee perception seems to be effected by the municipal refugee policy. In Berg en Dal and Winterswijk these were examples of negative imaging; in Kleve and Rees these were examples of positive imaging. The descriptions of the municipal officials of the carried out policy and the experiences described by the residents with this policy, show mainly similarities between the four municipalities. There are for example no specific differences between the Netherlands and Germany observed that could explain the negative or positive imaging of the respondents in these four municipalities. What however can be stated, is that municipal refugee policy has the potential to influence refugee perception; although only to a limited extent observed in this study. That the policy did not influence the refugee perception of more respondents might be explained with help of chapters 8.2.1 and 8.2.2, in which it was observed that most respondents do have a limited or even no knowledge of the carried out refugee policy, hardly know or experience the effects of this policy, and state to receive little to no communication from the municipality on this matter. In other words; residents simply do not get into contact with the refugee policy and therefore perhaps also do not experience any effect on the refugee perception.

Further, the results showed an inverse relation as well. The previous section described how respondents view the municipal refugee policy very critically, and that their opinion is strongly related to the position they themselves had already taken with regard to the arrival and presence of refugees. This therefore describes an influence of refugee perception on how residents view the municipal policy. Thus, in the results a light reciprocal relation is observed between refugee perception and municipal refugee policy: a lightly observed influence of municipal policy on refugee perception, for some residents; and a stronger observed influence of a person's existing refugee perception on how one views municipal refugee policy.

The follow-up question with regard to refugee policy was if the relation between municipal policy and refugee perception relates to the Dutch-German border perception of refugees. As stated, the first mentioned relation is only very lightly present. A relation with the border perception was, based on the conversations on municipal refugee policy, not detected at all. Municipal officials state not to recognize such a relation, and the interviewed citizens do not mention the Dutch-German border in any way, directly or indirectly, in relation to the refugee policy of the municipality. These results therefore give no reason to assume the presence of a relation between the carried out municipal refugee policy and the Dutch-German border perception of citizens in these four municipalities.

9 CONCLUSIONS

The introduction of this study described how, in a globalizing world, borders hardly lose value and in many cases even gain strength. Borders do not only separate territories, but also identities; in other words, they are constructed by (groups of) individuals to demarcate and protect identity. The role these borders take concerning identities can be regarded on a national level, but also on local (municipal) level. Choices in local policy can influence feelings of identity, and therefore the perception of a border. It was explained that how people perceive a border can be made visible by measuring in how far this border functions as a barrier to these people. The barrier effect of a border in that sense is thus linked to a feeling of identity; the existence of a barrier between 'us' and 'them', and the creation of an 'other'.

The European context of this study showed that the European Union works hard on diminishing the barrier effect through subsidy programs such as Interreg Deutschland-Nederland. How people perceive the Dutch-German border is however not only determined by national and regional differences and similarities that Interreg focuses on. Other, external factor such as the recent refugee situation in the EU might have had their effects on the identity feelings of people, and therefore, on the value they address to demarcating this identity. Perhaps developments with regard to the arrival and presence of refugees thus relate to the barrier effect Dutch and German residents of the Interreg DE-NL operational area experience from the Dutch-German border. Since, as discussed, refugee policy is increasingly organized on a municipal level, the question mainly arises what effects this will have on a local level.

As the project framework described, a clear gap is present concerning the relation between the refugee situation and the inner borders of the EU, as research on this topic mainly focusses on the outer borders. Furthermore the barrier effect of the inner European borders, though well mapped from an economic viewpoint, is hardly described with concern to general opinions, perceptions and behavior of individual residents. This study therefore aims to map a possibly present relation between the refugee perception of the past few years and the Dutch-German border perception for residents of the Interreg DE-NL operational area. The study is based on theories discussing the mental production of borders in relation to demarcations of identity and the existence of imagined communities, and framing refugees into the position of the 'other'. Furthermore academic studies are consulted that involve the influence of municipal policy on public attitude. The proposed gap and the (possible) connection between concepts derived from these theories led to the following research question:

What is the relation between the Dutch-German border perception and the refugee perception of Dutch and German border residents, and how does refugee-related policy of Dutch-German border municipalities relate to this?

To answer this question and the accompanying sub-questions, a mix of qualitative and quantitative research methods was applied. This consisted of an extensive survey in the research area, 24 in-depth interviews with residents from four local municipalities, and 4 interviews with municipal officials from these municipalities. In this last chapter, the described and analyzed results of chapters 5 to 8 are discussed by answering the sub-questions and main research question of this study. This is followed by a reflection on the conclusions and possible implications and recommendations for practices. Finally, the limitations of this study will be discussed, along with recommendations for the research field.

9.1 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

(1) *What is the perception of residents in these municipalities regarding a. the Dutch-German border and b. refugees, why is the perception like this, and how has it changed?*

This study started by mapping the border perception and refugee perception of survey and interview respondents, as to make it possible to detect parallels in these perceptions and in the changes of these perceptions, so a possible relation could be detected and described. These perceptions are mapped by first creating a general overview in numbers on the basis of the (quantitative) survey results, and subsequently giving these numbers context based on interview results from the four municipalities.

Dutch-German border perception

The position taken from the theory that there are different ways in which the (barrier effect of the) border is perceived has proved to be correct. There is a clear difference between how one perceives the border in daily practice, and how self-evident the border is to people. It showed for example in the quantitative results that the experienced barrier effect of the border in daily practice is significantly lower than the barrier effect experienced as a result of how self-evident one perceives the existence of the border. The context provided by the interviews to these numbers showed this same difference. In first instance, citizens speak of a border that simply is (or is not) there; the normative sense in which they perceive the border. On later moments, citizens refer more to how the border functions / disfunctions to them, on different levels, in the daily practice.

An explanation for the difference between both dimensions was found in the interviews, where several residents proved to perceive the border as a demarcation between the two countries for e.g. administrative reasons, cultural differences, and mostly, feelings related to the perception of an 'us' and a 'them.' Visualizing the border by discussing differences between both sides of the border (differences between Dutchman and Germans) shows that the border plays a role for respondents with regard to the own identity and the difference with 'others'; the demarcation of an imagined community, and the presence of a (in the theory already discussed) mental bordering effect. Based on these experienced differences, the presence of the border is normal, logical; corresponding with the higher perceived level of self-evidence. At the same time, people state that in actual cross-border experiences the border most often is not recognized when passing; is or is not truly experienced. This explains the relatively low barrier effect in daily practice.

This is recognized as well when addressing the importance of the border. Both the qualitative and the quantitative results show a division in residents who view the existence of and experiencing the border as important, and those who find this unimportant. For those who perceive the border as unimportant, this is connected to the (lack of) physical existence of the border. In relation to this, this group of residents regularly do not (or no longer) address a function to the border. For those who perceive the border as important, this is often related to feelings of 'us' vs. 'them'. The function of the border as described by these residents can therefore be defined as a demarcation of identity, containing a spatial component. Residents furthermore showed to find the border to be self-evident, important, as being a demarcation; yet at the same time to be happy with the open character of the border, stressing not to want to experience a barrier in their daily practices. The measured difference in perceived barrier effect between daily practice and self-evidence thus lines up with the actual preferences of the residents, who indicate to prefer a self-evident border, yet at the same time prefer a low barrier effect in border-related activities.

For the large majority of the residents, their border perception, as they see it, has not changed. The few individuals that did notice a change described in the interviews that the border has become more open to him/her, and that this development took place over the course of many years; e.g. as a result of the (physically) opening-up of the border and because one has become more acquainted with the other side of the border over the years.

Perception on the arrival and presence of refugees

A majority of the citizens experienced the arrival and presence of refugees as 'noticeable'. Further, a relatively equal division was observed for how (ab)normal, (un)natural, or (not) worrisome one perceived refugees. The context that could be given to this from the four selected municipalities showed a division in the statements and opinions shared by local residents. On the one hand these were of a more accepting nature, in which from a humanitarian point of view the suggestion was made of a moral obligation that is felt to help. On the other hand these were of a more doubtful nature, questioning the arrival and presence of refugees.

This division can be explained as a result of several feelings residents indicated to experience with regard to refugees. For those who express statements of a more accepting nature, it turns out that they either are aware of differences between refugees and themselves (.e.g related to welfare, unsafety), or aware of the equality between refugees and themselves (e.g. being human beings with the same feelings and fears), both appealing to a degree of obligation experienced by residents to offer support. For those who express statements of a more questioning nature, several reasons based on doubt or fear play a role; for example because of doubts concerning the motives and willingness to adapt from refugees, because of feelings that the municipality or country does not have the capacity to help all the refugees that (wish to) enter, or because of dissatisfaction regarding a (perceived) unequal divide over regions and countries.

Many residents described feelings that could be placed in both categories, therefore seemingly contradicting themselves several times; on the one hand willing to help refugees, on the other fearing (possible) consequences or avoiding the housing of refugees in their direct proximity; a mixture of feelings that can be indicated as 'not in my backyard' (NIMBY).

The integration of refugees is described by most interview residents as something that has to come from the refugee himself. It is expected of them to adapt (or at least try to), which furthermore is seen as a condition for the acceptance of a refugee into (local) society. Here, also a spatial component is present; if adaptation fails, the refugee (the 'other') has to 'leave', has to 'go back'. These feelings can be explained as the result of a form of identity, of an imagined community experienced by the resident, that the 'stranger' or 'other' needs to find access to (which in this case is the refugee). If the other is not willing or capable to meet the standards of this community, he or she is not welcome to stay in that community and even needs to physically leave the space occupied by this community.

Residents prove to be divided with regard to changes in their refugee perception, as the survey showed. The context offered by the interviewed residents in the selected municipalities however almost only showed residents who state their refugee perception has not changed. A few individuals indicated to perceive the arrival and presence of refugees as less normal, less natural, and more worrisome. The few changes that were described could not be related to precise moments (therefore, also not to the sudden rise in refugee influx of 2015), but took place over a larger number of years; e.g. as a result of having children and thus different feelings of responsibility.

(2) What is the relation between the residents' perception of refugees and the residents' perception of the Dutch-German border, and why is the relation like this?

The citizens were first directly asked for their views on a possible connection between both perceptions. Second, the results related to research question 1 were used to detect potential similarities and differences between border perception and refugee perception, to identify parallels, and to determine if indeed a relation is present.

A very light *perceived* negative relation was observed between the arrival and presence of refugees and the barrier effect of the Dutch-German border in the survey results. This however needs to be approached with caution because of the very direct proposed question to residents. Furthermore, no proof from a relation between the *changes* in border perception and refugee perception was detected. When putting this into context using the interviews from the municipalities, citizens proved not to perceive a relation between their border perception and refugee perception. This is either because of the 'open' character of the Dutch-German border, or because, as they state, these two matters simply have nothing to do with each other.

However, indirectly parallels were observed between the citizens' border perception and refugee perception: feelings that relate to a demarcation of identity, to the presence of an imagined community that the residents adhere to, and furthermore, the openness of the border.

The 'us' and 'them' that are addressed when discussing the Dutch-German border are not defined the same as when discussing the arrival and presence of refugees. Discussing the Dutch-German border, 'them' constantly refers to those living in the country on the other side of the border; whereas in discussing the refugee perception, the refugee is perceived as 'them', as the 'other'; at the same time even sometimes addressing the ones living on the other side of the border (and inhabitants from other EU-countries) as being part of the 'us'. Both situations thus consider a different imagined community. Related to this, the borders of the imagined community differ for both types of perceptions. Both for refugee perception and for border perception a spatial component in mental bordering practices was detected. When referring to the 'Dutch' as an imagined community with the German as the 'other' (or the other way around) the mental border (logically) aligned with the administrative Dutch-German border. With regard to refugees, this spatial component aligned with the country, the municipality, the European Union; varying from citizen to citizen and varying throughout the interviews as well. More often this spatial component was not even observed; a resident simply spoke of refugees coming 'here', going 'back', 'leaving' again; addressing a not clearly defined mental border. The concept of 'borders' plays a role here, but the Dutch-German border is never specifically addressed by the citizens with regard to the arrival and presence of refugees; let alone the neighboring country.

For a few individuals it was observed that because of (their perception on) the arrival and presence of refugees, they had become more aware of the open character of the Dutch-German border. Further results indicated the possibility that the open image of the border might have led to residents experiencing no issue when it comes to, for example, passage of refugees or the lack of border controls. This presumption however could not be proven as an existing relation with the present data.

Summarized, the found parallels between both perceptions thus do not indicate a clear relation in which (a change in) one perception somehow effects (a change in) the other. Though a very light (negative) relation was detected in the quantitative results, these results need to be approached with caution and are also not backed by further quantitative or qualitative results. For a few people, awareness of the openness of the Dutch-German border touches upon their perception of the refugee

situation, but based on the results of this study this can hardly be defined as more than an observation made by these respondents when asked; not truly relating, let alone a causal relation.

(3) *What policy is implemented by Dutch-German border municipalities with regard to refugees, and what expected and observed effects with regard to residents are involved? Specific: (how) does the found municipal policy relate to residents' perception of refugees?*

Interviews with municipality officials resulted in a description of policy choices made over the past years with regard to the arrival and presence of refugees, and the expectations and experienced effects that came with it. The stories of interviewed residents show how they experienced the municipal approach with regard to refugees, and in how far this influenced their refugee perception.

Municipal policy with regard to the arrival and presence of refugees

The four municipalities (and their citizens) have no say in the take-in of status holders. In both countries status holders are divided over municipalities through a formula. For asylum seekers this is different. In the Netherlands Winterswijk purposely chose to open an asylum center, and Berg en Dal purposely chose not to; in Germany the municipalities and Kreise are obligated to take in asylum seekers.

All four municipalities describe a chaotic situation at the start of the rise in refugee influx of 2015. All of a sudden they had to house and care for a much higher number of refugees that previously was the case. This resulted among other things in backlogs and in housing in less suitable locations.

Regardless of country, the municipalities experience the same types of problems. At first instance this concerns finding enough and suitable housing, which results in a struggle as the suitable houses and apartments are also wanted by (elderly) singles and students. In both German municipalities a deliberate choice was made to, despite the numbers, focus on providing individual housing. This on the one hand led to better integration, yet on the other hand resulted in more criticism from citizens who felt too much was 'given' to refugees.

In the Dutch municipalities, the integration process is controlled centrally by the municipality, and various official organizations and voluntary movements joined (sometimes on request) to support this. The German municipalities also know central coordination, but the initiative to take action lies more with organizations (such as the church) and volunteers than in the Netherlands. The integration 'package' ((language) courses etc.) offered in the German municipalities appears to be much more substantive than in the Netherlands.

The municipal officials describe that housing and integration, though going through a difficult start, is going pretty well. Few problems are experienced; and problems that are mentioned often involve individual cases, misunderstandings, or (in the situation of Rees) are caused by people from the asylum center and are therefore beyond the control of the municipality. The municipalities however recognize that integration remains a difficult topic, because of the difficult communication with refugees and the complicated Dutch and German social systems; especially for individual refugees. Therefore the impression amongst the officials is that the greatest progress in integration is yet to be made.

The Dutch municipalities appear to have given more attention to spreading information amongst citizens regarding the arrival and presence of refugees and municipal actions on this matter, and involving the opinion of citizens in making choices regarding, for example, housing or the opening of an asylum center. This was heard in lesser account for the German municipalities. Both the German officials stated that sometimes information deliberately is not spread, to prevent negative reactions.

There were hardly to no expectations regarding the refugee situation or policy effects at the start of the increased refugee influx, and also little preparation for extensive policy measurement packages. Because of the sudden nature of the increased influx, actions were taken on the short term, to the best of the municipalities ability at that time. Scenarios for the future were not formulated; and now still, the municipal officials state to have little insight into the refugee situation for the following years and for example state that integration is still at the verge of beginning.

Citizens' image of the municipal refugee policy

In general, it was observed that the residents are not well aware of if, how many and where refugees arrive in the municipality; if and how the municipality arranges some kind of housing for them; and if and how actions are taken concerning integration. In Berg en Dal for example, several times residents mention to think housing is minimal. Yet residents do seem to be aware of (integration) activities with regard to refugees. In Rees residents think housing is organized by the municipality, but integration activities and other refugee support comes from the church and from voluntary movements. In Winterswijk the knowledge of residents on municipal action differs strongly, but residents do think the municipality makes a positive contribution to the arrival and presence of refugees. In Kleve residents know very little of the housing situation, but all knew examples of integration measurements.

The opinion of citizens on the amount and quality of communication from the municipality on the arrival and presence of refugees varies between the four municipalities. In Berg en Dal and Kleve, the experiences vary more between citizens; in Rees and Winterswijk, the general opinion on the communication is quite negative. In all municipalities citizens complained of a lack of information, or information being to positive / incomplete. Citizens mention to wish for more information. In Rees and Winterswijk, several citizens think information deliberately is not spread out of fear for negative reactions. Citizens see their own lack of knowledge as proof that the municipality does not share enough information on the refugee policy / refugee situation.

It was observed that citizens mainly focus on pros and cons of the policy itself. The citizens hardly address the position of the refugee in this, or the view of the citizen on the refugee situation with regard to the municipal policy. In every municipality, some residents indicate the municipality does sufficient work for refugees, and others indicate that the municipality does too little or too much. Two citizens of Berg en Dal felt the policy provided too positive imagery on refugees and wanted integration to be better maintained. In Rees several residents experience a stronger positive connection with refugees because of refugee children placed (as a result of municipal policy choices) in school with their own children. Two respondents from Winterswijk see the municipal approach as the binding factor between refugee and citizen. Another thinks the municipality supports refugees too much and therefore views refugees more negatively. In Kleve, all citizens emphasize good refugee policy is useful and important. The citizens from Kleve are the most positive with regard to integration of refugees. Because refugees can move freely through the city and mingle, the difference with other groups of people (such as (international) students) had somewhat faded away for one citizen.

Relating municipal refugee policy and refugee perception

The descriptions of the municipal officials of the carried out policy and the experiences described by the residents with this policy, show mainly similarities between the four municipalities. There are for example little to no specific differences between the Netherlands and Germany observed that could explain the negative or positive refugee imaging of the citizens in these four municipalities.

The municipality officials are mainly positive on the executed policy, on the effects it had, and state their municipality has the best intentions for refugees and also acted on this as best they could. The

official of Berg en Dal sees no relation between carried out policy steps regarding refugees, and the image citizens have of these refugees. In the other three municipalities this relation indeed is detected; all three officials here think that the carried out refugee policy had a positive effect on the refugee image. This is thought for example because of the decentralized approach in housing (Rees), or because of the given attention for creating mutual understanding (Kleve, Winterswijk).

Citizens are considerably less positive on the way the municipality deals with the arrival and presence of refugees. Many feel the municipality does too little, or carries out wrong policy. It should be kept in mind that many of these citizens stated to know little to nothing on the municipal policy; perhaps this means they do not have a clear image of the quality of the policy. The discrepancy between the stories of citizens and officials mainly could be explained due to the way of communication between municipality and citizens.

What however could be derived from the citizens' stories, is that municipal refugee policy has the potential to influence refugee perception; although only to a limited extent observed in this study. Every municipality showed an example of a citizen whose refugee image (indirectly) had changed as result of municipal actions on this issue. In Kleve and Rees these were two positive changes in refugee perception; in Berg en Dal and Winterswijk these were two negative changes. That overall so few changes were observed might be explained as residents simply do not get into contact with the refugee policy and therefore perhaps also do not experience any effect on their refugee perception.

The reverse was observed more strongly; municipal policy was viewed very critically by many residents, mainly resulting from the already present refugee perception of the resident. This also explains why citizens, as described above, focus mainly on pros and cons of the policy itself; hardly addressing the role of the refugee in it, as they already have taken position in their view on the arrival and presence of refugees and it is now the policy that does or does not line up with that view. This thus concerns an influence of the existing refugee perception on how one perceives the municipal refugee policy. Hence, a light reciprocal relation is observed between refugee perception and municipal refugee policy.

(4) *How does the found municipal policy relate to the resident's perception of the Dutch-German border, and why?*

Combining answers to the previous sub-questions results in an answer on this question. By viewing how municipal policy relates to refugee perception, and how refugee perception relates to the Dutch-German border perception, statements can be made on the relation between municipal refugee policy and the border perception. Furthermore, the interviewees were directly asked about such a relation.

When directly asked, municipal officials state they do not see a relation between the municipalities' choices and activities regarding refugees, and the way in which citizens regard the Dutch-German border. These matters are seen as separate issues. Furthermore, the residents do not mention the Dutch-German border in any way, directly or indirectly, in relation to the municipality's refugee policy. Therefore there is no reason to assume the presence of a relation between the carried out municipal refugee policy and the Dutch-German border perception of citizens in these four municipalities.

Studying the relation between municipal refugee policy and refugee perception, and between refugee perception and border perception, the following can be stated. As described at sub-question 3, the municipal refugee policy has the *potential* to influence citizens' refugee perception; yet this was only marginally observed in this study. Furthermore, the reverse was observed: the existing refugee perception influences how one views the refugee policy. As stated at sub-question 2, no clear

connection was observed between refugee perception and the Dutch-German border perception. The quantitative results show a (to be interpreted with care) very weak negative relation, which however was not substantiated with further proof. With regard to the refugee situation, a few individuals seem to experience an awareness considering the (perceived) open character of the border, which however should be considered rather as an observation than as a (causal) relation. The results of this study therefore provide insufficient reason to assume the presence of a relation between municipal policy aimed at the arrival and presence of refugees, and the perception residents have of the Dutch-German border.

Answering the main research question

A full answer consists, of course, of the sum of the answers given to the sub-questions 1 to 4 above. It is not intended to present here an extensive repetition of findings. Therefore the main research question is answered here in key points:

- The Dutch-German border perception and the refugee perception of Dutch and German borderland residents show several parallels, mainly related to 1. feelings of identity, of 'us' vs. 'them', that one experiences, and the imagined community that is associated with this; and 2. the open character of the Dutch-German border.
- The found parallels do not indicate the presence of a clear relation between both perceptions. The parallel concerning the imagined community addresses a different imagined community for both perceptions, and with it, a different demarcation in which for the refugee perception there is no role per se for the Dutch-German border. The found parallel concerning the openness of the border revolves around signs of awareness of this open character when addressing the refugee perception, which however not specifically indicates a relational connection.
- The municipal policy regarding the arrival and presence of refugees has the potential to influence citizens' refugee perception, but this was only marginally observed. In reverse, the refugee perception does clearly prove to be of influence on how one perceives the refugee policy.
- Direct proof for the presence of a relation between the carried out municipal refugee policy and the Dutch-German border perception of citizens in these four municipalities was not found. An indirect connection through the refugee perception could on the base of the above not be established. Therefore, there is not sufficient reason to accept the assumption of a relation between municipal refugee policy and the Dutch-German border perception of borderland residents.

The findings of this study result in some alterations in the conceptual framework presented in chapter 2, figure 1. Therefore a new conceptual model is presented in figure 4 on page 87. The made changes will now be explained.

The awareness of the openness of the Dutch-German border is added as an extra parallel (e). Both the concepts of imagined community (c) and awareness of the border (e) have separate connections with the refugee perception and the border perception ((2) and (5)). The proposed relation between municipal refugee policy (d) and border perception (a) has been removed. The relation between refugee perception and border perception (1) is intentionally displayed grey and thin, to indicate no clear relation was detected.

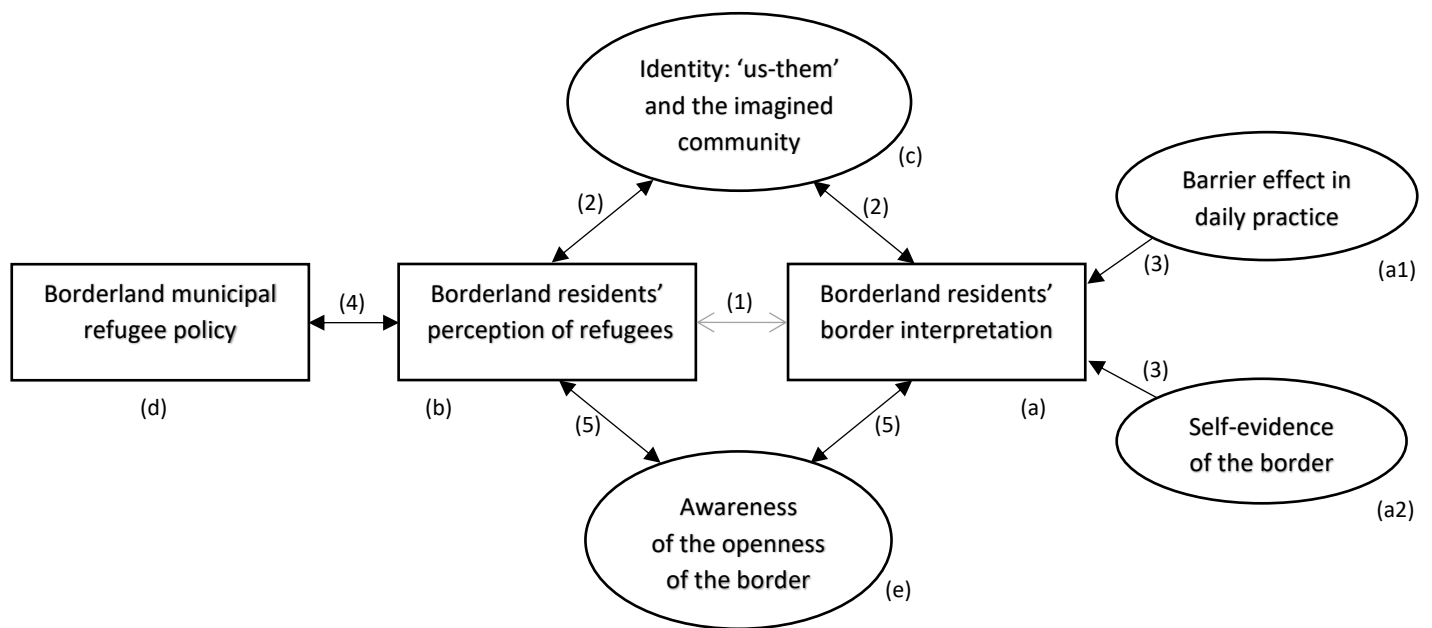


Figure 4 Adjusted conceptual model based on the results

9.2 REFLECTION ON CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICES

The findings of this study, in combination with the societal relevance discussed in the project framework, result in the following reflection and provides several recommendations for practices.

The societal relevance discussed in chapter 1 is found in contributing to insights regarding the diminishing of barrier effects concerning inner EU borders, placing focus within the refugee debate on these internal borders, approaching the refugee situation on local (policy) level, and an overall contribution to insights on promoting integration in the European Union.

Regarding the diminishing of the barrier effect, a sole focus on the refugee situation is insufficient. This study showed a relation between refugee perception and border perception was almost not detected. Yet the results of the Interreg evaluative rapport of 2018, as discussed in chapter 1.3.3, did show a strengthening of how self-evident the border is to people, despite Interreg's efforts through various programs to turn this the other way around. It is now unclear what caused this rise in barrier effect, and a first recommendation is therefore to Interreg DE-NL to address other possible external factors that might be of influence. A suggestion to look in to would be the Brexit, as the heavy discussions on EU and national level regarding Brexit and the position of European (inner) borders, in the same manner as with refugees, could have had its effects on citizens' perceptions of these borders. Another suggestion might be the rise of populist political parties; e.g. the huge victory of the new populist party *Forum voor Democratie* (Forum for Democracy) in the elections for the Dutch senate of March 2019; a party that has explicitly spoken out against open border politics.

A second recommendation concerns the current approach of barrier effect Interreg DE-NL used, and therefore was used in this study. That the barrier effect can be measured through two component proved to be true in the analysis of the results. Interreg approaches both types of barrier effect issues that ideally should not exist. However, especially the interview statements in this study show that the component 'self-evidence of the border' does not have to be approached as a negative issue. Many respondents indicated to be okay with the border being 'simply present', as long as they do not feel

hindered by it in their daily practices. In some occasions, the differences that the border represent to some people (e.g. cultural differences between Dutchman and Germans) is perceived as positive, as inviting. This already has been stressed in academic studies as well (e.g. Spierings & van der Velde, 2012). Therefore a recommendation is made to Interreg to reconsider the value and position of the component 'self-evidence of the border'.

The results also give some insights into recommendations on a municipal level. First, a discrepancy was observed between the stories of municipal officials and the stories of residents. It showed that municipal officials are in general more positive regarding the communication with residents and the responses of these residents, than residents themselves. It was often heard that residents had none to little knowledge on the refugee policy, on the way housing or integration is arranged. Several times this simple lack of knowledge led to negative responses, thinking the municipality clearly does not take enough action, is afraid to communicate, or executes 'wrong' policy steps. Though not directly forming the core of this study, enough observations were made to give a recommendation to revise the communication on these and possible other, similar issues. Based on the results the need for this is bigger for the German municipalities than for the Dutch municipalities.

Furthermore, in relation to this, municipalities are given the recommendation to more actively involve citizens opinions and existing perceptions in policy making, as for example it proved that the existing refugee perception of residents plays a significant role in the image these residents form on carried out policy steps.

9.3 REFLECTION ON LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Discussing the findings of this study, certain limitations also need to be taken into account. First, the framework of this specific case needs to be addressed. The cooperation with Interreg DE-NL implied a focus on the Interreg DE-NL operational area, considering the Dutch-German borderland. This lend itself perfectly for the aims of this study. However, one can question whether the involvement of different cases (for example other local borders such as the Dutch-Belgian border, or borders in other parts of the EU such as the Hungarian-Serbian border would have resulted in the same insights. The choice to focus on only one case can therefore be perceived as a limitation in the sense that comparisons could not be made and generalization involving other inner EU borders are not formulated. This same framing also can be seen as a limitation on a smaller scale, concerning the fact that only borderland residents and municipalities participated instead of respondents from all over both countries. However, as the focus is placed specifically on Dutch-German border perception, the expectation to gain the most valuable insights in said region still stands.

As qualitative and quantitative research is combined in the mixed methods approach of this study, this poses some limitations of its own; the most important one being that, in the convergent design chosen for this particular study, the sample sizes for both datasets are different (Creswell, 2012). The selection of municipalities and respondents is not so large. Though the numbers are deemed sufficient to create an insightful overview of perceptions and relations between them for individual residents, and furthermore can be explained perfectly within the lines and limitations of this thesis, it also means that the eventual outcomes cannot be assumed automatically to be widely representative for the whole Interreg operational area. In this sense, this research should (within this field of study) be considered as exploratory.

The refugee 'theme' has played a significant societal and political role in the past years on local, regional, national and international scale. This has made it into a relatively sensitive subject to discuss. This can result in interviewees and survey respondents feeling less at ease to truly and fully speak their

minds on this subject. This applies mostly to views and opinions that lean quite strong to certain sides of the field of discussion. It is therefore of great importance to emphasize that the way of questioning has been as neutral and open as possible. Furthermore, in the interviews it has been necessary to provide people with enough space and time to freely ventilate their thoughts and opinions, and to respond in an interested but neutral manner; encouraging respondents to truly speak their minds. An important decision to accomplish this has been to do all interviews together with a fellow researcher. This ensured a certain level of 'control' on each other during the conversations, and had the additional advantage of a lower risk of the conversation coming to a hold or certain (follow-up) questions being forgotten. Furthermore, to ensure the presence of the researchers (with their own personal background and features, e.g. being Dutch) influenced the interviewee as little as possible, the self-perception of the interviewee concerning the border and refugees has constantly been emphasized during each interview. However, the sensitivity of the subject should always be kept in mind.

This research focuses specifically on the relation between refugee policy and border interpretation. Such framing within the framework of a thesis is both necessary and logically. It is however important to keep in mind that any possible observed changes in border perception and interpretation take might (and will) not only be due to refugee policy, but can also be related to other influencing factors. Take for example the research of my colleague Shauni Drost (2019, in progress), who approaches the same types of relations from a different influencing factor (public discourses). It is therefore important not to be too firm about the findings of this study, but to keep an open mind. The same goes for the focus on refugee perception in general. With respect to the scientific aim of contributing to academic knowledge on the (mental) functioning of borders and the effects of external factors on it, the focus on the arrival and presence of refugees might be observed as limited as well. Though the theoretical framework explained a clear gap is present concerning this specific issue, other issues might proof to show similar voids in academic work. Though not per se a limitation of this study, this does indicate there is value in conducting similar research on the Dutch-German border or other inner European borders concerning different types of issues (like the earlier suggestion considering the Brexit).

Finally, the researcher must take into account his own biases. When working for a long period on such a theme, following it through scientific developments in literature and also in (news) media, certain ideas, images and expectations might start to form; something that is certainly relevant when it comes to sensitive subjects such as refugees. Furthermore, the researcher brings his own personal background with him. It is therefore important to note that the researcher has continuously been aware of his own position within this study, and adjusted for it.

The found results and the mentioned limitations or other 'gaps' that are described above together make room for several recommendations that for further research.

A first recommendation follows logically from the described limit to the Dutch-German border region. In order to be able to make comparisons and perhaps discover patterns, similar types of study could be performed on other inner European borders to contribute to the knowledge on European integration, the functioning of (mental) borders, the role of local (municipal) refugee policy etc. With regard to the refugee situation, several inner borders in southern and eastern Europe of which is known to experience irregular migration on a larger scale might prove to be interesting cases for comparative research.

A second suggestion would be to address other issues than the arrival and presence of refugees with regard to border perception. As the European Union keeps on working to decrease the barrier effect of inner borders, the search for factors countering these efforts remains as relevant as ever. The

refugee situation proved to be of little influence on the Dutch-German border perception, according to this study; yet the Interreg 2018 evaluative rapport showed the border has increasingly become self-evident over the past few years, despite Interreg's programs to counter this. What factor causes these changes? Might other societal and political issues such as the earlier mentioned Brexit play a role here? This is worth further studying.

The aim of this study was to contribute to the academic and societal knowledge concerning the interpretation of the Dutch-German border, and with it, to the concepts regarding border functioning in general. The presented research is believed to have achieved the research goal. The additional knowledge provided by this study on the (mental) functioning of the border, the position of refugees in / for imagined communities in the Dutch-German borderland, and the progress of European integration with regard to the barrier effect of the border, provided both academic and practical insights that can be of use to various actors. The suggestions for follow-up research show that bordering practices, also within the European Union as stated in the very begin of this thesis, are still as present as ever; as are discussions on the irregular migration of refugees. This underscores the importance of these topics, and of the studies that seek to understand it.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A SURVEY QUESTIONS

An English translation of the substantive questions of the survey (so, excluding all questions regarding e.g. age, municipality of origin, etc.) is given below.

Start of Block: Role of the border

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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Noticeable
Abnormal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Normal
Impeding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Unimpeding
Dividing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Undividing
Unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Important
Useful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Useless
Natural	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Unimportant

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

	1	2	3	4	5	
Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Noticeable
Abnormal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Normal
Impeding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Unimpeding
Dividing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Undividing
Unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Important
Useful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Useless
Natural	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Unnatural

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

	1	2	3	4	5	
Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Unimportant

End of Block: Border in economic perspective

Start of Block: Border in social-cultural perspective

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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Noticeable
Abnormal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Normal
Impeding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Unimpeding
Dividing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Undividing
Unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Important
Useful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Useless
Natural	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Noticeable
Abnormal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Normal
Impeding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Unimpeding
Dividing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Undividing
Unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Important
Useful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Useless
Natural	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Unimportant

End of Block: Border in legal-administrative perspective

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

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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Noticeable
Abnormal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Normal
Unnatural	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Natural
Not worrisome	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Worrisome

Q18 How did you experience the arrival and presence of refugees to your country of residence **before** 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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Normal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Natural	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Worrisome	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Normal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impeding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dividing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Useful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Natural	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economically	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Socio-culturally	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal-administratively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

	Not at all	Not really	Neutral	Somewhat	Fully
Europe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My neighbouring country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My country of residence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My province	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My municipality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My region (in country of residence)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The border region	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

☐ Yes

☐ No

Display This Question:

If 'Do you know the INTERREG-program Deutschland-Nederland?' = Yes

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

☐ Yes

☐ No

Display This Question:

If 'Have you ever been in contact with an INTERREG Deutschland-Nederland project?' = Yes

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

This was the final question. We thank you for your 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 B INTERVIEW GUIDE MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

An English translation of the interview set-up with municipal officials on refugee policy is given below.

INTERVIEWGUIDE MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS WITH REGARD TO REFUGEE POLICY

1. Introduction

- a. Who are we, what are study and interview about.
- b. Emphasize anonymity and privacy
- c. Ask permission for audio recording
- d. Explain data saving and interview transcribing
- e. Any questions?

2. Basic information

- a. Name (anonymous if requested)
- b. Function & role with regard to refugee policy

3. Which authority regulates what in the municipality with regard to refugee policy?

- a. What does the national government regulate?
- b. Wat do you regulate yourself?

4. What policy do you implement with regard to refugees?

- a. Housing
- b. Integration (language, culture etc.)
- c. Income / employment
- d. Communication towards citizens
- e. Bring citizens and refugees into contact
- f. Financing of all of the above

5. What effects did you expect of the described policy?

- a. Level of 'succes'
- b. Response from citizens; effects on citizens
- c. Duration
- d. Possibly expected problems, or expected changes in the municipality

6. What effects did you actually experience in the municipality?

- a. Level of 'succes'
- b. Response from citizens; effects on citizens
- c. Duration
- d. Possibly experienced problems, or experienced changes in the municipality

Possible additional questions:

7. Do you think the policy that has been carried out by the municipality in any way connects to the image that citizens have of refugees / the refugee situation?
8. Do you think the policy that has been carried out by the municipality in any way connects to how citizens perceive/view/interpret the Dutch-German border?

APPENDIX C INTERVIEW GUIDE CITIZENS

An English translation of the interview set-up with residents of the four selected municipalities on border perception, refugee perception and refugee policy is given below.

INTERVIEWGUIDE CITIZENS ON BORDER PERCEPTION, REFUGEE PERCEPTION AND REFUGEE POLICY

9. Introduction

- a. Who are we, what are study and interview about. *(Explain that this interview regards two topics, namely border perception and refugees (so, do not underscore (the search for) a possible relation)*
- b. Emphasize anonymity and privacy
- c. Ask permission for audio recording
- d. Explain data saving and interview transcribing
- e. Emphasize that it's about person's OWN opinion
- f. Any questions?

10. Basic information

- a. Name (anonymous if requested)
- b. Gender
- c. Age
- d. How long do you live in the municipality?
- e. Highest finished education

Start audio recording

11. Interpretation of the border

- What are your experiences with the border?
- How do you think about the Dutch-German border?
 - o Noticeable? How? Why?
 - o Do you find it important that this border exists? Why?
 - o Do you find the border impeding / dividing? Why?
 - o Do you think the border has a function / should have a function / is a necessity? With all: Why / what do you mean / can you clarify/explain yourself?
- Do you think your image of the border has changed at a certain moment? If yes: what changed, and why did this happen?

12. Refugee perception

- Which three words come to mind when you think about the coming of refugees?
- Could you explain why these three words come to mind?
- Could you explain how you yourself feel about the arrival and presence of refugees in (country of residence)?
 - o Housing
 - o Integration
 - o Perhaps ask: what are reasons for you that this has / has not gone well? (First wait for what the interviewee brings in himself, then zoom in on the subject)
- Do you have personal experience with (one or several) refugees? If yes: what experiences?

- There has been a lot of (media) reporting concerning the coming of refugees; did you hear anything of this, and if yes, what do you think of the (media) coverage concerning the arrival and presence of refugees?
- Is there a certain reason for your opinion regarding refugees, or a certain moment at which your opinion has changed? Or, have you always had this opinion? Could you explain why / why not?

13. Municipal policy

What do you notice of the municipal policy / activities with regard to refugees?

- Noticeable? What does the municipality do with regard to refugees?
→ *Perhaps get interviewee started with the use of information from the interview with the municipal official*

What do you think of the municipal policy / activities with regard to refugees?

- Useful? Important? (In)sufficient? Experiences?

How does communication from the municipality to citizens work out, with regard to refugees?

- Experiences? Sufficient? Redundant?

14. 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 of the border policy regarding the arrival of refugees? Why / why not?
- Do you think that the refugees / refugee situation, and any changes therein, may somehow relate to your image of the Dutch-German border? Why / Why not?

APPENDIX D ADDITIONAL SURVEY RESULTS

Questions within the general (physical) aspect

Table D1 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 D2 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

Questions within the economic aspect

Table D3 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 D4 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

Questions within the sociocultural aspect

Table D5 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 D6 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

Questions within the legal-administrative aspect

Table D7 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 D8 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 border existence and border experience

The respondents' views on the importance of the border were also compared for groups: country of origin, gender, level of education and different age group.

The importance of border existence and border experience compared for country of origin

Table D9 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 D10 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 find the existence of the border from a general and economic aspect a little more important than German respondents; for the socio-cultural aspect this is the other way around.

The importance of border existence and border experience compared for gender

Table D11 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 D12 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 importance of border existence and border experience compared for level of education

Table D13 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						Legal-administrative					
		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	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%	47	20,1%	69	12,9%	29	11,4%
	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%	32	13,7%	82	15,4%	40	15,7%
	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%	103	44,0%	282	52,9%	124	48,6%
	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%	30	12,8%	46	8,6%	32	12,5%
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%	22	9,4%	54	10,1%	30	11,8%
		237		537		261		233		533		255		234		532		256		234		533		255	

Table D14 Importance of experiencing the border, for level of education

How important is it to actually experience the Dutch-German border?		General						Economic						Socio-cultural						Legal-administrative					
		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher	
		N	%	N	%	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	17,7%	62	11,5%	16	6,2%
	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	16,0%	78	14,5%	46	17,8%
	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	48,9%	299	55,6%	120	46,5%
	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	7,2%	46	8,6%	44	17,1%
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	10,1%	53	9,9%	32	12,4%
		238		541		259		238		540		261		238		542		260		237		538		258	

Lower educated respondents relatively more often state the existence of the border to be important within the economic and legal-administrative aspect, but unimportant within the general aspect. Furthermore, they relatively often perceive experiencing the border within the general and legal-administrative aspect to be important.

The importance of border existence and border experience compared for age groups

Table D15 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						Legal-administrative					
		18-30		30-50		50-65		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	%	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%	35	15,5%	50	13,9%	59	13,6%
	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%	44	19,5%	48	13,4%	63	14,5%
	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%	104	46,0%	188	52,4%	215	49,4%
	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%	34	15,0%	34	9,5%	40	9,2%
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%	9	4,0%	39	10,9%	58	13,3%
		226		361		445		224		357		437		225		361		433		226		359		435	

Table D16 Importance of experiencing the border, for age groups

How important is it to actually experience the Dutch-German border?		General						Economic						Socio-cultural						Legal-administrative					
		18-30		30-50		50-65		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	%	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%	27	11,9%	44	12,3%	48	10,8%
	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%	43	19,0%	51	14,2%	68	15,3%
	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%	110	48,7%	185	51,5%	239	53,7%
	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%	38	16,8%	31	8,6%	38	8,5%
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%	8	3,5%	48	13,4%	52	11,7%
		224		362		449		225		363		448		226		361		449		226		359		445	

18- to 30-year-olds on average find the existence of and experiencing the border relatively more important than respondents from other age groups.

Question regarding a change in barrier effect

The respondents' perceived change in barrier effect was compared for groups: country of origin, gender, level of education and different age groups.

Table D17 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	%
<i>Clearly decreased</i>	27	5,2%	30	5,7%	14	2,7%	17	3,3%	16	3,1%	17	3,3%	17	3,3%	14	2,7%
<i>Slightly decreased</i>	43	8,3%	46	8,8%	42	8,1%	51	9,8%	35	6,8%	53	10,2%	22	4,3%	27	5,2%
<i>About the same</i>	391	75,2%	379	72,3%	384	74,1%	392	75,0%	393	76,2%	376	72,4%	413	80,2%	401	76,8%
<i>Slightly increased</i>	51	9,8%	51	9,7%	62	12,0%	47	9,0%	56	10,9%	58	11,2%	47	9,1%	62	11,9%
<i>Clearly increased</i>	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 D18 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	%
<i>Clearly decreased</i>	35	6,8%	22	4,1%	20	3,9%	11	2,1%	15	2,9%	18	3,4%	19	3,7%	12	2,3%
<i>Slightly decreased</i>	58	11,3%	31	5,8%	49	9,6%	44	8,3%	56	11,0%	32	6,1%	32	6,3%	17	3,2%
<i>About the same</i>	350	68,4%	420	78,9%	372	72,8%	404	76,2%	368	72,0%	401	76,5%	379	74,6%	435	82,2%
<i>Slightly increased</i>	54	10,5%	48	9,0%	50	9,8%	59	11,1%	55	10,8%	59	11,3%	61	12,0%	48	9,1%
<i>Clearly increased</i>	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 think the barrier effect has decreased within the general (physical) aspect. Women more often state it has not changed.

Table D19 Changed barrier effect of the Dutch German border over the last three years, for level of education

	General						Economic						Socio-cultural						Legal-administrative					
	Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Clearly decreased</i>	19	8,0%	29	5,4%	9	3,4%	7	3,0%	14	2,6%	9	3,4%	10	4,3%	18	3,4%	5	1,9%	8	3,4%	14	2,6%	9	3,5%
<i>Slightly decreased</i>	22	9,3%	40	7,4%	26	10,0%	20	8,5%	50	9,3%	23	8,8%	22	9,4%	41	7,7%	24	9,2%	16	6,8%	20	3,7%	13	5,0%
<i>About the same</i>	169	71,3%	409	75,7%	188	72,0%	174	74,0%	400	74,2%	198	75,9%	167	71,1%	410	76,8%	188	72,3%	179	76,2%	438	81,6%	192	74,1%
<i>Slightly increased</i>	20	8,4%	54	10,0%	28	10,7%	27	11,5%	61	11,3%	21	8,0%	26	11,1%	56	10,5%	32	12,3%	22	9,4%	50	9,3%	36	13,9%
<i>Clearly increased</i>	7	3,0%	8	1,5%	10	3,8%	7	3,0%	14	2,6%	10	3,8%	10	4,3%	9	1,7%	11	4,2%	10	4,3%	15	2,8%	9	3,5%
Total	237		540		261		235		539		261		235		534		260		235		537		259	

Table D20 Changed barrier effect of the Dutch German border over the last three years, for age groups

	General						Economic						Socio-cultural						Legal-administrative					
	18-30		30-50		50-65		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	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Clearly decreased</i>	12	5,3%	19	5,2%	26	5,8%	8	3,6%	8	2,2%	15	3,4%	8	3,6%	7	2,0%	18	4,1%	7	3,1%	11	3,1%	13	2,9%
<i>Slightly decreased</i>	32	14,2%	28	7,7%	29	6,5%	33	14,7%	28	7,8%	32	7,2%	24	10,7%	36	10,1%	28	6,3%	13	5,8%	21	5,8%	15	3,4%
<i>About the same</i>	152	67,6%	263	72,5%	346	77,4%	144	64,0%	269	74,5%	355	79,6%	137	61,2%	258	72,1%	366	82,4%	165	73,7%	273	75,8%	368	82,9%
<i>Slightly increased</i>	21	9,3%	42	11,6%	39	8,7%	30	13,3%	45	12,5%	33	7,4%	45	20,1%	45	12,6%	23	5,2%	28	12,5%	42	11,7%	38	8,6%
<i>Clearly increased</i>	8	3,6%	11	3,0%	7	1,6%	10	4,4%	11	3,0%	11	2,5%	10	4,5%	12	3,4%	9	2,0%	11	4,9%	13	3,6%	10	2,3%
Total	225		363		447		225		361		446		224		358		444		224		360		444	

18- to 30-year-olds relatively often state the barrier effect economically decreased a little. At the same time this group relatively often thinks it has increased sociocultural. This respondent group scores relatively lower for all aspects on the category ‘unchanged’ (score 2). Within the economic and socio-cultural aspect, 50- to 65-year-olds relatively often state the barrier effect remains unchanged. Within the socio-cultural aspect this group scores relatively lower in the category ‘slightly increased barrier effect’.

Question regarding the current refugee perception

The respondents' current refugee perception was compared for groups: country of origin, gender, level of education and different age groups.

Table D21 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 sees the arrival and presence of refugees as very noticeable and very natural is significantly lower than for Germans. The percentage of Dutch respondents seeing the arrival and presence of refugees as worrisome is relatively high compared to German respondents.

Table D22 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 D2314 Current perception on the arrival and presence of refugees, for level of education

	Noticeable						Normal						Natural						Worrisome					
	Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher	
	N	%	N	%	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%	85	15,8%	48	18,5%
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%	124	23,0%	58	22,3%
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%	146	27,1%	55	21,2%
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%	91	16,9%	51	19,6%
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%	92	17,1%	48	18,5%
	236		541		261		235		539		260		234		539		260		237		538		260	
	Unnoticeable						Abnormal						Unnatural						Not worrisome					

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 D24 Current perception on the arrival and presence of refugees, for age groups

	Noticeable						Normal						Natural						Worrisome					
	18-30		30-50		50-65		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	%	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%	54	15,0%	99	22,1%
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%	79	22,0%	85	19,0%
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%	87	24,2%	116	26,0%
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%	59	16,4%	74	16,6%
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%	80	22,3%	73	16,3%
	226		360		449		226		358		447		226		357		447		226		359		447	
	Unnoticeable						Abnormal						Unnatural						Not worrisome					

18- to 30-year old respondents relatively often see the refugee situation as quite normal and natural, whereas 50- to 65-year old respondents often consider it to be little to not normal or natural. 18- to 30-year old respondents relatively often see the arrival and presence as not worrisome, whereas relatively many 50- to 65-year-olds see this as worrisome.

Question regarding the refugee perception in 2015, compared to the current perception

The respondents' former refugee perception was compared for groups: country of origin, gender, level of education and different age groups.

Table D25 Refugee perception in 2015, compared to current perception, for country of origin

	Noticeable				Normal				Natural				Worrisome			
	Netherlands		Germany		Netherlands		Germany		Netherlands		Germany		Netherlands		Germany	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
In 2015:																
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	

Dutch respondents more often considered the arrival and presence of refugees in 2015 just as noticeable, normal, natural and worrisome as now, compared to Germans. Germans more often perceived the refugee situation in 2015 as less noticeable, normal, natural and worrisome than now, compared to Dutch respondents.

Table D26 Refugee perception in 2015, compared to current perception, for gender

	Noticeable				Normal				Natural				Worrisome			
	Man		Woman		Man		Woman		Man		Woman		Man		Woman	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
In 2015:																
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 D27 Refugee perception in 2015, compared to current perception, for level of education

	Noticeable						Normal						Natural						Worrisome					
	Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher		Lower		Middle		Higher	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
In 2015:																								
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%	54	23,0%	101	18,7%	42	16,2%
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%	109	46,4%	261	48,2%	150	57,7%
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%	72	30,6%	179	33,1%	68	26,2%
Total	236		540		260		235		540		259		234		536		259		235		541		260	

Higher educated respondents relatively often state they saw the refugee situation in 2015 just as natural as now. Lower educated more often state they found the refugee situation in 2015 less natural. Higher educated respondents also relatively often perceived the refugee situation in 2015 just as worrisome as now. The group stating that they thought the refugee situation to be less worrisome in 2015 is relatively small.

Table D28 Refugee perception in 2015, compared to current perception, for age groups

	Noticeable						Normal						Natural						Worrisome					
	18-30		30-50		50-65		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	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
In 2015:																								
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%	37	16,4%	68	18,9%	92	20,6%
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%	108	47,8%	180	50,0%	228	51,0%
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%	81	35,8%	112	31,1%	127	28,4%
Total	225		360		448		225		360		446		226		357		443		226		360		447	

The group of 18- to 30-year old respondents shows several extremes. They relatively often state to have perceived the refugee situation in 2015 as less noticeable, and also as more natural and less worrisome than now.

Question regarding border perception within the refugee aspect

Table D29 If you think back to the developments in recent years concerning refugees, how do you now consider 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 respondents' border perception within the refugee aspect was also compared for groups: country of origin, gender, level of education and different age groups. The most relevant outcomes are described here.

The differences between groups are quite small. What can be states is that a relatively large group of lower educated respondents feels the border has become more noticeable in relation to the refugee situation. A relatively small group of higher educated respondents perceives the border as more impeding than before; here, the group stating that the border is still just as impeding is relatively big. A relatively small group of lower educated respondents thinks the border to be just as dividing as before; both the group thinking the border has become more and less dividing in relation to the refugee situation is quite large.

18- to 30-year old respondents see the border now relatively often as more normal and more natural than before in relation to the refugee situation, and as less dividing and less important.

Closing questions

Table D30 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 D31 Do you know the INTERREG program Deutschland-Nederland, and if so: have you ever been in touch with it?

	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	

APPENDIX E ADDITIONAL PERCEPTION SCORES

Border perception and level of education

Table E1 Border perception and level of education - scores per dimension within each aspect

Level of education	General		economic		socio-cultural		Legal-administrative	
	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.
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

The differences between levels of education are relatively small, and vary for the barrier effect of the border in daily practice. For the self-evidence of the border it can be stated that higher educated respondents perceive the border as least natural, whereas middle high educated respondents perceive it as most natural.

The differences are largest for the sociocultural self-evidence of the border, with higher educated scoring relatively high and middle educated score relatively low; and for the legal-administrative daily practice, where lower educated score relatively high and higher educated score relatively low.

Table E2 Border perception and level of education - scores per aspect, per total dimension, and overall total

Level of education	General	economic	soc.-cult.	Leg.-admin.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	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. Middle high respondents also score a relatively low overall score.

Border perception, age and gender

Age

Table E3 Border perception and age - scores per dimension within each aspect

Age group	General		economic		socio-cultural		Legal-administrative	
	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.
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

Respondents aged 50- to 65-years old perceive a lower barrier effect within all four aspects for both the daily practice and self-evidence of the border (higher scores), whereas 18- to 30-year old respondents constantly perceive a higher barrier effect (lower scores).

The differences between age groups are relatively big, especially for the barrier effect in daily practice; except for the legal-administrative aspect.

Table E4 Border perception and age - scores per aspect, per total dimension, and overall total

Age group	General	economic	soc.-cult.	Leg.-admin.		Daily pr.	Self-evid.	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

Regarding the total scores per aspect, 50- to 65-year-olds again perceive the lowest barrier effect whereas the 18- to 30-year-olds perceive the highest. These differences are biggest within the general (physical) aspect, and smallest within the legal-administrative aspect. This continues in the overall scores, showing that 50- to 65-year old respondents perceive the lowest overall barrier effect (highest score) and 18- to 30-year-olds respondents the highest.

Gender

Table E5 Border perception and gender - scores per dimension within each aspect

Gender	General		economic		socio-cultural		Legal-administrative	
	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.
Male	71,5	41,8	61,7	42,2	63,6	44,8	50,3	45,9
Female	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

Within all aspects, women perceive a lower barrier effect of the border than men in the daily practice (higher scores); yet at the same time perceive a higher self-evidence of the border (lower scores). The size of these differences between men and women is relatively small and varies.

Table E6 Border perception and gender - scores per aspect, per total component, and overall total

Gender	General	economic	soc.-cult.	Leg.-admin.		Daily pr.	Self-evid.	Total
Male	56,6	51,9	54,2	48,1		61,8	43,7	52,8
Female	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

Regarding the aspects in total, women perceive a lower barrier effect of the border in the general and legal-administrative aspect, whereas men perceive lower barrier effect from an economic and sociocultural point of view. However, the differences are small. In total, men perceive a (slightly) lower barrier effect than women.

Border perception and cross-border visiting frequency

Table E7 Border perception and cross-border visiting frequency - scores per dimension within each aspect

visiting frequency	General		economic		socio-cultural		Legal-administrative	
	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.
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

Within the general, economic and sociocultural aspect it can be noted that as one crosses the border less frequent, the barrier effect in the daily practice slightly rises (slightly lower scores). For the legal-administrative aspect a statistical trend was not observed. The same goes for the self-evidence of the border; the scores vary and do not show a trend related to the visiting frequency.

The most noteworthy results here are that for the border perception in daily practice within the general aspect, respondents that never cross the border perceive a higher barrier effect (lower score). Furthermore it is noted that within the economic aspect respondents who cross the border once a month perceive it most as natural.

Table E8 Border perception and cross-border visiting frequency - scores per aspect and total

visiting frequency	General	economic	soc.-cult.	Leg.-admin.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	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	63,0	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

For the aspects in total it can be noted that the differences between respondents from different visiting frequencies are quite small. Overall it is observed that respondents that cross the border most often perceive the lowest barrier effect, while respondents that never cross the border perceive the highest barrier effect. The differences between these groups are however quite small.

Border perception and knowledge of Interreg

Table E9 Border perception and knowledge of Interreg - scores per aspect dimension

Knows Interreg	General		economic		socio-cultural		Legal-administrative	
	<i>Daily pr.</i>	<i>Self-evid.</i>	<i>Daily pr.</i>	<i>Self-evid.</i>	<i>Daily pr.</i>	<i>Self-evid.</i>	<i>Daily pr.</i>	<i>Self-evid.</i>
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 E10 Border perception and knowledge of Interreg - scores per aspect and total

Knows Interreg	General	economic	soc.-cult.	Leg.-admin.	Daily pr.	Self-evid.	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

Border perception per aspect and cross-border experience within each aspect

Table E11 Border perception in economic aspect and cross-border experience within this aspect

	Border perception in economic aspect		
Economic cross-border experiences	<i>Daily pr.</i>	<i>Self-evidence</i>	<i>total</i>
Yes	62,5	40,1	51,3
No	60,0	44,2	52,1
Total	62,0	41,0	51,5

Table E1215 Border perception in socio-cultural aspect and cross-border experience within this aspect

	Border perception in socio-cultural aspect		
Socio-cultural cross-border experiences	<i>Daily pr.</i>	<i>self-evidence</i>	<i>total</i>
Yes	66,3	41,5	53,9
No	61,5	46,9	54,2
Total	64,5	43,4	54,0

Table E13 Border perception in legal-administrative aspect and cross-border experience within this aspect

	Border perception in legal-administrative aspect		
Legal-administrative cross-border experiences	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

Change in border perception within the refugee aspect and level of education

Table E14 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		
	<i>Daily pr.</i>	<i>self-evidence</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Lower</i>	-13,36	-3,68	-8,37
<i>Middle</i>	-11,65	-3,29	-7,31
<i>Higher</i>	-6,67	-3,09	-4,89
Total	-10,81	-3,34	-6,96

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

Age

Table E15 Change in border perception within the refugee aspect and age - both dimensions and total

Age	Change in border perception within the refugee aspect		
	<i>Daily pr.</i>	<i>self-evidence</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>18-30</i>	-11,21	-6,61	-9,18
<i>30-50</i>	-9,78	-2,99	-6,45
<i>50-65</i>	-12,18	-1,95	-6,62
Total	-10,91	-3,21	-6,94

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.

Gender

Table E16 Change in border perception within the refugee aspect and gender - both dimensions and total

Gender	Change in border perception within the refugee aspect		
	<i>Daily pr.</i>	<i>self-evidence</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Man</i>	-11,77	-3,87	-7,67
<i>Women</i>	-10,08	-2,58	-6,24
Total	-10,91	-3,21	-6,94

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 E17 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		
	<i>Daily pr.</i>	<i>self-evidence</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Once a week</i>	-13,53	-10,51	-12,25
<i>Once a month</i>	-15,58	-3,38	-8,78
<i>Once a quarter</i>	-7,00	-3,30	-5,09
<i>Twice a year</i>	-7,61	-2,18	-5,03
<i>Less than twice a year</i>	-14,29	-4,87	-9,60
<i>Never</i>	-10,76	-0,26	-5,31
Total	-10,94	-3,27	-6,99

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.

Change in refugee perception related to change in barrier effect of the border, per dimension

Economic aspect

Table E18 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%

Socio-cultural aspect

Table E19 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%

Legal-administrative aspect

Table E20 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 F ORIGIN OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS AT NUTS 3 LEVEL

Table F1 Survey respondents - Origin at Nuts 3 level

	N	%		N	%
Oost-Groningen	15	1,4%	Delmenhorst, Stadt	10	1,0%
Delfzijl en omgeving	2	0,2%	Duisburg, Stadt	36	3,4%
Overig Groningen	35	3,3%	Düsseldorf, Stadt	48	4,6%
Noord-Friesland	30	2,9%	Emden, Stadt	6	0,6%
Zuidwest-Friesland	3	0,3%	Emsland	19	1,8%
Zuidoost-Friesland	16	1,5%	Friesland	6	0,6%
Noord-Drenthe	15	1,4%	Grafschaft Bentheim	5	0,5%
Zuidoost-Drenthe	20	1,9%	Kleve	24	2,3%
Zuidwest-Drenthe	6	0,6%	Krefeld, Stadt	20	1,9%
Noord-Overijssel	22	2,1%	Leer	16	1,5%
Zuidwest-Overijssel	13	1,2%	Mönchengladbach, Stadt	27	2,6%
Twente	37	3,5%	Münster, Stadt	52	5,0%
Veluwe	56	5,3%	Oldenburg, Stadt	15	1,4%
Achterhoek	32	3,1%	Oldenburg	14	1,3%
Arnhem/Nijmegen	43	4,1%	Osnabrück, Stadt	21	2,0%
Zuidwest-Gelderland	13	1,2%	Osnabrück	9	0,9%
Noordoost-Noord-Brabant	28	2,7%	Rhein-Kreis Neuss	27	2,6%
Zuidoost-Noord-Brabant	50	4,8%	Steinfurt	14	1,3%
Noord-Limburg	16	1,5%	Vechta	18	1,7%
Midden-Limburg	29	2,8%	Viersen	22	2,1%
Flevoland	41	3,9%	Warendorf	16	1,5%
Ammerland	8	0,8%	Wesel	21	2,0%
Aurich	10	1,0%	Wesermarsch	12	1,1%
Borken	26	2,5%	Wilhelmshaven, Stadt	6	0,6%
Cloppenburg	5	0,5%	Wittmund	4	0,4%
Coesfeld	9	0,9%			
			1048	100,0%	

APPENDIX G ORIGINAL INTERVIEW QUOTATIONS

The interviews were mostly conducted in Dutch and German. For the practical use of this research, useful quotations that are used to support the analysis have been translated to English. The original Dutch and German transcripts of these quotations can be found in this appendix. The coding used for the quotations below corresponds with the coding used in the text of this study.

- **Q1; interviewee Kleve D** - *"...Er was eigenlijk nooit een grens, echt. Geen reden om te stoppen of iets dergelijks, of gecontroleerd te worden (...). En ook de taalgrens, die was voor er voor mij eigenlijk bijna nooit. (...) Dus voor mij was er... is er geen grens."*
- **Q2; interviewee Berg en Dal E** - *"...Je ziet het gewoon aan alles. Hoe de mensen eruit zien. Als jij hier tien mensen op een rijtje zet en er staat een Duitser tussen, dan pik ik hem zo eruit."*
- **Q3; interviewee Winterswijk C** - *"Ik heb een paar keer gehad dat ik werd aangehouden met de auto en dat je alles eruit mag pakken wat je hebt (...). Dat was het enige wat ik echt belemmerend vind."*
- **Q4; interviewee Winterswijk A** - *"Ik denk gewoon wel dat het belangrijk is dat we onderscheid maken; dat we niet straks langzaamaan één land gaan worden ofzo, daar zit ik echt niet op te wachten. (...) Dan zullen wij bij Duitsland gaan horen."*
- **Q5; interviewee Berg en Dal B** - *"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"*
- **Q6; interviewee Rees E** - *"I worked there [city of Dinxperlo, MvW] a few weeks in a retirement home, and there is a bridge over the street, from the German retirement home to the Netherlands. (...) All the people could go by foot, and it was all mixed up, and I thought: no, there isn't any divide."*
- **Q7; interviewee Rees B** - *"...je hebt nog altijd die mensen die zeggen ik ben Nederlander, ik ben Duitser. Die trekken daar gewoon die harde lijn. Maar die gaan toch ondertussen ook een Duits biertje drinken, of in Duitsland de whisky halen omdat het goedkoper is. Ja, verdelend..."*
- **Q8; interviewee Rees D** - *"I don't think so. (...) You cross it without controls. On every side are living very nice and very crazy people, so why should there be a border?"*
- **Q9; interviewee Rees B** - *"Natuurlijk, 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."*
- **Q10; interviewee Berg en Dal E** - *"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"*
- **Q11; interviewee Berg en Dal F** - *"Ik denk dat het goed is dat de grenzen er zijn, (...) Je bent één volk, en dat wil je ook uitstralen. Je wil ook laten zien van: nou, dat hoort bij mij"*
- **Q12; interviewee Berg en Dal A** - *"Het is nou Europese Unie, waarom zou je nog een grens hebben. Ze willen het allemaal openmaken. (...) Is toch veel handiger"*

- **Q13; interviewee Kleve B** - *"...Das nicht al zu viel blödsinn hin und her gemacht wird. (...) Soll offen bleiben, aber muss gezielt mal in wieder etwas mehr kontrolliert bleiben".*
- **Q14; interviewee Kleve D** - Interviewee: *"Nou ja, het past zich steeds weer aan. (...) Het is niet zo dat het van zwart naar wit is veranderd; ik had een bepaald beeld, en daar komen nuances in terecht."*
- **Q15; interviewee Berg en Dal B** - *"...als wij buiten gingen spelen, dan mochten wij wel op straat maar dan niet de grens over. (...) Ik denk als ik, stel dat ik zelf kinderen zou hebben zou ik dan ook niet meer zo doen. Dan zou ik daar wel iets losser in zijn."*
- **Q16; interviewee Kleve C** - *"Also, man kommt sich schön immer näher, finde ich. Und dadurch hat man auch weniger das Gefühl das man im Ausland geht, oder das man im Fremdesland geht."*
- **Q17; interviewee Rees F** - *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."*
- **Q18; interviewee Winterswijk F** - *"Die mensen hebben al heel wat meer meegemaakt dan wij ooit zullen meemaken. Dus ik vind dat... dan mag je die mensen ook wel ondersteunen."*
- **Q19; interviewee Rees E** - *"I was glad for them that they have an opportunity to stay here. (...) I walked through Rees (...), and I thought: why can't they live here? We have the place, we have the money."*
- **Q20; interviewee Kleve C** - *"Es ist vieles schief gelaufen bei der Abwicklung; aber grundsätzlich finde ich es richtig dass ein reiches Land wie Deutschland Menschen hilft die in Not sind, und die aufnimmt."*
- **Q21; interviewee Berg en Dal B** - *"Als die mensen hier iets kunnen toevoegen, voor zichzelf of voor de samenleving, zou ik niet weten waarom ze niet hier kunnen blijven. (...) Het zijn geen domme mensen, dus ze kunnen van alles leren."*
- **Q22; interviewee Winterswijk E** - *"...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."*
- **Q23; interviewee Kleve B** - *"Und wenn sie Arbeit haben, dann haben sie keine Lust. (...) Hier in Deutschland kriegen sie soviel Geld, damit die gut leben können. Und dann gehen die nicht mehr zurück."*
- **Q24; interviewee Winterswijk C** - Interviewee: *"...Maar ja, er zijn dan wel eens van die ongeregelheden met de mensen die niet hier vandaan komen. Toch altijd zo'n puntje dat ik denk "mwah, lastig."*
Interviewer: *"Heb je het nou dan over vluchtelingen of heb je het over..."*
Interviewee: *"Nee, of ja, eigenlijk dan bijna, of ja, in het algemeen."*
- **Q25; interviewee Berg en Dal E** - *"Je bent in een bepaalde cultuur opgegroeid (...). Daar gaan drie, vier generaties overheen, ook over de mentaliteit van mensen, voordat ze gaan veranderen. (...) Het Midden-Oosten, het zit in die mensen."*

- **Q26; interviewee Berg en Dal F** - *“Dan hoor je van die verhalen dat ze mensen verkrachten en al die toestanden, dan denk ik: lekker dan, dan zit ik hier en dan staan ze straks hier aan de deur, als ik hier ’s nachts ben.”*
- **Q27; interviewee Winterswijk C** - *“Ja, als je dat dan weer hoort, zoals in Parijs... (...) Kijk de meeste zullen goed zijn die hierheen komen (...); Maar ja, er zitten natuurlijk een paar van die rotte appels tussen. En die heb je in Nederland ook.”*
- **Q28; interviewee Winterswijk C** - *“Ik vind het allemaal goed dat ze er zijn, maar het liefst wat verder van me af. (...) Iedereen kent mekaar hier en het is hier allemaal het boerse. En dan denk ik dat ze hier niet passen. (...) Als je ze in een grote stad als Utrecht of Den Haag of Amsterdam... daar zijn alle nationaliteiten door elkaar, dat klikt beter dan dat het hier doet.”*
- **Q29; interviewee Rees C** - *“Het kan niet zijn dat je een land, wat er toevallig bereid voor is, en daar dan alles heen schuiven, totdat die mensen zelf ook zeggen ik heb de strot vol.”*
- **Q30; interviewee Kleve B** - *“Liebe Leute, Junge Leute, bleibt da; Baut ein Stad wieder auf, und Fabriken (...). Mann Musste die Leute einfach sagen: bleib zu Hause. Es ist zwar in manchen Ländern sehr gefährlich, wenn die zu Hause bleiben; das wissen wir auch. Aber so geht’s auch nicht. Hilfe dahin schicken und dass Sie ihr Land wiederaufbauen und sicherer machen. (...) Das Geld muss dahin.”*
- **Q31; interviewee Winterswijk F** - *“Wat dat betreft zijn de Duitsers, komt denk ik nog een beetje uit hun belaste verleden in dat opzicht wel, toleranter. (...) Wij [Nederlanders, MvW] denken, we hebben al zo’n klein landje met zo veel mensen, het is wel een keer goed.”*
- **Q32; interviewee Winterswijk E** - *“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, bij de bakker bij wijze van, je woordje kan doen.”*
- **Q33; interviewee Kleve E** - *“Ik vind 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.”*
- **Q34; interviewee Berg en Dal F** - *“Met dat aanpassen, dat stoort me heel erg. Dat je nu ergens gewoon komt en er geen fatsoenlijk woord Nederlands uit komt terwijl die mensen hier al tien jaar wonen; dat je ook al een bepaald beeld door die vluchtelingen hebt gevormd, over die mensen die nou hier nieuw komen.”*
- **Q35; interviewee Winterswijk C** - *“Maar het is ook niet zo dat die mensen die daar wonen, dat die zich met ons gaan mengen ofzo. Tegelijkertijd gaan wij er niet naartoe, wij houden ons af van hun. (...) Dat je elkaar beide ontloopt, zoeken toch hun eigen familie of vrienden.”*
- **Q36; interviewee Berg en Dal D** - *“[Dit beeld, MvW] heb ik eigenlijk altijd al; staat los van alles wat er in de politiek gebeurt; dan denk ik, roep maar allemaal heel hard, maar dit is mijn beeld.”*
- **Q37; interviewee Kleve D** - *“Veranderd is die mening eigenlijk nooit. Maar, waarom heb ik deze mening? Geen idee. Ik ben gewoon een heel open mens, en denk in eerste instantie: iedereen is welkom, en iedereen is prima; en dan moeten we maar kijken wat we daarmee doen.”*
- **Q38; interviewee Rees C** - *“Ik was op demonstraties, ik heb van alles tegen nazi’s gedaan, en ik was altijd pro buitenlanders, pro vluchtelingen, maar (...) ik ben kritischer geworden. Ik kijk met een ander*

oog de laatste jaren. (...) 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 (...) gewoon niet sporen. Ja dat maakt dan de hele sympathie weer kapot."

- **Q39; interviewee Winterswijk B** - *"Dan ga je toch wel anders tegen dingen aankijken en toch ook wel wat beschermender, en vallen je ook andere dingen op."*
- **Q40; interviewee Kleve D** - *"Toen dacht ik van: dat kan toch allemaal niet kloppen? Er moet toch ook iets positiefs aan zijn? Als je dan heel goed naar de achtergrondinformatie kijkt, dan word je in je mening toch eigenlijk wel bevestigd dat het zo erg allemaal niet is als in de massamedia."*
- **Q41; interviewee Rees E** - *"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 wouldn't be like this if we had not done this in this or that 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's so deep in your head. (...) And I always think: calm down, not everybody in this world is bad. (...) Maybe he is just as afraid as you. But, once again, I don't want to feel like this, but I feel it. I think that this is the problem for most people."*
- **Q42; interviewee Winterswijk A** - *"Ja toen ik (...) echt op het HBO begon. (...) 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."*
- **Q43; interviewee Winterswijk B** - *"Nee, absoluut niet. (...) Ik zou niet weten wat ik er nog meer over moet zeggen."*
- **Q44; interviewee Winterswijk C** - *"Vluchtelingen staat voor mij helemaal los van de grens zelf. (...) Het is toch iets anders. (...) Ik ga naar Duitsland om te tanken en weet ik wat allemaal, maar het is niet dat ik daar het vluchtelingenprobleem bij haal."*
- **Q45; interviewee Winterswijk A** - *"Nee, ik denk niet met deze grens. Dat staat daar echt los van. (...) Ze komen praktisch allemaal binnen via Schiphol, dus ja."*
- **Q46; interviewee Berg en Dal C** - *"Nee. Ook echt niks van gehoord dat ik denk 'oh ja, dat is ook echt door de grens.' (...) 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."*
- **Q47; interviewee Rees A** - *"Nee eigenlijk niet. Voor mijn gevoel komen de vluchtelingen ook niet vanuit de richting van Nederland over de grens."*
- **Q48; interviewee Kleve D** - *"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."*
- **Q49; interviewee Berg en Dal E** - *"Ja. Van van mij mogen ze wel wat strenger controleren. Maar ja, waar wil je op controleren? Zolang de overheid alles toestaat... Dat de grens daardoor ook weer een beetje wegvaagt, omdat je ziet dat iedereen over kan steken. (...) Misschien heb je dan ook wel iets meer, nu je er zo over nadenkt, wel weer iets meer behoefte aan de grens. (...) Ja, ik denk het wel."*
- **Q50; interviewee Berg en Dal A** - *"Helemaal niks. Helemaal niks. Nee, omdat het [De grens, MvW] open is; je ziet niks."*

- **Q51; interviewee Winterswijk C** - *Ik vind dat dat ook gewoon bij Europa hoort. Als je eenmaal in Europa bent, dan vind ik dat je je ook vrij mag, moet kunnen verplaatsen. Ik bedoel, dat mag iedereen."*
- **Q52; interviewee Winterswijk C** - *"het is prima dat iedereen overal komt, maar dat een land echt wel een land moet blijven."* .
- **Q53; interviewee Kleve D** - *"...Maar als je het hebt over hoe mensen opgevangen worden in dit gebied, en hoe ze opgenomen worden, dan denk ik dat het wél invloed heeft. Dat het wel een verband heeft. Zeker bij een open grens als hier tussen Duitsland en Nederland, want je bent in alles hier gewend om met vreemden om te gaan. Dan is het misschien ook makkelijker om weer iemand heel nieuws op te nemen, en daaraan te wennen."*
- **Q54; Municipal official Berg en Dal** - *"Ik weet nog wel dat op een gegeven moment om 4 uur 's middags een noodoproep kwam vanuit het Rijk, van het COA: er vertrekken nu allemaal bussen, die gaan door het land rijden; wie meldt zich aan? Dat had ik nog nooit meegemaakt."*
- **Q55; Municipal official Berg en Dal** - *"Mensen vragen nog wel eens: waarom word ik niet geïnformeerd als er een statushouders naast mij komt te wonen? Maar ja, dan zeggen wij: het is een gewone huurder. Als er een woning vrij komt krijg je ook niet te horen wie er komt te huren."*
- **Q56; Municipal official Berg en Dal** - *"....Wel eens van bezorgde burgers, van: 'die kinderen zitten nou al een paar maanden thuis, hebben die geen leerplicht?' Maar als je dat dan naging bleek er toch een verhaal achter te zitten. En als je daar dan over terug informeerde, dan (...) bleek het dat ze niet aan hun lot over gelaten waren."*
- **Q57; Municipal official Berg en Dal** - *"Ik denk wel dat het heel zorgvuldig is geweest, maar veel burgers zullen toch hebben gedacht, eerst zien en dan geloven. Het moet dan toch in de praktijk bewezen worden."*
- **Q58; Municipal official Berg en Dal** - *"Er waren wel zorgen van: 'wat gebeurt er nou met al die lui'. Ook allemaal van die alleenstaande jonge mannen, die in zo'n dorpje komen, of in een post waar verder niks te doen is. 30 meter van een Nederlands dorp. Die zorgen waren er wel, ja."*
- **Q59; Municipal official Rees** - *"Wenn man Hartliner wäre, würden wir sagen: 'ich mache Gemeinschaftsunterkunft, das ist die wirtschaftlich günstigste Lösung und die sozialen Folgen sind mir erst mal egal.' (...) Haben wir nicht getan und insbesondere in Hinblick auf die Zukunftsperspektiven, insbesondere der Kinder, die jetzt ein ganz normales Schulleben durchleben können und auch schon Ausbildungen machen zum Teil."*
- **Q60; Municipal official Rees** - *"Wir [the municipality, MvW] sind Mieter und müssen dann die Gartenarbeiten erst mal verrichten, bis wir die anlernen können. Dann sagen Bürger auch noch, 'ihr mäht auch noch bei denen den Rasen.' Also es gibt Situationen, die auch schon mal natürlich also negativ aufgenommen wurden."*
- **Q61; Municipal official Rees** - *"....und so hatten wir phasenweise Schwierigkeiten, dass dieser Personenkreis den Ruf unserer eigenen etwas nach unten gezogen hat."*

- **Q62; Municipal official Rees** - *“die Integration wird schon groß geschrieben. Aber scheitert oftmals an fehlenden Kapazitäten der Integrationskurse. (...) Die eigentliche Integrationsarbeit, die kommt jetzt erst.”*
- **Q63; Municipal official Rees** - *“Dadurch (...) ist natürlich entspanntes Zusammenleben, somit ist das Image der Flüchtlinge positiver, oder konnte sich positiv entwickeln, weil die sich auch ganz normal in die örtliche Gemeinschaft einleben konnten. (...) Hätten wir das nicht gemacht, könnte ich mir vorstellen, dass hier und da Konflikte zwischen der einheimischen Bevölkerung und der Flüchtlingsgruppen entstehen würde.”*
- **Q64; Municipal official Rees** - *“Die Grenzgänger bei uns sind Ausnahmen. Es gibt welche die schon über Jahre in die Niederlanden arbeiten... Aber das ein permanenter Austausch zur Zeit positiv beeinflusst wurde durch die Flüchtlingspolitik hier bei uns, das kann ich jetzt so nicht erstellen.”*
- **Q65; Municipal official Winterswijk** - *“Toen hebben we wel een avondje gehad dat de inwoners konden komen en daarover praten en toen was er zo iets van: ‘waarom moet dat in Winterswijk, want we hebben al een AZC’. Daar waren toen negatieve geluiden, maar ook hele positieve geluiden. Maar uiteindelijk is eruit gekomen oké, we doen het in het oude bejaardencentrum”*
- **Q66; Municipal official Winterswijk** - *“Het netwerk is nog vrij aanbod gericht, want vraaggericht is moeilijk. Ze hebben vaak geen vraag. Of ze zijn zich niet bewust van de vraag. Wat zien wij is dat mensen enorm in de problemen zitten met geld en helemaal niet piepen. (...) Als je alleen maar vraagt: ‘heb je hulp nodig?’ zullen ze bijna altijd nee zeggen.”*
- **Q67; Municipal official Winterswijk** - *“De individuele integratie, daar kan ik nog geen zinnig woord over zeggen. Of wij daar succesvoller in zijn dan andere gemeentes, dat weet ik niet. (...) Wij hebben geen normen gesteld.”*
- **Q68; Municipal official Winterswijk** - *“Het zijn vaak mensen die ervoor open staan. En anderen zeggen: ‘nou, het zal allemaal wel goed zijn. Ik bemoei me er niet mee, ik heb er geen last van, maar ook geen gemak.’ Die mensen heb je ook. En mensen die per definitie negatief zijn, die heb je ook.”*
- **Q69; Municipal official Winterswijk** - *“We hebben er bewust voor gekozen om dat niet te doen, omdat je dan eigenlijk de mensen meteen al bestempeld; let op, er komt hier iets bijzonders. Terwijl het gewoon mensen zijn.”*
- **Q70; Municipal official Winterswijk** - *“...een faciliterende rol, en dat betekent af en toe dus ook dat je er wat geld in moet stoppen om activiteiten op gang te houden. Dat dat een positief effect heeft, dat denk ik wel.*
- **Q71; Municipal official Winterswijk** - *“Ik zie het verband niet. Het zou er goed kunnen zijn, maar ik zie het niet.”*
- **Q72; Municipal official Kleve** - *“Die Stadt hat sich zum Ziel gesetzt (...), die Flüchtlinge möglichst separat unterzubringen. (...) Es sind fast 60 Prozent, die in eigenem Wohnraum leben und nicht in den großen Unterkünften. Das ist das, wo die Stadt sich entschlossen hat, wie Flüchtlinge bei uns leben sollen.”*
- **Q73; Municipal official Kleve** - *“Die sind ja alle in diesen Bereich hineingestoßen und die alle haben natürlich dasselbe Problem, dass sie Wohnraum bekommen müssen. Und auch wenn das im Prinzip*

eigentlich nicht sein sollte, ist es natürlich nach wie vor so, dass viele Vermieter lieber an Deutsche weitervermieten."

- **Q74; Municipal official Kleve** - *"Das wird nämlich oftmals nicht gesehen. Viele Bürger glauben: Die kriegen ja alles und wir kriegen nichts. Oder die Asylbewerber meinen, sie kriegen nicht genug und sie müssten noch viel mehr Unterstützung bekommen. Also das gilt schon beiden Seiten."*
- **Q75; Municipal official Kleve** - *"Also, Integration abgeschlossen ist mit Sicherheit noch lange nicht. (...) Man sagt: 'wenigstens sechs Jahre dauert eine Integration von jemandem.' Und ich glaube eigentlich, dass die Zeit noch darüber hinausgeht. (...) Die Angebote sind gigantisch, aber (...) die Zugewanderten zu erreichen, diese Maßnahmen auch wirklich in Anspruch zu nehmen, das ist das Schwierigste, aus meiner Sicht zumindest."*
- **Q76; Municipal official Kleve** - *"auf der anderen Seite sind natürlich noch sehr viele damit befasst, die ganzen Problematiken der einzelnen Flüchtlinge in irgendeiner Form zu bewältigen. (...) Da sind jetzt noch viele Paten unterwegs, die sich dann um einzelne Flüchtlinge noch bemühen; und die da versuchen zu helfen."*
- **Q77; Municipal official Kleve** - *"Ich glaube das diese positive Stimmung, die (...) hier in Kleve überwiegend noch herrscht, sicherlich damit zusammen hängt, dass wir als Stadt sehr stark für Integrationsmaßnahmen gesorgt haben; dafür gesorgt haben, dass die Flüchtlinge gut untergebracht waren; dafür gesorgt haben, dass die Kommunikation immer gestimmt hat; immer bereit waren (...) mit den Bürgern im Gespräch zu bleiben."*
- **Q78; Municipal official Kleve** - *"Das glaube ich eigentlich weniger. Also die Flüchtlingsproblematik hatte mit der holländischen in meinen Augen überhaupt gar nichts zu tun. (...) Ich glaube: dass wir hier relativ viele Flüchtlinge auch aufgenommen haben, hat das Verhältnis zu den Niederlanden in keinster Weise beeinflusst und schon gar nicht negativ."*
- **Q79; interviewee Winterswijk F** - *"Als er een grote ontevredenheid was, zou je daar wel meer over horen denk ik, dus wat dat betreft dat ze hun best daar wel doen. Wat je uit de media hoort, ziet, leest, denk ik dat de gemeente zich daar toch wel goed opereert wat dat betreft."*
- **Q80; interviewee Berg en Dal E** - *"Toen hadden ze zo'n (...) avond georganiseerd, om hun plannen te vertellen, en hoe je met vluchtelingen om moest gaan (...). En dan zeggen ze: het is druk bezocht. En dan kijk je naar die foto's, en dan zie je 50 man, allemaal bejaarden die daar komen voor de koffie en de cake omdat ze niks beters te doen hebben. En dan denk ik ook van: ja, kom op hé."*
- **Q81; interviewee Rees E** - *"Well, by the fact that I don't know what they do, I think it is a little bit too less. They could do better, and they could do more."*
- **Q82; interviewee Winterswijk B** - *"maar als ik zie en van mensen hoor wat ze daar allemaal krijgen en hebben, terwijl ik dan denk: van het eigen volk zijn er ook zat die het heel moeilijk hebben... (...) En ja, die asielzoekers die komen en die krijgen een huis en die krijgen kleren en die krijgen eten en ja, dan uh, heb ik daar wel moeite mee."*
- **Q83; interviewee Kleve E** - *"Ik zie ze hier wel soms lopen, maar dat is ook gemengd in Kleef; met al die studenten, je weet dan niet... (...) wie is er nu een vluchteling, of student?"*