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# THE MEANING OF THE BORDER BETWEEN GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS FOR DUTCH TOURISTS

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BSc Tourism Thesis



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## Abstract

There is still a big gap in the literature when it comes to tourism and the meaning of borders. This study has aimed to fill this gap, but more research is necessary on the meaning of borders for tourists, so the tourism industry can use it to their advantage. In this qualitative study, the meaning of the Dutch-German border for Dutch tourists has been explored. This is done according to a theoretical framework in which the meaning of the border is divided in a bureaucratic meaning and a socio-cultural meaning. The bureaucratic meaning exists out of the aspects territoriality, safety, and economy. The socio-cultural meaning exists out of the concepts 'us' and the 'other', identity, and language. From this study, it can be concluded that the Dutch-German border has a bureaucratic meaning on the aspects of territoriality and safety. The socio-cultural meaning of the Dutch-German border is very present for the Dutch tourists. Next to this, the Dutch tourists indicated that the meaning of the Dutch-German border has changed over time. The theoretical framework of this study is unique, and it has never been applied to the Dutch-German border.

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## Introduction

Tourism is one of the biggest economic sectors in the world. There are many tourists travelling the world per year. The number of domestic tourists is unclear, but international tourism is growing every year. More and more people cross borders with cars, planes, buses, but also with bikes and even by foot. Borders are thus very important in the tourism industry (Timothy & Tosun, 2003). Since the Schengen Agreement between the Netherlands and Germany, physical border controls in Europe are in the past, which increased the tourism numbers in Europe (Whitaker, 1992). The meaning of borders has been studied before. Paasi is one of the researchers who has done extensive studies on borders and identity. Sofield is one of the few researchers who studied the border in relation to tourism. Stüver is an important researcher according to the Dutch and German border. But the border between the Netherlands and Germany has never been studied in relation to tourism. Even though the border is crossed everyday by tourists the meaning of the border for tourists is something that should be researched (Diener & Hagen, 2009). Thus in this research the meaning of the Dutch-German border for Dutch tourists will be explored.

## Literature review

This literature review will lay the basis for this study. First the concept of border will be defined, after which a conceptualization of a border will be shown. This conceptualization will be used to create a theoretical framework. Lastly the concept of borders will be connected to tourism, as this study researches the meaning of the border for Dutch tourists.

### Defining borders

There are many ways to describe a border, and there are many different synonyms such as frontier, boundary, and barrier. The definition of a border has changed throughout history. Newman (2006) defined a border as “the physical and highly visible lines of separation between political, social and economic spaces” (p. 144). However, Newman calls this the traditional definition, as he believes that this definition is not applicable to the borders that we currently have as the borders have changed. In this study, borders are defined as an international barrier (Alvarez Jr, 1995) between nation states, which will be the Netherlands and Germany in this study. Borders have different meanings to different people. Bauder (2011) argues that everybody can see an object differently and have different meanings for an object. These meanings are created by the uses and practices of this certain object. This also happens with borders: everybody has a different perspective on what a border is, and what kind of a meaning a border has. As such, borders can be perceived as a physical boundary and they can also have a symbolic meaning. Physical borders refer to the way that borders are marked off; they are also called material borders. Next to this, borders have a symbolic meaning, which refers to the way people experience a border (Newman & Paasi, 1998; Paasi, 1997, 1999; Yuval-Davis & Stoetzler, 2002). Bauder (2011) argues that the meaning of a border is hard to comprehend, and thus researchers should continue with finding a meaning for a border (Bauder, 2011).

In this study the focus will be on the symbolic meanings of the border between Germany and the Netherlands for Dutch tourists. However, when talking about a border, it is difficult to completely avoid the physical border. Therefore, the physical border will also be discussed in this study.

A border can have different meanings and as such, the border has been studied from many different perspectives, e.g. economic, political, human geography, anthropological, historical, juridical, and a sociological perspective (Kolossoff, 2005; Paasi, 2011). All these disciplines have studied the border only from their own perspective. According to the literature it is of importance to combine different perspectives from different disciplines for a better and broader research on the border (Paasi, 2005). Specifically the meaning of the border from the perspective of tourists has been suggested by literature (Diener & Hagen, 2009). In this study, different disciplines will be combined, namely tourism studies, sociology and human geography.

### Operationalization of the concept border

Now that a border has been defined, an operationalization is necessary to be able to work with the concept of a border in this study. Different functions have been given to a border however, an operationalization has not often been made. Thus, in the following sections a new operationalization of a border will be discussed, which will be used in this study on the meaning of the Dutch-German border

Many different functions and meanings have been given to the border by researchers. For example, Sofield (2006) made a distinction between the material border, which is the legal border that is also recognized internationally, and the mental border, which is about the people within this bordered space, their stereotypes, culture, and religion. This distinction will also be used in this study; however, the elements that belong to the material and mental border will be slightly different. Other researchers have indicated that these are not the only meanings a border can have (B. Anderson, Sharma, & Wright, 2009; Mechlinski, 2010; Moraczewska, 2010; Newman & Paasi, 1998; Paasi, 1997, 2005; Salter, 2008; Singer & Massey, 1998; Willemyns, 2002; Yuval-Davis & Stoetzler, 2002). The material border will be called 'bureaucratic border': this is derived from the article of Singer and Massey (1998), in which they explain that a bureaucratic border is a border that demarks territory. The mental border will be called 'socio-cultural border', as the border separates different socio-cultural communities.

The bureaucratic border is used to demark a territory and is created by politics, regulations and policies (Mechlinski, 2010; Salter, 2008; Singer & Massey, 1998). Although borders have sometimes been made invisible, i.e. borders in the Schengen Agreement, this does not mean that there are no policies and regulations for crossing the border. In this study the bureaucratic border exists of the following concepts: territoriality, safety, and economy.

According to Paasi (2005) the border is used to produce and reproduce territories. Sack (1986) calls this producing and reproducing of a state, territoriality. "Territoriality will be defined as the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area." (Sack, 1986, p. 19). There are different kinds of territoriality: in this study, political-geographical territoriality will be used.

Safety is the second aspect of the bureaucratic border. According to Anderson, Sharma, and Wright (2009) it is even one of the main functions of the borders. After the event of 9/11, safety and security have become an increased concern. This was especially seen at the border, where border controls increased and became more strict (Sofield, 2006). With perceived threats of migration, terrorists and other countries attacking the territory, the border is an important instrument in safety (Moraczewska, 2010). As the border functions as a filter, it decides who enters the country and who is not allowed inside the barriers (B. Anderson et al., 2009).

The border also played an important role in safety between Germany and the Netherlands in the past. The border protected the Netherlands from the first World War. This will be further explained in the section 'Case study'. Safety is also an important issue for tourists and the tourism sector. When a destination even has a hint of unsafety, the tourists will not take the risk of visiting the destination (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). Thus, safety is very important in the tourism industry: it is one of the main concerns that the tourism industry faces (Edgell, 2013).

The last aspect of the bureaucratic border is the economy. International borders have a negative effect on the economy, as shown by McCallum (1995). In his study, he studied the effect of international borders on the trade numbers. He showed that within the borders of Canada the trade numbers were 22 times larger than when trading across the border with the



US (McCallum, 1995). This is confirmed by many other researchers (Evans, 2003; Helliwell, 1997; Nitsch, 2000; Wei, 1996). Even within the European Union and its open borders, the borders still have a negative effect on trade patterns (Nitsch, 2000). Thus, the border divides different economies of different countries. The question is if the Dutch-German border is also seen as an economic divider.

When it comes to the economy of tourism, this is different. After the opening of the borders with the Schengen Agreement, tourism has increased considerably. Borders are less of a hurdle for tourists and the tourism economy bloomed. Not only is there no physical control at the border anymore, the same currency is used in almost all the EU countries (Zeng & Go, 2013). Thus, in the tourism industry the border is not seen as an economic barrier. Will Dutch tourists also indicate that they find that the Dutch-German border is not a hurdle anymore when they cross it?

The socio-cultural border exists out of the following concepts; 'us' and 'other', identity, and language. According to Newman and Paasi (1998) the border is a boundary that helps with the forming of identity and 'us' and the 'other'. Next to this, the border is seen as a symbolic boundary of language (Newman & Paasi, 1998). These concepts will be further explained below.

Borders are seen as a separation of 'us' and the 'other' (Newman & Paasi, 1998; Sofield, 2006). With 'us' and the 'other' it is meant that when applied to a border, everybody within this border is seen as 'us', and everybody outside these borders will be defined as the 'other'. Borders are an instrument that help create 'us' and the 'other' (Newman & Paasi, 1998; Paasi, 2009; Yuval-Davis & Stoetzler, 2002). These borders that are created by 'us' and the 'other' can be physical or conceptual, thus it can be borders between nations, but also borders within a country between different social groups. In example all Christians are 'us' and everybody who is not Christian, thus Atheist, Muslim, Buddhist, etc. is the 'other'.

In this study on the Dutch-German border, I will examine whether or not people find the border a line that separates ~~them from~~ the 'other', the foreigners, and 'us', themselves. I will do so by seeing whether or not they describe themselves as part of the Dutch community, and the Germans as part of another community.

'Us' and the 'other' is also linked to the concept of identity. Some researchers believe that 'us' and the 'other' help with the construction of identity (Eisenstadt & Giesen, 1995; Newman & Paasi, 1998). Identity will be explained in the following section.

Identity is a very complex concept, as shown by Požarlik (2013), who tried to conceptualize identity in social science. A quote of Sztompka (2004) in the article of Požarlik shows how complex identity is: "identity has become multidimensional, multi-layered, differentiated. It is produced as personal construction built of a multiple repertoire of options. People 'craft themselves', rather than receive themselves ready-made"(Požarlik, 2013, p. 80). Therefore, in this study we only stick to the definition of Christine Korsgaard, who is a philosopher. She believes that we have practical identities. These practical identities reflect how we value ourselves, what we find import in life, and which actions we find worth undertaking. We think of ourselves as concepts, for example Christian, European, parent, and Dutch. These conceptions give us reasons to act and these reasons manifest our identity. Acting on these reasons demonstrates who we are (Korsgaard, 1996). In this study the main focus will be on the national identity of individuals. According to Smith a national identity contains the following features: "1. An historic territory, or homeland; 2. Common myths and historical memories; 3. A common, mass public culture; 4. Common legal right and duties for all members; 5. A common economy with territorial mobility for members" (Smith, 1991, p. 14). On each side of the border a different national identity exists; citizens are expected to identify with and be loyal to these national identities (Sofield, 2006). This means that the border defines to who you should be loyal.

Volkan (2003) describes that national identity can also be seen as a large-group identity. A large-group identity is felt when a group of thousands or millions of people feel connected because of similarities, even though they also have similarities with others outside this group. An example of this could be the national identity of somebody, like Dutch, or German (Volkan, 2003). The border decides which national identity you get, and thus which large-group identity you get.

Identity is a concept that is often studied in relation to the border. Paasi is one of the researchers who mainly focuses on identity and borders. In 1997 he did a case-study on the Finnish national identity. This study specifically focused on how borders create national

identity and how this national identity is kept in place by borders (Paasi, 1997). In the current study on the meaning of the Dutch-German border there will also be looked at how the border influences the national identity of the Dutch tourists.

Another study of Paasi (1999) focuses on the Finish-Russian border, which changed over time. Paasi studied the changed identity of people living in a village that first belonged to Finland, but now belongs to Russia. When the village belonged to Finland, the inhabitants had their Finnish national identity, but they also had their regional identity. When the border moved, the village became part of Russia. The locals had to decide whether they wanted to become Russian, and lose their national identity, or move out of the village, and lose their regional identity. The citizens who moved to another region in Finland, held on to their national identity, but lost their regional identity, which made them feel like they did not completely fit in with the other Finns. The younger generations, however, have completely adjusted, and do not have this regional identity anymore (Paasi, 1999). Thus, the border does influence the national identity of citizens, but sometimes regional identity can be more important to somebody. It would be interesting to see if the Dutch-German border also has this effect on the identity of Dutch tourists.

Although Paasi has done much research on identity and borders, he still thinks that not enough research is done, and more research on identity and borders is needed. This study will help to fill a small gap in the research on borders and identity.

According to Willemyns (2002) a 'language border' is not easy to define because around the border different dialects are spoken. These dialects are very similar to the own language, and the language across the border. Thus, the border is never a clear cut indication of the language division. Some even argue that language borders do not exist at all (Willemyns, 2002).

Beerkens (2010) explains in her book, with the help of Goossens (1984) and Janssens & Marynissen (2005), that the border between the Dutch and German language is also difficult to define. The dialects that were spoken in the past in the border region of the Netherlands and Germany, gradually changed to Dutch and German dialects. This eventually led to two different standard languages, and so the language border was formed. On each side of the border the standardized Dutch and German were used more and more, which made the language border between the Netherlands and Germany more clear. Even though dialects are

nowadays still used in the border region, there is a significant difference between the Dutch and German dialects (Beerkens, 2010; Goossens, 1984; Janssens & Marynissen, 2005).

### Changing borders

As shown above, the meaning of borders can change, which is caused by the fact that the borders themselves change (Sofield, 2006). According to Sofield (2006) one of the reasons for the changing borders is globalisation (Sofield, 2006). Anderson and O'dowd (1999) studied changing borders, which are being caused by globalisation. The borders of Europe are a perfect example of changing borders. After the Schengen Agreement was signed, many borders opened within Europe, and with that the meaning of the borders changed (Newman, 2006). Much research has been done on borders within Europe. A study by Sidaway (2002) on the Portuguese and Spanish border shows that even though the border has been opened because of the Schengen Agreement, the border is still kept in place by the local community (Sidaway, 2002). Thus, even though the border is not a physical border anymore, the meaning of the border does not have to change. Stüver (2005) examined the Dutch and German border and studied how the daily lives of the citizens changed with the border that opened after the Schengen Agreement. She concluded that not much has changed since the opening of the border, as daily practices do not easily change. So again, even though the physical border changed, the meaning of the border stayed the same.

Borders keep changing, with this the study on borders and its meanings will be an ongoing process: this study will help to establish this.

### Borders and tourism

Borders and tourism are related to each other in different ways (Sofield, 2006). Borders play a big role in tourism as tourists often want or have to cross a border for their holidays. Some tourists even only want to cross borders, so they can say that they have been in another country (Timothy, 1995). The perceived distance can increase when tourists need to cross a border, which makes a tourism destination more interesting (Timothy, 1995). Borders can also be a tourist attraction themselves. According to Timothy (1995), welcome signs, flags, and

border markers at the border are often photographed by tourists, which could indicate that they find this a noticeable detail on their trip, and worth remembering (Lo, McKercher, Lo, Cheung, & Law, 2011). Some borders are well known because of its history which is the reason that they have become a tourist attraction. Examples are the Berlin Wall and the Great Wall of China. The Peace Garden is another example of a tourist attraction on a border. The Peace Garden is an international park that crosses the border between the United States of America and Canada. It represents international corporation and peace, which is the reason of it being a tourism attraction (Timothy & Tosun, 2003). A tri-point is also often a tourist attraction, for example one that connects Finland, Norway, and Sweden, and one that connects the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany. Also natural wonders can be on the border, which adds a special dimension. For example the Niagara Falls: even though most tourist are likely to come for the natural wonder, some must find it intriguing that it is placed on a border (Timothy, 1995). Enclaves are also a tourism destination. Enclaves are “small pieces of one country completely surrounded by the territory of a neighbouring country” (Gelbman & Timothy, 2011, p. 110). Many enclaves have developed into tourism destinations, for example Baarle-Nassau in the south of the Netherlands. Here the border is transformed in a tourism attraction, by indicating the border between Belgium and the Netherlands on the ground in the small town (Gelbman & Timothy, 2011).

Even though borders are tourist attractions, borders can also be seen as a hurdle in tourism and for travellers. A border can be a barrier because of its restrictions and policies that are created by countries. Thus it can be a hurdle for tourists when they go on holiday (Timothy & Tosun, 2003). Next to this, a border can also be a psychological barrier for tourists. Crossing a border can mean going into a different world. This world can have a different social, economic, and political system. Some people find this appealing while for others this creates feelings of fear (Oberg, 1960).

Now we have defined and conceptualized the concept of the border. After this the borders role in the tourism industry has been discussed. And gaps in the literature have been established.

A research design can now be created, which will be shown in the next section.

## Theoretical Framework

As shown in the literature review a border can have different meanings. In this research, a theoretical framework will be used that divides the meaning of the border in a bureaucratic and a socio-cultural meaning. This division is based on the literature and thoroughly explained in the literature review. However this division is not yet linked to tourism. This will be done below.

First the border with a bureaucratic meaning will be explained. This border has three different aspects. The first one is territoriality, this is the way in which the territory is carried out. In tourism this function of a border is important as the definition of international tourists is crossing these border and entering the territory of a different state (Sofield, 2006). Crossing borders is important for tourists as they are happier when the perceived distance of a destination is bigger. A border can increase the perceived distance, when the border becomes more of an obstacle (Schack, 2001).

Safety is the second meaning that a border can have according to the literature. The border functions as a filter, it decides who is allowed inside the borders (B. Anderson et al., 2009). After 9/11 border controls have become more strict at airports. This can have a negative on the tourism industry as it restricts the flow of tourists (Sofield, 2006). However these safety measures are very important for the tourism industry, as safety is one of the biggest concerns of tourists (Edgell, 2013). When a tourism destination is marked as unsafe tourists will not visit the destination (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). Borders often demark a safe zone.

Lastly a border can be seen as an economic divide. A border influences the economy in a negative way, as shown in the literature review. However the tourism economy is positively influenced by borders, because of the increase in perceived distance (Schack, 2001). But especially the open borders because of the Schengen Agreement have massively influenced the tourism industry (Zeng & Go, 2013).

The second categorization is the socio-cultural border.

'Us' and the 'other' is the first aspect of a socio-cultural meaning of a border. 'Us' stands for the group someone is part of and the 'other' is everybody who does not belong to this group. This group is often defined by the border, in tourism this 'us' group can for example be defined by national identity, everybody who is Dutch is seen as 'us', and everyone else, who is not Dutch belongs to the 'other' (Newman & Paasi, 1998).

The second aspect of the socio-cultural border is identity. The concept of identity is very complex. Different literature has indicated that the border plays a role in the creation and preservation of an identity (Newman & Paasi, 1998; Strüver, 2005). Identities are situational, which means that it depends on the situation how one identifies oneself. When tourists are outside their own border, they are more likely to identify themselves according to their national identity, then when they are in their home country (Smith, 1992).

The last aspect of the social cultural border is language. Often a border indicates a language barrier, but this division is not always as clear as the border itself (Beerrens, 2010). Research has indicated that tourists rather go to a tourism destination where a similar language to their own language is spoken (Timothy, 1995).

<b>Bureaucratic meaning of a border</b>	<b>Socio-cultural meaning of a border</b>
Territoriality	'Us' and the 'other'
Safety	Identity
Economy	Language

*Tabel 1: Theoretical framework*

## Research Questions

The literature review has shown that many research has been done on borders. A border plays an important role in the tourism industry according to the literature. A border can be an obstacle for tourists or an attraction. A border can have many different functions and meanings for different people. This research will focus on these different meanings and functions that the border can have for tourists, and specifically the Dutch-German border and Dutch tourists. Thus, the following research question has been defined:

### ***What is the meaning of the Dutch-German border for Dutch tourists?***

To answer the main research question the following sub research questions have been formulated:

- 1.1. What is the bureaucratic meaning of the Dutch-German border?
- 1.2. What is the socio-cultural meaning of the Dutch-German border?
- 1.3. How has the meaning of the Dutch-German border changed over time?



## Case Study

This research is a case study. The data collection will only be done at the Dutch-German border. A small overview of the history between the Netherlands and Germany is given below, including the history of the border. This is important to know as this might influence the meaning of the border for Dutch citizens.

In the first world war the border between the Netherlands and Germany protected the Netherlands from the war. The Netherlands had declared themselves independent and thus nobody entered the border of the Netherlands to start a war. Next to this the Netherlands was bordered to the sea and to Germany, thus even though the Netherlands has declared themselves neutral, they still helped the east of Europe with trade, and the economy benefitted from this. In this case the border with Germany was a blessing in disguise, as the economy of the Netherlands benefitted, but the Netherlands had to help the enemy for this (Hardach, 1981).

The second World War however has left scars in the Dutch German relationship. In 1939 the Netherlands had declared themselves neutral for the second World War, just as in the first World War. However this time it was not respected and Adolf Hitler entered the country on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1940. Many Dutch citizens were killed in this war by the German army. After the war, Dutch citizens who were in any way involved with German citizens got prosecuted (Gilbert, 1989; Stüver, 2005)

After the war, the Netherlands demanded border changes on the Dutch-German border. The Netherlands wanted to get more land from Germany as a compensation for the war crimes. They also wanted to shorten the border and make it more straight, so the country could be better protected. The Dutch government thus claimed more land, but they didn't want to include the German citizens, who lived in these villages, in the Netherlands. Not all the 20 demands of the Netherlands got served, but they did get some villages such as for example Elten and Tubberen (Hoffman, 1952). In 1963 these areas were bought back by the Germans for 280 million German marks (Schrover, 2015).

In 1990 the Schengen Agreement was signed. Through this agreement all people were able to move freely in the Schengen Area, as the borders opened. In the beginning only five countries signed the agreement: the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France and Luxembourg (Whitaker, 1992). Later other countries joined and now 26 countries are part of the Schengen area (Rijksoverheid, 2017).

## Methodology

This is an exploratory research, that focuses on getting more insight in the meaning of the border for Dutch tourists. To do this a qualitative method is used. To be precise semi-structured interviews have been used to collect data. Questions were prepared before the interviews, and follow-up questions were created during the interview. As part of the interviews drawings were used to make the people feel at ease, and get a broad idea of how the participants see the border between the Netherlands and Germany.

### Interviews

Before the interviews started the participants were asked if they could be recorded. They were told that the recordings would not be sold or distributed to third parties and would only be used for this Bachelor Thesis, and that afterwards the recordings would be deleted. After this they were told that this interview would be completely anonymous and that they could stop at any moment if they wanted to. After this the interview started.

The first questions of the interviews were: Could you draw a border that separates countries? and Could you draw the border between the Netherlands and Germany?.

After the drawing, they were asked to explain why they draw the different borders in this way and what the difference is between their two drawings. The verbal explanation of the drawings is very important, as this is the only way to understand the interpretation of the drawings by the participants themselves.

Directly after the introductory drawings, questions were asked that are based on the theoretical framework that has been explained before. First general questions were asked to get an idea on how the participants see the border, questions such as: Did you cross the Dutch-German border today? What could be the functions of the Dutch-German border?

To understand the socio-cultural meaning of the border, the following questions were asked: When you cross the border do you feel like you have more/less in common with the Germans than with the Dutch? Do you think there is a difference between the Dutch and German identity?

To get an insight in the bureaucratic meaning of the border questions like the following have been asked: Do you feel restricted by the border between the Netherlands and Germany? Do you feel safer when you are in Germany/the Netherlands than when you are outside your own country?

To understand how the meaning of the border differs between different categories of people information about their characteristics is gathered: What is your age? What is your highest education? Where did you grow up?

To answer the last research question about the changing meaning of the border questions like the following were asked: There used to be border control on the borders. Do you think this is important to keep the border in place? Is the way that you view the Dutch-German border partly determent by the history of Germany and the Netherlands? Do you think your view of the border has changed over time?

A full overview of the interview questions can be found in Appendix 1 in Dutch and in Appendix 2 in English.

### Field work

The fieldwork was conducted on Ascension Day, a national holiday in the Netherlands and Germany. Before the fieldwork four different locations were picked out as research spots to create a diverse sample. The first research spot was 't Pannekoeknhuys in Hoch-Elten, Germany. When arriving here, no people were to be found, and it seemed useless to wait until they came as it seemed very abandoned. So the next research spot was visited, this time it was the Rhine Embankment in Emmerich, again there was nobody to be found, in

contradiction to past research, on a Saturday it was full of people. Thus the journey continued. The next research spot was 't Peeske in Beek, the Netherlands, close to the German border. It was a hot summer day thus many people came here to refresh. Everybody that tried to enter the restaurant got approached by the researcher. When approaching the potential participants, they were asked to join in on a research for a bachelor thesis, with a topic that was about the Dutch-German border. A total of 14 people volunteered to participate in the research and were interested in the topic, they even wanted to know the final results of this study.

### Respondents

The respondents in this research consists out of 14 Dutch tourists. They have been interviewed close to the Dutch-German border. Originally the plan was to get a sample that had crossed the border that same day. However it was hard to find these people, thus the sample of the research was changed into any Dutch tourist. The original idea was to find a research spot in Germany and to also include German citizens in the research. However when arriving on the research spots in Germany, there was nobody to be found. There seemed to be a folk fest going on, thus a research spot in the Netherlands was found. As mentioned before 't Peeske was chosen as the research spot in the Netherlands, this is a restaurant in Beek, Gelderland hidden in the woods and less then two kilometres from the border. The border in this area is not indicated very well. The border can be crossed on the Boterweg, this is a road only accessible for cyclists and hikers, and is located in the woods (maps.google.nl, 2017). Many walking trails start and end here (RouteYou, 2017). At the research spot, everybody who walked towards the restaurant got approached.

### Analysis

The interviews are recorded to avoid the loss of relevant information. The recorded interviews have been transcribed, after which the recordings were deleted. The interviews are analyzed with thematic analyses. This a method of data analysis that brings order and structure in the collected data. First the data has been coded and manually highlighted. Then these codes were subdivided in different themes (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). These themes are discussed in the Findings section.

## Findings

Here the findings of this research will be represented. According to Timothy tourism always involves the crossing of a border (D. J. Timothy, 2002). The Dutch tourists that were interviewed have all ever crossed the Dutch-German border. This is not surprising, as in 1995 more than 12 million Dutch tourist crossed a border when going on holiday, since then this number has only increased (TheWorldBank, 2017). Some tourists might cross the border without thinking about it, others make a thorough decision on what borders they want cross and which they don't. The meaning of the Dutch-German border for Dutch tourists has not been researched yet, thus below more information to fill this gap is represented and linked to already existing literature.

## Demographics

The respondents of this research exists out of 14 respondents with a Dutch nationality. All respondents live in the Netherlands, with one exception, who lives 6 months of the year in Bangkok, Thailand. The entire sample has crossed the Dutch-German border, but only three respondents crossed the border the day of the interview. The respondents included 6 men and 8 women. Most respondents had an educational level of 'MBO' (7) and 'HBO' (4). Other education levels that were present in the sample are 'Mavo', 'VMBO-GT/Havo' and University. The ages of the respondents ranged between 14 and 68 years, with an average age of 46. Half of the respondents were between the 50 and 57 years old. On the next page an overview of these demographics are given in a table.

Participant	Gender	Age	Crossed border*	Education level	Born	Live now	Living in Netherlands
1.	Female	56	No	HBO	Randstad	Doetinchem**	Yes
2.	Female	55	No	MBO	Limburg	Doetinchem	Yes
3.	Male	20	No	MBO	Didam	Etten	Yes
4.	Female	21	No	MBO	Duiven	Etten	Yes
5.	Male	68	No	HBO	Rheden	Rheden	Yes
6.	Male	67	No	MBO	Loo (Duiven)	Loo (Duiven)	Yes
7.	Female	51	No	Mavo	Arnhem	-	Yes
8.	Male	50	No	MBO	Zevenaar	-	Yes
9.	Female	14	No	GT/HAVO	-	-	Yes
10.	Female	56	Yes	MBO	Kaatsheuvel	Kaatsheuvel	Yes
11.	Male	57	Yes	MBO	Kaatsheuvel	Kaatsheuvel	Yes
12.	Male	37	No	HBO	Beek	5 km from border	Yes
13.	Female	35	No	University	Noord-Holland	5 km from border	Yes
14.	Female	53	Yes	HBO	Wehl	Apeldoorn	Yes

\*The day of the interview

\*\*Lives in Bangkok 6 months of the year

Tabel 2: Demographics of respondents

## Themes

During the analysis six different themes were found. On the right these themes and their connections are demonstrated in a figure. The themes and their connections will be described on the following pages.

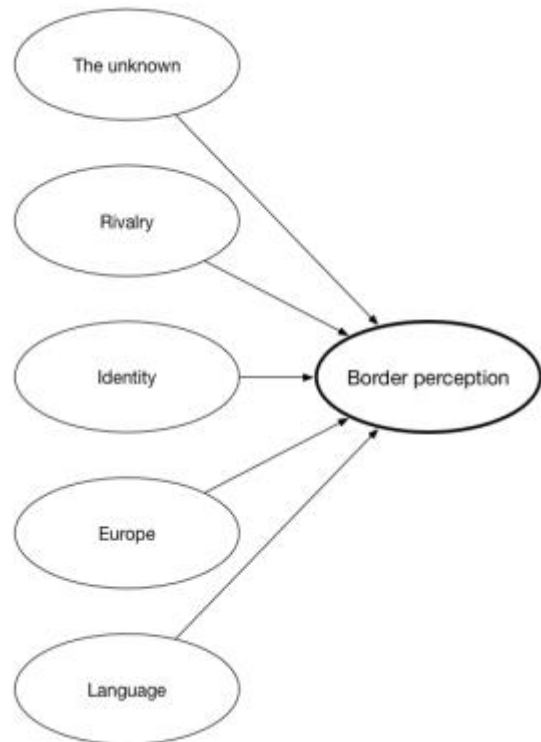


Figure 1: Representation of findings

## Border Perceptions

The Dutch-German border perception is the first theme that will be discussed. During the interviews, it became clear that the respondents had multiple views on the meaning of the Dutch-German border. All respondents mentioned that the border between the Netherlands and Germany does not play a role in their daily lives. Stüver (2005) confirms this in her study, as she states that the border is not part of the daily practices of Dutch citizens. Katrina also indicates this “I have never thought that [the border] should have a meaning.”. The respondents see the border as something that is “not of use anymore”, now that the borders are open. The respondents also indicate that the Dutch-German border is not very visible anymore, as there is no physical border control that has to be crossed like in the past. The respondents that are crossing the Dutch-German border are therefore not triggered to think and discuss about the border and its functions. This could be another reason for the respondents not having an immediate answer on the question about the functions and meaning of the Dutch-German border. According to Newman (2006) the unknown meaning of the border is also caused by the fact that the traditional role of the border is to clearly show barriers. With open borders this does not happen anymore and thus the traditional meaning

of the border has disappeared. A new meaning for the border has to be found (Newman, 2006).

When asking questions more detailed questions about the Dutch-German border, different answers arose. According to the respondents the border separates laws, rules, economies, and infrastructures of the Netherlands and Germany. According to the literature this indicates that the Dutch-German border is used as a tool to express territoriality (Sack, 1986).

Not only did the respondents mentioned that the Dutch-German border was useful, they also stated that the separation between the two countries can be seen clearly. It is not just a line on a map that is called the Dutch-German border, the border can be seen in the form of signs, other houses, changing landscapes and a different road.

Next to this the respondents indicate that their perception of the Dutch-German border has changed over time. According to the respondents this is caused by the fact that the physical appearance of the Dutch-German border has changed. Before the Schengen Agreement, the border was closed and it had physical border control. Now, after the implementation of the Schengen Agreement, the border is open, and easy to cross, sometimes there is not indicated that you are crossing the Dutch-German border. With this physical change, the meaning of the Dutch-German border has also changed. Instead of the border being a barrier for people and things, it is now open to everybody and everything. This is convenient for the Dutch tourists, as they can cross the border without any hurdles and time waste. The easily crossing of borders is good for the tourism economy, as after the Schengen agreement the tourism numbers have increased massively in Europe (Zeng & Go, 2013).

The border has also become more transparent, as the respondents have indicated. The physical border control is not present anymore and this makes that the border is less clear. Some respondents even say that they do not notice when they cross the Dutch-German border. They suddenly realize that they are in Germany. This decreases the perceived distance of Germany, which can be a downside for the tourism industry. As tourists are attracted to tourism destinations that are far away. The opening of the Dutch-German border makes it easier to access Germany, thus its perceived distance becomes smaller, which makes Germany a less interesting tourism destination (Timothy, 1995).



The next perception that Dutch tourists have of the Dutch-German border is that the border secures their safety. They believe that the Dutch-German border prevents criminals from entering the Netherlands. They indicate that in the past this was done more thorough because the Dutch-German border was more closed, and physical border control was present. The respondents still feel protected by the Dutch-German border, but they are protected less visible, with cameras. This is also confirmed by the research of Anderson, Sharma and Wright (2009), who state that the border functions as a filter, which keeps the country within the borders safe.

The respondents also indicate that they do not necessarily feel more safe within the border of the Netherlands. When going to Germany on holiday they would feel as safe. Only when a threat arises they would feel more safe in their own country, as the Dutch-German border would protect them. As shown by the quote of Alfons: "If something is going on, I would rather be in the Netherlands.". Tourism destinations that are perceived as a safety risk are not visited by tourists as shown by Cohen and Cohen (2012).

Some respondents however believe that the open Dutch-German border does not function as a safety measurement anymore, as shown by the quote of Gerrit: "I would say close the borders, keep the junk outside of the Netherlands". Other respondents do not feel threatened at this moment, but they do indicate that the Dutch-German border should be able to close as a safety measurement to ensure the safety of the Dutch citizens when it is necessary. Which links to the research of Moraczewska (2010) who stated that the border is an important instrument for safety.

### The unknown

The unknown is the second theme that was found in the analysis of the interviews. The respondents indicate that the Dutch-German border divides the known and the unknown. With the Netherlands as the known and Germany as the unknown. The respondents say that in the past the Dutch-German border was something that they never crossed, and if they did it was very exciting. They saw Germany as something scary, as they did not know what was behind the border, thus the Dutch-German border protected them. Not knowing what was on the other side of the border influenced the border perception of the respondents.

This can be linked to the theory of 'us' and the 'other'. Everything within the borders was seen as safe and known, however everything that was outside the border was seen as the 'other' (Strüver, 2005).

Nowadays this is not the case anymore with the border of the Netherlands and Germany. The respondents see Germany as a country that is similar to the Netherlands, and they indicate that they feel secure in Germany. The border is not an obstacle anymore when going to Germany, and thus many people visit Germany often. Ina: "The more unknown a country, the more alert you are." Thus because Germany is known and similar to the Netherlands the Dutch tourists do not feel unsecure in Germany. And thus the Dutch-German border is not a division in the known and the unknown.

### Rivalry

The theme rivalry, has been based on the finding that the respondents often indicate that they believe the Netherlands is better than other countries, specifically Germany. The respondents say that everything is better organized in the Netherlands, for example the infrastructure and laws. This can be linked to the border with a bureaucratic meaning, and specifically aspect of territoriality. Different laws are illustrating that the Netherlands is different from Germany, and the Netherlands have their own territory (Sack, 1986). With this the marking of the border between the Netherlands and Germany becomes stronger.

### Identity

The next theme that was found in the data is identity. First the subject of national identity will be discussed, after which its loyalty will be described, lastly the importance of the border in the preservation of identity for Dutch tourists will be explained.

Even though national identity is a practical aspect of identity (Korsgaard, 1996), the respondents were not sure whether or not they would call themselves Dutch. They did not know what being Dutch included, as mentioned by Katerina: "I feel Dutch, whatever that might be.". Nevertheless, all respondents eventually said that they are Dutch. As they concluded that they were born inside the borders of the Netherlands, and thus they carried the Dutch national identity. When the respondents cross any border, it is more clear to them that they have a national identity, which is indicated by the quote of Ina: "Yes, I feel Dutch, I

can say that really easily because I live in a foreign country.”. Thus tourists that visit a foreign country will more often use national identity to identify themselves (Smith, 1992).

Not only do the respondents state that they have the Dutch national identity, they also say that they are expected to be loyal to this identity, which is also confirmed by Sofield (2006). An example that many respondents brought up is the FIFA World Cup. When this football competition takes place, Dutch citizens are expected to back the national team, and especially be against the rival Germany. During the FIFA World Cup a national attitude is expected and taken very seriously. The Dutch-German border creates a division between Germany and the Netherlands, and decides for which national team you have to support.

Next to this the respondents indicate that they find the border very important for the preservation of their identity. They indicated that their identity would be lost if the Dutch-German border disappeared. The respondents do not want to become part of Germany or become German. According to the respondents the Dutch-German border is the only thing that prevents this, as indicated by the following quote of Sally: “The border should stay. Because I am Dutch.”.

When the Dutch-German border does disappear, the citizens of the Netherlands will get a different national identity, namely German. Steven was the only one who mentioned that this would not influence his identity. He indicated that being Dutch will just change from a national identity, to a regional identity. As an example he mentioned “East Frisians in Germany”, who according to him, still have their own regional identity, but also have the German national identity. Paasi (1998) also shows this in his study on the village in Finland and Russia. The villagers kept their own regional identity, even though their national identity changed. Thus even though the Dutch-German border creates the Dutch identity, it might not disappear, when the Dutch-German border disappears.

## Europe

The Dutch-German border has become less significant according to the respondents. With this Europe has become more familiar. The less powerful Dutch-German border is caused by the fact that the border is not that visible anymore according to the respondents. The borders of Europe have become more important to respondents now, as these borders are the ones that

have to keep them safe, instead of the Dutch-German border. Thus the territoriality of the Dutch-German border has decreased, in which the European borders have increased.

This is favorable for the tourism industry, as the familiarity of the countries has increased, and more people are willing to travel to these countries. Next to this for the people who find Europe too familiar, the people will go further away (D. J. Timothy, 2002). Which is again good for the tourism economy.

### Language

Language is the last theme that will be discussed. Almost every participant mentioned that they noticed the language difference immediately when crossing the Dutch-German border, as in the Netherlands there is spoken Dutch and in Germany there is spoken German. Thus it seems like the Dutch-German border is a very clear cut language border, as also stated by Beerkens (2010).

All the respondents mention that they talk German, when crossing the Dutch-German border, to overcome the language barrier. The respondents also indicate, that when they do not know the German word, they will try it in Dutch or in their Dutch dialect, which is often very similar to German according to the respondents. With the help of dialects it is easier to communicate between the different standardized languages, Dutch and German. According to Beerkens (2010) the existence and use of dialects makes it however more difficult to draw a clear language border. This is favorable for the tourism industry, as literature shows that tourists are more likely to go across the borders when a similar or the same language is spoken to their own language (Timothy, 1995). But by the respondents the Dutch-German border is still perceived as a language border.

## Discussion & Conclusion

### Sub research questions

Now that the literature has been reviewed, the theoretical framework has been created and the findings have been discussed, the sub research questions can be answered.

#### 1.1. What is the bureaucratic meaning of the Dutch-German border?

As shown in the theoretical framework, the bureaucratic meaning of a border exists out of Territoriality, Safety, and Economy.

When looking at the findings there can be concluded that the Dutch-German border does have a territoriality meaning for Dutch tourists. The respondents indicate that the border divides laws, infrastructure, countries, economies, etc. These are indications that the Dutch-German border is still held in place by territoriality, even though the border is open. The territorial meaning of the Dutch-German border has however decreased, the Dutch tourists indicate that the Dutch-German border itself is less visible nowadays. But the difference between the Netherlands and Germany is still shown. Thus even though the way that the border is territorialized has changed, the Dutch-German border still stand for territoriality according to the Dutch tourists.

The next possible meaning of the Dutch-German border according to the theoretical framework is safety. The Dutch-German border also has this meaning according to the Dutch tourists. They find that the Dutch-German border is an important aspect in providing their safety. They believe that the border filters out certain people, which keeps them safe. Next to this the respondents indicated that the Dutch-German border should be able to close when threats from other countries appear. Thus the Dutch-German border has a safety meaning..

The Dutch-German border does not necessarily have an economic meaning. The respondents did notice that the Dutch-German border divides the Dutch and German economies, but this was the only thing that was mentioned and not in much detail. So there is not enough

information that can conclude the Dutch-German border does, or does not have an economic meaning.

Thus the Dutch-German border has a bureaucratic meaning for Dutch tourists. The border is important in the territorialisation of the country. Also safety is an important aspect of the border. The economic meaning of the Dutch-German border for Dutch tourists is not clear. Thus the Dutch-German border partly has a bureaucratic meaning for the Dutch-German tourists.

### 1.2. What is the socio-cultural meaning of the Dutch-German border?

The socio-cultural meaning of the border exist out of us and other, identity, and Language.

The Dutch-German border has been indicated as a division between the Germans and the Dutch. The border creates a division between 'us', the Dutch, and the 'other', the Germans. In the past this was mainly because there was not known what was behind the border. Nowadays this is not the case anymore, as the Dutch-German border is crossed often. But the border still is a division between the Dutch and the German. This will be explained in the next paragraph.

The Dutch-German border has the meaning for Dutch-tourists to create a part of their identity and also preserve it. The respondents indicate that they feel Dutch and this national identity is created by the existence of the Dutch-German border. This national identity is also often more noticed when the respondents travel outside of the border. This indicates that the border is a division between us and the other. Inside the borders everybody is the same, us, and national identity is not important, however when outside of the border, the respondents are mixed with the 'other', and they still belong to 'us' by identifying themselves as Dutch.

Next to this the Dutch-German border is also seen as a protection for the Dutch national identity. The Dutch tourists indicate that the Dutch-German border is needed to preserve their Dutch identity. If the Dutch-German border disappear, their Dutch identity will also fade. One respondent however indicated that even though the Dutch-German border disappears, the Dutch identity will still be preserved. He will still be Dutch, however it will not be a national

identity anymore, but a regional identity. He was the only one did not think that the Dutch-German border preserved his Dutch identity.

Form this can be concluded that the Dutch-German border helps to create the Dutch identity, and for most also help preserve it.

The language difference is noticed by the respondents when they cross the Dutch-German border. The respondents see that when they cross the border, the spoken language shift from Dutch to German. The respondents indicate that they try to adjust to the German language when they cross the Dutch-German border. Thus the Dutch-German border indeed has the meaning of a language border, according to the respondents.

The Dutch-German border is thus seen as something that creates identity, influences the separation between us and the other, and has the meaning of a language barrier. The Dutch-German border is a socio-cultural border for Dutch tourists.

### 1.3. How has the meaning of the Dutch-German border changed over time?

With the changing Dutch-German border, from a closed to an open border. The meaning of the Dutch-German border for the respondents has also changed. These changes will be discussed below.

The border has become less important in terms of safety with the open border, as respondents believe that the impact of the open border on safety is less significant than that of a closed border. However when threats arise the Dutch tourists indicate that the Dutch-German border will still protect them. Thus with the changing of the Dutch-German border itself, the safety meaning of the Dutch-German border had to be adjusted, as it had gotten a new form.

With the open border the territoriality of the Dutch-German border has also changed. In the past it was clear how the border was territorialized, as in it was done by physical border control and check ups. With the open borders it is according to the participants less clear where the border is, and thus what is the Netherlands and what is Germany. These changes are

however still seen in the landscape, rules and laws, and thus new forms of territorialisation are found.

Thus the meaning of the Dutch-German border for Dutch tourists has changed over time.

### Limitations

There have been 14 respondents that joined the research, which is a small sample. Not only is the sample small, it is also not representing all ages of the population. Half of the participants were in the age range between 50 and 58. The other half of the participants varied between the age of 14 and 68. The respondents are not a good representation of the population, and is thus not a good indication of the meaning of the border on all age categories. But this research was an exploratory research, in future research respondents from a broader age range should be part of the study.

Next to this only three of the 14 respondents crossed the border the day of the interview. When the people had crossed the border the day of the interview they might have had a more concrete idea of the border, and thus the answers on the interviews would be different. Also the location was around 2 kilometres from the border, this might have been too far to find respondents who crossed the border at the day of the interview. The data gathering has only been done in one location, this could be a possible explanation for the lack of diversity in the sample.

To get more respondents to participate in the research, some interviews were held in pairs. The answers of these interviews could have been influenced by the other person that was interviewed at the same time. The bias is kept to a minimum as the researcher asked all the questions to all the participants in the interview so the participants. It can however not be guaranteed that the respondents did not influence each other.



The interviews were held in Dutch, the transcribing also happened in Dutch, however the quotes in the research paper are in English. This translation can influence the meaning of the quote, next to this the translators mother tongue was not English, which may have led to faulty translations.

On the 23<sup>th</sup> of May 2017 a terrorist attack happened in Manchester, Great Britain. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2017, the data was collected. Because of this recent threat, the perception of safety for the respondents can have been influenced by this event. This could have influenced the meaning to the Dutch-German border, and make safety a more important aspect.

### Future research and Recommendations

This research focused on the meaning of the border for Dutch citizens. This meaning is created and influenced by different factors. Future research could explore how the meaning of the border is created. Whether this is done by the media, the government, the upbringing of somebody, the history of a country, something else, or maybe a combination of different factors.

Only the meaning of the border between the Netherlands and Germany for Dutch tourists has been researched here. Will the meaning of the border between Belgium and Netherlands be the same, or will this border have a different meaning for Dutch tourists? And will the meaning of the Dutch-German border be different for German tourists? This could be explored in future research.

A recommendation for the tourism industry:

For the tourism industry it is important to keep the borders as low of a time consuming thing as possible. When borders are too difficult to cross, the countries behind them are not visited anymore, because they are portrayed as scary and dangerous. As has been done in the past with Germany by Dutch tourists. However a balance needs to be found in this, as when the border is too easy to cross the perceived distance becomes smaller, and Germany becomes a less interesting tourism destination.

## Conclusion

To conclude the main research question can now be answered: ***What is the meaning of the Dutch-German border for Dutch tourists?***

According to Dutch tourists the Dutch-German border has a socio-cultural meaning and a bureaucratic meaning. First the socio-cultural border will be explained. The Dutch-German border means a division of 'us', the Dutch, and the 'other', the German. The Dutch-German border also creates and preserves the Dutch identity. Lastly the Dutch-German border is seen as a language border by Dutch tourists. The bureaucratic meaning is also represented according to the Dutch tourists. The Dutch-German border has a territoriality meaning as it is used to demark territory. Dutch tourists also find that the border protects them and keeps them safe. With the changing of the Dutch-German border, from a closed to an open border, the meaning of the border has also changed. The territoriality meaning of the border has gotten a different form. Also the safety meaning of the Dutch-German border had to be expressed in a different way after the opening of the border. After all the Dutch-German border is something that is crossed everyday by Dutch tourists, and the line between Germany and the Netherlands will always be part of our history.

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## Appendix

### 1. Interview questions – Dutch

Ik wil graag het interview opnemen omdat het voor mij lastig is tegelijkertijd vragen te stellen en te schrijven. De opname zal na afloop van mijn onderzoek worden verwijderd en alle informatie die u mij geeft zal niet worden doorverkocht of aan derden worden verstrekt. Maar alleen worden gebruikt voor mijn bachelor thesis. Heeft u er bezwaar tegen als ik het interview opneem? Voordat ik begin met uw te interviewen wil ik u erop wijzen dat dit interview volledig anoniem is en u kunt op elk moment stoppen.

#### Introductie grens

- Zou u een landsgrens willen tekenen?
- Zou u de grens tussen Nederland en Duitsland willen tekenen?
- Wat voor een functies zou een landsgrens kunnen hebben?
- Wat voor een functies heeft de Duits-Nederlandse grens voor u?

#### Toerisme

- Gaat u wel eens op vakantie naar het buitenland?
- Naar welke landen bent u op vakantie geweest?
- Hoe merkt u dat u in een ander land bent, als u de grens overgaat?
  - o Geldt dit ook voor Duitse grens?

#### Grens toerisme

- Bent u vandaag over de grens gegaan naar Duitsland?
  - o Was u dit van plan?
- Had u uw paspoort bij u toen u de grens over ging?
- *Voelt u zich anders dan anderen als u de grens over gaat in vergelijking met als u in Nederland bent?*
- Hoe verschilt de Duits-Nederlandse grens met de grens die u bent overgegaan toen naar *bijvoorbeeld Amerika* op vakantie ging?
- Vroeger waren er controles aan de grens. Denkt u dat dit belangrijk is om een grens in stand te houden?
- Gaat u ook over de grens naar Duitsland voor andere redenen? (zoals boodschappen, drogisterij en benzine dat goedkoper is in Duitsland.)

#### Grens - physical

- Voelt u zich veiliger als u in Nederland bent dan wanneer u buiten uw eigen land bent?
- Wordt u beperkt door de grens tussen Duitsland en Nederland? Hoe?
- Wordt de manier waarop u de Duits-Nederlandse grens ziet mede bepaald door de geschiedenis van Duitsland en Nederland? Hoe?

#### Vroeger en nu

- Hoe was dit vroeger?

### Identiteit

- Voelt u zich een Nederlander?
- Voelt u zich verbonden met Duitsers?
- Denkt u dat er een verschil is tussen de Nederlandse en Duitse identiteit?
- Op wat voor een manier is uw identiteit anders/hetzelfde als die van Duitsers?
- Zou u in Duitsland willen wonen?
  - o Waarom (niet)?
- Als u de grens overgaat, heeft u dan het gevoel dat u minder gemeen heeft met Duitsers dan met Nederlanders?

### Algemeen

- Waar bent u opgegroeid?
- Waar woont u nu?
- Heeft u ooit dicht bij de grens gewoond?
- Denkt u dat de betekenis van de grens is veranderd voor u?
- Wat is uw leeftijd?
- Wat is u hoogst genoten opleiding?

### Laatste vraag

Wat betekent de Duits-Nederlandse grens voor u?

Heeft u interesse in het eindresultaat van mijn onderzoek?



## 2. Interview questions – English

I would like to record the interview because it is difficult for me to ask questions and write at the same time. The recording will be deleted at the end of my research and the information you have given me will not be sold or distributed to third parties. It will only be used for my bachelor thesis. Do you have any objections against me recording the interview?

Before I start the interview, I would like to point out that this interview is completely anonymous and you can stop at any moment.

### Introduction border

- Could you draw a border?
- Could you draw the border between the Netherlands and Germany?
- What kind of functions could a border have?
- What kind of functions does the Dutch-German border have for you?

### Tourism

- Have you ever been on a holiday to a foreign country?
- To which countries have you been on holiday?
- How do you notice that you are in a different country when you cross the border?
  - o Does this also apply to the Dutch-German border?

### Border Tourism

- Did you cross the border to Germany/Netherlands today?
  - o Was this planned?
- Did you bring your passport when you crossed the border?
- Do you feel different than other people when you cross the border in comparison to when you are in your own country?
- How does the Dutch-German border differ to the border that you crossed when you visited the USA?
- There used to be border control on the borders. Do you think this is important to keep the border in place?
- Do you also cross the border for different reasons? (For example, groceries, gas, drugstore, drugs?)

### Grens – physical

- Do you feel safer when you are in Germany/the Netherlands than when you are outside your own country?
- Do you feel restricted by the border between the Netherlands and Germany? How?
- Is the way that you view the Dutch-German border partly determined by the history of Germany and the Netherlands? How?

### Past and Now

- How was this in the past?

## Identity

- Do you feel Dutch?
- Do you feel connected with Germans?
- Do you think there is a difference between the Dutch and German identity?
- How is the identity the same or different as the German/Dutch?
- Would you want to live in Germany/Netherlands?
  - o Why (not)?
- When you cross the border do you feel like you have more/less in common with the Germans than with the Dutch?

## General

- Where did you grow up?
- Where do you live now?
- Have you ever lived close to the border?
- Do you think your view of the border has changed over time?
- What is your age?
- What is your highest education?

## **Last question:**

What is the meaning of the Dutch-German border for you?

Are you interested in the end-result of my research?