

**Christian Banse:**

***The Experience of National Borders and Cross-border Processes.***

***A sociological study of selected border regions.***

Görlitzer Beiträge zu regionalen Transformationsprozessen. Eckehard Binas, Stefan Kofner, Joachim Schulze, Erika Steinert und Gisela Thiele (ed.). Band 8. Peter Lang GmbH. Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, Frankfurt am Main 2013.

1. Introduction
  - 1.1 Do we need sociology of the experience of national borders in the twenty-first century?
  - 1.2 The state of research: perspectives on national borders
  - 1.3 Socialization (*Vergesellschaftung*) and communitization (*Vergemeinschaftung*) because of and in spite of national borders: the scheme of the book
2. National borders: a historical and political kind of social boundaries
  - 2.1 Territory – state – nation and the political and social importance of national borders
  - 2.2 The Europe of border regions: vision and reality
3. Varied experiences in border regions
  - 3.1. The French - German border region
  - 3.2. The Danish - German border region
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4. On the multi-social character of border regions
  - 4.1 The starting point: different border regions
  - 4.2 The border regime as a social fact
  - 4.3 Socialization caused by borders – the paradoxical suspension and use of differences
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5. National borders and their social function
  - 5.1 The experience of national borders and the problems of integration in Europe
  - 5.2 Future aspects in sociological border investigations. The limits of national borders.

National borders, their functions today and the establishment of cross-border progresses in Europe – the study at hand is concerned with these up-to-date issues. From a sociological point of view, this essay explores if territorial borders of national states are really increasingly disintegrating as supposed by current analyses and social theories.

After discussing the effects that borders have on society, the author closely analyzes the French-German border region around Strasburg and Kehl, the Danish-German border region around Flensburg, and the Polish-German border region around Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice. He thereby explains the diversity of perspectives on national borders and their multidimensional functions.

The essay finally shows that profit-orientated cross-border traffic (*Vergesellschaftung*) is – depending on the particular political function of the border regime in each region – increasing in different ways while all of the border regions mentioned also produce a certain clash of national distinctions (*Vergemeinschaftung*) showing the residents' needs for dissociation. This result has consequences for the comprehension of integration: Cross-border socialization (*Vergesellschaftung*) is in particular based on the differences between the national systems and the growing possibilities to cross the border do not automatically mean that people stop to produce collective distinctions.

Hence many new processes of negotiation are occurring in border regions and national borders still remain an important social aspect in these controversies.