Border regions and minorities – an (un-) explored area?

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National minorities in Europe

NATIONAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES IN EUROPE
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MOLDOVA
Moldovans Ukrainians
Russians
Gagauzians
Bulgarians
Romanians

SWITZERLAND
German
French
Italian
Bantu Romans

ESTONIA
Estonians
Russians
Baltic Russians
Ukrainians

LATVIA
Latvians
Russians
Baltic Russians
Ukrainians

HUNGARY
Hungarians
Slovaks

ROMA and SINTI
National Minorities in their different host countries in most European states
Minorities in European integration

Direct context: Copenhagen criteria, Charter of Fundamental Rights

Indirect context

- More open borders
- “Europe of Regions” offers new opportunities for substate nations
- Bi- and tri-linguality can be an asset in a common market
- ‘Blurred’ minorities
- The use of violence to achieve secession has become unfashionable (Ireland, Basque)
- Last not least: economic growth can lead to social inclusion
Bilingual/bicultural: by choice or of necessity?

Schleswig-case (20th century):
- Germans in North Schleswig: European self-identification since the mid 1950’s
- Danish in South Schleswig: reflect the ambivalent Danish attitude to European integration

Minorities often reflect their kin-state’s ”Europeanness”
Minorities and cross-border cooperation – a problem?

- Border revisionists, secessionists, hidden agenda
- Representing sensitive border issues (Hungary-Romania, Hungary-Slovakia, historic. Germany-Denmark, Germany-France, Italy-Austria, a.o.)
- Danger of intra-ethnic cooperation instead of inter-ethnic (Hungary-Croatia, Tyrol, Estonia-Russia)
- Ressource conflicts can harm otherwise good bilateral relations (school funding Schleswig)
Minorities – an asset?

- National minorities illustrate that borders can divide people by separating previously united cultural landscapes
- Bilingual, bicultural – ”transnational borderlanders” (Oscar Martinez*) or ”Regionauts” (Tom O’Dell*)

Questions:
- Are minorities an avantgarde to reunite landscapes by cross-border cooperation?
- Are minorities preconditioned to be a decisive factor in cross-border cooperation because of their knowledge of their (neighbouring) kin state’s culture, language and political system?

Minorities and cross-border cooperation in Schleswig

Minorities as a collective have been a barrier to cross-border cooperation until the 1980’s:
• fear of a hidden agenda: border revision, ’Lebensraum’
• fear of the loss of the specific minority identity in an integrated, trans-national cross-border region

Minority members as individuals, though, have profited from cross-border cooperation because of their bilingual education and because they are bi-cultural:
• regional labour market
• higher education opportunities
Minorities: capacity builders in cross-border regions (Tove Malloy*)?

- Minority cooperation in cross-border governance organs:
  - Directly (institution) through their delegated representatives
  - Indirectly (individually)
    - As employees in the secretariat
    - As project holders or 'regionauts' in Interreg projects

Danish-German CBC

- Region Sønderjylland-Schleswig (euroregion)
- Municipal Border Triangle (Aabenraa-Sønderborg-Flensburg)
- Schleswig-Holstein – Region South Denmark
- Fehmarn Belt
- Baltic Sea Region
- North Sea Region
- String Hamburg – Kiel – Copenhagen – Malmö – Göteborg - Oslo
# Levels of cooperation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Minority participation</th>
<th>Potential minority participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region Sønderjylland-Schleswig</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border Triangle Flensburg-Aabenraa-Sønderborg</td>
<td>Low, higher since Flensburg’s mayor is from SSW</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation Agreement Schleswig-Holstein – Region Syddanmark</td>
<td>None, higher since SSW is in the state government</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRING</td>
<td>None, higher since SSW is in the state government</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltic Sea Region</td>
<td>None, higher since SSW is in the state government</td>
<td>Low</td>
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<td>North Sea Region</td>
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<td>Low</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Minorities as regionauts

- Common policymaking on minority issues
- 'Regionalist' political agenda in election campaigns since the 1950's
  - Seemingly successful for SSW since the 1970's
  - Seemingly successful for SP in the 2009 municipal elections
Presence of minorities does not automatically lead to intensive cross-border cooperation:

- Minorities often connected with national irredenta, border revision or other threats to sovereignty
- Conflict of interests: Minorities are predominantly interested in good cultural relations to their kin-state, majorities in tangible financial gains
- Minorities’ interest in an overcoming of the border might be contrary to majorities’ interest in a preservation of the border because of its protective function
- Minorities’ integration into civil society is necessary for constructive minority-majority cross-border cooperation
- Cross-border cooperation intensifies, when a financial incentive is given to the majority population
- High level participation in CBC is outside the tasks and means of minority institutions
- As individual actors, minority members can act as transnational borderlanders
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