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Tobias is a historian in the field of  
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He is affiliated with the Centre for  
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2011. In 2013, Tobias came to SDU in  
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PhD Dissertation of

## Tobias Haimin Wung-Sung

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Beyond the border: A history of minority  
youth identities in the Danish-German  
border region, c. 1955-1971

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# Beyond the border

## A history of minority youth identities in the Danish-German border region, c. 1955-1971

The dissertation examines identities of Danish and German minority youths in South and North Schleswig respectably during the period 1955-1971. It pays particular attention to the characteristics of young people's sense of national belonging and their changing perceptions of the national contestations between Danish and German groups in the border region.

The dissertation is based on a wide range of primary sources which have not previously been subjected to historical analysis. The sources consist mainly of youth and student magazines as well as other publications for and by youths. In addition, the analysis draws on archival material from relevant institutions as well as oral history accounts.

Conceptual reflections on youth and identities as social constructions, as well as methodological insights on transnational history have contributed to the structuring of this thesis. Furthermore, the thesis departs from the historiographies concerned with the Danish-German border region and youth in post-war Europe.

The dissertation pursues a thematic as well as a chronological focus. It starts by deciphering characteristics of minority youth identities during the period before 1955, pointing out the tense relationship between the national groups in the border region, and the idealisation of national contestation. It then shows how political develop-

ments determined beyond Schleswig influenced these ideals: the NATO alliance and the ideas of European integration both challenged separatist and isolationist ideals.

The dissertation continues by analysing the ways in which perceptions of the past brought out generational differences, and how new loyalties were shaped across national boundaries by young people's interests in jazz and pop music and a new international youth culture more generally. Notwithstanding, being minority remained important to young people, only they understood their connections to their kin- and the host-states differently than previous generations.

The different perceptions of what being minority meant were to a large extent, however not completely, divided along generational lines. Towards the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, young people had manifested their own independent position within the minority communities, and they overwhelmingly shifted their focus away from the traditional national ideas, assuming international interests and patterns of behaviour at the same time.

*Tobias Haimin Wung-Sung*

## The Centre for Border Region Studies

The Centre for Border Region Studies in Sønderborg continues a long tradition of research in the Danish-German border region. It aims to promote aspects of European border regions in research, teaching and knowledge exchange.

The centre has an interdisciplinary approach to research in European border regions. It counts scholars from different disciplines within the humanities and social sciences. In different ways and from different perspectives they all work on border region related questions.

The scholars also represent a diverse and internationally oriented group with strong ties to the academic world in the rest of Europe and North America. At the same time, the centre takes pride in a strong local anchoring in the Danish-German border region. It has close contacts to archives, museums and the regional community, and is actively engaged in knowledge exchange in the region.

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## Department of Political Science and Public Management

The Department of Political Science and Public Management has two overarching and interconnected objectives. Through innovative thinking and pioneering research the department strive to illustrate and provide answers to society's chief challenges and aim to share research based knowledge produced through high-quality study programs and various knowledge dissemination activities.

The department works to attract, develop and retain the best members of staff and create an efficient and inspiring environment for both students and staff. The department employs around 80 people, and around 2,000 students are enrolled in various programs, which comprise bachelor's, elective, master's and professional master's programs part- and full-time. At the organizational level the department consists of six sections that contain a range of research collectives and formalized interdisciplinary centers.

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