

Thomas Lundén¹

¹CBEES, Södertörn University

A twin city divided during Corona – a story of unintended geopolitics.

Bakgrund/Frågeställning

In what ways are people in a borderland affected by a pandemic? The aim of this paper is to analyse the incidence of Covid 19 in a borderland, and the impact of state territorial regulations and restrictions on the life of the borderland population.

An analysis of the effects of a pandemic in a borderland has to grapple with a number of phenomena: Land, Border, Time space, Diffusion, and People in border pandemics.

The area chosen for analysis is the twin city area of Tornio and Haparanda, divided by the state border between Finland and Sweden and situated near the mouth of the Torne River. There is no information on aggregate levels of behaviour in the Hapatornio borderland. But certain conclusions may be drawn:

During much of the pandemic, a physical barrier (like a riot fence) was placed by Finland on the urban border between Haparanda and Tornio, and Finnish border guards controlled the border, demanding identification and permits. Even if controls were usually carried out in a respectful way, the fence created a symbolic difference between the countries and images were spread in the media.

To the inhabitants of the twin city, the pandemic's restrictions meant an oscillating 'life world' of opportunities and containments, affecting differently, often depending on decisions taken by distant authorities and for reasons irrelevant to the local borderland. Certain restrictions are not spatially relevant, as they emanate from incidences from the whole territory of a country while the real cases are concentrated to certain 'hot spots'. A story of unintended geopolitics.

Metod och Resultat

Konklusion