Cross-border shopping at the EU's eastern edge – the cases of Finnish-Russian and Polish-Ukrainian border regions

Maciej Smętkowski, Sarolta Németh and Heikki Eskelinen

Abstract

This paper investigates cross-border shopping across the Finnish-Russian and the Polish-Ukrainian borders since the disintegration of the Soviet Union from a comparative perspective. Cross-border shopping can be defined in various ways for diverse purposes; this study is interested mainly in the conditioning factors, drivers and forms of this activity in addition to its volumes and trends in order to understand its implications to cross-border interaction and regional development. It is observed that cross-border shopping accounts for a substantial part of all mobility and that cross-border shopping is characterized by comparable fluctuations across both of the studied borders, while the two cases show some specific features, too. A common aspect is that during the first years after the regime change, informal economic activities in various forms played a major role in border crossings in these two regions. Since then, ordinary cross-border shopping tourism supported by the attractiveness of the neighbouring country as a travel and leisure destination has grown in importance in the influx of Russians into Finland, whereas most shopping visits by Ukrainians to Poland continued to be linked to profit-oriented reselling. Also, changes in exchange rates resulting from geopolitical turns and economic cycles have proved to be factors in both cases, *particularly* in conditioning short and frequent trips from Finland to Russia and (mainly) from Ukraine to Poland for utilizing differences in prices of excise commodities such as fuel and cigarettes. Finally, the study also shows that cross-border shopping may have direct implications to regional development, as local-regional policy stakeholders may see it as an asset: the attraction of shopping tourists from Russia has become a key development strategy in Southeast Finland despite the vulnerability to changes in geopolitical conditions.

Shopping tourism; border regions; EU's eastern border; cross-border interactions; development of border regions

Zusammenfassung

Grenzüberschreitendes Einkaufen an der Ostgrenze der EU – die Grenzregionen Finnland-Russland und Polen-Ukraine

Untersucht wird das grenzüberschreitende Einkaufen zwischen Finnland und Russland sowie Polen und der Ukraine seit dem Zerfall der Sowjetunion. Es geht hier hauptsächlich um bestimmende Faktoren, Auslöser und Ausprägungen dieser Tätigkeit zusätzlich zu ihrem Umfang und ihren Trends, um deren Auswirkungen auf den grenzüberschreitenden Austausch und die regionale Entwicklung zu verstehen. Dieses Einkaufen macht einen wesentlichen Teil der gesamten Mobilität aus und ist durch vergleichbare Fluktuationen auf beiden Seiten der untersuchten Grenzen gekennzeichnet, während es in beiden Fällen auch einige Spezifika gibt. Ein gemeinsamer Aspekt ist, dass in den ersten Jahren nach dem Regimewechsel eine Schattenwirtschaft in unterschiedlichen Ausprägungen beim Grenzübergang eine wichtige Rolle gespielt hat. Seit damals hat der normale grenzüberschreitende Einkaufstourismus, der durch die Attraktivität des Nachbarlands als Reise- und Freizeitziel begünstigt wurde, mit dem Zustrom von Russen nach Finnland an Bedeutung gewonnen, während die meisten Einkaufsbesuche von Ukrainern nach Polen weiterhin mit gewinnorientiertem Weiterverkauf verknüpft waren. Veränderungen der Devisenkurse stellten sich in beiden Fällen ebenso als Faktoren heraus, insbesondere bei den kurzen und häufigen Fahrten Finnland-Russland und (hauptsächlich) Ukraine-Polen zur Nutzung von Preisunterschieden bei besteuerten Gütern wie Kraftstoff und Zigaretten. Schließlich wird auch darauf hingewiesen, dass grenzüberschreitendes Einkaufen direkte Auswirkungen auf die regionale Entwicklung haben kann, da lokale/regionale Interessenvertreter darin einen wirtschaftlichen Vorteil sehen: Die Anziehung von Einkaufstouristen aus Russland ist in Südost-Finnland trotz der Anfälligkeit für Veränderungen bei den geopolitischer Bedingungen eine wichtige Entwicklungsstrategie geworden.

Einkaufstourismus; Grenzregionen; Ostgrenze der EU; grenzüberschreitender Austausch; Entwicklung von Grenzregionen

Introduction

Cross-border shopping can be defined in various ways for diverse statistical or analytical purposes. It may include "any purchases made from retailers or providers located in another country, either in person or via distance selling" (used for instance, when examining issues of consumer protection in the Internal Market; EC 2006, p. 1). An alternative definition by the OECD (2002, p. 147) claims that it occurs when "private individuals buy goods abroad because of lower taxes and import them for their own consumption, without declaring them in full in order to avoid paying import duties". This study excludes e-commerce and is not focussed so much (or at least, not exclusively) on the tax-rationale behind these instances of 'small-scale import'. Our interest lies instead in a diversity of conditioning factors, drivers and forms of this activity, and the ensuing characteristic changes in its volumes and trends particularly in order to understand its implications to (physical) cross-border mobility and social-cultural interaction, and thus to specificities of cross-border regional development.

Indeed, cross-border shopping is an important element of and motivation for, interaction in many border areas not only in economic terms but also in promoting socio-cultural encounters and interdependencies (Timothy & Butler 1995; Timothy 2005). This paper investigates and compares its characteristics, significance and evolution between south-eastern Finland and the St. Petersburg/Leningrad Region in Russia and between eastern Poland and western Ukraine. These two regions along the EU's eastern border provide an interesting setting for comparing the impacts of the disintegration of the Soviet Union on cross-border shopping. The paper is structured as follows: a brief discussion on the conceptual approach and the research enquiries frames the longer, systematic exploration of the two case-study regions along the EU's eastern border. In the last section, the findings are compared and summarized in a way that both empirical and theory-laden conclusions are provided.

Drivers of shopping across a border

Cross-border shopping is a multifaceted phenomenon, particularly in border areas with cultural differences and socio-economic disparities. As for its motives, the above-mentioned division into recreational and goal-oriented shopping is intuitively obvious. On the one hand, shopping can be a supplementary part of a leisure or business visit to the other side of a border (which we may refer to as 'tourism shopping'), but in many cases it is the primary reason for visiting a neighbouring country (as a 'shopping tourist') for utilizing border-related actual and perceived *differences* not only in price, but quality, supplies and other relevant factors (Spierings & van der Velde 2013, pp. 7–8). On the other hand, in borderlands with high economic disparities, including the two cases under consideration in this paper, part of cross-border shopping is linked with informal – yet not necessarily illegal (Koff 2015) – trading activities and can be an important source of income for many households (Powęska 2008, Bruns et al. 2011). This aspect of cross-border interaction – in the form of 'bazaar capitalism' – was particularly visible in the initial period of the socio-economic transformation in Central and Eastern European countries (Smith 1997; Minghi 1999; Williams & Balaz 2002).

In unpacking the phenomenon, Spierings and van der Velde (2008) point out that in addition to the differences in price, quality and assortment that may promote cross-border shopping, there are also other border-related differences, such as those in terms of accessibility, safety and familiarity that can discourage it. This implies that cross-border shoppers are recruited from those persons who find a certain destination as "acceptably unfamiliar" (Spierings and van der Velde op.cit, p. 10). According to a study on cross-border shopping in 28 European countries, this aspect of shopping "is stressed in particular by some consumers of the future Members States of Eastern Europe when they go shopping in more pleasant stores" (CEC 2004, p. 8). It is also worth emphasizing here that each potential visitor interprets the existing differences in terms of his or her personal views, that is, what is an attractive feature for a person can be an unattractive one for another. This can be taken as a kind of selection mechanism, which results in a situation where different forms of cross-border shopping, as also other forms of border-crossing visits, can be common in certain socio-economic or cultural segments of the population and non-existent in some others.

In principle, the above distinction between encouraging and discouraging factors applies to all forms of cross-border shopping. Nevertheless, assumedly, these conditioning factors and potential drivers bear different relevance and influence in the case when cross-border shopping (related to reselling the purchases) is a strategy of everyday survival in comparison to the case of actual tourism – shopping tourism motivated by love for variety. For instance, in the former case, this activity is compared to available opportunities to earn additional income from alternative sources in the local labour market and it has to be adapted to the confines of the border regulations and practices, whereas in the latter case travel choices are made genuinely up to individual preferences (or tolerance levels of unfamiliarity), and the level of wealth.

Many border regimes, such as the ones around the former Soviet Union, have been far from stable in terms of the rules and regulations that influence shopping behaviour. In addition, the ways how individuals see and interpret the existing barriers and border-related differences have evolved when they have learnt from their experiences through cross-border visits. Both these factors encouraging or discouraging cross-border shopping can be assumed to be important along the borders with relative high cultural, socio-economic and institutional differences. Understandably, a threshold to make the first visit tends to be relatively high on such a border, but after a visitor has acquired a certain level of familiarity with the local circumstances on the other side,

Working typology of cross-border shopping and its drivers and conditioning factors

	Economic	Socio-cultural	Administrative
Genuine 'shopping tourism'	Differences in prices and availability of different goods	Foreign culture and conditions – attractive or discouraging Perception of goods and services of foreign origin	Requirements, practices and costs of border crossing and their predictability
Cross-border activities related to petty trade	Differences in prices and availability of different goods Profitability in terms of local labour market situation	Social status and utility of cross-border activities	Requirements, practices and costs of border crossing and their predictability

Source: own elaboration by the authors

Tab. 1: Working typology of cross-border shopping and its drivers and conditioning factors

the incentives to continue the utilization of the existing differences can be significant. This supports the development of groups of 'cross-border specialists', who are often recruited among those who have relevant bicultural competences, such as language skills. The growth of such groups is also fuelled by migratory processes in border areas. The above argumentation is summarised in the working typology for the empirical comparison of the two cases: see Table 1.[1]

Based on the above, the main research questions that guide the comparison of the two cases are (1) to what extent cross-border shopping represents 'shopping tourism' (shopping being a primary or accompanying leisure activity of holiday or business trips abroad) per se, and to what extent it is primarily related to the informal economy (i.e. cross-border traders, petty trade); and (2) whether and in what ways the phenomenon of cross-border shopping is seen as a 'development strategy'.

Comparing the two cases along the EU's eastern border

The Finnish-Russian and the Polish-Ukrainian border regions investigated here are situated along the external border of the European Union: from 1995 onwards in the case of Finland and from 2004 in the case of Poland, and they are also Schengen borders from 2001 and 2008 onwards, respectively. In both cases, the disparities in the average income level between the neighbouring countries were at considerably high levels after the opening of the border for diverse flows and interaction. However, what should be borne in mind is the fact that while both sides of the studied Polish-Ukrainian border region were among the least developed areas in their respective countries, the setting is rather different in the case of the Finnish-Russian border. St. Petersburg (surrounded by the separate administrative unit of the Leningrad region) with the population of five million is the second (federal) city of Russia, whereas the neighbouring region in south-eastern Finland is a sparsely populated industrial region which has suffered from a relative decline in recent decades. Cross-border shopping can be of importance for regional economic growth and employment and it thus receives attention in policy-making. For this purpose, data on its volumes and forms are collected for official statistics (as in Poland), or monitored by means of case-specific surveys funded by regional or interest organizations (as in Finland).[2] In the following, based on such data and specific studies available on informal cross-border activities, the development of cross-border shopping is analysed in the two cases focusing on volumes, motives, number of visitors, and the 'recruitment' of regular or occasional cross-border shoppers. This analysis derives mainly from the EUBORDERREGIONS (FP7, 2011–2015) research project, which focused on identifying "challenges to economic, social and territorial cohesion as well as regional development potentials in different borderlands at the EU's external frontiers". (www.euborderregions.eu)[3]

The empirical research on cross-border co-operation in these two cases (Finland and Russia, Poland and Ukraine) was carried out in 2012 and 2013. At that time, local cooperation was not yet affected by geopolitical challenges related to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the

1 It is worth emphasizing here that this typology and the following empirical investigation do not include illegal cross-border activities such as smuggling. Petty trade by „cross-border specialists' can be seen semi-legal in the sense that it can be carried out in terms of the existing rules concerning border crossings, although reselling is typically done informally, without following the regulations of retail trade.

2 In Finland, the consulting firm TAK Ltd (www.tak.fi) in Lappeenranta has specialized in this field of expertise demanded by private and public actors. The findings presented and discussed in the following are based on the studies conducted by it. For the summary of the key results based on interviews of Russian border-crossers: see TAK (2013), TAK (2014).

3 The EUBORDERREGIONS project carried out in-depth interviews with key stakeholders of cross-border co-operation (50 in each case), observations were made as part of four weekly observation rounds (carried out at the border crossings PL-UA: Medyka-Shehyni and Korczowa-Krakovets and FI-RU: Vaalimaa-Torfyanovka, Imatra-Svetogorsk and Nuijamaa-Brusnitsnoe), local and national press were reviewed for identifying various aspects of cross-border co-operation and interaction, and questionnaires were collected at an outdoor market in Przemyśl (PL). (For the details in the data gathering see Németh et al 2015 for the Finnish-Russian case study and Smętkowski et al 2014 for Polish-Ukrainian case study.)

Russian intervention in the eastern regions of Ukraine, which has had a bearing on cross-border interaction and co-operation both at the Polish-Ukrainian and the Finnish-Russian border regions. However, based on available statistical data on border crossings it was possible to cover the period up to 2014 in both cases (for the location of the case study regions, see sections "The Finnish-Russian case" and "The Polish-Ukrainian case" respectively.)

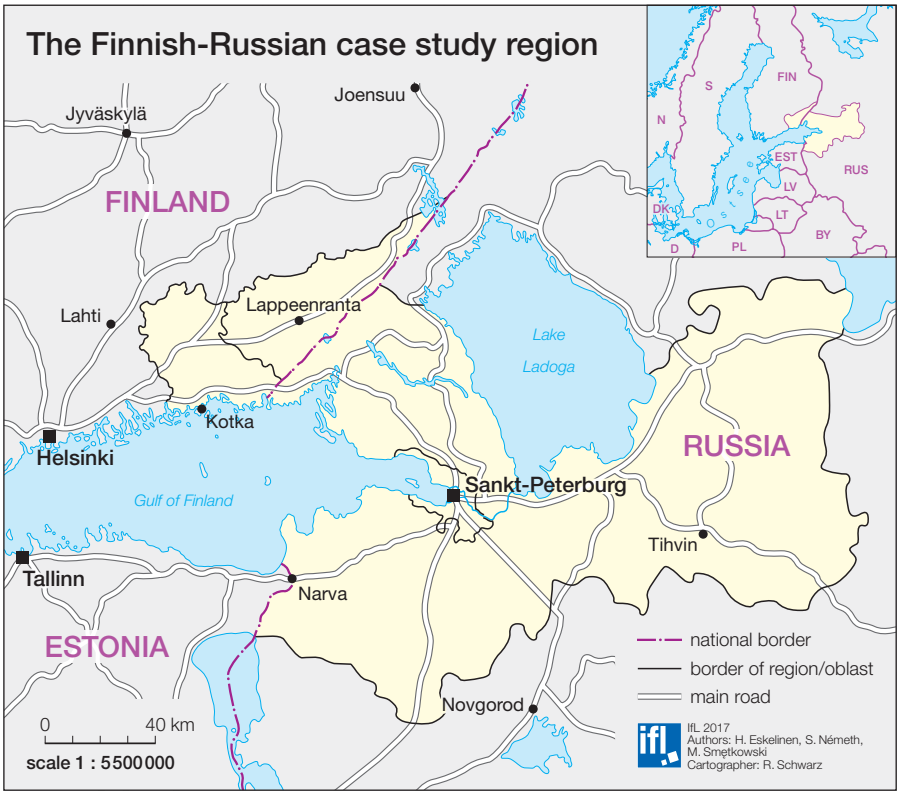


Fig. 1: The Finnish-Russian case study region

The Finnish-Russian case[4]

Most of the current 1340 km long Finnish-Russian border runs through a very thinly populated or uninhabited northern wilderness. This study focuses on the southernmost (circa 135 km long) stretch of the border through which the major share of the Finnish-Russian interaction (trade, transit traffic, tourism, etc.) takes place, i.e. between the Finnish regions Etelä-Karjala and Kymenlaakso and the Leningrad region and the Federal City of St. Petersburg in Russia (see Fig. 1).

The history of this borderland is characterized by several major turns of events. The imperial city of St. Petersburg played a particularly important role in the development of south-eastern Finland for more than a century (1809–1917) when Finland was a semi-autonomous Grand Duchy under the Russian Tsar and the borderline was very close to St. Petersburg. After the October Revolution and Finnish Independence in 1917, the border was tightly closed and south-eastern Finland turned into a cul-de-sac region. A few decades later (1940/44), the border was transferred some 150 km to the west and the population of the region annexed to the Soviet Union was evacuated to present-day Finland. After this geopolitical turn, the political and economic relations between Finland and the Soviet Union were organized on the basis of treaties orchestrating extensive co-operation, but border regions did not have any privileged position in these arrangements. It is against this background that the disintegration of the Soviet Union was a major upheaval, facilitating various forms of cross-border interaction based on spatial proximity and repositioning Finland geopolitically, including membership in the EU.

It is worth emphasizing that the volumes and forms of cross-border activity in this cross-border region (Etelä-Karjala and Kymenlaakso in Finland, Leningrad Region and St. Petersburg in Russia) are to an important degree conditioned by the asymmetry in population numbers. Approximately 95 per cent of the region's total population (7 million people) live on the Russian side of the border and St. Petersburg alone is comparable to Finland as a whole. In terms of spatial structure, however, the Leningrad region (with the exception of St. Petersburg's immediate surroundings) and the neighbouring Finnish regions of Kymenlaakso and Etelä-Karjala are relatively similar: sparsely populated, and the main cities are small – the largest ones Vyborg (pop. 80 000) on Russian side and Lappeenranta (pop. 72 000) on the Finnish side are at the distance of about 60 km from each other. The only towns adjacent to each other on the border are Imatra on the Finnish side (pop. 28 000) and Svetogorsk on the Russian side (pop. 16 000), which already in the 1990s launched the concept of 'twin town' for promoting their co-operation (Eskelinen & Kotilainen 2005).

For a long time, the Finnish-Russian border has been a dividing line between two cultural and political systems in Europe and this setting still prevails today in several respects. The Russian-speaking minority in Etelä-Karjala and Kymenlaakso is currently approximately 3 per cent of the total population (Alanen 2015), resulting from a modest flow of migrants since the early 1990s. On the Russian side of the border, the small Finnish-speaking population mainly consists of individuals who work for Finnish-owned companies and other organizations in St. Petersburg.

Border regime

Even though the permeability of the Finnish-Russian border has clearly increased since the early 1990s, it is noteworthy that the treaties for the management of

4 This section utilizes the data materials and results of the Finnish-Russian case study carried out as part of the FP7 EUBORDERREGIONS project (Nemeth et al. 2015).

the border and co-operation between the authorities in charge signed between the Soviet Union and Finland in their renewed forms still guide the border-crossing practices. From the point of view of a visitor to/from Russia, what has changed is that individual tourism is allowed and the rouble has become a normal, convertible currency. To a Finnish tourist, the removal of the earlier strict travel restrictions in Russia also are of major importance.

Finland's membership in the European Union from 1995 onwards did not have any major influence on the number of crossings due to the fact that there was no visa-free period between Finland and Russia.[5] More recently, Finland's participation in the Schengen system since 2001 has in fact improved the possibilities of Russian citizens to travel in Europe as many of them use Finland as a transit route to other countries. However, there is no Local Border Traffic (LBT) agreement in use and there are no initiatives to introduce such arrangement for facilitating cross-border interaction. The cost of a visa, which has to be purchased in advance, is 40 to 70 euro and many frequent travellers use multi-entry visas. Visa-free travel was much discussed before the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, and its potential impacts were forecasted, but it is currently not on the political agenda. The number of offences and irregularities (illegal crossings, forged documents, etc.) at the border crossing stations has remained small.

Socio-economic conditions

The transition period following the collapse of the Soviet Union was difficult throughout Russia, including St. Petersburg and its surroundings. After the crisis in 1998, the recovery of this Russian border region has been rapid and in terms of GDP per capita both these 'subjects of the Federation' (St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region) have risen above the Russian average. This positive change has been promoted by St. Petersburg's favourable geographical location as an important gateway and its institutional status as Russia's second (federal) city. In this setting, the regional economy has benefited from major public investments in harbours, roads and other infrastructures, and also from investments in industrial production by both domestic and foreign firms.

On the Finnish side of the border, the south-eastern border regions of Kymenlaakso and Etelä-Karjala have been undergoing major restructuring processes mainly due to plant closures in their traditional economic base, particularly in the pulp and paper industry. As a result, unemployment rates have risen and the relative standing of these regions in Finland has weakened. Due to these contrasting trends, the gap between the two sides of this border in terms of standard economic indicators such as GDP per capita has narrowed, especially during the period from the 2008 financial crisis until 2013. However, it is noteworthy here that the above outlined convergence in cross-border economic disparities has not undermined incentives for border crossings in general and cross-border shopping in particular. Rather, it can be seen as an indication of the rise of a relatively large stratum of Russians who are interested in visiting, and can afford to visit, the 'attractively unfamiliar' neighbouring region and country.

Border traffic

In both cases under consideration in this paper, Finland-Russia and Poland-Ukraine, the change of the political and economic regime in the eastern neighbour in the early 1990s, and the resulting increasing permeability of the border, have led to a major growth in the number of border crossings. The sheer figures on border crossings reveal a lot on the grand dynamics of the Finnish-Russian border since then (see Fig. 2).

In 1991, the total number of crossings was 1.3 million, mainly attributable to Finnish visitors to Russia. In 2000, the number was almost 6 million, shared equally between Finns and Russians (the share of other nationalities has remained all the time very small). Since then, the number and percentage of Russians increased almost continuously until 2013 when the total number was 12.9 million crossings, approximately 80 per cent of them being Russians. Some 80 per cent of all travellers between these countries crossed the border in south-eastern Finland. In 2014, the period of rapid growth turned into a decline when the exchange rate of rouble weakened in connection of the Ukrainian crisis – the total number of crossings was down to 11.4 million and the share of Russians declined to 72 per cent. This downward trend has continued in 2015.

Cross-border shopping

Visitors from Finland to Russia

Tourism during the Soviet era was organized in guided groups, and the strict customs and currency regulations set limits to spending in the neighbouring country. Illegal selling of 'western goods' such as jeans and chewing gum for acquiring roubles was an important touristic activity for many Finns visiting Leningrad at that time, and it supported the networks of the informal economy (Shikalov & Hämynen 2013). After the regime change in the early 1990s, individual travelling was allowed and Finns could buy the so-called Vyborg card, which enabled them to pay a short visa-free visit to this city that had been the second city of Finland before the Second World War. Many former residents of the city and their descendants searched for their roots there (and also hunted for bargains) in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, but this nostalgic tourism soon lost much of its appeal also partly for the reason that the Vyborg card was suspended. St. Petersburg, for its part, has maintained or even increased its importance as a destination due to its size, variety of services and sights as well as improved transport connections, but for the present purposes it has to be emphasized that shopping tourism is not at all a motive for these visits. The same is valid for business trips targeting the Russian metropolis, which also account for a significant share of the

5 Short boat trips (Lappeenranta/Vyborg, Helsinki/St. Petersburg) have been visa free. For positioning the Finnish-Russian visa regime in the Schengen context, see Golunov 2014.

border crossings from Finland to Russia and are due to relatively important trade and investment connections as well as co-operation between civil society and administrative organizations.

Even though neither 'shopping tourism' nor 'tourism shopping' (as defined above) play a role in Finnish visits to Russia, there is a core group of frequent border crossers for economic gain. These visitors, living close to the crossing points, make very short trips for buying fuel and cigarettes just on the other side of the border. Understandably, this activity depends on the exchange rate; for instance, since early 2014, the number of visits from the Finnish border regions to Russia has increased. There is no comprehensive data on this very visible form of cross-border activity; occasional surveys (e. g., TAK 2002) indicate that in terms of numbers it accounts for more than a half of all crossings from Finland to Russia.

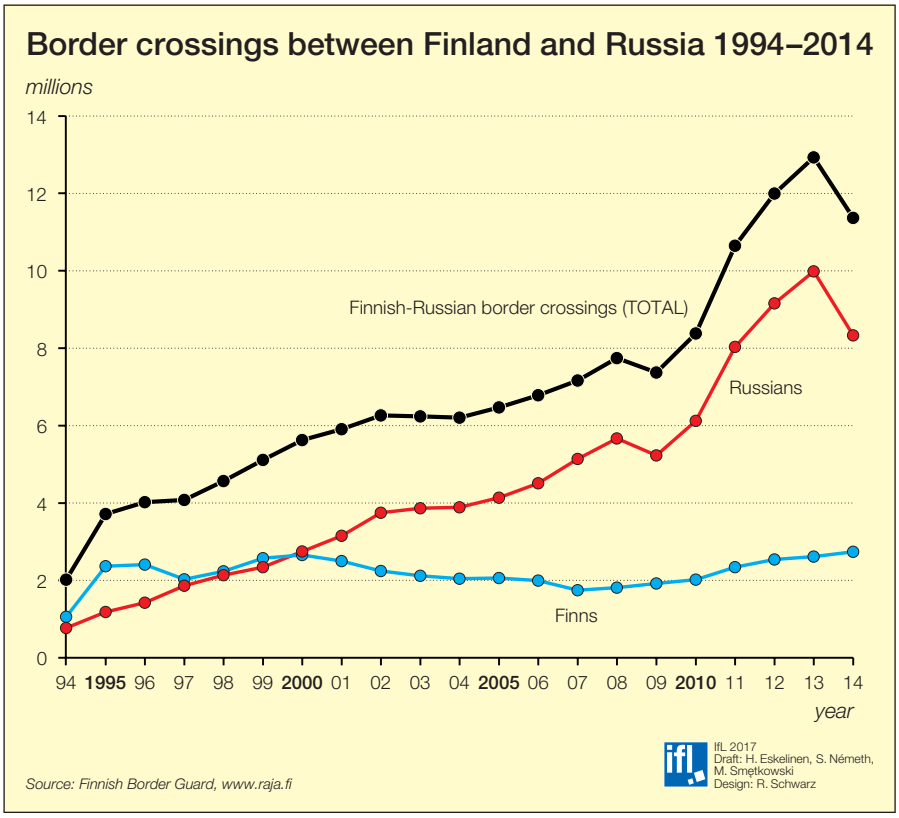


Fig. 2: Border crossings between Finland and Russia 1994–2014

Visitors from Russia to Finland

The disorderly state of the Russian economy and society had a visible impact on the behaviour of Russian visitors in Finland in the early 1990s. Many of them had to earn currency by selling whatever they could carry with them on the so called 'red squares' or 'shadow squares', i.e. illegal markets. This activity was well organized, but it largely disappeared in a few years (Nokki 2015, pp. 25–27). As a result, the original stigma attached to Russian visitors as 'poor pedlars' – illustrated by signposts reading 'Russians one at a time' on shop windows – disappeared, and their potential as solvent customers – 'Russian spoken' – was gradually recognized (Katajala 1997).

From the humble beginnings in the early 1990s, the number of trips from Russia to Finland through the crossing points in south-eastern Finland (Etelä-Karjala and Kymenlaakso) has grown manifold: from 0.2 million in 1992 to 1.1 million in 2000, and further to 4.1 million in 2013. More recently, however, the downward turn has been steep; the total number of these visits was 3.6 million in 2014 (see Figure 2). A clear-cut majority of these trips by Russians – varying from 60 to 80 per cent – are shopping trips followed by holiday trips. The share of work-related or business trips of the total number is only 10 per cent or less.[6] In this millennium, around 90 per cent of all Russian visitors have come from the two border regions, that is, from St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region, and the share of immediate border regions (Vyborg and its surroundings) has clearly fallen. The share of St. Petersburg has grown considerably and it reached 80 per cent in 2012. Notwithstanding this trend, only 21 per cent of St. Peterburgians had ever visited Finland according to the 2010 survey. This implies that frequent visitors account for an important share of the trips. In 2010, 35 per cent of respondents visited Finland at least once a month and in 2012, this share was even higher (41 per cent). The relatively small group of the most frequent visitors – 0.2 per cent of the persons who paid a visit to Finland from Russia in 2012 made 122 trips a year on average – probably work as carriers for informal cross-border trade. Understandably, this flow of informal exports has varied according to how the Russian customs regulations and practices are interpreted and implemented. It has also created a specific group of short-term visitors, so-called 'kilogrannies', who come along only for circumventing the Russian regulations on the maximum allowed volume of imported goods (50 kilograms per person). In this way, the Finnish-Russian border serves as an informal economic resource for some local citizens (Stammler-Gossmann 2012).

In addition to weekly commuters for work and business and the above-mentioned carriers, frequent border-crossers include those Russians who have bought second homes in Finland and stay at these dachas or villas during weekends and holidays. Most of the over 3000 such properties bought in 2000–2011 are located in south-eastern Finland. In addition, some

6 As was already mentioned, the volumes and composition of Russian cross-border shopping are not covered in official statistics in Finland. Notwithstanding that, the evolution of this phenomenon has been monitored in detail due to its economic importance in the south-eastern border regions.

Russians have bought time-share apartments. According to Lipkina (2013), Finland represents safety, nature and positive difference, that is, positive unfamiliarity, to a typical Russian second home owner. Understandably, (tourism) shopping is an integral part of this way of living in these two countries.

As a whole, the surveys on cross-border shopping trips from Russia to Finland clearly indicate that – notwithstanding the above mentioned cross-border carriers – it has become primarily a middle-class or even an upper middle-class phenomenon. In 2012, a Russian tourist spent 303 euro/trip for goods and services in Finland on average. This sums up to the total volume of 1154 million (879 million euros on products and 274 million on services). The largest item groups were foodstuffs and clothing, followed by household goods and shoes. As for services, the bulk of the spending goes to cafes and restaurants, accommodation and spas. This demand has led to major investments in areas close to the border where the capacity constraints of shopping and other tourism facilities were more binding than in the Helsinki region, at two hours' drive from the border. An illustrative example is Holiday Club Saimaa in Imatra, which, in addition to a spa hotel and holiday resort (opened in November 2011 with 1300 beds and rentable villas), also incorporates a shopping centre and a golf court. Typical Russian visitors are the young and middle-aged, especially families with children, combining shopping and leisure in Finland.

What comes to the reasons for shopping tourism to Finland among relatively well-to-do population in St. Petersburg and its surroundings, both rational and emotional motives are frequently mentioned in the surveys on this phenomenon. Prices of several international brands are lower in Finland due to Russian import tariffs and the reimbursement of VAT at the border, and many Russian customers trust that these products are originals. For potential Russian customers in St. Petersburg, the alternative EU destination is Estonia, where the price level is lower and most people in the eastern border region speak Russian. Inside Finland, the main competitor for the south-eastern border region as the destination for Russian visitors is Helsinki, which attracts particularly the shopping tourists interested in more expensive furniture, fashion and design items. Thus, shopping tourism from Russia to Finland also acts as a mechanism transmitting fashion and consumption styles (Gurova 2015).

When the importance of Russian visitors for jobs and economic recovery in south-eastern Finland was recognized, it was given a prominent role in regional and local development initiatives. Regional actors forecasted the prospects of this activity, especially in the case of potential visa-free travel. In addition, Russian shopping tourism was given a visible role in land use planning, but this was not accepted by the authorities in charge at the ministerial level (Fritsch & Eskelinen 2015). More recently, since early 2014, however, the interest in this potential regional growth sector has diminished for the obvious reason that the value of the rouble has declined. As a result, the flow of Russian visitors has declined and future prospects remain uncertain. Interestingly, this turn in the volatile evolution of cross-border shopping has revealed how different forms of cross-border economic interaction are linked to each other in a complex fashion. Russian shopping tourism in Finland and Finnish investments in the retail sector in St. Petersburg have created a segment of Russian customers who are well familiar with Finnish food. Since imports to Russia have been banned, cross-border carriers have found a niche by carrying food from Finland for sale at semiformal stands and kiosks in Russia (Bredníkova & Nikiforova 2015).

The Polish-Ukrainian case[7]

The Polish-Ukrainian border spans 535 km, of which 239 km stretches between the Podkarpackie Voivodship on the Polish side and the Lviv Oblast on the Ukrainian side, and the rest between the Lubelskie Voivodship in Poland and the Lviv and Volhynia Oblasts in Ukraine (see Fig. 3). Altogether, these border regions occupy an area of 85 000 sq km and have a population of 7.85 million, of which just more than 50 per cent on the Polish side of the border. Its major cities include Lublin (343 000 residents) and Rzeszów (185 000) in Poland, and Lviv (757 000) and Lutsk (213 000) in Ukraine. Due to the lack of any distinct differences in the features of the border traffic which can be observed between the Lubelskie and Podkarpackie Voivodships with their neighbouring Ukrainian regions, the characteristics of the border interaction described below refer to the entire length of the border, whereas the selected qualitative analyses relate only to the Podkarpackie Voivodship and the Lviv Oblast; both of which were subject of field research as part of the EUBORDEREGIONS FP7 project.

The analysed cross-border region has a long shared history dating back to the eleventh century, being a part of the Polish Kingdom and its successors, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Austro-Hungarian Empire (the southern part of the region in focus) in the period 1772–1918 and the Second Polish Republic before the Second World War. The region in focus here was not permanently divided between Poland and the Soviet Union (and Ukraine following its demise) until in the wake of the Second World War and the Yalta Conference. The establishment of the border afterwards severed the historical socio-economic ties and significantly disrupted the settlement system that had evolved as a result of those connections, ultimately resulting in the marginalisation of the areas lying on both sides of the border. Part of the border runs along the course of the rivers Bug and San, whilst the rest do not follow any natural features.

Border regime

Until 1989, the border between Poland and the Ukrainian SSR had a low level of permeability with only one road border

7 This section utilizes the data materials and results of the Polish-Ukrainian case study carried out as part of the FP7 EUBORDERREGIONS project (Smętkowski et al. 2014).

Fig. 3: The Polish-Ukrainian case study region

crossing point and one railway border crossing point available for passengers along its entire length. Soon after Ukraine had gained independence, this number increased to five road border crossings and two railway crossings handling passenger traffic. As to the rules and regulations concerning border crossings, the agreement on visa-free traffic between Poland and Ukraine was concluded in 1997, but visas were re-introduced for Ukrainian citizens in 2003 as part of Poland's preparations to EU membership. Because they were issued to Ukrainian citizens free of charge, the impact of this requirement was small until Poland's accession to the Schengen Area in December 2007, which led to the tightening of the border regime and included the introduction of charges for visas issued to Ukrainian citizens. From 1 July 2009 the visa regime was eased again by the agreement on local border traffic (LBT), according to which travellers living within a 30 km radius from the border were released from the obligation to obtain a visa. Not surprisingly, this arrangement has been criticised as it does not include the residents of Lviv, situated about 60 km from the border. Another point of criticism has concerned the visa fees which were quite substantial (EUR 35 for the Schengen visa) in terms of purchasing power in Ukraine. This problem, however, was solved by the introduction of free-of-charge 'national' visas in 2013, which permit entry to Poland.

Socio-economic and spatial-cultural conditions

In economic terms, both sides of the border are lagging behind the respective national averages in GDP per capita – this relative difference exceeds 30 per cent. The main reason is the large role of agriculture characterised by low productivity both in the Polish and in Ukrainian border regions. Another important structural factor bearing on various forms of cross-border interaction, such as shopping tourism, is the striking economic difference between the two sides of the border. In 2013, the GDP per capita in the Polish border region was 6500 EUR, whereas it was 1600 EUR in the neighbouring Ukrainian region (SSCU 2014). This disparity is clearly linked to the dissimilarity in the systemic transformation processes in these two countries; Poland being a forerunner and the crisis-ridden Ukraine lagging much behind. In addition, the spatial structures of the border regions differ from each other in the sense that the socio-economic potential is predominantly concentrated in Lviv on the Ukrainian side, whereas the Polish side of the border is characterised by a more polycentric structure (GUS 2009).

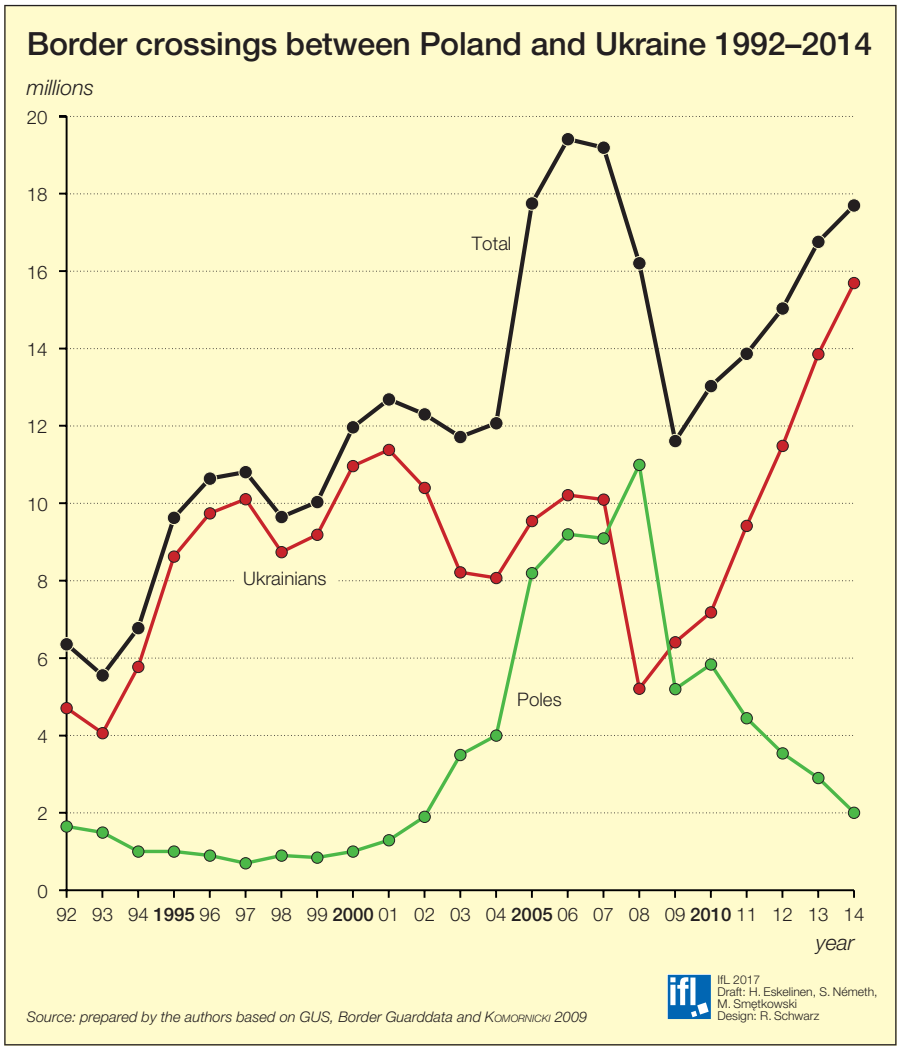
In terms of the socio-cultural sphere, however, the two sides of the border are much closer to each other than in the economic sphere in the sense that although the share of minorities is low (less than one per cent) on both sides, the similarity of the two languages enables a fairly easy communication and many aspects of cultural heritage are common or similar (e. g. from the period of Austro-Hungarian Empire).

Border traffic

Compared to Poland's other borders with non-EU countries, the traffic at the Ukrainian border is of the highest intensity. Since 2001, passenger traffic at the Polish-Ukrainian border has steadily and distinctly outnumbered passenger traffic at the Polish-Belorussian border. The year 2006 saw the record number of crossings, close to 20 million, whereas in 2013 16.7 million crossings were recorded at the Polish-Ukrainian border (57 per cent crossings being made in the Podkarpackie Voivodship) (see Fig. 4). The most popular border crossing points included Medyka, the only border crossing point along this

border that can handle pedestrian traffic (4.5 million travellers), Korczowa, a village situated along the main transport corridor A4 motorway (2.7 million), and Dorohusk and Hrebenne (each 2.7 million) in the Lubelskie Voivodship.

In general, the number of crossings has been characterized by major fluctuations, which are to a large degree conditioned by the behaviour of frequent border-crossers dealing with informal cross-border trade. This activity, for its part, has been dependent on business conditions such as the economic crises in Ukraine, the so-called 1998 'Russian crisis' and, more recently, the global financial crisis in 2008. Interestingly, the share of Polish nationals rose rapidly during the first years of this millennium, but then fell from 67 per cent in 2008 to a mere 14 per cent in 2013. In comparison, the impact of the changes in the visa regime in the years 2003 and 2007 on border traffic is much less visible due to the fact that the rather fast growth of Ukrainian economy in those years raised personal incomes and increased the number of arrivals of Ukrainians to Poland. More recently, however, the impact of the adoption of the local border traffic agreement in 2009 gave a boost to short-distance cross-border trips. These local visitors currently account for approximately two-thirds of Ukrainians visiting Poland, compared to 43 per cent in 2009. This trend has continued in 2015.



Fig, 4: Border crossings between Poland and Ukraine 1992–2014

Cross-border shopping

Visitors from Ukraine to Poland

In the first period after 1991, the arrival of Ukrainians to Poland was associated with the petty trade of industrial goods from countries formed after the disintegration of the USSR. In the following years, due to shortages and high prices of some goods in the Ukrainian market, many people travelled to Poland in order to buy food, cosmetics and furniture especially. Their purchasing power was increased by resales of excise goods such as Ukrainian cigarettes and alcohol, which were sold at open bazaars – a market of this kind operating in Przemyśl (one of the border cities on the Polish side) was among the five biggest of such facilities in Poland (Krok & Smętkowski 2006).

This form of trade exchange collapsed after the so-called 'Russian crisis' of 1998, which was reflected, for instance, in the drastic decrease in revenues from the outdoor market fees paid to the budget of the above mentioned Przemyśl in 1997–2000 (Smętkowski 2002). Furthermore, according to a 2012 survey of customers at the markets of Przemyśl and Medyka (situated in the direct vicinity of the border crossing point), Ukrainians were major buyers for only 5 per cent of the stands, while their share had been almost 25 per cent in 2001. This decline is due to the fact that shopping malls, discount stores and DIY stores have become their main shopping destinations. An important factor in this change is the possibility of VAT return service, which is not available at all shops (Bar-Kołelis & Dopierała 2014).[8] Overall, the benefits arising from this kind of border trade are limited to a small number of municipalities, whereas a growing sense of peripheralisation is visible in other municipalities situated along the border (Janicki 2010; Bański & Janicki 2013).

Based on the Central Statistical Office statistics (GUS 2014), the total value of purchases made by Ukrainians in Poland in 2013 can be estimated at approximately PLN 4.6 billion (approximately EUR

8 During the past decade, a number of such modern shopping facilities have been built in Przemyśl, including the shopping mall ***Galeria Sanowa*** with 60 retail and service outlets, supermarkets (Carrefour, Tesco) as well as DIY stores (Castorama, Nomi) and a number of discount stores (Biedronka, Lidl). In addition, in 2011 a shopping mall, ***Korczowa Dolina***, was opened 2 km from the border in the vicinity of the second largest border crossing point in Korczowa. Currently, it offers 48 000 sq. metres of retail space.

1.1 billion), which represented as much as 25 per cent of the aggregate value of official Polish exports to Ukraine. The main groups of commodities included building materials (37 per cent), car parts and accessories (21 per cent), audio and TV (16 per cent), foodstuffs (12 per cent), whereas other groups such as clothing and footwear, interior materials, toiletries and cosmetics accounted for approximately 5 per cent each. In recent years, the share of foodstuffs in the shopping basket has decreased considerably (it was 32 per cent in 2003). This change reflects the improved living conditions of Ukrainians, and also the structural developments in the industries of these two countries, especially in comparison to the 1990s, when the shortages of commodities in the Ukrainian market, including food, were the main factor encouraging border trade (Miszczuk 2007). Growth in the average value of purchases reflects the same trend – it is currently in excess of EUR 150 per customer, compared to EUR 40–50 in 2003.

For increasing their purchasing power, visitors from Ukraine to Poland still bring products for sale, mainly cigarettes, despite the severe restrictions of its imports implemented in 2008. Alcohol is also brought to the country, although on a much smaller scale. Owing to wide disparities in the price levels, the bulk of the revealed smuggling cases are associated with cigarettes; in 2012, a pack of cigarettes cost EUR 2.32 on the Polish side of the border and EUR 0.77 on the Ukrainian side (FRONTEX 2012). However, it should be noted that due to the gradual price convergence of fuel prices and the more stringent customs restrictions, illegal trading activities of excise goods have become far less profitable than before.

The share of Ukrainian travellers crossing the border at least several times a week has not changed over the years and remains at a level of 65 per cent, which quite clearly indicates that such visits are motivated by profit-oriented reselling. In 2013, 90 per cent of surveyed travellers declared shopping as the main purpose of their visit, compared to around 80 per cent in 2008. The share of long distance trips has decreased; around 80 per cent of the respondents reported that they made their purchases within a 30 km distance from the state border.

As for the purposes of border crossings, traditional tourism plays an insignificant role when compared to shopping and petty trade – only 1.4 per cent in 2003 and 0.8 per cent in 2013 of the visitors from Ukraine reported leisure tourism as the purpose of their journey. In 2013, there were only approximately 50 000 Ukrainian citizens staying overnight at the accommodation facilities in the border regions in Poland, including accommodation during transit travels. Also, visits to family or friends accounted for only 1.4 per cent of the travellers, compared to 6.8 per cent in 2003.

Visitors from Poland to Ukraine

Before 1991, the number of visitors from Poland to Ukraine was small and they traded mainly Western goods such as clothes and cosmetics unavailable on the USSR market. Earnings were spent by buying mostly gold and jewellery. After the opening of the border, profit-oriented trips continued to play an important role in border crossings and most travellers focused on selling cheap goods coming from the countries formed after the dissolution of the USSR. From 1994 to 1997, this flow of visitors declined, but this downward trend turned in the aftermath the Russian crisis (Komornicki 2008). Typically, Polish visitors to Ukraine purchased fuel and excise goods for their own use or for resale. In the next stage, after Poland's accession to the European Union, the number of border crossings grew manifold. The proliferation of traffic on weekends, which was not observed at other Polish external borders with non-EU countries, indicated that the purchase of excise goods in Ukraine had become for a large group of Poles not only an additional source of income, but it was also combined with leisure activities (Komornicki 2009). Partly, this was also due to the growth of incomes in Poland and the appreciation of the Polish zloty against the Ukrainian hryvnia (the value of hryvnia fell by 47 per cent in the period 2005–2008). However, with the outbreak of the economic crisis in Ukraine in 2008, there was a significant decrease in the number of Poles traveling abroad. In the same year, the opportunities to carry excise goods through the border were reduced drastically by the implementation of new regulations. This led to protests by border region residents engaged in the transport of cigarettes, even blocking the largest border crossing point in Medyka.

Shopping is still the most important motive for border crossings. In 2013, not less than 88 per cent of Polish travellers to Ukraine declared it as the main purpose for their journey, although the scale of this activity has decreased considerably in recent years; 2.3 million of border crossings in 2013 compared to 5.2 million in 2009 (see Figure 2). The total value of purchases, estimated at approximately EUR 60 million annually, was small in comparison to the value of imports from Ukraine (3 per cent). Furthermore, the average spending by a Polish traveller in Ukraine (50 EUR) is nearly three times lower than the amount spent by a Ukrainian visitor in Poland, although this sum has increased significantly in comparison to 2003, when it was under EUR 10. An additional reason for the decline in the number of cross-border shopping trips results from the more stringent restrictions on imports of excise goods from Ukraine, which has undermined the profitability of cross-border visits. Most of these shopping trips are very short – 90 per cent within a 30 km distance from the border. Understandably, this concerns especially the trips made in order to fill up the car, which in fact accounts for no less than two thirds of the aggregate value of purchases. The other key commodities are cigarettes and alcohol, which both account for 10 per cent of the aggregate volume of the purchases by Polish visitors in Ukraine.

The total number of Polish overnight tourist visitors in the border regions of Ukraine is hard to estimate but is probably not higher than 100 000 annually (Rettinger 2010). The analyses

of declarations submitted by travellers crossing the border clearly show that leisure tourists account for a tiny share of this traffic, and even this fraction has been on a decline. This tourism mainly comprises group tours, with destinations in Lviv and the so-called Golden Horseshoe of Ukraine, a tourist route covering major castles and palaces of the region. Such trips are in many cases emotionally motivated and associated with nostalgic memories of the lost Polish borderlands, i.e. the region which formed part of the Polish territory before the Second World War. At the same time, the number of visitors to Ukraine travelling by air has recently increased, the EURO 2012 UEFA European Championship being an important case-specific reason for this change.

Conclusions

The key findings from the two case studies can be interpreted along the working typology presented at the beginning of this paper (in Tab. 1), which makes a distinction between different forms of shopping and its drivers.

As a brief summary, it can be observed from the above that cross-border shopping accounts for a substantial part of all mobility and that cross-border shopping is characterized by comparable fluctuations across both of the studied borders. An aspect common to the two examined cases is that during the first years after the regime change, informal economic activities in various forms played a major role in border crossings in these two regions. Since then, however, different developments have taken place: ordinary cross-border shopping tourism supported by the attractiveness of the neighbouring country as a travel and leisure destination has grown in importance in the influx of Russians into Finland, whereas most shopping visits by Ukrainians to Poland continued to be linked to profit-oriented reselling.

Looking behind these phenomena, one can detect various drivers. Already within the Finnish-Russian case, there is a major asymmetry. Shopping trips from Finland to Russia are a representative example of the utilization of border-related price differences. This setting has not changed to any major extent since 1990s. Fuel and cigarettes can be bought on the Russian side at lower prices and for this reason most visits from the neighbouring country are very short in both space and time. As indicated above concerning both cases, the number of these visits is sensitive to the exchange rate and the regulations of the border regime (the latter effectively limits imports for sale and prohibits imports of alcohol in connection with one-day trips). 'Tourism shopping' (shopping performed in connection with proper tourism and business trips) from Finland to Russia plays almost no role at all. Considering cross-border shopping in the other direction, carried out by Russian visitors in Finland, volumes, drivers and forms of this activity are very different. During the first years of a more open border in the early 1990s, the typical form of Russian tourism to Finland was a combination of small-scale trading and shopping at low-price markets. Since then, it has evolved towards rather large-scale middle-class shopping tourism that is connected to an outward looking way of living. Finland represents positive unfamiliarity to certain relatively well-to-do Russian travellers – the often-mentioned attractions are spas, clean urban milieus, traffic safety and well-equipped villas in silent natural environments.

Aspects of both stability and volatility may be detected in relation to developments in shopping tourism across the studied Finnish-Russian border. Most Finnish visitors to Russia are relatively frequent travellers and thus they are well familiar with the requirements and practices of border crossings, which have been relatively stable throughout the period under consideration. It is also interesting to note that while in early 2014 the Ukrainian crisis and its economic repercussions put an end to the growth trend in Russian (shopping) tourism to Finland, the indirect impacts of the crisis have been quite reverse on the 'fuel rally' from Finland to Russia which has got a boost from the declined value of the rouble.

At the Polish-Ukrainian border, cross-border petty trading has a tradition dating back to the 1970s, but it flourished especially in the 1990s, when large outdoor market facilities ('bazaars') on the Polish side of the border appeared following the opening up of the border. More recently, Ukrainian 'cross-border specialists' have become customers of shopping malls and discount stores, even though border crossings are still accompanied by the smuggling of small amounts of excise goods, mainly cigarettes to Poland. The scale of border traffic is mainly conditioned by the overall economic situation in Ukraine (and the resultant purchasing power of citizens) and by price differences on the two sides, whereas administrative barriers such as the visa regime do not affect overall flows, but may shape to a certain extent its geographical range. Currently, about two-thirds of these cross-border travellers live within the area covered by the local border traffic agreement in comparison to 40 per cent in 2008.

Crossings from Ukraine to Poland for other reasons than shopping related to petty trade are relatively infrequent and tourism remains largely undeveloped. The main driver that encourage Ukrainians to visit the Polish border region is related to differences in prices of goods. The majority of them make purchases with a view to further resale with a profit (brokerage) prevail. This form of shopping is an important source of income for a large part of residents living in the Ukrainian border zone. The 'emotional aspect' of shopping is associated with the highly appreciated quality of Polish products (which is also a known factor in cross-border shopping by Russians in Finland) and the considerably improved shopping conditions as a result of the move from traditional bazaars to modern shopping malls.

Volatility can be traced in the development of shopping tourism in this border region as well, yet with some other direct causes in the background. The number of cross-border trips from Poland to Ukraine grew manifold between 2002 and 2007, but has since fallen to their earlier relatively limited level. There are several

reasons for this change. Shopping in the crisis-ridden Ukraine has lost much of its appeal for the residents of the border areas, unpredictable waiting times at the border considerably curtail visits abroad (including those taken for recreational and leisure purposes). Also, the emergence of alternative opportunities for improving one's financial situation by emigrating for work in highly-developed European Union countries has also undermined the economic motives of informal small-scale cross-border business. In effect, the disappearance of economic motives could not be compensated for by an emergence of positive socio-cultural drives for crossing from Poland to Ukraine to engage in shopping tourism. This was reinforced by a heightened barrier effect of the border and the deteriorating overall perception of the neighbouring country as a consequence of the political and economic crisis there. The inevitable result has been the contraction of cross-border shopping in this direction.

Overall, the investigation of the two cases on the EU's external border illustrates that cross-border shopping is a multifaceted phenomenon being affected by various economic and socio-cultural factors as well as administrative and (geo) political conditions. In these two cases, the border regimes have provided an increasingly stable environment for various cross-border activities (at least until 2014). For instance, EU membership of Finland and Poland and the introduction of the Schengen regime did not change shopping tourism to any major extent, although the Local Border Traffic (LBT) introduced in 2009 seems to be of importance for shopping visits to Poland. In the Finnish-Russian case, 'genuine' shopping tourism linked to 'emotional' and socio-cultural factors grew fast until 2013 in the Russia to Finland direction, whereas the opposite flow of visits is largely motivated by one single, economic factor, i.e. the difference in the price of fuel. Understandably, the economic implications of the geopolitical crisis since 2014 has had opposite repercussions on these two aspects of border crossings related to shopping. Shopping behaviour reflecting socio-cultural factors is less responsive to changes in market conditions than that based on monetary calculations (driven by economic conditions). In general, cross-border shopping between Poland and Ukraine has been conditioned by fluctuations in economic conditions (including exchange rates, income level and its changes, labour market situation), to a larger extent than between Finland and Russia. Also the recent increase of the development gap between Poland and Ukraine as result of the current crisis in the latter have led to growth in the number of Ukrainian visitors for shopping related to petty trade. The prevalence of shopping in this form is very significant and genuine 'shopping tourism' driven by socio-cultural factors has a very small share in Ukrainians visits in Poland and vice-versa.

As a final note, one may make a few claims and draw some comparisons based on the two studied examples of border regions in terms of the implications of cross-border shopping to regional development. Genuine shopping tourists can be seen as a resource of being situated near the border especially when the visitors represent an affluent purchasing power as well as a particular love of variety motivating their tourism to the neighbouring country. Regions on the receiving side can consciously promote their attractiveness in terms of the assortment and quality of products, by making crossing the border technically smoother as well as by providing a generally appealing environment for the visitors – provided they are well aware of the socio-cultural and economic drivers of their mobility. This has indeed been the case of the Finnish regions' development strategies, who saw the opportunity and reacted fast in order to reignite their economic growth, which had experienced industrial decline for decades. By comparison, cross-border shopping of the 'petty trade' type, which has been prevailing in the Polish-Ukrainian case, is triggered chiefly by price differences and has engaged predominantly low-income segments of the population. Hence, it is not matched by consumption of tourism services in a particular region. Instead, cross-border shopping triggered by price differences and aiming at reselling is important for the survival of some households of the settlements in closer proximity of the border, as an 'informal resource' or coping strategy of individuals to raise their standards of living. However, taking into account the large scale of shopping related cross-border mobility in this border region, the number of visitors with medium and high incomes has been also growing, which may lead in the future to the development of a greater range of tourism services.

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Prof. (emeritus) Heikki Eskelinen
Dr. Sarolta Németh
University of Eastern Finland
Karelian Institute
Yliopistokatu 2
FIN-80140 Joensuu
Finland
Sarolta.Nemeth@uef.fi
Heikki.Eskelinen@uef.fi

Dr hab. Maciej Smętkowski
University of Warsaw
Centre for European Regional and Local Studies (EUROREG)
Krakowskie Przedmieście str. 30
PL-00–927 Warsaw
Poland
msmetkowski@uw.edu.pl

Резюме

Мачей Сментковски, Саролта Немет, Хейкки Эскелинен

Трансграничная розничная торговля на восточной границе ЕС – приграничные регионы Финляндии-России и Польши-Украины

В статье рассматривается трансграничная розничная торговля между Финляндией и Россией, а также Польшей и Украиной после распада Советского Союза в сравнительной перспективе. Трансграничные покупки можно по-разному классифицировать для различных целей. Проведённое исследование посвящено определяющим факторам, акторам и проявлениям этой деятельности, а также её объёму и тенденциям с тем, чтобы проанализировать их влияние на трансграничный обмен и региональное развитие. Показано, что трансграничная розничная торговля является существенной частью общей мобильности населения и характеризуется схожими сдвигами по обе стороны рассматриваемых границ, в то же время в обоих случаях имеются и некоторые специфические особенности. Общим является то, что в течение первых лет после смены режима важную роль в трансграничных связях в различных формах играла теневая экономика. С тех пор за счёт притока россиян в Финляндию выросло значение обычного трансграничного торгового туризма, которому благоприятствовала привлекательность соседней страны, с точки зрения возможностей туризма и отдыха, в то время как большинство торговых поездок украинцев в Польшу по-прежнему связано с прибыльной перепродажей товара. Кроме того, изменения валютных курсов, в результате геополитических и экономических процессов, являются в обоих случаях определяющими факторами, особенно при коротких и частых поездках из Финляндии в Россию и (в основном) из Украины в Польшу при использовании ценовых различий для налогооблагаемых товаров, таких как автомобильное топливо и сигареты. Наконец, исследование также показывает, что трансграничные покупки могут иметь прямое влияние на региональное развитие, так как заинтересованные местные/региональные акторы рассматривают розничную трансграничную торговлю как экономическое преимущество. Приток торговых туристов из России в Юго-Восточную Финляндию, несмотря на восприимчивость к изменениям геополитического характера, стал важной стратегией развития.

Торговый туризм; приграничные регионы; восточная граница ЕС; трансграничный обмен; развитие приграничных регионов

Résumé

Maciej Smętkowski, Sarolta Németh et Heikki Eskelinen

Shopping transfrontalier à la limite orientale de l'UE – le cas des régions frontalières finno-russe et polono-ukrainienne

Cet article étudie le shopping transfrontalier à travers les frontières finno-russe et polono-ukrainienne depuis la désintégration de l'Union soviétique, dans une perspective comparative. Le shopping transfrontalier peut être défini de manière différente en fonction de divers objectifs ; cette étude s'intéresse principalement aux facteurs conditionnants, aux moteurs et aux formes de cette activité ainsi qu'à son volume et ses tendances afin de comprendre ses implications dans les interactions transfrontalières et le développement régional. On observe que les achats transfrontaliers représentent une partie importante de la mobilité dans son ensemble et qu'ils se caractérisent par des fluctuations comparables à travers les deux frontières étudiées, alors que chaque cas présente également certaines caractéristiques spécifiques. Un aspect commun réside dans le fait que, durant les premières années après le changement de régime, des activités économiques informelles de diverses formes ont joué un rôle majeur dans les passages aux frontières de ces deux régions. Depuis lors, le tourisme de shopping transfrontalier ordinaire, soutenu par l'attrait du pays voisin en tant que destination de voyage et de loisirs, a gagné en importance dans l'afflux des Russes en Finlande, alors que la plupart des visites d'achat des Ukrainiens vers la Pologne restaient liées à la revente dans un but lucratif. De plus, les variations des taux de change découlant des retournements géopolitiques et des cycles économiques se sont révélées être des facteurs dans les deux cas, *en particulier* en tant que conditions pour effectuer des voyages courts et fréquents de la Finlande vers la Russie et (surtout) de l'Ukraine vers la Pologne, afin de profiter des différences de prix des produits soumis à des impôts indirects, comme le carburant et les cigarettes. Enfin, l'étude montre également que le shopping transfrontalier peut avoir des conséquences directes sur le développement régional, puisque les acteurs politiques locaux et régionaux peuvent le considérer comme un atout : l'attraction des touristes au shopping de la Russie est devenue une stratégie de développement clé en Finlande du sud-est, en dépit de la vulnérabilité aux changements de conditions géopolitiques.

Tourisme de shopping; régions frontalières; frontière orientale de l'UE; interactions transfrontalières; développement des régions frontalières