

PLACE IMAGE FORMATION AND CROSS-BORDER SHOPPING: GERMAN SHOPPERS IN THE POLISH BAZAAR IN SŁUBICE

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Received: July 2016; accepted June 2017

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on differences in place image formation between cross-border shoppers who visit the bazaar in the Polish part of the border-crossing town of Frankfurt–Oder/Słubice. By examining the German–Polish border context and the historical and regional particularities of this shopping destination, our qualitative analysis reveals differences in place image formation between two groups of German border crossers: locals from Frankfurt–Oder and visitors from other parts of the borderland. It turns out that the locals regarded the border-crossing town as part of daily life and had lost interest in the bazaar, while cross-border shoppers from further afield visited the bazaar regularly, were motivated by leisure, and assessed the bazaar more positively. These differences in place image formation between the two groups resulted from differences in mind-set and motivation, influencing not only the knowledge and experiences of the border crossers, but also the likelihood of visiting this specific shopping destination again.

Key words: Place image formation, cross-border shopping, shopping tourism, Polish bazaar, German-Polish borderland, qualitative study

INTRODUCTION

With the opening of the internal borders of the European Union, EU citizens were able to move more widely and engage freely in cross-border practices. As a result, not only mobilities changed, but some places near borders transformed from crossing points into tourist destinations (Timothy *et al.* 2014). One of these places is Słubice with its bazaar on the Polish side of the border-crossing town of Frankfurt–Oder and Słubice. Following the fall of the Berlin wall and the subsequent reunification of East and West Germany in 1990, the bazaar became a well-known shopping destination for German

shoppers from both Frankfurt–Oder and further afield.

In addition to being a functional endeavour, shopping has increasingly been recognised as a leisure activity, not only in the home country but also abroad (Timothy & Butler 1995; Dimitrovic & Vida 2007; Sullivan *et al.* 2012; Spierings & van der Velde 2013; Makkonen 2015). Like tourism shopping (Tosun *et al.* 2007; Murphy *et al.* 2011), cross-border shopping involves leisure activities and touristic experiences in another country. Cross-border shoppers usually live in relative geographical proximity from a shopping destination, making day-trips possible. Some may even live within walking distance, as is the case for people living

in the border-crossing town of Frankfurt–Oder and Ślubice (see for instance Dołzbłasz & Raczyk 2012). When shopping across a state border, people often expect to enter a different space. They expect to find not only unfamiliar physical surroundings and different socio-cultural encounters, but also differences in merchandise, prices and local atmosphere – particularities that often motivate people to engage in cross-border shopping (Spierings & van der Velde 2008).

These expectations contribute to place image formation, described by Crompton (1979, p. 18) as ‘the sum of beliefs and ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination’ with its physical, cultural and social attributes (Imamoğlu 2009; Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou 2015; Kim & Chen 2015). In comparison to holiday making, which often entails a longer period of stay and is less likely to be repeated frequently, place images may be different for those involved in cross-border shopping as their practices can be recurring, of variable duration and have seasonal variation (Bell & Ward 2000). Place images may also differ between shoppers who live within walking distance from a cross-border shopping destination, and shoppers who live further away. Timothy and Butler (1995), for instance, have demonstrated that the frequency of cross-border shopping practices increased with geographical proximity to the shopping destination across the state border. Although different studies in tourism recognised the visitor’s origin or place of residence to influence place images, they mostly focused on personal characteristics as nationality (Beerli & Martín 2004; Prebensen 2007; Prayag & Ryan 2011; Prayag 2012), or the distinction between domestic and international visitors (Crompton 1979; Joppe *et al.* 2001; Yuksel 2004; Falk 2013; Sharma *et al.* 2015). Little research has specifically focused on differences in place image formation between border crossers who live in the borderland and are involved in cross-border shopping tourism.

Therefore, in this study, we will differentiate between two groups of German border crossers who visit the Polish bazaar in Ślubice on day-trips, namely locals from Frankfurt–Oder, and shoppers who live further away

from the town in the borderland. We aim to enrich the debate on shopping tourism in relation to place image formation by examining the place images of these two groups concerning the Polish bazaar, a shopping destination that is geographically close to but in one way or another different from home and situated across the state border. We examine the following research question: how do these two groups of border crossers perceive and assess the differences and similarities they find in the Polish bazaar in Ślubice, and how does it influence their place images and attraction of the shopping destination? Differences in mind-set and motivation among the shopping tourists seem to play an important role for their place image formation, and subsequently for the attractiveness of the shopping destination.

PLACE IMAGE FORMATION IN A BORDER CONTEXT

Place image formation is a well-known concept in tourism research, often used in understanding tourist behaviour (see Tasci & Gartner 2007 for an overview). Many studies focused on the cognitive–affective nature of place image formation with the cognitive component covering knowledge and beliefs about a destination, and the affective one indicating feelings towards a destination (Baloglu & McCleary 1999; Beerli & Martín 2004; San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque 2008). Lately, a conative component has been added in understanding place images, referring to the purpose or likelihood of visiting a specific destination (Pike & Ryan 2004; Tasci & Gartner 2007; Kim & Chen 2015; Stylos *et al.* 2016). Following this approach, different factors are identified to influence place image formation. Knowledge, experiences, and mind-set and motivations related to the purpose of visiting stand out, in particular (Gartner 1993; Baloglu & McCleary 1999; Beerli & Martín 2004; Prayag & Ryan 2011; Kim & Chen 2015).

First of all, knowledge about a shopping destination involves various information sources, which can be categorised as organic, induced or autonomous image formation

agents (MacKay & Fesenmaier 1997; Tasci & Gartner 2007). Whereas induced images result from marketing efforts by tourist organisations and travel agencies, organic and autonomous information sources are influenced by personal selections and perceptions. Autonomous image formation agents include, for instance, newspapers, educational materials, films and popular culture and are largely out of a destination's direct control. Related to the organic image formation agents are non-commercial sources of information, which result from perceptions of otherness and personal experiences at a specific place. Perceptions of otherness are particularly important as place images are not necessarily neutral, but often include meanings that are widely accepted due to the strength of particular representations (Dunn 2006). Although these representations may be facts, personal or common assumptions or stereotypes are often as important when making sense of otherness and give meaning to perceived differences and similarities (Brislin 1999). In a cross-border context, these beliefs may be strongly related to the history of the state border and the borderland in people's minds. Strüver (2005), for instance, found that history-based perceptions can create very sticky but also powerful images, often stereotypical, of both the self and the other, and the 'here' and the 'there', even if cross-border practices take place on a daily or regular basis. These place images can create expectations that may be either quite misguided or quite accurate, but most of all they influence people's perceptions of otherness (Moscovici 1988).

Experiences at a shopping destination develop through encounters with differences where different socio-cultural backgrounds, for instance, language and customs, and physical surroundings, such as different squares, streets, shops, restaurants and bars, are likely to become part of the shopping experience. These notions of the social and physical environment are related to the historical and regional particularities of a destination (Imamoğlu 2009; Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou 2015; Kim & Chen 2015). Here, the history of the borderland and the particular border policies, such as customs

regulations and document requirements, play a role in the assessment of a shopping destination, and the degree of cross-border mobility (Anderson & O'Dowd 1999). A pleasant drive and no visa control at the state border will most likely contribute to a more positive assessment of a shopping destination than long queues at the border crossing and extensive customs regulations (Wang 2004).

Furthermore, people's experiences can be influenced by frequency and previous visits. Feelings of familiarity or unfamiliarity concerning a shopping destination may come to the surface when a visit to a particular destination is repeated. More specifically, repeat visitors, 'tend to develop attachment to specific activities, areas, people, and destinations' (Prayag & Ryan 2011, p. 139). They are 'through past experiences [...] it might be assumed that their thoughts about places become more sophisticated, and their reaction to proffered advertising more critical' (Ooi in Prentice 2004, p. 926). Repetition of a visit does not necessarily mean replication, as every visit can be different as a result of people's company, the presence of other visitors, and social and cultural interactions with locals (Ryan 2012). Ward *et al.* (2001, p. 87), for instance, argue that the presence of co-nationals – that is, other visitors from the home country – 'can be harmful or helpful [for the experience of a place], depending on the nature of individual supporters and their group dynamics'. Co-nationals can contribute to some feelings of familiarity at a shopping destination, but also create feelings of annoyance when the main purpose of a visit is to engage in cross-border differences without being confronted with people from the home country (see also Pearce 2005).

In considering purpose or likelihood of visiting a specific shopping destination, socio-demographic characteristics, such as place of residence, and psychological characteristics, concerning for instance mind-set and motivation, should also be taken into account (Gartner 1993; Baloglu & McCleary 1999; Beerli & Martín 2004; Kim & Chen 2015). When it comes to motivation, a distinction is often made between functional and leisure shopping. A person who visits a shopping destination to purchase specific goods has a

different mind-set and motivation compared to a person who visits the destination purely for leisure (San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque 2008; Szytniewski & Spierings 2014; Sharma *et al.* 2015). While many authors associate shopping across the state border with a functional purpose (Piron 2002; Dmitrovic & Vida 2007; Sharma *et al.* 2015), Timothy and Butler (1995) argue that people engaged in cross-border shopping can also be motivated by leisure motivations. Moreover, according to Timothy and Butler (1995), people who live in close proximity to a state border cross the border more frequently for shopping purposes than people living further afield. Visit frequency combined with travel distance seems to play a role in the way a destination is assessed. In fact, previous research on place image formation in relation to place of residence shows that domestic tourists are more critical of a destination than international visitors (Crompton 1979; Joppe *et al.* 2001; Yuksel 2004; Sharma *et al.* 2015). It must be noted though that the accumulation of knowledge and past experiences may shape new expectations and perceptions, contributing to new evaluations of a destination (Imamoğlu 2009; Ryan 2012; Kim & Chen 2015).

METHODOLOGY

Our research site was the large bazaar in the Polish part of the border-crossing town of Frankfurt–Oder and Ślubice. Frankfurt–Oder and Ślubice comprise a border-crossing town that resulted from the redrawing of the Polish state borders after the Second World War. The two parts of the town are on opposite sides of the Oder river, which is now the state border between Germany and Poland. The German part includes the former city centre and has approximately 62,600 residents; the Polish part, which was formerly known as Dammvorstadt, has almost 20,000 residents (Stadtverwaltung Frankfurt (Oder) 2013). The physical environment of the town is characterised by its common past: the town bridge and the pre-war ‘German’ architecture in Ślubice. Although the post-war state border led to substantial resettlement and

new communities on both sides of the Oder, over the years, border restrictions and policies changed and a lively border crossing tradition developed between the two parts of the town (Szytniewski 2015).

From the start, the bazaar became a well-known shopping destination for German shoppers living in the borderland. The first stalls appeared on the streets of Ślubice in 1990, but the municipality soon decided to move the traders out of the city centre to an open field approximately two kilometres from the Frankfurt–Oder/Ślubice bridge (Figure 1). This field is the current location of the bazaar, which now has 1,200 permanent stalls selling clothing, footwear, fresh food, cigarettes and alcohol. There are also various food and beverage outlets and a few hairdressers. The Polish market vendors interact and trade in German and one can pay with euros, even though the zloty is Poland’s official currency. Following a destructive fire in 2007, the bazaar was transformed from a semi-provisional market into a permanent shopping area with brand-new stalls. Despite its changed appearance, the bazaar can still be described as an open market with covered structures (Sik & Wallace 1999). Shoppers from various parts of Germany visit the bazaar on day-trips. They come not only from Frankfurt–Oder, which is just across the state border, or Berlin, about 100 kilometres away, and the Brandenburg region, but judging by the car number plates we saw, also from Hanover and even Bremen, which are over 300 kilometres away.

After an initial rise in the early 1990s as a result of changes in border policies, cross-border shopping declined somewhat but continued to be a part of the everyday in the German-Polish borderland, with Polish towns along the state border remaining attractive for the foreign visitor (Baláž & Williams 2005; Więckowski 2010; Szytniewski 2015). According to the most recent report by the Central Statistical Office Poland (2016) on cross-border mobility between Poland and its neighbouring countries, the state border between Germany and Poland consisted of the highest number of border crossings into Poland in 2015. Although there is no specific customer data about the bazaar, 64 per cent

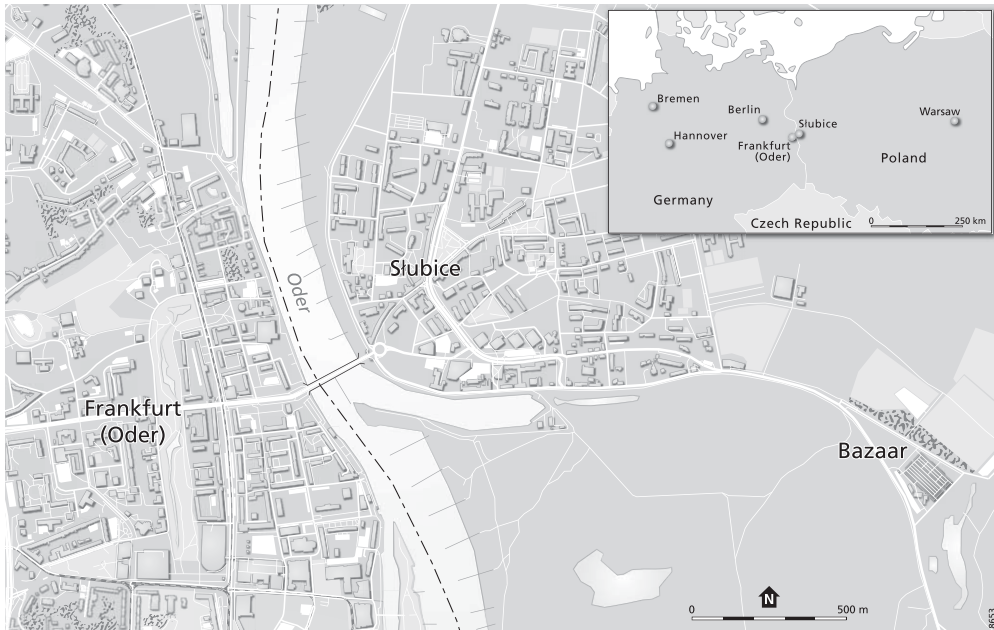


Figure 1. Map of Frankfurt–Oder and Stubice.

of the border crossings made by German nationals were related to shopping. The largest groups of cross-border shoppers consisted of German border crossers visiting a shopping destination in Poland within a range of 30 kilometres from their place of residence. Most interestingly, there is a drop in cross-border mobility for those living between 50 and 100 kilometres from the shopping destination, followed by an increase in the number of visitors living further than 100 kilometres. Although this may confirm the earlier mentioned observation of car number plates from Berlin and further, it must be noted that these numbers on cross-border mobility do not mention the bazaar in Stubice independently but cover the whole German-Polish borderland.

The data collection took place in September 2012 in the form of in-depth interviews. We chose qualitative research methods as we were interested in the individual processes of place image formation of the shopping tourists, and their perceived differences and similarities concerning the bazaar. Prior to the in-depth interviews, in which the border crossers elaborated on their experiences and perceptions of

otherness, we held an explorative survey among forty customers at the car park to get an overview of the motivations and sources of information, and to use it as an additional input for the interviews. Our interview partners were German visitors to the bazaar, who we approached on a next-to-pass basis at various places in and near the bazaar, on different days of the week and at different times of the day. We selected respondents who had visited or were visiting the bazaar, and paid attention to ensuring variety in gender, age and place of residence. Open-ended questions were asked about how people assessed their current and past shopping practices in the bazaar, their knowledge about the town and the bazaar, and the extent to which they experienced differences and similarities across the state border. In total, 18 in-depth interviews were conducted with German nationals, whose ages ranged from 24 to 88 years. Although almost all interviewees had visited the bazaar before, three interviews included first-time visitors, who were part of a larger party visiting the market.

Fourteen of the 18 interviews took place along the Oder river (seven on the Polish

side of the town and seven on the German side). Four interviews were held in the bazaar itself. As a result of this approach, the social and physical environment of the bazaar and its surroundings became an engaged part of the described practices and encounters. For instance, respondents referred to other customers in the bazaar, purchases they had just made, their walk to or from the bazaar, the green patch along the Oder or the 'German' pre-war architecture in Słubice.

All interviews were fully transcribed and coded thematically by using multiple rounds of open and axial coding, breaking down, comparing and categorising data (Corbin & Strauss 2008). A number of themes related to place image formation emerged during this process; such as, perceived differences and similarities across the state border, the distinction between daily life and a day out in the bazaar, the role of sticky stereotypes and the presence of others as part of cross-border shopping practices. Two groups of visitors were taken into account in our analysis: locals from Frankfurt–Oder and visitors from further away, in particular Berlin and other parts of the borderland. Eight interview partners were part of the first group and 10 were part of the second one. All quotations taken from the interviews have been translated from German into English.

PLACE IMAGE FORMATION AND CROSS-BORDER SHOPPING TOURISM IN THE POLISH BAZAAR

Borders and differences – According to many respondents, the Słubice bazaar is well-known in the German–Polish borderland and beyond. From its start in the 1990s, information about the bazaar mostly spread through word-of-mouth among friends and family, and media in Germany. Even now, it continues to attract first-time visitors, not only because of the low prices and what is on offer, but also because it is regarded as an interesting place to explore and spend some time in. One local, for instance, explained how people know the bazaar and why they visit it:

... simply to have a look how it is. People know it. It is an institution, the *Polenmarkt*, it is that ... well the *Polenmarkt* ... you know what you can find there and that it is cheaper ... (male, 22 years, Frankfurt–Oder).

The particularities of the location of the bazaar in Słubice influenced the cross-border shopping experience of the border crossers. Although the bazaar is in the Polish part of the border-crossing town, not all German shoppers immediately feel that they are 'abroad' or that their expectations of entering a different space are immediately confirmed. Remnants of German architecture in Słubice are part of the physical surroundings and contribute to maintaining the knowledge that Słubice used to be a German suburb. Many visitors who live in Frankfurt–Oder and those who come by train cross the bridge on foot, walk along the river and pass these former German buildings. Sudden confrontations with differences pinpoint otherness and produce a sense of being abroad:

When you don't know that there is a border, then you probably would not have noticed it. Well, like every other bridge ... [old bus, probably from the 1970s, passes by] ... so when I walk here I think that I am still in Germany. If only the bus had not passed ... we don't see such buses in Germany. No ... That's again Poland, and not Germany (male, 24 years, Brandenburg, walking to the bazaar).

Many Germans who visit the bazaar do not visit other parts of Słubice, nor do they stop in Frankfurt–Oder. In contrast to the bazaar, the town itself is often regarded as less appealing and not exotic or different enough. The bazaar is especially attractive because of perceived differences compared to shopping premises in Germany:

There is no such market in Germany. We only have shopping centres. American-like ... (male, approx. 60 years, Berlin, walking from the bazaar).

Differences in merchandise, interactions and atmosphere are especially appreciated and contribute to the attractiveness of the bazaar as a shopping destination. For instance, many German customers still remember the former

'traditional' characteristics of the first market back in the 1990s and relate their past experiences and knowledge to their perceptions of today's bazaar. In particular, the semi-organised and somewhat provisional market stalls of the old days and the more authentic market atmosphere evoke good memories. Past features of the bazaar, which are also present these days in the form of less commercialised goods and small stalls, are still reasons for visiting the bazaar. However, for some, recent infrastructural changes after the destructive fire of 2007 are too much of a change, making the bazaar less attractive. A visitor from Berlin reflected on the newly built market structures:

[the market] becomes too commercial. There is no fun to it anymore (male, approx. 50 years, Berlin, in the bazaar).

Thus, as the border wears off and shopping facilities in Germany and Poland become more alike, differences between 'home' and 'away' are slowly disappearing too. At the same time, however, previously noticed social, cultural and physical attributes and differences are still appreciated and remain part of the motivations to visit the bazaar.

Sticky stereotypes – Historical perceptions of otherness also continue to play a role in the assessment of the bazaar as a place where one can buy goods for a cheaper price and these prices can be negotiated. For several interview partners, the assumption that people are more open in Poland raised the expectation that one can bargain in the bazaar. This was particularly mentioned by visitors who lived further away from the market:

The behaviour is different ... for example, that you can bargain at the *Polenmarkt*. That's not possible in Germany at all (male, 24 years, Brandenburg, walking to the bazaar).

The belief that prices can be negotiated in the bazaar is assessed as a positive socio-cultural difference between markets at home and the Polish bazaar, giving pleasure when a negotiation is successful and disappointment when an attempt fails. Regardless of how market vendors react to bargaining, the

belief that one can bargain in the bazaar is part of the attraction of cross-border shopping and could even be seen as an incentive for more cross-border shopping tourism.

Even though most German interviewees had been crossing the German–Polish state border since the early 1990s and were aware of the economic development in Poland and the country's accession to the European Union and the Schengen zone, perceptions of Poland as a country with a lower living standard still persist. As a consequence, German customers often seemed surprised to see that price differences between Germany and Poland were becoming smaller.

Some stereotypical characterisations of Poland and Polish people as underdeveloped were also noted by the respondent who spotted an old bus passing by during the interview and connected it to his feelings of being abroad:

The Eastern bloc. The future has not yet arrived here. They still live in the 19th century here (male, 24 years, Brandenburg, walking to the bazaar).

Another 'sticky' image related to the perceived lower living standard is found among both groups of Germans, reflecting a higher level of criminality on the Polish side of the border, car theft in particular:

There is lots of smuggling going on, that is, cars are being stolen. There is no [border] control ... Criminality is being encouraged as a result of this openness [of the state border] (male, retired, Frankfurt–Oder).

They don't have anything, right? In the past, it was said that much was stolen. It probably still is, but, well, most of it goes further, to Russia ... (male, retired, Berlin, walking to the bazaar).

These perceptions about Poland and Polish people illustrate that 'pre-existing stereotypes are not dismantled by actual experiences, but instead serve as standards against which the visited culture is evaluated' (Andsager & Drzewiecka 2002, p. 403). Related to this, some locals also mentioned a distance in the social and cultural backgrounds between Germans and Poles, which has not

disappeared despite the border liberalisation in Central and Eastern Europe. When discussing cross-border differences, one respondent said that:

the border, it is always there. We are too different, one can say the difference is too big – the language barrier, in general the social structures, they are too different from one another ... we are at a different level (male, approx. 40 years, Frankfurt–Oder).

Following Strüver (2005), pre-existing stereotypes can be quite ‘sticky’ and influence people’s place images. They are most often used to grasp and explain perceived differences and similarities at a shopping destination, without wondering whether or not they are true. Some stereotypes with regard to, for instance, opportunities for bargaining and cheaper prices as part of a lower living standard were part of the attractiveness of the bazaar and its positive assessment. In particular for cross-border shoppers from further afield, stereotypes did not necessarily prevent them from engaging in cross-border shopping, on the contrary. As such, ‘sticky’ stereotypes related to cross-border differences may be considered as either appealing, or unappealing and a motive for cross-border shopping, or unappealing and a motive for cross-border immobility. This reflects the mind-set of a leisurely day out among the shoppers from further afield and the mind-set of the everyday among the locals, respectively, which will be discussed further on.

Seeing different others – Experiences as part of place image formation were in this case study further formed through the presence of other visitors, and the social and cultural interactions with locals. Both groups of shopping tourists were well aware of different others. When reflecting on actual interactions and shopping practices in Słubice, both groups of German respondents reported experiencing encounters with Polish locals in town and in the bazaar as pleasant, and recognised positive differences in mentality. In comparison to people in Germany, Poles were regarded as less hectic and tense, making time for each other and their daily practices. However, the way these perceived

differences and similarities between Germany and Poland are assessed also depends on the frame of reference taken. From both groups, some people mentioned, for instance, that the market vendors were a bit pushy, while others compared their encounters in the bazaar to other comparable intercultural encounters and evaluated the Polish market vendors as not pushy at all:

but when you go to Italy for example or somewhere else, they nearly knock you over. Very bad. That’s okay here ... (male, 53 years, Bad Sachsa, bazaar car park).

In addition, German respondents also reflected on the fellow shoppers with whom they shared their shopping experience in the bazaar. They were mostly aware of other German shoppers at the market, but instead of associating themselves with this familiar other, they mostly tried to disassociate and distance themselves from other German shoppers. They were, for instance, perceived as cross-border discount hunters:

of course you have those like my neighbour. He has been here a few times, drives here often only for cigarettes eh ... he comes here, parks and gets his cigarettes and ... he is gone (male, approx. 40 years, Berlin, in the bazaar).

Both locals and those from further away regarded other German customers as poorer individuals who needed to cross the state border to meet their basic needs. Therefore, these familiar but different others were sometimes regarded as people they did not need to meet:

The Polenmarkt is actually for people that do not have much ... our socially weaker class in society (male, approx. 40 years old, Frankfurt–Oder).

Well, sometimes you also meet people, who you not necessarily need to meet. You can see them from afar, when they get out of the bus ... who knows, where those people come from. That’s how it is ... (male, retired, Berlin, walking to the bazaar).

Shoppers reflected on the presence of co-nationals to explain their experiences and

practices at the market. This distinction was mostly made by shoppers from further afield who considered shopping at the bazaar as a leisurely day out and buying something for a cheaper price as a secondary motivation. Their assumptions about other people's motives reduced to some extent people's positive experiences of the bazaar as an escape of the everyday and brought to the attention that other visitors may regard the bazaar only as a place where goods can be bought for a cheaper price.

Daily life or a day out in the bazaar – Previous research has shown that place images vary with geographical proximity. As distance increases, the image of a place becomes more positive (Crompton 1979; Joppe *et al.* 2001; Yüksel 2004). This also proved to be the case for our analysis of the bazaar in Słubice. While both groups were relatively familiar with the bazaar as a result of previous visits, the bazaar as a cross-border shopping destination was assessed more positively by those visiting from further away than locals from Frankfurt–Oder. Differences in mind-set and motivation play a role here.

Locals from Frankfurt–Oder have become familiar with the bazaar mostly through past cross-border shopping practices. They had gradually lost interest in the bazaar as they got accustomed to the Polish market vendors, the shopping facilities and the merchandise. They no longer expected to find something new or different in the bazaar, and therefore visited the bazaar only occasionally. This confirms the argument of Baláz and Williams (2005) that the feelings of novelty and curiosity that accompanied border liberalisation in Central and Eastern Europe since the 1990s have diminished over time. As one local put it:

It's actually all junk ... In the past, I have been there on occasion. But, well, I do not need to go there ... at first it was out of curiosity ... (male, approx. 40 years old, Frankfurt–Oder).

Having become familiar with the bazaar, the locals felt that they got to know everything about the bazaar and no longer needed to visit it. MacKay and Fesenmaier (1997, p.

542) call this over-familiarity, where 'at a certain point, familiarity becomes less attractive' and results in inattention or even estrangement. Such over-familiarity is found with regard to not only the bazaar, but also Słubice. For locals from Frankfurt–Oder, the bazaar, its surroundings and its visitors have become a normal part of their daily lives:

[while things] look different ... but that's only at first sight. A second look reveals everything ... when one looks behind the curtains, one sees that everything is the same, all the same ... (male, retired, Frankfurt–Oder, walking from the bazaar).

However, as a result of the many shopping tourists passing through the city centre on a daily basis, locals were continuously reminded of the popularity of the bazaar. Although they recognised the bazaar as an attractive shopping destination for others, they themselves did not consider it attractive:

People from Frankfurt–Oder no longer go there often. Well, because it is normal. However, those who do visit, are the day-trippers, arriving on buses ... many tourists ... for them it is something special (female, 88 years, Frankfurt–Oder).

Most cross-border shoppers who lived further away from the market experienced a visit to the bazaar as a leisurely day out, even though the majority were return visitors who visited the bazaar on a regular basis. They perceived it as something different from the everyday. When asked about their motives for visiting, one of them replied:

shopping, cigarettes, browsing and rummaging ... we are on a day out with the girls, we've left our men at home (female, approx. 50 years, Brandenburg, in the bazaar).

Whether people regard visiting the bazaar as a day out or as part of daily life appears to play an important role in their place image formation. Although both groups of respondents visited the bazaar, their perceptions were related to different mind-sets and motivations. The interviews illustrated that shoppers living further away from the bazaar developed new expectations and perceptions as a result of regular cross-border shopping

practices. As opposed to locals, their perceptions of otherness seemed less fixed and they kept on changing with every visit. Previously obtained knowledge and active experiences following a leisurely day out, contributed to new evaluations of a destination, which has also been recognised by Ryan (2012), and are in this study part of the reasons to visit the bazaar again.

Moreover, people living further away from the bazaar perceived and remembered the bazaar more vividly, by noticing and reflecting on particularities of the shopping destination. The following visitor from Berlin, for instance, seemed to have considered the organisation of the stalls in the bazaar in detail:

and then the shops repeat themselves. Every few metres ... the same. It may then lead to the impression that they all somehow work together ... and that they only spread themselves a little bit just to make more profit (male, approx. 40 years, Berlin, in the bazaar).

Resulting from their mind-set of the everyday, locals from Frankfurt–Oder, however, not only seemed to perceive fewer details and speak in more general terms about their experiences in the bazaar, they were also more critical about the bazaar and the shopping facilities in Ślubice than people who came from further away. There appeared to be a degree of disinterest among the locals when it came to renewing cross-border interactions. They seemed not to feel much affinity with what was going on in Ślubice, which prevented them from seeking new experiences in either the bazaar or Ślubice. They felt content in their own part of the town, as that was where they had both their professional and their private lives.

CONCLUSION

In our study on place image formation, we have focused on border crossers who were engaged in cross-border shopping in the Polish bazaar in the German–Polish border-crossing town of Frankfurt–Oder and Ślubice. Whereas previous research found differences in place image formation as a

result of nationality (Beerli & Martín 2004; Prebensen 2007; Prayag & Ryan 2011; Prayag 2012;), and a distinction between domestic and international visitors (Crompton 1979; Joppe *et al.* 2001; Yuksel 2004; Falk 2013; Sharma *et al.* 2015), we found differences in place image formation between two groups of border crossers: locals living in Frankfurt–Oder and visitors from other parts of the borderland. Following the debate on the cognitive, affective and conative nature of place image formation, we identified knowledge, experiences, and mind-set and motivation, respectively, as factors to influence the way border crossers perceive and assess differences and similarities at a shopping destination across the state border (Baloglu & McCleary 1999; Beerli & Martín 2004; Prayag & Ryan 2011; Kim & Chen 2015).

Our study revealed similarities in the knowledge and experiences concerning the bazaar between locals from Frankfurt–Oder and those from other parts of the borderland. The shopping destination at this specific border-crossing town was strongly influenced by the historical and regional particularities of the borderland. For both groups of shoppers, feelings of being somewhere different, or abroad, appeared gradually due to the pre-war ‘German’ architecture, giving an impression of a German town at first sight. Another similarity was found in the assessment of others in the bazaar. Both groups reflected positively on interactions with locals, while referring to other German shoppers as people they did not need to meet, associating them as poorer individuals from a socially weaker class. We also found that some of the earlier established perceptions towards otherness still remained among both locals and visitors from further afield. In particular, those related to the historical division between east and west Europe were often used to make sense of the differences and similarities found in Ślubice and the bazaar. Stereotypes, such as opportunities for bargaining and cheaper prices as part of the perception of Poland as a country with a lower living standard, appeared quite ‘sticky’, but did not

necessarily influence people from engaging in cross-border shopping.

What influenced the differences in place image formation and the subsequent attractiveness of bazaar the most, appeared in the mind-set and motivation between the two groups of border crossers. Whether people considered a visit to the bazaar as part of everyday life or a leisurely day out turned out to be the most important factor. Different from earlier research that associated cross-border shopping with a functional purpose (Piron 2002; Dmitrovic & Vida 2007; Sharma *et al.* 2015), our study shows that leisure motivations were important drivers for visiting the bazaar. Cross-border shoppers from further afield, in particular, were motivated by leisure and assessed the bazaar more positively, whereas locals from Frankfurt–Oder had lost interest as a result of functional shopping motivations and feelings of over-familiarity. Living at walking distance to the shopping destination implied that the bazaar was perceived as part of the everyday life as opposed to providing opportunities for a leisurely day out. Moreover, we derived that people who lived within walking distance from the bazaar were not necessarily the ones who regularly engaged in cross-border shopping. The frequent visitors were found among the border crossers from other parts of the borderland. Contrary to the findings of Butler and Timothy (1995), in our study, the frequency of cross-border shopping practices increased with more geographical distance.

Following Ryan (2012) on the relationship between experiences and expectations, we found that as a result of new experiences, the place images of the shopping tourists from further afield not only became more sophisticated, but also contributed to new expectations of the bazaar. This group seemed to be more positive and interested in the specific social and physical environment of the shopping destination, such as shopping facilities, merchandise and atmosphere. This mind-set and motivation related to a leisurely day out instead of part of the daily life influenced not only the likelihood of visiting this specific shopping destination again, but also the knowledge and experiences of the

border crossers. When people's place images continue to change as a result of new experiences and encounters with differences, familiar and unfamiliar features of otherness may consciously or unconsciously come to their attention and motivate them to engage in cross-border shopping.

Following these results, which revealed novel insights on place image formation in cross-border shopping tourism, we would like to outline a few recommendations for further research. First, we need to point out that our findings provide information about the lived experiences of a group of German shopping tourists who live in the borderland. Judging by the car number plates, however, we also know that shopping tourists from other parts of Germany are visiting the bazaar. In order to further enrich our findings on cross-border shopping in the Polish bazaar, a follow-up study on shopping tourism could go beyond the borderland and include a more diverse group of day-trippers with people who live in other parts of Germany. Second, from our results we also derived that, over the years, locals living in the border-crossing town have become less engaged in cross-border shopping practices. Further research could look in more detail at motivations for cross-border immobility, with particular attention for 'indifference' towards a shopping destination that lies geographically close to but is in one way or another different from home (see also Ernste 2010). Third, historical and regional particularities of a tourist destination are of great importance in understanding place image formation and cross-border shopping practices and experiences. While our case study covers one specific European borderland, it would be worthwhile to explore the implications of these particularities in other borderlands. We would suggest a comparative analysis with the focus on cross-border shopping tourism of different types of borderlands along both the inner and the outer borders of the EU. In so doing, we can achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the role of state borders in place image formation processes and the way functional and

leisure motivations influence cross-border mobility and immobility.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO [grant number 231-50-002]) and the European Science Foundation (ESF [grant number 09-EuroCORECODE-FP-009]) for providing the financial support for the research.

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