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SHOPPING, SPACE AND BORDERS

How to understand cross-border shopping activities in the Euregio Rijn-Waal

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INTRODUCTION¹

The patterns of shopping activities have changed during the last decades. Classical patterns were based on the fact that consumers were supposed to act in a completely rational manner. Daily products were obtained at the grocery 'next door' and more expensive goods at the nearest equipped city. Rationality of consumers, nowadays, no longer means that the activities are more or less identical in comparable situations. At different times consumers are attaching different values to the same characteristics, leading to different activities. Next to this change, it is also no longer possible to talk about THE consumer. An individualising society, increasing prosperity and growing amounts of leisure time make it necessary to discriminate between (groups of) consumers. However these consumer categories again are blurred by amorphous, dynamic and flexible consumer tactics (Miller et. al.,1998).

Observing this phenomenon, means accepting that human activities with regard to shopping are by no means deterministic. On the other hand, it is possible to state that certain parts of this

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shopping activities have developed into fairly routine actions, that take place without much deliberation and preparation. Superficially it looks like this routine activities can be regarded as a response to a certain stimulus. This dilemma is also expressed in the difference between behaviour-theoretical approaches and the action-theoretical approaches.

In the light of this dilemma, this paper tries to shed some light on consumer activities in a border area especially where it concerns cross-border shopping. To achieve this goal, the paper is divided into three different parts. In the first part, next to some general remarks on cross-border activities in general and shopping activities in particular, a conceptual framework is presented with regard to the differences between the behaviour-theoretical approach and the action-theoretical approach. The second part presents some empirical results with regard to shopping activities in two border communities in the Netherlands and Germany. Especially the influence of the country border is considered. In the final part a tentative agenda is presented, concerning future research into shopping activities especially where it concerns influencing the cross-border component.

CROSS-BORDER ACTIVITIES

The present-day Europe is striving for the integration of regional and national markets into one common market, which enables a free movement of goods, services, people etc. The main reason for this effort is the supposed impulse for increasing efficiency and regional economic development. To reach this goal the European Union has implemented already a vast amount of measures, which are supposed to decrease the (objective) institutional barriers for cross-border interaction. Because of this, the objective possibilities for cross-border interaction from market actors have increased, but nevertheless are not revealed to the same extent in overt activities. Next to institutional barriers, other factors exist, which are in the way of complete integration. To improve European integration policies in an innovative manner, new fundamental insight are necessary concerning the role of these factors on cross-border activities. The assumption is that individual actors first have to change the spatial frames of observation, experience, appreciation etc. and finally their action spaces, to reach a stage of full integration.

This paper is prepared within the research program '*Borders and Interaction*'. The central goal of this program is to establish new theoretical and empirical insights into the influence of borders on starting up and maintaining of cross-border interaction and the actual level of this interaction (van Houtum, van der Velde & Boekema, 1999). Within this research program, influences of the border are divided in two broad groups. The first group can be characterised as 'objective' or (to the actor) exogenous factors, the second as 'subjective' or endogenous factors (van der Velde, 1999). The first group of factors imposes physical and institutional constraints upon the actor's cross-border activities. With regard to shopping, import regulations, but also limited (public) transport facilities and language problems can be mentioned.

The second group of factors concerns not only the value and meaning given to cross-border activities, but also the subjective perception of the differences on both sides of the border and the hindrances or opportunities because of the border. In this case past experiences and experiences with other kinds of cross-border interaction are of relevant importance.

Human Geography studies spatial activities of actors and their relationship with space. Acts and actions with a spatial component are therefore the central issue. Although individual actions are scientifically of interest, in policy practice the aggregated (effects of) human activities are crucial. Human Geography adapted itself to this by studying especially spatial patterns resulting from these aggregated activities. The models derived from these patterns were to a certain extent able to predict these patterns, but could hardly explain why these patterns came into existence. From a policy point of view these models were useful only for taking the right measures to accommodate the predicted trends. The result is a very reactive nature of the models instead of a proactive one. To formulate proactive policies a thorough knowledge of the causal processes behind individual activities is necessary.

Based on acting human beings, spatial units can be demarcated, within which actions by and large will take place. In the geographical sciences traditionally this spatial units are called 'action spaces'. Every individual has different action spaces for every act. These spaces are on the one hand reproduced through explicit intentional activities ('action spaces as an explanation for activities'), on the other hand the 'borders' of these spaces are intentionally

crossed ('action spaces as a consequence of activities'). Action spaces are therefore dynamic and it is this process of modification that is of crucial importance for the integration process.

In this paper we will try to visualise the interaction between the country border and action spaces and the influence of borders on the formation of action spaces with regard to shopping.

SHOPPING

As was stated in the introduction, major changes have occurred in shopping activities. It is by no means obvious to shop in the hometown or the nearest town suitable any longer. One of the main reasons can be found in the increased mobility of consumers. Next to this consumers have emancipated and are more demanding with regard to the shopping facilities. When other places offer cheaper and more efficient shopping or a better ambience, they will not hesitate to go there. In general one could suppose consumers prefer quick and efficient shopping when buying daily goods and other articles needed on a frequent base ('one-stop-shopping' or 'run-shopping'). Important conditions to enable this efficient shopping are facilities which cover a suitable range of products, are accessible and have good parking opportunities. Because of this need for 'one-stop-shopping', consumers have oriented themselves more and more towards the bigger towns and shopping-malls in the suburbs and periphery of these towns. With regard to the non-daily products, the consumer patronises locations which provide shops matching his lifestyle.

As a consequence of an increasing individualising society and greater amounts of spare time, shopping is more and more regarded as a leisure activity ('fun-shopping' or 'recreational shopping'). For this kind of shopping it is important to offer an agreeable atmosphere and to try and make the visit an experience. Next to an ample and diverse supply of shops, also complementary facilities, like bars, restaurants and cultural opportunities have to be present. Because the needs of consumers are different one day from the other, he or she will also choose different places to shop one day from the other. In the Euregio Rijn-Waal visiting places 'on the other side of the border' plays an important role in this activities. Earlier research from the department of Human Geography in Nijmegen shows that the German town Kleve is more important as a shopping place for the inhabitants of the Dutch city of Nijmegen, compared to the Dutch town Uden, which is comparable in size and distance (van der Velde & Vergoossen, 1996).

BEHAVIOURAL OR INTENTIONAL

The main goal of this contribution is trying to understand the differences between cross-border shopping-patterns. As was stated in the introduction both the behaviour-theoretical and the action-theoretical approach can be of assistance. In this section a brief discussion is presented on these two approaches.

The behavioural approach in its simplest (behaviouristic) form supposes a very mechanistic, deterministic behaviour from consumers. A stimulus from the environment provokes a response from the actor (fig. 1).

When looking upon reality from a behaviouristic point of view, all actors are reacting upon changes in the same way. Depending on a very rationalistic deliberation concerning this change and other possibilities they will act upon this new opportunity.

This point of view is very much based on perfect knowledge of consumers. Off course knowledge is not perfect. Depending on age, family circumstances, social status, gender etc. the level of knowledge and the knowledge itself may vary. This may lead to different responses on the same stimulus. As a response from the behavioural scientists, the simple extremely deterministic models have been elaborated, to include also for instance cognition and perception-factors (fig. 2). Consumers in this case are not reacting merely on objectively observable (changes in) structures, but perceive and interpret the structures and act accordingly. Still these models are of stimulus-response character. The initial cause of (changes in) behaviour is to be found outside the responding agent. In the case importance is given to perception, the outcome of this initial stimulus may differ however between agents

The objective aspects of the physical world are detected through a filter, leading to different perceptions of these aspects. These filter are supposed to be more or less static, at least during a relative short period of time, and when these filters are known, essentially reaction on the external stimuli can be determined. For the sake of the argument perceptions are connected

with the objects. For different actors the same object can be perceived differently, but the same object is always perceived by the same actor in the same way and he is also reacting on this perceived stimulus in the same way. Therefore changing the behaviour of actors, needs changing the perceived aspects of the stimulus.

Next to the still more or less deterministic behavioural models, the action-oriented models discern between the act and the action of actors. An act in this respect is the outcome of an action and essentially is what behavioural scientist see as there object of study. The act is the outcome which has to be achieved by a certain action. Scientists adhering to this action-oriented approach state that in order to understand spatial patterns, action leading to this pattern should be studied. When studying these action, immediately the actor comes into the centre of attention (fig 3).

The physical environment in this approach then becomes a derivation of human actions. The objects which are located in space do only have a *meaning* given to them by the actor. The objects in themselves do not have any meaning. The main difference between this meaning and the perception as used by behaviouralists, is that the meaning given to objects is a dynamic and active concept, which can change when the stock of knowledge and the frames of reference of the actor, that gives a meaning, is changing. As stated earlier, the perception of objects can only be changed when certain perceived aspects of the object are changed and therefore is basically a static and passive concept. This change may refer to 'real' changes to the object, like improvements of parking facilities of shopping centres, or 'virtual' changes by for instance information campaigns. The term perception is also used in the action-theoretical approach, but in this case, not only indicates the filtered knowledge of an object, but it includes at the same time the meaning given to it by the actor.

A second important notion in the action-oriented approach is the notion of *intention*. With this concept is indicated, that human activities are (or at least has been) based on deliberated choices in how to achieve a goal, in other words which actions should be taken. In essence this notion means that actors are free to choose between different options. Off course a lot of actions have become very routine actions, which means actors do no longer make these

deliberate choices but take action, based on passed experiences. Still one could speak of intended action, because the first time this action is undertaken, a choice has to be made.

A final important notion in this respect is the one of *unintended consequences*. These are consequences of intended activities of actors, which could not be foreseen in advance. These unintended consequences tend to blur the study into the intention of actions. Traffic jams for instance are the unintended consequences of the intended action of masses of commuters to go to their work as fast and comfortable as possible.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In explaining the spatial patterns of shopping activities, several approaches and models can be used. To name but a few: a Christallerian approach, gravity models, models concerning human behaviour, like rational choice models etc.

In order to compare all these approaches in their applicability, a simple framework is proposed (fig. 4). The columns of the framework consist of the two distinguished approaches in studying human activities, viz. a behavioural-theoretical and an action-theoretical approach. As stated in the previous section, when viewed upon as caricatures, the first approach can be characterised as more or less deterministic and behaviour of the actor and/or changes in the societal and spatial structure are purely induced by (perceived) external stimuli. The action-oriented approach on the other hand assumes activities to be reflective and intentional.

| | Behavioural-theoretical | Action-theoretical | <i>Notions</i> |
|------------------|--|---|--|
| Agency | | | Aggregate activities; Typologies |
| Structure | | | Societal and spatial structures; Norms and values |
| <i>Notions</i> | Stimulus-response; Deterministic; Perception | Intentional; Voluntaristic; Meaning | |

Figure 4: A conceptual framework

The rows in this framework consist of two possible points of departure (e.g. for influencing cross-border interaction), or variables considered as independent, viz. the agent and the structure. Again considered as caricatures, the first starting point supposes the agent or actor is capable of adjusting the societal and spatial structures, or put differently the structure is reacting upon the agent. In the second approach, the agents is adjusting its behaviour towards the societal and spatial structures. Changes in these structures are answered by changing (spatial) behaviour of the actor.

Off course the resulting four quadrants are not able to exclusively accommodate all the models and approaches used for describing shopping activities. Many of them are amalgamations between two or more approaches and should be positioned at the dividing lines between the quadrants.

In the final part of this paper this scheme will be used for a tentative research agenda. A crucial role then is awarded to the research-questions which should be raised, in order to understand the spatial patterns, especially concerning the cross-border interaction.

Behavioural approach

From the previous section comes, that, when adopting a behavioural approach, the essence of human activities can be traced back to a stimulus-response model. In its most simple form it can be characterised as behaviouristic. To understand the (changing) patterns of shopping-activities, it is sufficient to trace (changes in) the shopping-structure. Consumers are reacting upon (the changes in) the structure of the shopping-facilities. Shopping is done where it is most suitable and when shops become available which are considered to be more suitable (e.g. nearer, cheaper, higher quality), they will be used automatically.

The other way round it is also possible to look upon the structure as reacting in a 'deterministic' way upon changing consumer preferences. Consumers are changing their patterns of shopping-activities, for instance by increasing the amount of time dedicated to 'fun-shopping' and the various actors influencing the structure of shopping-facilities are reacting on these changes, for instance by opening, closing or relocating shops.

Action-oriented

The main notion in action-oriented approaches, as was mentioned earlier, is the intentionality and reflectivity of human actions. The starting-point in these approaches lies in determining the intentions of the agent. Intentions of agents are influenced by certain circumstances which can be found in the societal structure. In these approaches spatial structures can be viewed upon as the physical outcome of intentional actions of agents in the past, which took place in the societal structure of that time. The resulting spatial structures are part of the 'frames of reference' in which current actions of agents are taking place.

Changing notions could lead to a changing spatial organisation (e.g. edge cities), which in turn is valued by actors and acted upon accordingly, i.e. reflective and intentional. In this respect another important concept in these approaches has to be mentioned, the unintended consequence of certain actions. These consequences are the outcome of actions, which can not be related to the original intention. One example can be the shopping-malls in suburbs originally intended to serve the population of these suburbs, which are becoming major rivals for inner-cities, because of their attraction to consumers from neighbouring communities.

Consumers are changing their preferences concerning shopping, e.g. the meaning given to inner-city shopping is changing in such a way that it is viewed upon as potentially dangerous because of for instance pick-pocketing and car-jacking. This meaning could lead to an increasing intention to shop in safer places. The actors influencing shopping-structure might react by creating for instance privately-guarded out-of-town shopping-malls, this way adjusting the structure.

EMPIRICAL DATA

The empirical data in this paper are stemming from a large scale investigation into shopping and visiting patterns of the inhabitants of the municipalities of the Euregio Rijn-Waal (fig. 5).

This project was accomplished with financial support within the framework of the INTERREG II-programme (van Middendorp, van der Velde & Vergoossen, 1999a). The respondents were asked to indicate which three places were used most often for shopping.

Within the shopping-trips three motives were discerned, shopping for daily goods, purposively shopping for non-daily goods and recreational shopping. As was discussed in the introduction shopping for daily goods still is supposed to be very much localised as close as possible to the place of residence. Shopping-trips aimed at the second motive is assumed to be attracted by factors like efficiency and diversity of the shops with regard to the specific product(s) which are to be acquired. With regard to recreational shopping finally, the most important attraction factors are supposed to be provided by the composition of shopping facilities as a whole next to all sorts of other factors with regard to a city- or shopping-centre, like parking facilities, cosiness etc.

For efficiency reasons the respondents were asked to indicate the visiting frequencies for each of the three most often visited places with regard to only one of the motives. This procedure led to enough data to estimate the regional shopping-pattern in the Euregio Rijn-Waal based on mean frequencies. For this paper this procedure of using mean frequencies, however, is not satisfactory because the role of individual factors like perception of borders and life-styles based on age and family-circumstances are to be confronted with individual patterns of shopping-activities. Therefore only the number of times a certain place is mentioned is included in this paper, independent of the frequency of the visits and whether the place ranks first, second or third. This way for the aggregated inhabitants of a municipality, an approximation of an action space can be derived. Later on in this research project it is possible to disentangle this aggregate pattern into its separate parts and subsequently study behaviour and actions of the individual consumers.

In this paper only the case of Kranenburg in Germany and the municipality of Millingen aan de Rijn in the Netherlands are under investigation. The main reason to choose these two municipalities is that they are very well comparable for several indicators. Both of them are small and rural communities alongside the border, about equal in size. The distance from and accessibility of the most important places for shopping, like Kleve and Nijmegen is almost the same. Finally, the structure of the local shopping-facilities are very much alike (see also table 1). The most important distinguishing factor is the nationality. The differences in both of the local patterns probably can be attributed to the border for an important part. In both municipalities 200 respondents were included in the inquiry.

Key-indicators for the most important towns in the region

Shopping activities, whether behavioural or action-theoretical viewed upon, still are directed towards shops. The size of the shopping area, the diversity, but also quality of the shops and goods and atmosphere of the central shopping area are important dimensions. Whether a stimulus or factors which exert influence through perception and meaning upon actions, much insight in shopping activities is gained by a simple description of the main characteristics of towns as shopping places. This description is limited to the two ‘sources’ of customers and the some important ‘target’-cities which are mentioned most frequently (tab. 1 & fig. 6).

Table 1: Key-figures for the two ‘source’-municipalities and the most important ‘target’-cities

| municipality | inh. | distance from (km) | | food | | shops | | total | |
|----------------|---------|--------------------|---------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| | | Kranenb urg | Millinge n | number | sqm. | number | sqm. | number | sqm. |
| Millingen | 5.800 | - | 16 | 10 | 1.500 | 19 | 2.200 | 29 | 3.700 |
| Kranenburg | 8.500 | 16 | - | 7 | 2.000 | 18 | 2.000 | 25 | 4.000 |
| Bocholt (g) | 71.000 | 51 | 51 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Emmerich (g) | 29.300 | 20 | 21 | 54 | 13.000 | 113 | 20.000 | 167 | 33.000 |
| Goch (g) | 12.600 | 19 | 26 | 79 | 16.500 | 175 | 33.500 | 254 | 50.000 |
| Kleve (g) | 48.300 | 11 | 12 | 100 | N/A | 260 | 67.000 | 360 | N/A |
| Arnhem (n) | 135.000 | 27 | 32 | 330 | 34.000 | 820 | 201.000 | 1.150 | 235.000 |
| Bergh (n) | 18.200 | 25 | 25 | 44 | 4.800 | 75 | 18.000 | 119 | 22.800 |
| Boxmeer (n) | 28.400 | 27 | 39 | 54 | 8.800 | 133 | 28.400 | 187 | 37.200 |
| Cuijk (n) | 23.500 | 17 | 29 | 31 | 5.400 | 85 | 18.000 | 116 | 23.400 |
| Doetinchem (n) | 44.600 | 36 | 36 | 56 | 11.700 | 232 | 57.600 | 288 | 69.300 |
| Gennep (n) | 16.900 | 18 | 29 | 32 | 5.900 | 65 | 12.000 | 97 | 17.900 |
| Nijmegen (n) | 150.500 | 11 | 17 | 330 | 37.000 | 720 | 162.000 | 1.050 | 199.000 |

Source: D&P, LDS NRW, Route66

ACTION SPACES IN SHOPPING ACTIVITIES

In this section the empirical results of the large scale investigation into the shopping activities of the inhabitants of the Euregio Rijn-Waal will be used to determine the action spaces for three different kinds of shopping trips. The (supposed routine) shopping for daily goods is compared with the trips for purposeful shopping for non-daily goods and recreational shopping. The action spaces are determined by computing the part of the population which mentions a certain place as one of the three most often visited for the respective motives for shopping. In this case no distinction is made between the order of the places. The third place

counts as much as the first one mentioned. As was stated earlier the border municipalities of Millingen aan de Rijn in the Netherlands and Kranenburg in Germany serve as the case.

Shopping for daily goods

Shopping for daily goods in general can be characterised as being of a routine nature. Once a decision is made, where to go for these goods, this pattern probably is very persistent, even when changes in the structure occur. The general pattern for shopping for daily goods is rather concentrated. For Millingen as well as Kranenburg, besides the municipality itself, only the neighbouring towns and the bigger cities in the direct surroundings are part of the action spaces (tab. 2).

Table 2: Municipalities mentioned as place for buying daily goods in Kranenburg and Millingen aan de Rijn

| <i>In Kranenburg</i> | <i>perc.</i> | <i>In Millingen aan de Rijn</i> | <i>perc.</i> |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Kranenburg | 70,6% | Millingen | 99,1% |
| Kleve | 69,4% | Nijmegen | 25,7% |
| Nijmegen | 8,8% | Kleve | 13,7% |
| Groesbeek | 4,3% | Groesbeek | 7,6% |
| Krefeld | 2,0% | Ubbergen | 3,9% |
| Düsseldorf | 0,7% | Eindhoven | 1,5% |
| Arnhem | 0,7% | Elst | 1,1% |
| Goch | 0,6% | Arnhem | 0,7% |
| Ubbergen | 0,6% | Gendt | 0,6% |
| Köln | 0,6% | Wijchen | 0,4% |
| Emmerich | 0,6% | Rheden | 0,4% |
| Essen | 0,6% | Wageningen | 0,3% |
| Rees | 0,4% | | |
| Gennep | 0,3% | | |
| Duisburg | 0,3% | | |
| Kalkar | 0,3% | | |
| Wesel | 0,3% | | |

Source: Questionnaire

The only exception is the city of Krefeld which plays, be it a rather small one (only 2% of the inhabitants mentioned the city), a certain role for Kranenburg. This may be explained by the fact that this city and the western part of the Ruhr-area, is also important as destination for purposeful and recreational shopping, as will appear in the next sections.

When visualising the spatial extent of the action space for the inhabitants, the figure shows again the very concentrated pattern for these kind of trips. Secondly, although the geographical

location of Kranenburg and Millingen is very much alike, a very strong orientation on the respective home country emerges.

When determining the influence of the border, first of all a distinction can be made within the two groups of respondents, with regard to whether the individual action spaces include only the Netherlands or Germany or both (tab. 3).

In the rest of this contribution these action spaces are specified as *intra-national*, where only towns are mentioned in the home country, *extra-national* when only consisting of ‘foreign’ towns and *bi-national* in the case both German and Dutch towns are indicated.

Table 3: Action spaces for daily shopping per respondent

| | Kranenburg | | Millingen | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| | hometown included (n=200) | hometown excluded (n=90) | hometown included (n=200) | hometown excluded (n=16) |
| Only in the Netherlands | 1,9% | 7,1% | 86,3% | 77,8% |
| Only in Germany | 85,9% | 84,3% | 0,4% | 22,2% |
| In both countries | 12,2% | 8,6% | 13,4% | 0,0% |

Source: Questionnaire

The table clearly shows again, shopping for daily goods is a very national activity. More than 85% of the respondents mention towns and cities in their own country only. Especially for the daily goods this pattern is strongly influenced by the fact that the shopping trips for these goods are very much locally oriented. For Kranenburg 58% (van Middendorp, van der Velde & Vergoossen, 1999c) of all trips are local and for Millingen aan de Rijn 86% even (notice that only 16 respondents mention places outside Millingen) (van Middendorp, van der Velde & Vergoossen, 1999b). When these local trips are excluded however, the pattern still has a strong national orientation.

The previous part considers the respondent individually. When the results of the individual action spaces are aggregated per municipality, a slightly different pattern appears (tab. 4).

Table 4: Nationality of the towns mentioned for daily shopping

| | Kranenburg | | Millingen | |
|--------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| | hometown included (n=324) | hometown excluded (n=182) | hometown included (n=312) | hometown excluded (n=113) |
| Dutch towns | 9,1% | 16,3% | 91,2% | 75,5% |
| German towns | 90,9% | 83,7% | 8,8% | 24,5% |

Source: Questionnaire

Of all the places mentioned by the respondents in Kranenburg and Millingen no less than 91% is located in the home country. Again this pattern off course is influenced by the strong local orientation, but even when the hometown is excluded, the home country dominates the aggregated action space. Three quarters of the shopping places mentioned by Dutch respondents are Dutch and 84% of the German answers concern German towns.

A final characteristic shows once again that the aggregated pattern for the respondents in Millingen is more concentrated than the one in Kranenburg. Besides the hometown, 11 other places are mentioned in Millingen, of which only Kleve is located in Germany. In Kranenburg 16 other places are mentioned. Five of them are Dutch, of which Nijmegen en Groesbeek are of relative importance. These five towns together however, are of less importance to the German respondents, compared to Kleve for the respondents in Millingen (see also table 2).

The first conclusion from this analysis is that, even regarding that the patterns are very locally oriented, the national border still functions as a separator in the action spaces in daily shopping activities. The patterns for Kranenburg and Millingen are almost mirror reflections of each other.

Purposeful shopping for non-daily goods

The second group of shopping trips consist of trips which are made for buying non-daily goods. Because these trips generally are made with far lower frequencies, they have less chance of becoming of a routine nature. Put in other words, for a bigger part of these trips some kind of a decision process has to be gone through.

Table 5: Municipalities mentioned as place for purposeful buying non-daily goods in Kranenburg and Millingen aan de Rijn

| <i>In Kranenburg</i> | <i>perc.</i> | <i>In Millingen aan de Rijn</i> | <i>perc.</i> |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Kleve | 61,3% | Nijmegen | 82,6% |
| Nijmegen | 35,8% | Millingen | 41,2% |
| Kranenburg | 23,4% | Arnhem | 10,4% |
| Krefeld | 10,6% | Kleve | 10,3% |
| Düsseldorf | 7,2% | Eindhoven | 1,5% |
| Oberhausen | 5,0% | Groesbeek | 1,1% |
| Bocholt | 4,9% | Amsterdam | 0,6% |
| Essen | 3,7% | Doetinchem | 0,6% |
| Goch | 3,7% | Cuijk | 0,6% |

| <i>In Kranenburg</i> | <i>perc.</i> | <i>In Millingen aan de Rijn</i> | <i>perc.</i> |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Arnhem</i> | 3,0% | <i>Duiven</i> | 0,6% |
| <i>Duisburg</i> | 2,7% | <i>Wijchen</i> | 0,4% |
| <i>Moers</i> | 1,7% | <i>Kranenburg</i> | 0,3% |
| <i>Emmerich</i> | 1,7% | | |
| <i>Groesbeek</i> | 1,6% | | |
| <i>Kamp Lintfort</i> | 1,3% | | |
| <i>Rees</i> | 0,7% | | |
| <i>Dortmund</i> | 0,7% | | |
| <i>Ubbergen</i> | 0,7% | | |
| <i>Köln</i> | 0,7% | | |
| <i>Kalkar</i> | 0,6% | | |
| <i>Eindhoven</i> | 0,4% | | |
| <i>Kevelaer</i> | 0,4% | | |
| <i>Doetinchem</i> | 0,3% | | |
| <i>Hamburg</i> | 0,3% | | |

Source: Questionnaire

The first striking feature of these trips is the fact the hometown is far less important as it was for daily goods (tab. 5). In itself this is not surprising. The pattern still is very much dominated by a few towns and cities, especially in Millingen. The fifth city is only mentioned by 1,5% of the inhabitants. In Kranenburg there are no less than 14 cities and towns counting for more than this percentage. Remarkably six of them are in the Ruhr-area, at about 80 kilometres from Kranenburg.

When put in maps, the figures again show, that, compared to shopping for daily goods, greater distances are covered, especially in Kranenburg (fig 8). The lure from the western part of the Ruhr-area can not be found in Millingen. None of the respondents in this town mentions one of the Ruhr-cities as the most important city to buy non-daily goods.

Following the same procedure as in the previous section, first of all the individual action spaces are characterised as intra-, extra- or bi-national (tab. 6). No distinction is made for the case the hometown is not included. For this kind of shopping trips as well as the next motive, recreational shopping, the municipalities are of minor importance, because of their small size.

Table 6: Action spaces for purposeful shopping for non-daily goods per respondent

| | Kranenburg (n=194) | Millingen (n=199) |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Only in the Netherlands | 9,2% | 89,7% |
| Only in Germany | 62,9% | 0,4% |
| In both countries | 27,9% | 9,9% |

Source: Questionnaire

Again compared to the pattern observed for shopping for daily goods, it shows that especially in Kranenburg a far less ‘nationalistic’ pattern exists. More than one third is visiting Dutch towns for these kind of trips. The respondents in Millingen on the other hand are almost as strongly oriented towards the home country as was the case for daily shopping.

When the individual action spaces are aggregated per municipality, the same trend appears again (tab. 7). In Millingen the stronger orientation on the home country shows again. Dutch towns, on the other hand, are making up 24% of the aggregated action space of Kranenburg. This relative strong orientation abroad in Kranenburg is caused by the flow to Nijmegen. This supports the hypothesis that the blocking effects of the country border is less for these kinds of shopping trips. Kranenburg is included tighter in the hinterland of Nijmegen.

Table 7: Nationality of the towns mentioned for purposeful shopping for non-daily goods

| | Kranenburg (n=337) | Millingen (n=298) |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Dutch towns | 24,2% | 92,9% |
| German towns | 75,8% | 7,1% |

Source: Questionnaire

A second major distinction between Millingen and Kranenburg is the number of towns mentioned as place for shopping. Besides Millingen itself respondents from this town indicate 11 other places of which two are German. In Kranenburg no less than 23 towns are mentioned, six of them Dutch (see also table 5).

As a first and tentative conclusion from these figures, it may be possible to state that the country border is less hampering for shopping trips for non-daily goods compared to daily shopping. This is especially supported by the fact that the respondents from Kranenburg are far more oriented towards the Netherlands than was observed for daily shopping. Still a border effect is measurable, regarding the orientation on the Ruhr-area. This could be a substitute for Nijmegen, which in absolute terms is closer, but may be mentally further away.

Recreational Shopping

Recreational shopping (as stated before, shopping trips which do not have an explicit intention to buy specific goods) is traditionally done in the bigger cities. One of the most important pull factors off course is an ample amount of shops which offer a range of products. The bigger cities can satisfy this criterion more easily. Next to an abundance of shops, more and more value is rewarded to the atmosphere of the shopping area (van der Velde & Vergoossen, 1996). Therefore smaller towns also can attract these kind of trips, because of special amenities, like an old historic centre, or an orderly centre with good parking facilities.

When looking at the number of destination, especially in the Netherlands it shows, that the pattern for these trips is more dispersed, compared to the previous motive (tab. 8 & fig. 9). Also the spread is more even. Although still dominated by a few cities, like Arnhem, Nijmegen and Kleve, more towns are of relevant importance. For Millingen twelve cities and towns have shares of 1,5%, while Kranenburg counts for 15 cities and towns. Again the western part of the Ruhr-area is an important region.

Table 8: Municipalities mentioned as place for purposeful buying non-daily goods in Kranenburg and Millingen aan de Rijn

| <i>In Kranenburg</i> | <i>perc.</i> | <i>In Millingen aan de Rijn</i> | <i>perc.</i> |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Kleve | 42,6% | Nijmegen | 79,0% |
| <i>Nijmegen</i> | 38,1% | Arnhem | 45,4% |
| Oberhausen | 12,3% | <i>Kleve</i> | 22,9% |
| Krefeld | 11,4% | Millingen | 8,1% |
| Düsseldorf | 10,3% | Den Bosch | 6,0% |
| Köln | 8,1% | Amsterdam | 3,9% |
| Essen | 6,6% | Doetinchem | 3,1% |
| Bocholt | 5,8% | Utrecht | 2,8% |
| Kranenburg | 4,3% | Maastricht | 2,6% |
| <i>Arnhem</i> | 4,1% | <i>Düsseldorf</i> | 2,2% |
| Duisburg | 3,0% | Venlo | 1,8% |
| Bochum | 2,9% | Groesbeek | 1,7% |
| Goch | 2,3% | Wijchen | 1,4% |
| Emmerich | 2,3% | Oss | 1,1% |
| Moers | 1,6% | <i>Oberhausen</i> | 1,0% |
| Kevelaer | 1,2% | Zwolle | 0,9% |
| Mönchen Gladbach | 0,8% | Duiven | 0,6% |
| Dortmund | 0,8% | <i>Köln</i> | 0,4% |
| <i>Doetinchem</i> | 0,7% | Rotterdam | 0,4% |
| <i>Groesbeek</i> | 0,4% | Boxmeer | 0,4% |
| <i>Amsterdam</i> | 0,4% | Eindhoven | 0,3% |
| Xanten | 0,4% | <i>Kranenburg</i> | 0,3% |
| Bonn | 0,4% | | |
| Berlin | 0,4% | | |

The individual action spaces of the respondents show, that both for Millingen and Kranenburg the share of bi- and extra-national action spaces is the biggest of the three motives (tab. 9). In Kranenburg the increase is relatively small, but here a remarkable shift occurs from bi-national to pure Dutch extra-national action spaces. The respondents from Millingen find some attraction in Germany (viz. Kleve) for these kind of trips. For almost one quarter of the respondents the action space covers Germany.

Table 9: Action spaces for recreational shopping per respondent

| | Kranenburg (n=172) | Millingen (n=167) |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Only in the Netherlands | 15,7% | 75,3% |
| Only in Germany | 59,2% | 2,4% |
| In both countries | 25,1% | 22,3% |

Source: Questionnaire

When aggregating the individual action spaces a pattern, which is comparable with that of purposeful shopping, emerges (tab. 10). The respective cross-border character is a little stronger, considering the share of the Dutch towns in the German action space is twice that of the German towns in the Dutch action spaces. But once again this could be expected, in view of the size of Nijmegen compared to Kleve.

Table 10: Nationality of the towns mentioned for recreational shopping

| | Kranenburg (n=278) | Millingen (n=313) |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Dutch towns | 27,2% | 85,0% |
| German towns | 72,8% | 15,0% |

Source: Questionnaire

Concluding this section, it is remarkable to observe there are big differences between the action spaces of the respondents in Kranenburg and Millingen. Although not as striking as with daily shopping, still a deviation to intra-national action spaces can be observed.

CONCLUSIONS AND A TENTATIVE RESEARCH-AGENDA

In this final section, an attempt is made to formulate a tentative research agenda. The main goal is trying to understand the differences between the patterns of shopping activities of inhabitants of the two border municipalities Millingen aan de Rijn in the Netherlands and

Kranenburg in Germany. Special attention is given to the role of the country border. Two basic approaches for studying spatial activities, the behavioural-theoretical and action-theoretical approach, are used as a conceptual framework. Together with the dichotomy agent vs. structure, which as caricatures can serve as respective 'independent variables', four quadrants can be discerned, being behavioural and structure-centred, behavioural and agent-centred, action-theoretical and structure-centred and action-theoretical and agent-centred

From the empirical part of this paper it becomes clear, that in spite of the similar geographical position in the region, huge differences exist between the regional patterns of shopping activities of the Dutch and German respondents. Despite the fact that the two municipalities are comparable, the orientation expressed in the action spaces was very much directed towards the home country. The patterns were almost mirror images of each other. For now the main reason for these differences is supposed to be the country-border. Kleve is far more important for Kranenburg, then it is for the inhabitants of Millingen. Nijmegen is the main target for Millingen, as could be expected, from a traditional Christallerian or gravity approach when no border would be present. To the inhabitants from Kranenburg however, Nijmegen is far less important. Another example is the position of Arnhem and the cities in the Ruhr-area. For the inhabitants of Kranenburg the distance to Arnhem, which is small in absolute terms, mentally is comparable to the distance to the Ruhr-area. The cities in the western part of the Ruhr-area have the same position for the inhabitants of Kranenburg as Arnhem, where it would have been expected to be subordinate. Once again this could be caused by a possible border effect.

How can we understand these differences, when looking at it from a behavioural and action-theoretical point of view? First of all, an important distinction has to be made between routine actions and non-routine actions or unreflective and reflective. As was put forward in the theoretical part of this paper, the intention or reason for actions, that have become of a rather routine nature, are referring to the first time(s) this action was undertaken or even to other persons from this action is copied (Thrift, 1996). Changes in the structure of the shopping facilities in the broadest sense (including for instance the abolishment of borders) leading to changes in activities, suppose a new decision process of the consumer. When looking upon this routine activities from a behavioural point of view, it is necessary to know the original structure and perceptions of the actor, during the period he was shaping his patterns of behaviour. To understand the actual pattern, a longitudinal analysis seems necessary, for

pinpointing certain thresholds for routine activities to change. The two patterns for daily shopping can probably be understood from the past. The fact that only 14% of the Dutch respondents mention Kleve as a place to do this kind shopping and no less than 69% of the Germans, could be an expression of a 'pre-EU-era', where borders did matter. From an action-theoretical point of view, where a complete freedom of action is supposed, these differences can only be understood when the original frames of reference and stocks of knowledge are known. In general, however, it seems that routine activities, like shopping for daily goods, can well be understood from a behavioural point of view, be it that the original stimuli and perceptions play an important role.

Non-routine activities, like recreational shopping, suppose a much higher level of decision-making. Because the patterns are far more diffuse, the behavioural approach seems less suitable. Every time a decision is made, different factors are taken into account and different results are possible. The current frames of reference and stocks of knowledge are influencing these decisions. Although still dissimilar, the patterns witnessed in Kranenburg and Millingen are converging. Differences can be used to understand the present-day role of the border.

Compared to recreational shopping, purposeful shopping for non-daily goods, probably implies a far more rational decision process. At first glance it seems a more traditional behavioural approach as well as an action-theoretical approach is suitable in explaining the patterns. For these kinds of shopping-trips especially the quality and assortment of the shops are important. When these demands and the preferences attached to it, are more or less 'universal', both approaches are effective.

From the preceding discussion, two criteria for the applicability of the two approaches seem important. The first one concerns to what extent activities can be regarded as being of a routine character. The more routine the action is, the less 'freedom' for the actor exists. With a behavioural approach, be it based on the stimuli 'of the past', it is possible to understand these patterns. The second criteria deals with the rationality behind the investigated activities. When the level of rationality is less, as for example with recreational shopping, the intentionality of actions becomes more important. Action-oriented approaches seem more useful to understand these patterns.

Coming back to the problem of determining the effects emanating from the border, two different effects can be distinguished. In the case of routine or unreflective shopping, the border play more or less the same role as it did when the patterns in activities were formed. As long as no new decision process is undertaken, measure aiming at abolishing borders will have no effect. In other words if the actor is not changing his frames of observation, the increasing possibilities will not lead to growing cross-border interaction. These effects could still be looked upon as of an external nature. On the other hand, in the case of non-routine or reflective activities, the border also exerts influence. In this case the border could demarcate a region, where the actor feels at home and is familiar with the customs and rules for instance. In other words, the national border has settled in the mind of actors. This way the border still plays an important role in the process of deciding were to go. To establish these kinds of influences factors like attitude, cognition and affection have to be introduced.

To conclude, both of the approaches can be useful in this field of research. Starting of from a behaviour-theoretical or an action-theoretical point, it is very important to distinguish different types of shopping activities. Whether or not activities are of a routine nature and the level of rationality in the decision process, determines if a behavioural approach is sufficient or an action approach in recommendable or even necessary to understand spatial shopping activities. Research within the research program '*Borders and Interaction*' will certainly have to incorporate both approaches to increase the understanding of the role borders have on spatial activities.

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