

Third-Country Tourists on the Ferries Linking Germany with Lithuania

Eleri Jones, Ramunas Povilanskas, Ausrine Armaitiene,
Gediminas Valtas & Egidijus Jurkus

Recreation and Tourism Department, Klaipeda University, Lithuania, and
Cardiff School of Management, Cardiff Metropolitan University, UK

Abstract

This paper examines third-country passengers' travel itineraries on the DFDS Seaways ferry route linking Kiel, Germany with Klaipeda, Lithuania using a mixed-methods approach comprising qualitative and quantitative methods, including geographical information system spatial-cluster analysis. Survey results reveal the predominant third-country passenger groups (i.e. passengers from countries other than Germany and Lithuania) on ferries sailing from Kiel to Klaipeda and back were Latvian (28%), Dutch (20%), British (14%) and Danish (12%) nationals; 86% of Latvian passengers used the ferry to travel between home in Latvia and work in Western Europe. Western European passengers comprised a diverse segment of motorized tourists using the ferry in summer to reach the Baltic States faster than by land. The paper highlights the role of the Kiel–Klaipeda ferry route within the Baltic Sea motorized tourism circuit linking the Baltic and Nordic countries with Western Europe.

Key Words: Baltic Sea, ferry lines, motorized tourism circuit, third-country tourists, tourism landscape, triangulation

Introduction

Ferry tourism (Duval, 2007; Gibbons, 1996) is a relatively obscure phenomenon with limited literature available in comparison with other industry sectors, such as leisure, tourism and transportation (e.g. motorized and cruise tourism, shipping). While analysing power relationships between hosts and guests aboard an English Channel ferry, Gibbons (1996, p. 7) noted that ferry tourism: “despite its prominent place within the tourism industry, has been much neglected in the literature ...” with little change in the last two decades. Research on ferry tourism is particularly scarce on the periphery of Europe (e.g. on the Baltic Sea ferry routes linking Latvia and Lithuania with the Western Baltic) (Wiskulski & Bar-Kolelis, 2012). Little, if any, research has been done on the motives of tourists for choosing ferry routes and their travel patterns prior to boarding the ferry and after getting off. This paper fills that gap by using a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Plano

Clark, 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003) to examine Baltic ferry routes linking Germany and Lithuania and its implications for tourism in the Baltic States.

Triangulation is applied to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of results (Decrop, 1999), which implies application of three different methods. Triangulation, in its rigorous form, stipulates the complex examination of the same issue through quantitative methods (in this case, a survey involving a statistical interpretation of a large amount of data and geographical information system (GIS)) and qualitative methods (i.e. semi-structured interviews) (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Johnson et al., 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003). Whereas quantitative research presumes meeting certain statistical criteria to validate results, qualitative research requires the pursuit of some common principles of trust-worthiness (Decrop, 1999, 2004); therefore, mixed methods provide a more complete understanding of ferry tourism in the Baltics.

This paper introduces the key actors comprising ferry tourism followed by a discussion of the methods. The “results” section presents an analysis of third-country passenger itineraries (i.e. passengers from countries other than Germany and Lithuania) using the ferry connection between Kiel (in Germany) and Klaipeda (in Lithuania). The discussion focuses on the use of a mixed-methods approach to validate the existence of a Baltic Sea motorized tourism circuit and the role of Kiel and Klaipeda as ferry gate- ways. The paper concludes by noting that a mixed-method approach is an important strategy for repositioning ferry gateways and reordering ferry tourist itineraries.

Study Purpose

Ferry tourism could be considered a well-defined tourism landscape, “actor-networks connecting, within and across different societies and regions, transport systems, accommodation and facilities, resources, environments, technologies, and people and organizations” (Van der Duim, 2007, p. 967) with heterogeneous actors playing clear roles (Povilanskas & Armaitiene, 2011; Van der Duim, Ren, & Jóhannesson, 2013). Ferry companies function as “centres of calculation”, while gateways function as “obligatory passage points”. The ferries act as “hybrid collectives” comprising the ship, its crew, its passengers and on-board facilities. Usually, ferry tourism is a more or less stabilized network that appears as a “black box”, unless an accident happens. Leaving a deeper scrutiny of the roles played by various actors in ferry tourism and their relations aside, the objective of our study was twofold: first, to test and substantiate the integration of both qualitative and quantitative research and data interpretation methods, including GIS analysis, into a complex “quali-quantitative” tourism research methodology; and second, to investigate the role of the Kiel–Klaipeda ferry route within a Baltic Sea motorized tourism circuit linking the Baltic and the Nordic countries with Western Europe.

The focus of the study was on third-country passengers using the ferry connection between Kiel (in Germany) and Klaipeda (in Lithuania). Whereas German and Lithuanian ferry passengers naturally tend to choose those ferries sailing from, and to, ferry ports in their home countries, the choice motives of those passengers from third countries were more interesting to investigate since their itinerary choices were potentially more volatile. In addition, the loyalty of those passengers at the German and Lithuanian ferry ports is more likely lower than that of German or Lithuanian nationals; such “ferry tourist patriotism” is noted by Gibbons (1996) as well.

An additional motive for the choice of study target group was to balance the sample for geostatistical interpretation using GIS. The prevalence of German and Lithuanian passengers on the Kiel–Klaipeda route – comprising over 85% of the total ferry passenger traffic – could distort the geostatistical representation leaving places of origin or destination of passengers from third countries underrepresented overall resulting from a spatial-cluster analysis. Different from the concept of “business cluster” as applied in economic (and tourism) theory (Porter, 2000), a “spatial cluster” is a geographical term describing “a spatial pattern, that differs in important respects from the geographic variation expected in the absence of the spatial processes that are being investigated” (Jacquez, 2008, p. 396).

Methods

Three research methods – two quantitative and one qualitative – were applied in this study: standardized self-administered questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and GIS spatial-cluster analysis. A mixed methodology was selected since tourism is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon that is very demanding to study comprehensively (Puhakka, Cottrell, & Siikamäki, 2014). Fieldwork was undertaken over three consecutive years (2009 – 2011) aboard *DFDS Seaways* ferries sailing between Kiel and Klaipeda. The qualitative part of the survey was done in 2009 and 2010, whereas the quantitative part was completed in 2011. The questionnaire, simple and quick to complete, was conducted at the ferry terminal check-in. The instrument included place of origin of a passenger (home postcode); final travel destination (accommodation address); travel purpose and means; intended duration of the trip; number of travel companions, in addition to some standard socio-demographic questions. A total of 1843 completed questionnaires were returned anonymously. The response rate was 46%. Survey data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

The questionnaire was supplemented by 25 semi-structured face-to-face interviews with ferry passengers from third countries. The nationality and socio-demographic profile of the interviewees corresponded to that of the sample for the quantitative survey. The duration of face-to-face interviews (typically 30 – 45 minutes) was sufficient to allow complex issues to emerge (Creswell, 2009). Purpose of travel was the kick-off question for the

passenger interviews. Respondents were asked why they had chosen that particular ferry route, advantages (and disadvantages) of their choice compared to other travel options and what their overall planned travel itinerary was.

GIS is a little used technique in tourism research with just four of 76 tourism research articles published between 2000 and 2004 applying GIS techniques (Xiao & Smith, 2006a, 2006b). The situation has not improved much with GIS used primarily for mapping, storing and displaying data of a geographical nature, for example, tourism resources and spatial tourism patterns, or as a tourism infrastructure planning tool, rather than as a sophisticated geostatistical analytical tool (Boers & Cottrell, 2007; Inbakaran, Jackson, & Chhetri, 2006; Tremblay, 2005).

Table 1. Types of ferry passengers regarding their travel patterns.

Type of ferry passengers	Code	Characterization
Gateway travellers	GT	Do not stay overnight in the node; their main reason for going there is the transport connection
Overnight gateway visitors	OGV	Spend only one night in the node; they are away from home more than one night and have the transport connection as the main reason for visit

Stopover visitors (1) SV ₁	Do not stay overnight, but have another important reason for going to the node apart from the transport connection
Stopover visitors (2) SV ₂	Spend only one night in the node, but stay more than one night away from home and have a main reason for visit other than the transport connection
Destination tourists DT	Stay two or more nights in the node regardless of their main reason for going to the node

Source: Lohmann and Pearce (2010).

According to Becken, Vuletich, and Campbell (2007, p. 109), “A general lack of tourism databases and/or data inconsistencies have limited the application of GIS to tourism analysis and planning, particularly at a national level.” This study applies the ArcInfo GIS function, “kernel” to identify spatial clusters of places of origin and travel destinations of third-country passengers on the Kiel–Klaipeda ferry route. The input data comprised the orthogonal coordinates of the places of origin (home postcodes) and travel destinations (accommodation addresses) of the third-country passengers that responded to the questionnaires.

A smooth, curved surface was fitted over each point in kernel density for point features. The surface value was highest at the location of the point and diminished with increasing distance from the point, reaching zero at the 500-km search radius distance from the point. The volume under the surface equalled the “population” field value for the point. The density at each output raster cell was calculated by adding the values of all the kernel surfaces where they overlay the raster cell centre. The kernel function was based on a quadratic kernel function described in Silverman (1986, p. 76, equation 4.5). The “population” field’s value (the item value) determined the number of times to count the point.

To classify third-country passengers on the *DFDS Seaways* Kiel–Klaipeda ferry route, Lohmann and Pearce’s (2010) ferry passenger typology was used to identify four ferry passenger types based on their reason for choosing the ferry route and their length of stay at the ferry node (gateway): gateway travellers (GT), overnight gateway visitors (OGV), stopover visitors (SV) and destination tourists (DT) (Table 1).

Study Setting

Kiel–Klaipeda Ferry Route Within the Network of the West–East Baltic Ferry Links

In the early 2000s, the Baltic Sea contained one of the largest concentrations of ferry lines in the world. In 2005, approximately 270 ferries of different types operated on more than 130 lines across the Baltic Sea. In 2001, ferry carriage amounted to 25% of the world market of passenger loadings, over 40% of cars

and over 25% of trucks (Kapsa & Roe, 2006). The largest ferry operators on the Baltic Sea emerged from consolidation of a number of smaller companies (Kapsa & Roe, 2006). Thus, in 2009, *DFDS*, a shipping company that operated all ferry routes connecting Klaipeda, Lithuania's only seaport, with the Western Baltic, signed an agreement with *Moller-Maersk* to acquire its shipping and logistics company *Norfolkline*. The acquisition created Northern Europe's leading sea-based transport network linking two leading shipping companies with 25 routes and 55 ships in the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, the Irish Sea and the English Channel (DFDS, 2013). The merger coincided with the phasing out of the on-board duty-free trade in the European Union (EU), which caused an overall decline in the ferry passenger transport (Duval, 2007). The merger also coincided with the economic slowdown in the EU. This situation resulted in a further decline in ferry passenger transport in Europe, including the Baltic Sea (Wiskulski & Bar-Kořelis, 2012), and led to substantial reshuffling of ro-pax (combined passenger/freight) ferry routes in the European periphery, most notably, on the Irish Sea and the Baltic Sea.

On the Baltic Sea, the *DFDS* ro-pax ferry route between Lubeck and Riga was sold and ultimately closed in 2011. The *DFDS* route Klaipeda–Sassnitz was closed in 2013. On the Irish Sea, the unprofitable routes of *DFDS Seaways* were also sold (Belfast–UK) or closed (Dublin – UK) in 2010/2011. Although such reorganization might be beneficial for the ferry company, it left the peripheral ferry ports even more susceptible to changes resulting from a decline in ferry tourism. Although ro-pax ferries are generally recognized as the most competitive vessels, because of the synergy between cargo and passenger transportation (May & Mayes, 2004), ferry passenger transport is less lucrative than cargo shipping in the Eastern Baltic. Therefore, catering to passenger needs is not a top priority in the strategies of ferry companies operating in Lithuania and Latvia. Estonia is a different story due to its proximity to Finland, Sweden and St. Petersburg, as well as deep traditions of ferry passenger transport (Jarvis & Kallas, 2006).

Currently, there are six ro-pax ferry routes linking Lithuania and Latvia with the Western Baltic: from Riga (Latvia) to Stockholm (Sweden) operated by *Tallink Silja*, from Liepaja and Ventspils (Latvia) to Travemunde (Germany) and from Ventspils to Nynashamn (Sweden) operated by *Stena Lines*, as well as from Klaipeda (Lithuania) to Kiel (Germany) and Karlshamn (Sweden) operated by *DFDS Seaways*. The volatility of the ferry connections and increasing competition among the Eastern Baltic ports of call warranted a closer look into the ferry passenger profile on the routes linking the Eastern Baltic ports with the Western Baltic ones which might inform solutions to making ferry passenger traffic to and from the Eastern Baltic more lucrative and more stable, in order to sustain the competitiveness of the Eastern Baltic coast as an international tourist destination and Klaipeda as a ferry tourism gateway.

Regular ferry communication between the former East Germany and the former Soviet Baltic republics was launched in 1986 with the opening of a rail ferry route from Mukran/Sassnitz on the island of Rügen to Klaipeda (Lithuania). Five ferries operating on the Mukran/Sassnitz–Klaipeda route were listed in

the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's largest rail ferries of that time. After the reunification of Germany and the restoration of independent Baltic States, several new ferry routes between Germany and the Baltic States operated in various years besides the Mukran/Sassnitz– Klaipeda ferry route, linking ferry ports in Germany (mainly in the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein) with Klaipeda and the Latvian Baltic seaports.

During the recent turbulent years of optimization, downsizing and reshuffling of the ro-pax ferry connections in Northern Europe, the pattern of ferry links between Germany and the Baltic States was constantly changing. In 2009, the ro-pax *DFDS* route between Lubeck and Riga was sold to *Scandlines*, then sold to a Swedish- based company *Stena Lines* and ultimately closed in 2011. In 2013, the *DFDS* ferry route Sassnitz– Klaipeda, the oldest one linking Germany with the Baltic States, was also closed, which impeded communication with the Berlin metropolitan area of Germany.

In recent years, *Stena Lines* has taken over all but one (Kiel– Klaipeda) ferry route linking Germany with Lithuania and Latvia with a priority focus on the western Latvian seaports of Liepaja and Ventspils (Figure 1). The truck shipping between Germany and the Eastern Baltic can easily adapt to changes in ferry routes, whereas the interests of ferry passengers were not considered in the ferry company development strategies, as previously mentioned. It is understandable considering the negligible share (0.1% in 2010) of the ferry passenger transport between Germany and the Eastern Baltic within the nearly 400 million ferry passenger journeys in the EU (Euro- stat, 2012). Even within the Baltic Sea area, the Eastern Baltic destinations catered to only 4% of the ferry passengers travelling to and/or from the seaports of Germany in 2010 (Table 2).

The focus of this study is on the Kiel– Klaipeda regular ferry route, which was established in 1992 as a freight-only (ro-ro) route. In 1993, two new ro-pax ferries were introduced and the Kiel– Klaipeda ferry route became the main ferry route linking



Figure 1. Ferry routes of *Stena Lines* in 2014. (source: www.stenalines.lt).

Table 2. Ferry passengers (in thousands) in the Baltic Sea area who have embarked and disembarked at the seaports of Germany in 2010.

Connections	Total	Schleswig-Holstein	Hamburg	Bremen	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
Denmark (Baltic Sea)	7879	6362	2	2	1513
Sweden	1772	722	6	1	1043
Baltic States and Russia	402	218	2	4	178
Poland	138	7	2	3	126
Total	10,191	7309	12	10	2860

Source: Adapted from:

Germany with Lithuania and Belarus. Originally, the ferry route was served by *LISCO*, the national shipping company of Lithuania. The Kiel–Klaipeda ferry route maintained its key role in linking Western Europe with Lithuania and Belarus also after *DFDS* acquired a 76.36% shareholding in *LISCO* in 2001. Two ferries routinely operate on this route six days per week with a 21-hour average crossing time.

In 2013, the Kiel–Klaipeda route was serviced by *MV Victoria Seaways* (constructed in 2009) with a passenger capacity of 515 persons and *MV Regina Seaways* (constructed in 2010) with a passenger capacity of 532 persons. In 2009–2011, when the field research was done, the route was serviced by *MV LISCO Gloria* (constructed in 2001) with a passenger capacity of 300 persons and *MV LISCO Maxima* (constructed in 2009) with a passenger capacity of 600 persons. In October 2010, *MV LISCO Gloria* caught fire and was burnt beyond repair. *MV LISCO Gloria* was temporarily replaced by *MV Baltic Amber* (constructed in 2007) with a passenger capacity of 400 persons (the vessel on which field research was completed fall 2010 and 2011).

Results

Third-Country Passengers on the DFDS Seaways Kiel–Klaipeda Ferry Route

Data from a self-administered questionnaire distributed among third-country passengers and results of the GIS spatial-cluster analysis revealed that the most numerous third-country passenger groups on the ferries linking Klaipeda with Kiel were Latvian (28%), Dutch (20%), British (14%) and Danish (12%) nationals (Table 3, Figure 2). Passengers from other third countries (26%) represented Russia, Belarus, Estonia, Belgium, France, Italy, Austria, Switzerland and Spain; each accounting for less than 10% of the total ferry passenger traffic. Survey results were further supported by the semi-structured interviews.

The majority of Latvians (86%) used the ferry link between Klaipeda and Kiel to travel from home to work in Western Europe and back. This ferry route was more attractive for Latvians from the southern part of the country than other transport itineraries considering travel time and cost ratio. The travel costs for passengers with cars

Table 3. Third-country passengers on the DFDS Seaways Kiel–Klaipeda ferry route in 2009– 2011.

Type (based on the typology of Lohmann & Pearce, 2010)

Nationality %	Average duration of entire trip	GT	OGV	SV1	SV2	DT	
Latvians	28	2	14	0	10	0	4
Dutch	20	11	2	2	2	3	11
British	14	14	2	1	1	2	8
Danish	12	10	1	1	2	1	7
Other	26	14	6	3	2	3	12
Total	100	9.5	25	7	17	9	42

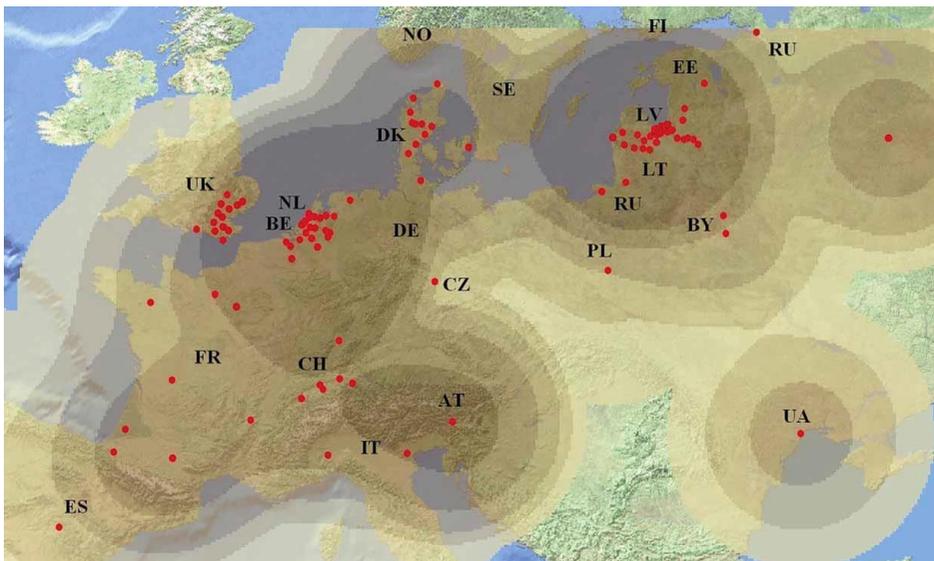


Figure 2. Spatial clusters of places of origin of the third-country passengers on the Kiel–Klaipeda ferry route.

was roughly the same; the main criterion for choosing the Klaipeda–Kiel route was that the average crossing time was 21 hours compared to 26–27 hours from the Latvian ports (Liepaja and Ventspils) to Travemunde. Thus, it takes 25–30% less time to reach the Netherlands or France from Latvia by car using the Klaipeda–Kiel ferry route. A single Latvian, working in the UK (interviewee #8 April 2009) noted that: “taking the ferry from Klaipeda is more comfortable and faster than any similar option from Latvia since my home is in southern Latvia, close to the Lithuanian border, and the roads in Latvia are in dire straits, compared to those in Lithuania (translated from Russian).

Most of the travel destinations of the ferry passengers were located off the major low- cost airline flight connections linking Riga, the capital of Latvia, with Western Europe (Figure 3). Four Latvian carpenters from the suburbs of Riga going to the Netherlands by a van (interviewees #10 to #13 May 2009) indicated that: “going by ferry from Klaipeda to Kiel is the most convenient option since it sails six times per week, and our work necessitates frequent, irregular, travel between Latvia and the Netherlands” (translated from Russian).

Latvians comprised a homogeneous group and travelled by ferry year round. The majority of these passengers were pure gateway traveller types using Klaipeda and Kiel merely for boarding and disembarking the ferry (Table 3). However, since Kiel is famous among the Eastern Baltic residents as a place where some of the cheapest consumer goods can be purchased, quite a few of the Latvian passengers also took the opportunity to visit local mega-malls and thus fell into the SV category of ferry passengers. In any case, since the main purpose of the Latvian nationals for travelling by ferry was work, they were not classified as tourists according to the UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization) definition. Neither did these passengers view themselves as “tourists” – a phenomenon observed by Gibbons (1996) among truck drivers crossing the English Channel by ferry. Different from leisure tourists on ferries, who ranked service efficiency highest among the ferry trip satisfaction criteria (Lazim & Wahab, 2010), these passengers did not require high-quality services;

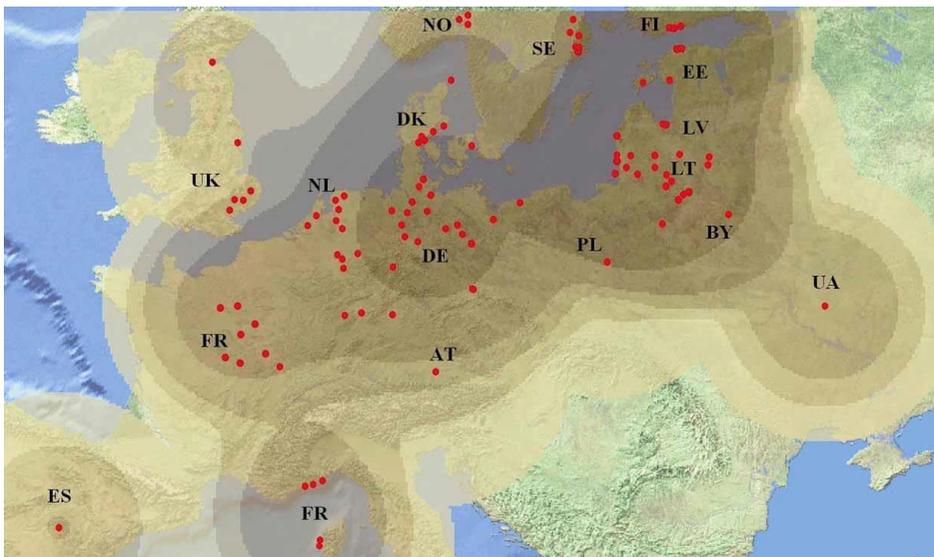


Figure 3. Spatial clusters of travel destinations of the third-country passengers on the Kiel– Klaipeda ferry route. They bought the cheapest seats and did not

spend much money on food, drinks or entertainment while travelling.

The Dutch, British, Danish and other Western European passengers were a relatively diverse segment of motorized tourists using the Kiel to Klaipeda ferry link mainly in the summer to reach the southeast Baltic coast faster than crossing Poland by land. Summer seasonality was a common feature of this segment (Figure 4). 40% of the Western European respondents were on a holiday tour; 22% were going to visit friends and relatives; 15% were on a business trip; 12% were going to a resort; 11% indicated other travel purposes: sport, charity, and so on. 47% of respondents were travelling by car: 27% – by caravan; 19% – by bus; 4% – by motorbike; 3% of the passengers travelled without any transport means. The travellers were more commonly couples or families with children.

The majority (73%) of Western European motorized tourists followed a similar travel itinerary from Klaipeda heading north to Riga (Latvia) and Tallinn (Estonia). Just 27% intended to stay in Lithuania and/or Latvia and return via Poland or by the same ferry. After completing the Baltic States itinerary, the majority (82%) of those who reached Estonia went from Tallinn by ferry to Stockholm, either directly, or indirectly via Helsinki, and then headed to Oslo, or south, back home across Sweden and the Danish sounds. One couple with two children from the UK (interviewees #14 and #15 July 2009) stated: “after Tallinn we are planning to spend a couple of days on the Aland islands, then go to Stockholm for few days, then cross the bridge and spend a night in Copenhagen and then head back home”. Most of the leisure tourists planned to stop for a few days on the Lithuanian Baltic coast to visit the Curonian Spit, a UNESCO World Heritage dune landscape. Some planned to visit Palanga as well, the most popular Eastern Baltic seaside resort (Povilanskas & Armaitiene, 2011). Therefore, they were classified as destination tourists (DT) according to the typology given in Table 1.

These tourists regarded their stay on ferry as an integral part of their holiday experience. They bought comfortable cabins and spent money on food, drinks and entertainment while travelling.

Such travel behaviour is to a large extent determined by the touring habits of the Western European tourists who regularly used ferries on their motorized travel itineraries (Gibbons, 1996). The occupancy rate of the ferries on the Kiel–Klaipeda route is nearly 100% during the summer season (Figure 4).

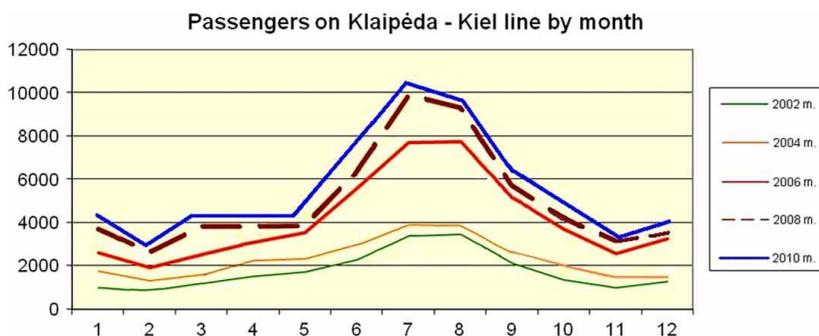


Figure 4. Kiel–Klaipėda ferry passenger transport seasonality. (source: DFDS Seaways).

Although current tourist numbers from France, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, and Spain are not high, there is the potential for attracting more motorized tourists from these countries to the Kiel–Klaipėda ferry, particularly, organized groups travelling by bus. The interviewed members of a Swiss tourist group, some elderly people from Basel, travelling by bus over Germany and around the Baltic Sea (interviewees #21 to #25 June 2010) indicated:

taking the ferry from Germany to Lithuania for us is the most convenient option since we are interested to visit the Baltic States and Scandinavia, and we cross Germany by bus without leaving the motorway, and thence avoid bad roads of Poland.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study illustrates how a mixed-methods approach, combining a GIS spatial-cluster analysis, a self-administered questionnaire, and third-country passenger interviews denotes a Baltic Sea motorized tourism circuit linking the Baltic and Nordic countries with Western Europe. The “quali-quantitative” approach highlights the role of the Klaipėda–Kiel ferry link in performing this touristscape (Van der Duim, 2007), catering to the needs of European motorized tourists. A similar function is played by the Polish Baltic seaports providing a key link for motorized tourists from Scandinavia travelling on vacation to Central and Southeast Europe (Kapsa & Roe, 2005).

To make a touristscape more durable, the mobilizing role and competitiveness of the obligatory passage points, ferry gateways in this case, should be enhanced (Povi-lanskas & Armaitiene, 2011). Considering the competitiveness of water transport with regard to other transport means, Lohmann and Trischler (2012) noted that speed is a major factor in transport choices in the modern world. Both, Kiel and Klaipėda are well positioned as intermodal gateways combining the shortest route from Western Europe to the Baltic States with a well-developed roadway network extending to the European metropolitan centres and the Baltic state capital cities. The challenge remains to increase tourist length of

stay in Kiel and Klaipeda, that is, to reposition sea-ports and adjacent coastal zones from mere drive-through gateways to attractive gateway destinations (Lew & McKercher, 2002).

Pertinent to the ferry and motorized travel itineraries in Sweden, Zillinger (2007, p. 69) noted: “the trips in the beginning and at the end of a holiday tend to be longer than the intervening ones, as there is a wish to spend as much time as possible in the country chosen for one’s holidays.” In this respect, departure gateway nodes are at a disadvantage, while arrival gateways to holiday regions have an advantage. Semi-structured interview results confirm this assumption to some extent, since Western European tourists travelling by ferry from Kiel to Klaipeda tend to stay a few hours in Kiel and up to a few days on the Lithuanian Baltic coast around Klaipeda. According to Lohmann and Pearce (2010), better or more accommodation, events/festivals or “must-see” attractions could increase length of stay in gateway locations. The most promising option for encouraging ferry passengers to spend more time at gateways is through packages that include transport and accommodation.

Yet, the question remains how to encourage ferry companies and tourism providers to cooperate in offering joint deals combining ferry travel with accommodation at the gateways. Neither tourism providers, nor ferry companies anticipate any integration of ferries into the tourism strategies of the gateway nodes and their hinterlands. This is particularly true regarding the aforementioned indifference to passenger transport development by ferry companies servicing the Eastern Baltic ports of call. Moreover, limited time available at the disposition of a motorized tourist to accomplish a planned travel itinerary means that encouraging ferry passengers to spend more time at the gateway destinations:

would most likely result in a reduction of time spent elsewhere on the trips being undertaken thus highlighting the nature of place competitiveness. While this would benefit those two nodes, it would in turn require competing places to reassess their functions. (Lohmann & Pearce, 2010, p. 274)

This time-squeeze dilemma might be particularly acute in the case of the Baltic Sea motorized tourism circuit, where eventual changes in an overall itinerary are restricted by the necessity to take yet another ferry in the central Baltic Sea which most probably is booked in advance. Thence, the studied south Baltic gateway nodes, Kiel and Klaipeda, not only compete between themselves as “gateway destinations”, but also with other Baltic destinations. The best strategy in this case might be a more targeted approach based on functional segmentation of ferry passengers (Lohmann & Pearce, 2010), that is, offering specially-tailored incentives to those motorized tourists who might be specifically interested in experiencing southern and eastern Baltic coasts and coastal cities on their Baltic Sea circuit. Yet, also for this purpose, the “quali-quantitative” investigation of both the needs and interests of motorized tourists, as well as the ways of potential reordering of their travel destinations, itineraries and leisure repertoires, is a useful research strategy. We conclude that the mixed-methods approach

combined with GIS provides a more comprehensive insight into the process of ferry tourism.

References

- Becken, S., Vuletich, S., & Campbell, S. (2007). Developing a GIS-supported tourist flow model for New Zealand. In D. Airey & J. Tribe (Eds.), *Developments in tourism research* (pp. 107–122). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Boers, B., & Cottrell, S. (2007). Sustainable tourism infrastructure planning: A GIS-supported approach. *Tourism Geographies*, 9(1), 1–21. doi:10.1080/14616680601092824
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Decrop, A. (1999). Triangulation in qualitative tourism research. *Tourism Management*, 20, 157–161. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(98)00102-2
- Decrop, A. (2004). Trustworthiness in qualitative tourism research. In J. Phillmore & L. Goodson (Eds.), *Qualitative research in tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies* (pp. 156–169). London: Routledge.
- DFDS. (2013). *The history of DFDS – from 1866 to today*. Uploaded by DFDS on December 23, 2013.
- Retrieved December 28, 2013, from <http://www.dfdsgroup.com/about/history/>
- Duval, D. T. (2007). *Tourism and transport – modes, networks, and flows*. Bristol: Channel View.
- Eurostat. (2012). *European Union coastal region statistics: Maritime passenger transport*. Uploaded by Eurostat in February 2012. Retrieved December 27, 2012, from http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Coastal_region_statistics#Maritime_passenger_transport
- Gibbons, T. (1996). Tourism afloat: The hidden discourse of relations aboard a cross-channel ferry. *JASO*, 27(1), 7–19.
- Inbakaran, R. J., Jackson, M. S., & Chhetri, P. (2006). Regional tourism attitude maps: A spatial approach to the community attitudes towards tourism in regional Victoria, Australia. In T. V. Liu (Ed.), *Tourism management: New research* (pp. 65–90). New York, NY: Nova Science.
- Jacquez, G. M. (2008). Spatial cluster analysis. In J. P. Wilson & A. S. Fotheringham (Eds.), *The handbook of geographic information science* (pp. 395–416). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Jarvis, J., & Kallas, P. (2006). Estonia – switching unions: Impacts of EU membership on tourism development. In D. Hall, M. Smith, & B. Marciszewska (Eds.), *Tourism in the New Europe: The challenges and opportunities of EU enlargement* (pp. 154–169). Wallingford: CABI.

Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14–26.

Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007). Towards a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1, 112–133.

Kapsa, E., & Roe, M. (2005). The development of the highway network in Poland and the future development of Polish ferry shipping. *European Transport/Trasporti Europei*, 29, 57–70.

Kapsa, E., & Roe, M. (2006). An analysis of the current situation for Polish ferry operators in a transitional environment. *European Transport/Trasporti Europei*, 34, 1–20.

Lazim, A., & Wahab, N. (2010). A fuzzy decision making approach in evaluating ferry service quality.

Management Research and Practice, 2(1), 94–107.

Lew, A. A., & McKercher, B. (2002). Trip destinations, gateways and itineraries: The example of Hong Kong. *Tourism Management*, 23, 609 – 621. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(02)00026-2

Lohmann, G., & Pearce, D. G. (2010). Conceptualizing and operationalizing nodal tourism functions.

Journal of Transport Geography, 18(2), 266 – 275. doi:10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2009.05.003

Lohmann, G., & Trischler, J. (2012). The failure of fast ferry catamaran operations in New Zealand and Hawaii. *Journal of Transportation Technologies*, 2(2), 102–112. doi:10.4236/jtts.2012.22012

May, J., & Mayes, W. (2004). *Ferries 2004: Southern Europe*. Windsor: Overview Press.

Porter, M. E. (2000). Location, competition, and economic development: Local clusters in a global economy. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 14(1), 15 – 34. doi:10.1177/089124240001400105

Povilanskas, R., & Armaitiene, A. (2011). Seaside resort-Hinterland Nexus: Palanga, Lithuania. *Annals of*

Tourism Research, 38(3), 1156–1177. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2011.02.004

Puhakka, R., Cottrell, S. P., & Siikamäki, P. (2014). Sustainability perspectives on Oulanka National Park, Finland: Mixed methods in tourism research. *Journal of*

Sustainable Tourism, 22(3), 480–505. doi:10.1080/09669582.2013.839690

Silverman, B. W. (1986). *Density estimation for statistics and data analysis*. New York, NY: Chapman & Hall.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed methodology. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (Eds.). (2003). *Handbook of mixed method research in the social and behavioral sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Tremblay, P. (2005). GIS techniques in tourism and recreation planning: Application to wildlife tourism. In

B. W. Ritchie, P. Burns, & C. Palmer (Eds.), *Tourism research methods: Integrating theory with practice* (pp. 163–178). Wallingford: CABI.

Van der Duim, R. (2007). Tourismscapes: An actor-network perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(4), 961–976. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2007.05.008

Van der Duim, R., Ren, C., & Jóhannesson, G. T. (2013). Ordering, materiality, and multiplicity: Enacting actor-network theory in tourism. *Tourist Studies*, 13(1), 3–20. doi:10.1177/1468797613476397

Wiskulski, T., & Bar-Koçelís, D. (2012). Passenger traffic on the Baltic Sea region in years 2000–2011.

Revista Română de Geografie Politică, XIV(1), 34–44.

Xiao, H., & Smith, S. L. J. (2006a). Case studies in tourism research: A state-of-the-art analysis. *Tourism Management*, 27, 738 – 749. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2005.11.002

Xiao, H., & Smith, S. L. J. (2006b). The making of tourism research: Insights from a social sciences journal.

Annals of Tourism Research, 33(2), 490–507. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2006.01.004

Zillinger, M. (2007). Tourist routes: A time-geographical approach on German car-tourists in Sweden.

Tourism Geographies, 9(1), 64–83. doi:10.1080/14616680601092915