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# **SCHENGEN BORDERS IN PRACTICE: FACTS ABOUT FINLAND (AND RUSSIA)**

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## **SCHENGEN BORDERS IN PRACTICE: FACTS ABOUT FINLAND (AND RUSSIA)**

This article attempts to solve the empirical puzzle posed by the way the Finnish diplomatic missions issue Schengen visas to the Russians. Building on the theory of the Self and the Other, a theoretical expectation about the uniformity of the Schengen visa regime is brought forward and further checked against the legal reality of the European Union common visa policy and the Finnish-Russian visa issuance arrangements. The case study of the experience that the Finns have with the Russians coming to their territory and history of the Finnish-Russian relations is carried out to dismantle the panoply of motives and meanings laying behind a particular visa regime and to show how the interplay of various political, economic and social factors works to produce peculiar policy outcomes. The main findings prove that despite both theoretical expectations and legal rules governing the Schengen borders and visas, in practice different member states apply the 'common' regime differently depending on both economic rationale and historical memories.

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*Finnish embassy is worried by the fact that the number of Norwegians travelling to Finland is too small, and it would not have been too difficult to make it several times bigger as there are quite some things in Finland that can attract tourists... for instance, kayaking, or, if you, say, prefer city amusements, then in Finland there are cities with night clubs and restaurants... and shopping.*

*Facts about Finland, Erlend Loe*

## **INTRODUCTION**

One remarkable fact about Finland is that in 2012 its four consular missions in Russia issued over 1.3 million Schengen visas to Russian citizens. This is around one fourth of the Finnish population. It is also roughly one fifth of all the Schengen visas issued by the 58 Russia-based Schengen consulates that year (European Commission 2013). Estonia, the second most attractive Schengen destination in Russia (as measured by the number of border crossings, see Rosturizm 2009, 2011, 2013a), only issued 128 thousand visas in 2012 (European Commission 2013), and thus did not even make up for one tenth of the Finnish record. And Germany, with a population 15 times the population of Finland, issued some 400 thousand visas (European Commission 2013), or less than one third of the Finnish figure.

Finland did not only top the list of the most popular European Union (EU) countries among the Russians. It was solely Ukraine that outstripped Finland in the chart of countries the Russians visited the most in 2012 (Rosturizm 2013b). The Russians clearly have something for Finland, and it is no wonder then that being such a popular place to go, Finland is “the biggest visa issuing state in Russia” (Salminen and Moshes 2009:16). One could frame this in terms of supply meeting demand, and with such a clear demand for visas, should it be surprising that the Finns deliver?

In fact, it should. For one thing, using the market metaphor to describe the world of visas and borders might be a stretch. Societies use visas for multiple reasons, but most importantly to control the (otherwise free) movement of persons across national borders, which essentially makes visas a means to check and restrict the demand for crossing a border, not to meet it. Furthermore, the balance between wishing to keep foreigners off (as expressed through politics) and the economic inclination to let them in, may be complicated by societal attitudes towards certain nations and foreigners.

This paper takes an example of the Finnish-Russian visa issuance arrangements to dismantle this panoply of motives and meanings and to show how this interplay of various political, economic

and social factors works to produce peculiar policy outcomes. Taking the case of Finland is particularly rewarding as Finland makes part of a broader visa regime alongside the other Schengen states, which allows for a meaningful comparison. I am arguing that despite the legal reality of the EU common visa policy, in practice different member states apply this ‘common’ regime differently depending both on their experiences with the third nationals coming to their territory and on historical memories, or, as it is put by Salminen and Moshes, on culture and history (Salminen and Moshes 2009:32).

The paper proceeds as follows. In the first section I review the theory of the Self and the Other and apply it to the Schengen visa regime. I move on to show just how particularly outstanding the Finnish visa practice is (as compared to the other Schengen states) in the second section. The third section presents analysis of the legal rules governing the common visa policy in the EU. The fourth section is used to suggest an economic explanation for the Finnish outlier, and further supplements it with elements of most similar systems comparison to see if culture and history matter in visa regimes. This is achieved through comparing Finnish and Estonian visa policies for Russia.

## **THEORIZING SCHENGEN BORDERS**

It was in the late 1980s that border as a concept emerged on the research agenda of various academic disciplines and became a matter of intense interdisciplinary inquiry. There are now many different ways of thinking about borders, starting with traditional perspectives of political geography, through mainstream international relations theories, and to diverse post-positivist approaches, both moderate and radical. Accordingly, depending on the perspective chosen, borders are either claimed to be mere physical barriers, or viewed as exclusively metaphorical constructs meaningless when stripped of the social context, with a number of approaches aspiring to integrate these arguments (for a detailed up-to-date overview, see Golunov 2012:9–27).

One possible way to think about borders in general, and Schengen borders in particular, is to consider them as a mechanism of identity construction and of distinguishing between the Self and the Other (see, e.g., Newman 2003, 2010; Houtum, Kramsch, and Zierhofer 2005; Houtum 2010). In this perspective, state borders present both physical and symbolic instrument that “maintains and controls the inner ordered space and ... separates it from the external Other, [thus] preventing it from penetrating inside and challenging this [inner] order” (Golunov 2012:26). Viewed from such an angle, borders are not just material lines fencing one state off

from another but they make integral part of the collective identity of the Self in almost Ratzelian sense (see, e.g., Barth 1998).

A more subtle perspective, yet the one that also allows to think of borders simultaneously along geographical and metaphorical lines, is given by Alex Wendt who explicitly connects the inner / outer (or the Self and the Other) dichotomy to the concept of sovereignty. As he mentions, “there is no sovereignty without an other”, for sovereignty is essentially a social construct, “and so it exists only by virtue of certain intersubjective understandings and expectations” (Wendt 1992:412). Borders, in this view, serve to mark these shared “understandings and expectations” and are therefore one major building block of sovereignty. At the same time, this does not mean that borders do no longer mark different geographical spaces under the international law, or that any doubt is cast upon their basic function of separating different sovereign states with their exclusive right to rule within their territorial limits (Golunov 2012:12). To the contrary, according to Wendt, *sovereignty has historically been primarily linked to territory* (Wendt 1992:414), and the geographical dimension of borders is therefore essential.

Taking this perspective allows for a slightly unusual view of the Schengen project. In this view, Schengen system with its abolition of border controls is not only a unique manifestation of voluntary surrender of a tangible part of European states’ sovereignties but, first and foremost, a clear sign of the change in the “intersubjective understandings and expectations” that the European states have of themselves and towards each other. Wendt calls a stable system of such “intersubjective understandings and meanings” covering states’ views of themselves and the international environment a *role structure*. We could therefore use the term to say that the launch of the Schengen project is a clear sign of a fundamental *role structure transformation* on the European continent, but how do we get to grips with this transformation?

As Wendt argues, there are three ideal types of role structures, or cultures of anarchies, that characterize relations between states. These cultures are the Hobbesian *culture of enmity*, the Lockean *culture of rivalry* and the Kantian *culture of friendship*. In a sense, all three present a reflection of the expectations the Self has towards the Other. This way, the Hobbesian culture reflects the “kill or be killed” principle, that is the constant war of all against all. The Lockean culture allows for the “live and let live” system, in which war is a possible if undesirable means of communication between states, but as a norm states would rather mutually recognize each others’ property rights and view their own security more in egoist and not competitive terms. Finally, in the Kantian culture “war is no longer considered a legitimate way of settling disputes” (for more details, see Wendt 1992, 1999:246–312).

It is now often argued that since the end of the Second World War the relations between the Western European countries (and their North Atlantic counterparts) have mutated into the Kantian culture of friendship characterized by non-violence as a principle of dispute resolution, and the rule of mutual aid or, in other words, a principle of collective security (Wendt 1999:297–302). Note though that borders present one key element of a state’s national security, because it is these borders that the state would need to protect and secure to function in its identity of a sovereign state (Wendt 1992:414), and border policies would therefore reflect the role structure existing between neighboring states.

Yet border policies can be particularly sensitive exactly because they do not necessarily deal with military threats. In most cases the Other crosses national borders unarmed, and the way the peaceful Other is treated is also indicative of the present role structure. The decision to abandon borders and border checks within the Schengen territory in 1995 marked the unique way in which the Schengen states have internalized this culture of friendship. Not only “the *cognitive* boundaries of the Self [were] extended to include the Other” (Wendt 1999:305, my emphasis), but literally the states’ physical borders were abolished to form the new collective Self.

Allowing such a deep trust towards each other and practicing this “we-feeling” within the Schengen zone, the member states also need to relate themselves with what does not make part of their collective inner order. This in turn, leads to the rigid external border, visa and migration policies that make scholars and journalists alike repeatedly use the infamous metaphors of *Fortress Europe* and *Schengen curtain* to illustrate the difficulties one faces when entering the Schengen zone (see, e.g., Geddes 2000; Bendel 2005; Asher 2008; Wojciechowski 2009; Carr 2012). Moreover, the existence of this inner order provides for a clear need for managing the external borders jointly and for conducting all the related policies in a uniform manner.

Among various border-related policies, visas seem the most nuanced tool of marking the Self and the Other. Visas allow to socially construct the same border differently for different groups, or to make borders polysemic, to use Balibar’s term (Balibar 2002:79). Visa-free regime with the US, for instance, clearly reflects the culture of friendship existing between the EU and Washington. At the same time, this regime is still able to distinguish between the culture of friendship among the Schengen countries and the role structure of friendship existing between the EU and the US – most visible in the fact that the American citizens would still need to pass the passport control when entering the Schengen zone.

On the other hand, the ‘black’ list countries, whose nationals must have a visa to enter the EU border-free territory (Meloni 2005:50), are clearly marked as the external Other vis-à-vis the collective Self of the Schengen states. Issuing a Schengen visa is a symbolic act of allowing the

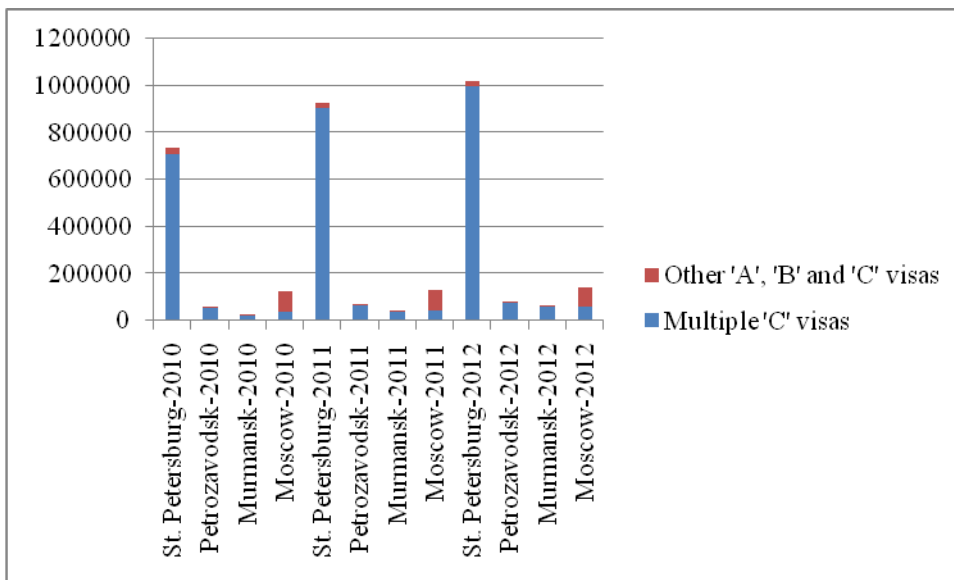
Other into the collective Self, and, what is more important, any consulate of any Schengen country is, in fact, vested with this symbolic power of inviting foreigners on behalf of the collective Self. As Salminen and Moshes put it, “Schengen states have shared their national sovereignty with other Schengen states, thereby altering the whole essence of visa issuance” (Salminen and Moshes 2009:9).

All these things being said (and often in language surprisingly high-flown for such a technical field), should not we be surprised to observe any variation in the visa policy implementation at all, and with extreme outliers of the Finnish scale in particular? In the sections that follow I review the Finnish visa issuance practice in Russia, scrutinize the Schengen legal regime to see how much divergence it allows for, and finally give a specific explanation for the Finnish case.

## **FINNISH-RUSSIAN VISA ARRANGEMENTS**

It has already been mentioned in the introduction that the sheer amount of visas Finland issues to Russian citizens makes it a remarkable outlier. Yet this is not the only thing to set Finland apart and make the Finnish case so special. Another peculiarity symptomatic of the Finnish-Russian visa issuance regime is the fact that there is a huge disproportion between the number of the Schengen visas issued in the Northwestern Federal District of Russia (NWFD) and visas issued in Moscow, 89% and 11% respectively for the year 2012. Obviously the trend would normally be reverse, with the capital attracting more visas. This effect might be upset by the fact that the NWFD borders Finland, but then again, the same record for Estonia, that also borders the NWFD, is 63% and 37%, respectively. And for Germany that is the third most visited Schengen country (Rosturizm 2013a) it goes 14% and 63%, respectively (European Commission 2013).

Another distinctive feature of the regime has to do with the ‘type’ of visas issued by the Finnish diplomatic missions in the NWFD – 98% of them are multiple-entry ‘C’ visas valid for half a year or one year. This is again not the case with the other Schengen diplomatic missions, and even compared to Moscow, 98% of ‘C’ visas is quite outstanding, as only 42% of visas issued by the Finns in the Russian capital are multiple-entry visas (European Commission 2013). And the common practice is for a Schengen member state to provide the applicant with a single-entry visa for the duration of stay equal to (or 15 days longer than) the period of the planned trip.



Graph 1. Shares of multiple-entry 'C' visas in the total amount of Schengen visas issued in St. Petersburg, Petrozavodsk, Murmansk and Moscow by the Finnish diplomatic missions per year, 2010-2012 (European Commission 2011, 2012, 2013).

Moreover, the actual practice with the NWF D Finnish consulates (which are three: in St. Petersburg, Petrozavodsk and Murmansk)<sup>2</sup> is that a first time application for a Schengen half a year multiple-entry visa only needs to be supported with a very short list of documents: (1) completed standard application form with a photo; (2) valid foreign passport and (3) travel insurance. Once obtained, such visa entitles its owner to receive *a one year* multiple-entry visa with the total duration of stay of roughly three months; and the list of the requested documents stays the same.

This practice may pose some questions, especially when one compares this *real* list with the official list of documents which can be found on the joint webpage of the Finnish Embassy in Moscow and the Finnish Consulate-General in St. Petersburg (Oformlenie vizes n.d.). Besides three above-mentioned points this list includes (4) “documents or information supporting the purpose and conditions of the journey (the purpose can be proven, e.g., by invitation..., employer’s accompanying letter or hotel reservation)” (Oformlenie vizes n.d.). Moreover, such documents and information would normally be requested from anyone applying for a Finnish Schengen visa in Moscow.

In other words, the NWF D residents enjoy quite a particular visa issuance regime and can in fact apply for a Finnish Schengen multiple-entry visa without planning any journeys beforehand (Ahonen 2009), while the Russian citizens from other districts have to plan their trips, that is, book a hotel or receive an invitation from their friends before going to the Moscow-based Finnish Visa center. Yet, even for those who are not from the NWF D and, thus, have to provide

<sup>2</sup> Note that the Kaliningrad region, legally part of the Russian NWF D, is out of the North-Western Finnish consular district and is served by the embassy in Moscow. This also means it is excluded from all calculations on visa statistics for the NWF D.



more documents when applying for a Finnish Schengen visa, the application procedure is still much easier compared to the rules governing issuance of Schengen visas in other member states' consulates and embassies where additional documents (supporting subsistence or/and means of transport such as, for instance, return ticket booking), are also requested (see, e.g., Podacha zayavleniya n.d.). So, this practice clearly proves that “consular section requirements for documents supporting the application vary greatly” from one Schengen country to another (Salminen and Moshes 2009:29).

The difference between different member states' visa issuance regimes for the Russians is even more visible when one examines the percentages of refused applications by different Schengen countries. This way, the refusal rate of the Finnish diplomatic missions was 0.7 per cent of applications in 2012 while the Germans refused to 2.07 per cent of the applicants the same year; Estonia's record was 1.12 per cent in 2012 (European Commission 2013). Yet, if one checks this number for Belgium (9.82% in 2012) and compares it to the Portuguese one (0.17% in 2012), s/he would clearly notice how huge such discrepancies can in fact be (for more details, see Table 1).

Schengen states	2010	2011	2012
BE	10,14%	12,90%	9,82%
NO	2,42%	2,38%	2,38%
DE	2,34%	1,88%	2,07%
EE	2,10%	0,80%	1,12%
FI	0,72%	0,62%	0,70%
IT	0,61%	0,45%	0,34%
EL	0,66%	0,43%	0,30%
PT	0,54%	0,63%	0,17%
Average	1,60%	1,50%	1,09%

Table 1. Percentage of refusals to grant 'A', 'B' and 'C' Schengen visas for the Schengen countries with the biggest and smallest numbers of refusals in 2012 as well as for Finland and Estonia, 2010-2012 (European Commission 2011, 2012, 2013).

Moreover, even such barely-measurable variables like “treatment meted out and attitude displayed by the staff” of different Schengen states' diplomatic representations differ quite substantially among the member states (for more details, see Boratyński et al. 2006; Chajewski et al. 2009). Thus, it is obvious that “the European consular departments do not apply the [EU] regulations in a uniform manner..., putting individuals on an unequal footing” (Salminen and Moshes 2009:6). The question then is whether the EU legislation provides such room for maneuver?

## UNITY IN DIVERSITY OR VICE VERSA?

Strangely enough, up until the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty no previous EU treaty explicitly mentioned the phrase “common policy” addressing visa issues. It has been only since December 2009 that the Article 77 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union gave the EU competences in “common policy on visas and other short-stay residence permits” (Lisbon Treaty 2010:76) and stipulated that decisions in this area have to be adopted under the Community method (Lisbon Treaty 2010:76).

Yet, it was already in 1990 that the contracting parties to the Convention on the Schengen Agreement stated the clear aim of adopting “a common policy... on the arrangements for visas” (European Parliament 1996:22). However, neither the Maastricht treaty nor the Amsterdam treaty, which incorporated the Schengen *acquis* into the body of the EU legislation, stipulated the creation of the EU common visa policy. Nevertheless, Amsterdam presupposed a transitional period of five years after its entry into force within which a whole bunch of the EU secondary legislation on short-stay visas had to be adopted including “(a) the list of third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders... [and] (b) the procedures and conditions for issuing visas by Member States” (Amsterdam Treaty 1997:201). Accordingly, the former was adopted in 2001 (Council of the European Union 2001 as amended on several occasions). Year later the Common Consular Instructions (CCI) saw the light.

To understand the degree of uniformity of the procedures and whether they provide enough room for ‘national’ maneuver one should examine the CCI as for the eight years they have been a precise guide to the visa issuance arrangements of the Schengen countries.

When it comes to the two main peculiarities of the Finnish visa issuance arrangements for the NWFD, namely (1) absence of the requirements to provide any documents neither supporting the purpose and the conditions of stay nor guaranteeing subsistence and return and (2) issuance of Schengen travel multiple-entry visas for half a year and year almost as a rule, the latest 2005 version of the CCI appears to be quite flexible.

Point 2 of the Part III stipulates that “the staff responsible for issuing the visas *may* exempt the applicant from submitting... documents [supporting the purpose and the conditions of visit]” “if the information supplied is sufficient to enable the diplomatic mission... to ascertain that the applicant is acting in good faith”; moreover, when the subsistence and return issues are concerned Point 3 reads that applicants “must ultimately be able to convince the diplomatic mission... that they have adequate means to ensure subsistence and return” (Council of the European Union 2005:9). Yet, there is no obligation for the consulates to ask the applicant to

carry such conviction. When it comes to the ‘types’ of ‘C’ visa Point 2.1.3 of the Part I states that “this visa *may* be issued for one or several entries... [and] *may* be valid for one year” if the applicant needs “to travel frequently to one or several Schengen states” (Council of the European Union 2005:5).

So, given all the *mays*, it can be concluded that the CCI defined a very loose framework that made it possible for the individual member states to make their visa regimes, though in theory aiming at becoming ‘common’ for all the Schengen states, diverse. In such a situation, it is hardly possible to speak about really ‘common’ visa policy of the EU, contrary to our theoretical expectations.

On April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010 the new Community Visa code replaced the Consular instructions. It seems logical to assume that this Code was intended to make the member states stick to a ‘more common’ visa policy, so that practice does no longer contradict the letter of law, which, as it was mentioned earlier, as of December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 presupposed a “common policy on visas and other short-stay residence permits” (Lisbon Treaty 2010:76). Let’s examine the articles dealing with (a) supporting documents and (b) ‘types’ of travel visas – the two issues that the Finns used to interpret loosely when the CCI were in force, thus making the visa issuance arrangements with the NWFD so special.

After giving a long and detailed list of supporting documents that “the applicant *shall* present” “when applying for a uniform visa” Article 14 in its Point 6 reads: “consulates *may waive* one or more of the requirements... [on the supporting documents] in the case of an applicant known to them for his integrity and reliability, in particular the lawful use of previous visas” (Council of the European Union and European Parliament 2009:9–10). Put differently, this means that the Finnish Consulate-General in St. Petersburg can still require its ‘real’ list of documents checking only that before applying for a visa the person correctly used her other Schengen visas.

When it comes to ‘types’ of travel visas, Article 24 reads: “a visa *may* be issued for one, two or multiple entries; [t]he period of validity shall not exceed five years” and the choice depends on “integrity and reliability [of the applicant], in particular the lawful use of previous uniform visas or visas with limited territorial validity” (Council of the European Union and European Parliament 2009:13–14). Thus, the Finns can still issue one year visas to the NWFD residents after the latter used their first half a year Finnish Schengen travel visa.

There is, therefore, no doubt that Finland obeys the EU legislation. Yet, the requirements for applicants from the NWFD are exceptionally minimal. As pointed out by Matti Sarasmaa, the expert in border questions and visa-matters of the Finnish Permanent Representation, “Finland

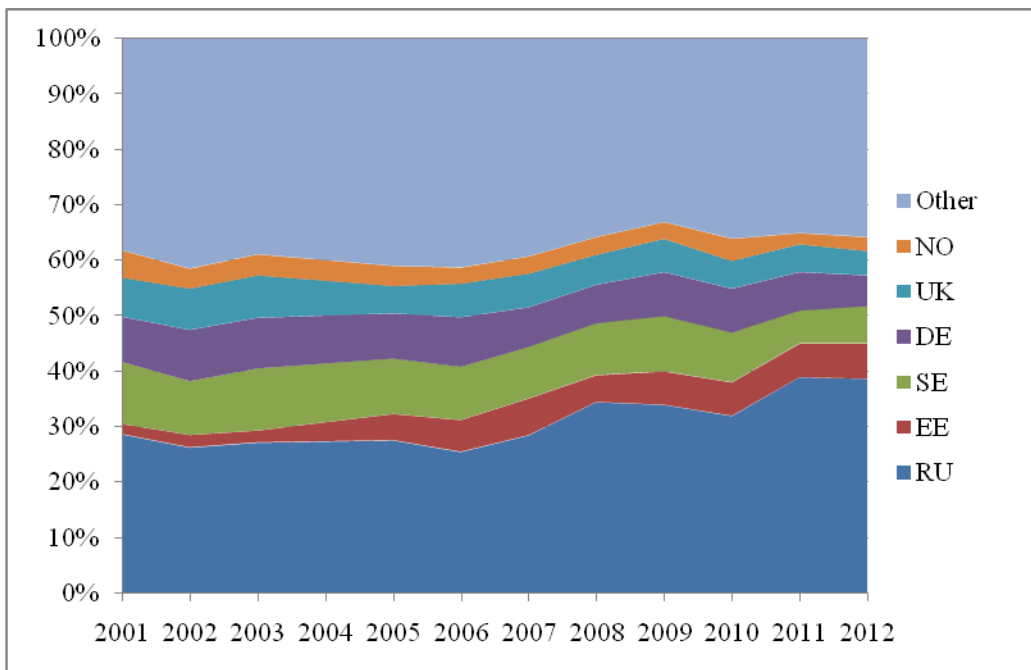
complies with the EU visa policy but interprets it in a Russian-friendly way” (Paakkola and Monar 2010:31).

It can be concluded that despite the explicit mentioning of the EU common visa policy in the Lisbon treaty, the 2010 Visa code has not made the member states stick to strict common rules, still leaving the choice of a visa issuance regime to the individual Schengen countries. The question then is why the Finns use this room for ‘national’ maneuver so enthusiastically?

## **FINNISH ANOMALY EXPLAINED**

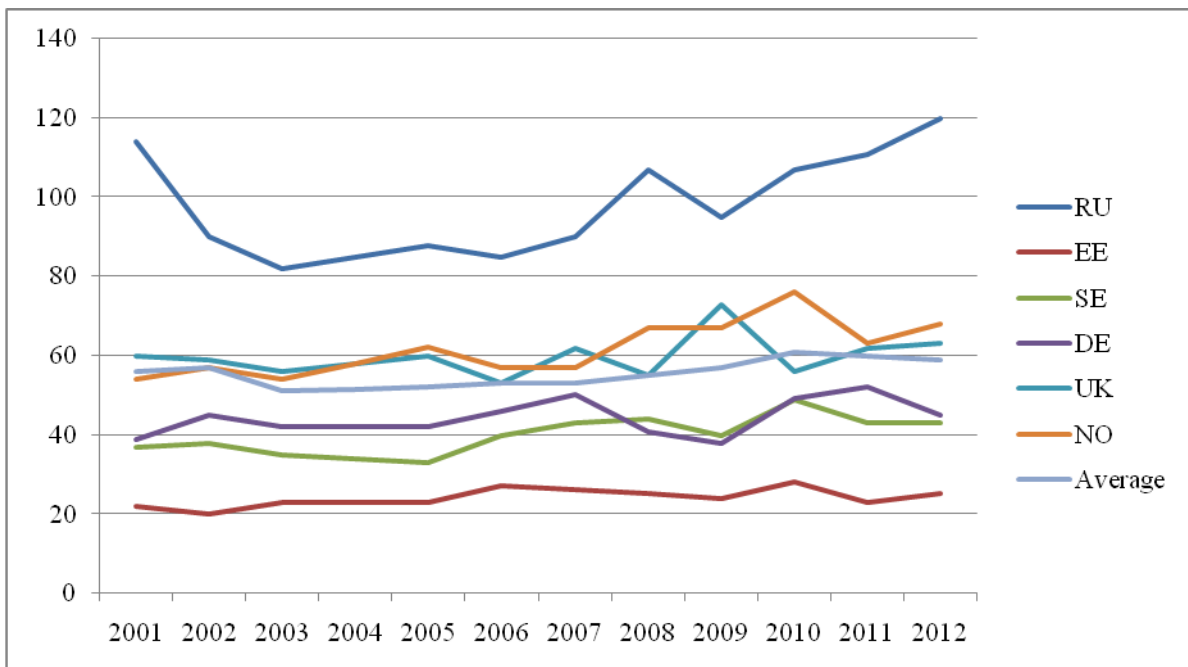
Some authors argue that visa issuance arrangements of individual member states can deeply depend, for instance, on the “labour market protection interests” (Salminen and Moshes 2009:17). This way, Germany stays quite ‘cold’ on the issue of visa-free regime between the EU and Russia, as there is a strong belief among the Germans that their country is an attractive place for the Russian job-hunters (Salminen and Moshes 2009:17–18). Similarly, the labour market expectations used to drive the discussion on Bulgarian and Romanian entry into the visa-free zone even after the two countries entered the EU.

These expectations are strongly informed by the experience one country has with people arriving from the other. Let’s then consider what experience the Finns have with Russian tourists coming to their country. One ample illustration of this experience is palpable in the statement made by the then Finnish Consul-General to St. Petersburg Olli Perheentupa in 2008, who said that “Russia is... a very profitable neighbor for Finland” (Titova 2008). Translated into numbers and figures, this statement means that since 2000 the Russians have been the most numerous national group among the foreigners visiting Finland, who spend there the largest proportion of money compared to five other ‘most-visiting-Suomi’ nations (for more details, see Graph 2).



Graph 2. Shares in the total amount of money brought by foreigners to Finland, 2001-2012 (Matkailun edistämiskeskus / Tilastokeskus - Finnish Tourist Board / Statistics Finland 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013).

Moreover, an average sum spent by an average Russian in Finland per day was in 2012 between 1.8 and 4.8 times as large as that of any other national coming from the five above-mentioned countries (Matkailun edistämiskeskus / Tilastokeskus - Finnish Tourist Board / Statistics Finland 2013:37–41). And as the Graph 3 shows this has been the trend for more than a decade.



Graph 3. Foreigners' average expenditure in Finland, EUR per day, 2001-2012 (Matkailun edistämiskeskus / Tilastokeskus - Finnish Tourist Board / Statistics Finland 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013).

This situation can be explained by the way the Russians, especially from the NWFD, travel to Finland. Contrary to what was expected by Anssi Paasi who wrote in 1999 that “most Russians

are not ‘happy border-crossing consumers’, nor will they become such for a long time” (Paasi 1999:674), today around 70% of trips made by the Russian citizens to the country are same-day trips (Matkailun edistämiskeskus / Tilastokeskus - Finnish Tourist Board / Statistics Finland 2009:61, 2010:23, 2011:22, 2012:22, 2013:26) having as their aim shopping (which is obviously a ‘money-intense’ enterprise) in border towns such as, for instance, Laappenranta (Ahonen 2009; Titova 2008). Taking into account these numbers there is no wonder why former deputy-Consul of the Visa unit in St. Petersburg Consulate-General Harri Heikkinen stated in 2009 that “these one-day shopping trips are a very positive thing from... the [Finnish] point of view” (Ahonen 2009).

This record and national peculiarities of trips made by the Russians to Finland seem a convincing explanation of the specific visa issuance arrangements between Finland and Russia. Moreover, they can also explain the differences existing between visa regimes in the NWFD and in Moscow. It is obvious that these are the NWFD residents who go for same-day shopping trips to Finland and not people from other federal districts. That is the clear reason for the Finns to issue multiple-entry visas for half a year or even a year. That also explains why there is no requirement to provide the NWFD Finnish diplomatic missions with an invitation or hotel booking, for a one day shopping tour involves neither.

At the same time, often keeping this requirement for all other Russian citizens the Finns probably try to avoid the situation when easy ‘visa-obtaining’ procedures could tempt other districts’ residents (who, obviously, do not go to Finland just for weekly-shopping) to apply for a Finnish Schengen travel visa whatever the Schengen country of their planned trip (which is already often the case for St. Petersburg, see Dneprovoy and Miklin 2007).

Thus, it can be concluded that the *experience* the Finns have with the Russian tourists determines the visa issuance regime the Finns have for Russia and the NWFD, in particular. Yet, it can be equally assumed that any other Schengen state that borders Russia should follow the same path to attract tourists, shoppers and money from Russia.

In this respect, Estonia is almost an ideal case for the comparison. But despite the structural characteristics being very similar to the Finnish ones (such as the distance between St. Petersburg and the border towns of Lappeenranta, Finland, and Narva, Estonia), Estonia is lagging far behind Finland both in number of issued visas and in ‘softness’ of its requirements for visa-obtaining procedures. This, on the one hand, does not contradict our conclusion that the economic rationale is a strong predictor of the visa regime a Schengen country chooses for a given third country. Yet, on the other hand, the Estonian case surely challenges the premise that it is *only* money that determines the visa regime choice. Money may be a necessary condition, but

it is far from being sufficient.

In 2007 Mark Leonard and Nicu Popescu made what they called “a power audit of EU-Russian relations” assessing what relations different EU member states had with Russia (Leonard and Popescu 2007). This audit classified Finland as belonging to a group of the EU countries labeled ‘friendly pragmatists’, whereas Estonia was placed in the group of ‘frosty pragmatists’. Though both groups, according to Leonard and Popescu, “take full advantage of the opportunities offered by Russia’s economic growth” and “tend to be pragmatic and oriented towards business interests”, the former keeps calm and carries on even when Moscow’s actions are questionable in terms of respect for human rights, etc., while the latter gets distracted with such situations, becomes picky and openly raises concerns over Russia’s behavior (Leonard and Popescu 2007:36, 42). Yet, when visas and cross-border activities are concerned, it seems that being ‘frosty’ turns out to be more important to Estonia than being a ‘pragmatist’.

As Timo Vahavainen argues, this can be explained by historical memories the citizens and the elite have about a third country (more to that, it is, in fact, the way the elite traditionally uses these memories to positively or negatively assess the relations with the third country that plays the role) (Vahavainen 2006:27–29). Over the last twenty five years a lot has been written about how the Finns related themselves to the Soviet Union before its collapse and how the dissolution of the USSR has changed the way of constructing the Self in Finland (Luostarinen 1989; Medvedev 1999; Browning 2002; Forsberg 2006; Kangas 2011; Izotov and Laine 2013). Yet what seem to be two most important factors underlying the Finnish *friendliness* towards Russia today is how the Finnish elites constructed the Soviets on the one hand, and how the Finnish society got to know the Russians, on the other.

In 1959, after the trip to the Soviet Union Matti Kekkonen, a member of the Finnish Parliament, wrote about Russian people in the newspaper *Maakansa*: “all the persons we met made a strong impression on us with their openness and sincere friendship”(Kostiainen 1999).

Moreover, not only Finnish high-ranked officials visited the USSR. Already in the beginning of 1970s the Finnish tourism to the Soviet Union turned to be a mass tourism which made around 15% of all the incoming tourism to the USSR (Kostiainen 1997). Starting from no more than 2.5 thousands tourists in mid-1950s, traveling to the Soviet Union became a popular enterprise among the Finns already in the mid-1970s with around 200 thousands Finnish citizens going to its territory each year (Kostiainen 1997). The large majority of the Finns visiting their Eastern neighbor were ordinary people “who participated in planned, standardised tourist routes”, the most popular of which was “a four-day roundtrip from Helsinki to Leningrad, de luxe in every detail but priced at \$74 all-inclusive”, as the *Floridian St. Petersburg Times* magazine stated in

1962 (Helsinki-Leningrad 1962).

Finnish citizens came to the USSR looking for relaxation and amusement; as well they were curious about Russian culture and the Soviet life-style (Kostiainen 1999). A tiny minority of these tourists, however, were infamous ‘vodka-tourists’ who caused a lot of trouble in Leningrad participating in “illegal selling and buying of items [such as jeans], currency exchange, etc.” (Kostiainen 1999) and often being duped by Russian tricksters. Yet, even they nostalgically reminisce about these trips (Tuominen and Lur’e 2008).

To promote Finnish traveling to the Soviet Union in 1974 the “Finnish-Soviet treaty on travel affairs” was made public which was supposed to facilitate ‘visa-obtaining’ procedures for both countries. This treaty “was designed in the same way as the treaties between the Soviet Union and the Soviet bloc countries”. It was emphasized at that time that only two more countries outside the block – Iraq and Italy – had the same type of treaties (Kostiainen 1997), thus, the special relations between the Soviet Union and Finland were clearly stressed.

These relations are still perceived as special ones. In 2008 Perheentupa stated that Finland had “‘the most unique’ relations with Russia of all European Union countries” (Titova 2008) also recalling the Soviet times and the Finns coming to Leningrad for “cheap vodka or cheap entertainment”. Reminiscing about that time, he also emphasized that “the first aim for... [his] time as a consul... [would] be to improve the visa issuing procedures for people traveling to Finland” (Titova 2008).

Thus, the Finnish case clearly shows that for a Schengen state to be a ‘friendly pragmatist’ towards a third country when it comes to issuing visas both economic rationale and the positively constructed historical memories are needed.

## **CONCLUSION**

The article begins with pointing out to one remarkable fact about Finland and its visa issuance arrangement with Russia. This Finnish outlier as compared to the practices of other Schengen member states reasonably seems to be something puzzling taking into account both the explicit declaration of the EU common visa policy made in the Lisbon treaty and the theoretical expectations about Schengen regime and visas built on the Self and the Other approach towards borders.

Dismantling the case through the thorough examination of the EU secondary legislation on visas, the experience with the Russians and historical memories the Finns have about their Eastern



neighbor the paper proves that Finland has each and every possibility, rationale and will to apply the EU visa provisions in Russia in the way it does. The most interesting and controversial outcome of such a 'Russian-friendly' regime is, however, the fact that Finland in a sense behaves like a naughty room-mate in the Schengen house inviting its friends in numerous amounts to visit not only its own room but the whole building without any prior notice while the general rule of sharing the house is to invite selected guests for a special dinner at a certain time. Thus, this finding calls for a more complex theory of collective Self and the culture of friendship that would allow for accommodating multiple Selves with their multiple understandings of collective Selfness.

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