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**Service provision and social cohesion in rural areas:
interaction between commuting, mobility and the residential
preferences in Latvia**

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Abstract

The main issue addressed in this study is interaction of development policy of agricultural and rural areas with the regional and cohesion policies.

This paper is based on an empirical study of everyday commuting models and spatial practices of different social groups of rural people in Latvia. This article analyzes data from a survey “Place, capabilities, migration” conducted in 2011 with a total of 1009 respondents in Latvia.

The theoretical basis of research is rooted in the mobility studies and sociological and geographical conceptualization of space and place.

The main focus is on analysis of relationship between commuting, mobility and the place-attachment. What are the main reasons of rural population mobility and everyday commuting? What services and where rural people use? What should be done to make rural places more attractive for people as places of work and residence?

Keywords: rural and local development, social cohesion, commuting, mobility.

JEL classification: JEL R.58.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rural development issues must become *consensus* decisions of various groups of rural population and social cohesion is one of the strategic goals of rural and regional development. Further concentration and intensification of agricultural production decrease the share of rural population employed in agriculture.

“Prosperous people in sustainably populated rural areas of Latvia” is the strategic vision stated in Latvian Rural Development National Strategy Plan 2007-2013. Policy evaluation usually is focused on particular rural development programme (RDP) intervention activities often neglecting whole rural and regional development context, as a result ignoring important agents and resources of rural development such as changes in the employment structure of rural population, socio-economic impact of small towns to the surrounding territories.

Social cohesion defined as “the capacity of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members – minimising disparities and avoiding marginalisation – to manage differences and divisions and ensure the means of achieving welfare for all members”(New Strategy and Council of Europe Action Plan for Social Cohesion) should be based on wide engagement of rural population in local development processes. Significant but unintended outcome of the RDP practice sometimes is widening of the gap between rural people who have and who do not have „*project experience*”. Knowledge and skills obtained in the process of the preparation of the project proposal and project management play stratifying role in rural areas.

Ability to attract human resources to rural areas is the central problem in the rural development in Latvia. More and more people live in rural areas but work in towns.

Commuting to nearby town to work is wide spread practice, providing access to the most vital services and opportunities. In regional development context distance from Riga, the capital is becoming more important than regional differences.

2. PLACE ATTACHMENT, ACCESS TO SERVICES AND COMMUTING

The use of services in a certain territory indicates a personal interaction with the place - regular territorial practices, which result in knowledge of the place, place identity and positive or negative attitudes related to a place (e.g., satisfaction with different functional aspects of a place, opportunities offered by a place etc.), place attachment, sense of belonging. (Manzo 2003). Access to services in a place is one of the elements (along with place identity and sense of belonging to a community) that attach people to a place (Low & Altman 1992, Gieryn, 2000).

Describing place attachment and sense of belonging to a place researchers acknowledge that it is formed not only by the emotional bonds, linked directly on the experience of environment and community like sense of home, sense of belonging to a local community, identification with place, but also by satisfaction with a structure of opportunities in a place (Low & Altman 1992; Stedman 2002). Researchers in environmental psychology and geography have also used the concept of “place dependency” emphasizing that emotional place and community attachment are as substantial as the functional aspects of a place: opportunities to work, to study, to realize the preferable life style or to reach a certain quality of life in a place of residence or within an accessible distance (Giuliani, 2003).

The structure of opportunities in a place is connected to the territorial capital – the development opportunities created by resources and their combinations (van der Ploeg & Marsden 2008). The structure of opportunities in a place is the capacity of a territory to satisfy the demands of people for quality of life.

The structure of opportunities in a place is frequently measured as satisfaction with services and their accessibility from the place of residence, as well as the readiness to move to another place of residence if a current place of residence does not provide the desirable opportunities (Giuliani, 2003). The accessibility of different services (roads and traffic infrastructure, public transportation included) in a place of residence and within a reachable distance create the everyday mobility space (van der Land 2005; Gustafson 2006, Schönfelder, Stefanan& Axhausen 2003). Mobility includes not only the possibilities of physical movement, but also the internet and communication technologies (Sheller& Urry 2006). Thus it is possible to regard the everyday mobility space as the environment within which people act physically on a daily basis, as well as the environment where people gain indirect experience through internet, television, contacts with friends, acquaintances (Urry, 2007).

Everyday mobility is a substantial resource that provides access to different opportunities. Meanwhile it needs also relevant material and social resources – access to transport infrastructure, personal means of transport or public transport, as well as an ability and motivation to go somewhere (Kaufmann, Bergman, Joye 2004, Cass, Shove, Urry 2005).

Opportunities of everyday mobility or lack of them is tightly connected to the risk of social exclusion. Opportunities to engage in everyday mobility in rural areas, e.g., related to a job, receiving the desirable services, maintenance of social contacts is tightly connected to the distance from the urban centres, available transport infrastructure and financial resources people have (Schönfelder & Axhausen 2003). Thus mobility as a resource is not equally accessible to everyone and that can be an aspect that widens the gap of social inequality. Previous research shows that higher mobility opportunities are related to a higher accessibility to different services and social networks –mobility is important to find a job, in a situation if the place of residence is located in relatively isolated territory; lack of mobility hinders opportunities to involve in different social activities, and often is related to difficulties in access to information and further education (Kenyon, Lyons, Rafferty 2002).

Thus the people from rural areas who have the opportunities and resources for mobility – people with higher income, who own or can use the means of transport and may have to commute daily in order to get to work are in this situation in a better position than those who do not have the resources – have no personal vehicle, have a difficult access to the public transport, do not have sufficient income etc. (Cloke 1996). The opportunities of mobility – intensity of mobility and the covered space – the radius of mobility varies also in different social and demographic groups of people (for example, Jetzkowitz, Schneider, Brunzel 2007).

Limited possibilities of commuting which is an important aspect of quality of life makes people consider leaving the rural areas as place of residence if there are no reasonable opportunities of work, education, shopping, bank services and other opportunities and services within a reachable distance.

3. RESEARCH DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

This article analyzes data from a survey “Place, capabilities, migration” conducted in 2011 with a total of 1009 respondents in Latvia. For the aims of this research we use a subset of a selection of 344 respondents from rural areas. The aim of the empirical research is to examine the everyday commuting models and spatial practices of different social groups of rural people in Latvia. In order to do that, data on employment, studies and consumption of services (the “basket of services”) and the geographical “dispersion” of use of services in respect of the place of residence were measured.

“Basket of services” is related to the lifestyle of people and their quality of life – the need to use services (e.g., shopping, bank services, education and health care) and their accessibility in the influence of different factors (e.g., service costs, physical distance of a service).

In the survey respondents were asked a question: “Where have you usually been using different services in the last 12 months?” about following services and opportunities: shopping, bank services, health care, education and further education, possibility to attend culture, leisure

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and sports events, everyday services (café, hairdresser etc.) and recreation (hiking, outing) – together seven daily often used and necessary services or opportunities.¹

To evaluate the diversity of the used (and accessible to each respondent) “basket of services” the index was calculated summarizing the information about the services and opportunities that respondent had used in the last 12 months. The value of the created index was measured on a scale of “7” – respondent had not used any of the mentioned services (opportunities) in the last 12 months, to “0” – respondent in this period of time had used all of the offered services (e.g., calculating average values of index in the groups of respondents, the value of index “3.67” means that respondents in this group have used on average 3-4 services or opportunities offered, but the value of index “1.60” – respondents have used on average 5-6 opportunities, services from offered).

Based on the information on the use of different services, respondents were grouped using the method of cluster analysis, thus characterizing the existing empirical “baskets of service consumption”. In this way it is possible to evaluate the “basket” of services used by respondents². Meanwhile the results of the research allow us to characterize not only the diversity of services accessible to a respondent individually in the place of residence, but also the structure of opportunities in the place – what kind of services are accessible in a place of residence generally.

Geographical dispersion of the consumption of services and use of opportunities is a part of people’s everyday activity space³. In the survey respondents were asked to specify the territorial scale within which they have used the previously mentioned seven services in the last 12 months – in the place of residence, in other city or territorial unit in the territory of municipality, in Riga or in other place in Latvia or abroad (respondents could mark all the answers). In addition to the previous services and opportunities, the work or study place of the respondent was recorded, if the respondent was engaged in activities in the moment of the research.

Based on the information provided by respondents indexes that characterize frequency of usage of services in different territories in the time of a year were created (value scale from 0 – none of the services are used – to 9 – in the given territorial level all the offered services and opportunities are used). Thus the intensity of use of services in different territorial scales – place of residence, other place in the municipality, Riga, etc. was identified, thereby characterizing the commuting space and spatial practices of the respondents. Using the information on the intensity of services and opportunities in different territorial levels respondents were grouped using the method of cluster analysis. In result information on empirically existing types of commuting space in relation to work, studies and services was acquired. This allows characterisation of the activity spaces and spatial practices which are the most typical.

¹ The meaning of those services is confirmed by other that pays attention to objective quality of life (Tisenkopfs & Bela-Krūmiņa 2006).

² Unfortunately existent information does not allow specifying the reasons in detail why the services or opportunities are not used, therefore we have to accept that it is either not needed or not accessible in a place of residence, or not accessible to the respondent within available resources.

³ Substantial part of the daily life space is related to social contacts, but those were not examined in this research.

Meanwhile this information implicitly characterizes the accessibility of different opportunities and services from a place of residence of respondent, i.e., in this way measured everyday living space of respondent implicitly characterizes the structure of opportunities in a place of residence of respondent.

4. EVERYDAY MOBILITY OF RURAL INHABITANTS IN CONNECTION TO THE USE OF DIFFERENT OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES

Data of the survey shows that everyday mobility in the rural areas is rather minor – two thirds of the respondents (62%) work in the place of residence. One fifth (22%) works in another city or territorial unit in the territory of the municipality⁴. Comparing to the other cities (except Riga where almost all of the respondents work in the place of residence) 82% of the working works in the place of the residence.

Where the rural inhabitants get their everyday services? 85% of the rural inhabitants have done shopping in the place of residence and 36% - in another city or rural area in their municipality. Doctors and health care have been used in the place of residence by 56% of respondents (28% elsewhere in the municipality).

Other services in the place of residence have been used more rarely than in the half of the cases. Use of different everyday services – cafe, hairdresser etc. – in the last 12 months was not urgent for 11% of inhabitants of Riga and other cities and 24% of rural inhabitants. From those rural respondents who have used those services two fifths have used them in the place of residence (40%), one fourth – 27% in the framework of the municipality, 12% - in Riga.

Bank services in the place of residence were used by 33% of rural inhabitants (42% in other city or rural area in the municipality), but one fifth – 20% of respondents – have not used them.

Cultural events have been attended by rural inhabitants more rarely than inhabitants of Riga or other cities. In Riga only one fourth of the respondents in the last 12 months have not attended cultural events (22%), in other cities the proportion of those is 39%, but in the rural areas – 50%. One fifth of the rural respondents – 21% have attended the events in the place of residence, 15% in the municipality and 21% – also in Riga.

Hiking, outing, recreation characterizes the recreational qualities of the countryside (and also the “green fields” of the cities); in the last 12 months those activities have been interesting for 76% of inhabitants of Riga and 54% of inhabitants of other cities, and 44% of rural inhabitants. In the rural areas it has happened most often – 17% of the cases in the place of the residence, 14% - elsewhere in the municipality, 16% - elsewhere in Latvia.

Studies, courses have been attended by 23% of rural respondents, 5% in their place of residence, 11% - elsewhere in the municipality, 8% – in Riga.

⁴ It has, however, to be taken into consideration that after the Administratively Territorial Reform in 2009 municipalities are rather different in size, therefore a municipality can be both a small or a rather large territory – for example, like former districts, therefore the geographical scale in this case is different.

This way it is possible to characterize the “basket” of used services that implicitly characterizes the lifestyle of respondents, and countryside as an activity space – territory for using services. From the results of the research we can conclude that in the rural areas shopping is accessible relatively often, in 40% of cases – different other consumer services and for one third of respondents – bank services. Different consumer services and bank services are better accessible in other places – city or elsewhere in the territory of a municipality.

More diverse choice of the services and opportunities is used by younger rural inhabitants. The most active users or different opportunities are 18-24 years and 25-34 year old inhabitants; until the age of 44 people have been more active, demanding to the living environment, place of residence in the sense of using different services. After age of 44 – between 44-54 year old inhabitants the average use of services is 2.7 or 4-5 services, but in the group of 55-74 year olds – 3.7 or 3-4 services or opportunities. People with high level of education, relatively high income and employed have a more diverse “basket of used services and opportunities”.

1. The “basket of services” used by inhabitants in the year time – types of using different services

From what kind of services people have used in the last year’s time a typology of characterizing “baskets of services” and implicitly lifestyle was created – respondents were grouped in three groups, from which the 1st group includes people with a medium diversity of services (have used 4-5 from 7 services), 2nd group – people with small diversity of used services (have used 2-3 from 7 services) and 3rd group – respondents with high diversity of used services (have used 6-7 from 7 services).

Among the most actively used services is shopping, banks and other everyday services – respondents have done shopping in all the three groups; banks and everyday services have been used by all respondents from 1st and 3rd groups (with medium and high diversity of used goods), but use of medical services, culture and recreation differs more.

1st type: medium diverse “basket of used services and opportunities”. In this group respondents that have used 4-5 services from offered (index – 2.21) are included. Shopping possibilities have been used by all, likewise – banks, and health and everyday services have been used by almost all (not used only by 4%). Considerably more rarely the possibilities of education, culture and recreation – hiking, outing have been used in this group in the last year - by 21%, education – by 28%, culture events have been attended by 38% in this group. So from the viewpoint of consuming the “basket of services” and lifestyle of this group is made from a rather small choice of services. Socially and demographically one third (34%) of inhabitants in this group have family members with low and medium low income (to 125 Ls per family member), 14% – medium high and high, more than 161 Ls per family member. This type of “basket of consumption” characterizes 54% employed (17% in the public sector, 38% in the private sector). One fifth in this group (19%) has an elementary education, 65% - secondary

professional education and 16% - higher education. One third is aged less than 34 years (31%), 21% - 35-44 years old, 47% - 45-74 years old.

2nd type: “basket of service consumption” with a small diversity of used services. This “basket” is made of the most modest group of diversity of service consumption – those people have used on average 2-3 services from 7 (index – 4.13). Almost all have done shopping and medical services have been used by two thirds - 67%, but bank services have been used by less than a half – 37%. One fifth – 20% from this group have gone hiking or have engaged in recreation – and most of them have done it in the place of residence (8%) or in the framework of municipality (9%). Culture events have been attended by 16% of people from this group, and mostly – in 9% of cases that has happened in the place of residence; 3% have attended events in the municipality and 3% - in Riga. Learning or attending courses – 4% of this group and only in the territory of the municipality. “Basket” of service consumption with a small diversity of used goods characterizes older people – 40% in this group are 55-74 years old (in comparison to 22% respondents with a medium diversity and 13% with highly diverse use of services). Almost three fourths (72%) do not work, but from the 28% employed 10% work in a public, but 1% in private sector. One third that are characterized by this type of service consumption have only the elementary education (34%), two thirds – 60% - secondary professional education, higher education - only 6% that is lower than average among the countryside inhabitants in general. People with that kind of consumption “basket” more often have low or medium low income – 48% have less than 125 Ls per family member, 32% have less than 85 Ls per family member, and only 12% - more than 161 Ls per family member.

3rd type: “Basket” of services with high diversity of used services. This “basket” characterizes diverse service users (have used 6-7 from 7, index value – 0.58). All who are characterized in this consumption type have done shopping, used bank or other everyday services, attended cultural events and done recreation activities in the last 12 months. A little bit more rarely they have used medical care (89%) and opportunities of education – 52%, nevertheless those services have been used more often than in the other two groups. This basket of service consumption is characterizing people with high income level: one third has medium high income and high income – more than 161 Ls (34%) and only one fourth – 25% - less than 125 Ls. Largest part of this group are employed (75% from them – 47% work in the private sector and 28% in the public sector) and has higher proportion of higher education than in other groups (24% in comparison to 16% and 6% in the other groups with medium or low diversity of used services). 12% have elementary school education, and 64% – secondary or secondary professional education, one fourth – 24% - higher education. Generally those are younger than the other two groups – 23% are aged 18-24 years, 18% - 25-34 years old, but 29% are 35-44 years old. 45 – 54 years old and 55-74 years old respondents’ proportion in this group is 18% and 13%.

2. Description of the living space covered by everyday mobility

To acquire information on commuting space, information of place of work and education was added to the information on the geographical dispersion of use of services to those respondents that work or study at the moment survey.

Work, education and use of services in a certain territory indicates people's personal experience, knowledge on the place – the more opportunities are used in the place, the more intensive is experience in a certain territory. Wider spatial coverage in use of services, work and study can serve as evidence on higher opportunities of everyday mobility. Five indexes were calculated that characterize intensity of use of different opportunities (work, educational) and services in the last year's time in different territorial scales – in the respondent's place of residence, elsewhere – in cities and elsewhere in the territory of municipality, as well as in Riga, in other places in Latvia and abroad (index value within 0 – no opportunities are used in the territory – to 9 – all the opportunities and services are used in the territory).

Results of the research show that intensity of use of different services among the rural inhabitants decrease when moving further away from the place of residence, however, the difference is small (see Table 1). So, the farther a service or opportunity is located geographically from one's place of residence⁵, the more difficult it is accessible.

Table 1: The intensity of use of services in different territorial scales

Place	Average evaluation ⁶	Standard deviation	N
Place of residence	2.90 (2-3 things from mentioned)	.79	44
Other place, elsewhere in the municipality	1.85 (1-2 things from mentioned)	.07	44
Riga	1.08 (1-2 things from mentioned)	.82	44
Other place in Latvia	0.76 (none or one from mentioned)	.23	44
Outside Latvia	0.20 (none or one from mentioned)	.81	44

Source: own elaboration

3. Types of everyday mobility

Grouping of respondents has been done based on the everyday commuting patterns related to work, studies and use services. In result, 5 empirical everyday commuting patterns were acquired.

⁵ In this case analyzing the level „other place – city or elsewhere in the municipality” different sizes of the municipalities have to be taken into consideration, i.e., in several municipalities it can be town or rural area located nearby, but in others that cover the former territory of a district - physically more remote territory.

⁶ (1 - in the year's time nothing from the mentioned has been done in the territory (work, studies (courses, further education attended now and in the last 12 months' time), shopping, bank services, health care, culture, everyday services, recreation) to 9 – everything from the mentioned has been done)

Respondents use diverse services outside of the place of residence in city or elsewhere in the municipality. First everyday mobility type covers one fourth of the rural population (25%) who do not work or study (86%) and are on average 41 year old. In the last year's time they have used on average 4-5 of the services and opportunities from the list of 9, mostly outside of their place of residence in the same municipality. Almost one half of them (45%) owns a car themselves or has it in family. There are on average 2-3 family members in a household and the average income on one family member is 138.77 Ls, personal income – 184.11.Ls. Comparing with CSP data on average household income in 2009 – 168.53 Ls, it is less than average.

Table 2: the first everyday mobility type: diverse services outside of the place of residence in a city or elsewhere in the municipality

Place	Average evaluation	N
Place of residence	1.84 (1-2 things from mentioned)	84
Other place, elsewhere		
in the municipality	4.16 (4-5 things from mentioned)	84
Riga	0.18 (none or one from mentioned)	84
Other place in Latvia	0.24 (none or one from mentioned)	84
Outside Latvia	0.03 (none or one from mentioned)	84

Source: own elaboration

Respondents use an average diversity of services and opportunities in place of residence. The second everyday mobility type covers one fourth (26%) of rural inhabitants that are all employed and on average 48 years old. They have on average used 3-4 of the services and opportunities from the list of 9 in the last year's time, most of them in their place of residence. Probably the small scale of everyday mobility depends not only on the structure of opportunities in the place of residence, but also of the opportunities of physical mobility of the respondents – only one fourth has an access to a car (25%).

On average those households connect 3-4 family members; income rate in this group of mostly employed people is less than 110.80 Ls a month per family member⁷ and 136.17 Ls a month as average personal monthly income. Probably it is connected to the education level of respondents – in this group there is a higher proportion of people with elementary school education. (31% in comparison to 22% on average in all the rural areas in general).

Table 3: the second everyday mobility type: an average diversity of services and opportunities in place of residence

Place	Average evaluation	N
Place of residence	3.62 (3-4 things from mentioned)	88
Other place, elsewhere		
in the municipality	0.69 (none or one from mentioned)	88
Riga	0.55 (none or one from mentioned)	88
Other place in Latvia	0.29 (none or one from mentioned)	88
Outside Latvia	0.03 (none or one from mentioned)	88

Source: own elaboration

⁷ Taking into consideration CSP data from 2009 this sum is only 63% from people's income in the countryside.

Respondents use diverse services and opportunities outside the place of residence in other city or elsewhere in the municipality. The third type of everyday mobility covers 12% of respondents, more than a half of them work (53%), 5% study and less than a half does not work, nor study (45%). They are on average 39 years old, younger than those from the second type and with a slightly more diverse use of services and opportunities in general. Similar to the first type services are mostly used outside the place of residence elsewhere in the municipality, but in comparison to the first group – more intensively. Nevertheless, rather intense is also use of different services (2-3 from all) in the place of residence, in Riga and in other places in Latvia.

Table 4: the third everyday mobility type: an average diversity of services and opportunities outside the place of residence in other city or elsewhere in the municipality

Place	Average evaluation	N
Place of residence	2.19 (2-3 things from mentioned)	42
Other place, elsewhere in the municipality	4.18 (4-5 things from mentioned)	42
Riga	2.25 (2-3 things from mentioned)	42
Other place in Latvia	2.49 (2-3 things from mentioned)	42
Outside Latvia	0.19 (none or one from mentioned)	42

Source: own elaboration

Almost two thirds (61%) have access to a car, that substantially differ this group from the others, and it is reflected also in a broader everyday mobility space – services are rather often used in Riga and other places in Latvia. One fourth (26%) has higher education (compared to the average of 15% among all rural respondents in this survey). Household consists on average of three members, and the average income per family member is 191.81 Ls (that is higher than average in the rural - CSP data on 2009 and as in other groups), but personal income – 313.92 Ls, that is considerably more than in the two previous groups. Likewise they live rather close to the capital city Riga –two fifths live in the region of Pierīga (43%), one fourth (26 %) – in Vidzeme, what indicated that the use of different services and opportunities and the spatial distribution scale is related to the level of income, access to a car and distance to Riga.

Respondents use diverse services and opportunities in the place of residence. The fourth everyday mobility type covers 14% of respondents that are rather active users of different services, basically in their place of residence that indicates a rather broad structure of opportunities of a place of residence.

Rather many in this group are students (41%), one fifth – 19% are employed, but 45% neither work, nor study. They are on average 41 year old, rather highly educated (27% in comparison to 15% on average have higher education), half (51%) have access to a car. There are 3-4 people in a household, whose income is 152.52 Ls per person, personal income - 201.21 Ls – so they can be considered as living in relatively prosperous rural households.

Table 5: the fourth everyday mobility type: diverse use of services and opportunities in place of residence

Place	Average evaluation	N
Place of residence	5.55 (5-6 things from mentioned)	49
Other place, elsewhere		
in the municipality	0.37 (none or one from mentioned)	49
Riga	0.78(none or one from mentioned)	49
Other place in Latvia	1.45 (1-2 things from mentioned)	49
Outside Latvia	0.05 (none or one from mentioned)	49

Source: own elaboration

Respondents use services and opportunities in a small diversity in the place of residence. The fifth everyday mobility type covers 15% of people who have on average used 2-3 opportunities from mentioned basically in their place of residence. The majority of them neither work, nor study (80%), 17% have said they work and 3% - study. Just a small part has an access to a car (16%). They are comparatively older than the other groups – 50 years on average; have lower education level (29% in comparison to 22% on average have basic education) and have the lowest income rate – 95.81 Ls per person, 2-3 family members in a household, and 113.09 Ls as respondent's average personal income.

Table 6: the fifth everyday mobility type: use of services and opportunities in a small diversity in the place of residence

Place	Average evaluation	N
Place of residence	1.26 (1-2 things from mentioned)	52
Other place, elsewhere		
in the municipality	0.40 (none or one from mentioned)	52
Riga	0.18(none or one from mentioned)	52
Other place in Latvia	0.49 (none or one from mentioned)	52
Outside Latvia	0.52 (none or one from mentioned)	52

Source: own elaboration

Respondents use diverse services and opportunities in Riga and in the place of residence. The sixth mobility type refers to 8% of respondents and characterizes very intensive consumption of different services; representatives of this group have used on average 6-7 opportunities in the last year out of 9 offered in the list, and basically – in Riga and their place of residence.

Table 7: the sixth everyday mobility type: use of diverse services and opportunities in Riga and in the place of residence

Place	Average evaluation	N
Place of residence	3.30 (3-4 things from mentioned)	29
Other place, elsewhere		
in the municipality	0.37 (none or one from mentioned)	29
Riga	5.81(5-6 things from mentioned)	29
Other place in Latvia	0.98 (none or one from mentioned)	29
Outside Latvia	0.87 (none or one from mentioned)	29

Source: own elaboration

All the respondents are employed. Most of them live in the capital city region (69%). Only one third (35%) has an access to a car, but in the capital city region the public transportation network is well-developed. They are the youngest (on average 37 years old) in comparison to other groups, with a comparatively higher education level – 28% have higher education in comparison to general rate among all the rural respondents - 15%. They also have the highest income rate per person in a household – 226.71 Ls per month, households of 2-3 members, and second highest personal income rate – 303.77 Ls.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The diversity of the services used by rural inhabitants and the space covered by everyday use of services, work, and studies differ, characterizing the structure of opportunities and accessibility of opportunities in different rural places. Only one fifth (22%) have used diverse opportunities and services in the place of residence (1st and 6th type), one fourth is characterized by average diversity by use of services in the place of residence (26%, 2nd type), that is probably limited by insufficient opportunities of everyday mobility (only one fourth has a car in this group and the income per household member is 2/3 from the average income rate in the rural areas according to the CSB data).

One third of the rural inhabitants (37%) use diverse services daily outside their place of residence in a city or elsewhere in the municipality (type 2 un type 3), in those groups inhabitants have the most widespread access to a car (45% un 61%), that let us conclude that higher mobility opportunities provide a higher possibility to access services in a broader territory.

The analysis of social and demographic differences indicates that older respondents with lower income per household member and with a limited access to the mobility resources (e.g., a car) in the last 12 months have used less diverse services and also those they have used – in their place of residence (5th type). That indicates that for the people in the places with a limited structure of opportunities, financial and everyday mobility resources the same opportunities and services are not equally accessible than to more prosperous inhabitants that live in the places with broader structure of opportunities (6th type, 8% respondents).

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