

ARTICLES**MOBILITY AND THE LIFESTYLE OF THE SLOVENE POPULATION**

AUTHOR

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ABSTRACT

Mobility and the lifestyle of the Slovene population

The paper deals with the question how does the place of residence influence mobility and how is mobility part of daily activities of the population in different parts of Slovenia – towns, suburbs, urbanised rural areas and less urbanised rural areas. For better explanation of the question four types of lifestyle has been defined: from very mobile with a wide home-range to less mobile with the small home-range. The whole territory of Slovenia shows all lifestyles; from least to most mobile, but in different volume and size. Approximately 50% of the respondents live a very mobile lifestyle, which is probably due to large dispersion of residential areas and concentration of work in urban centers.

KEY WORDS

lifestyle, mobility, social and spatial differentiation, Slovenia

IZVLEČEK

Mobilnost in življenjski stil prebivalcev Slovenije

Besedilo obravnava odnos med krajem bivanja in življenjskim stilom. Ugotavljali smo, ali se življenjski stil prebivalcev, ponazorjen s stopnjo mobilnosti, v različnih socioekonomskih območjih Slovenije – v mestih, obmestjih, na bolj ter na manj urbaniziranem podeželju, razlikuje. Opredelili smo štiri tipe življenjskega stila, od zelo mobilnega z velikim radijem prepotovane razdalje do manj mobilnega z majhnim radijem potovanja. Na celotnem ozemlju države se pojavljajo vsi življenjski stili, od najmanj do najbolj mobilnih, vendar v različnem obsegu. Približno 50 % anketiranih živi zelo mobilen življenjski stil, največ na bolj urbaniziranem podeželju in v obmestju, vzrok česar je velika disperzija poselitve ter koncentracija delovnih mest v urbanih središčih.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

življenjski stil, mobilnost, socialna in prostorska diferenciranost, Slovenija

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1 Introduction

Mobility has become one of the main characteristics of a modern lifestyle. We travel more often and to far-away places. Separating the place of residence with the workplace is only one of the reasons for daily migration; equally important is the separation of the place of residence and the location of recreation, provisions and other areas that fulfil our daily needs. Dispersion of non-agricultural activities, or in other words – a widespread of urbanisation, which is the reason (or the consequence) of mobility, can be seen as the second generator of this occurrence. As stated by Gabrovec and Bole, in 2002, there were 658,911 daily commuters in Slovenia, which is about 115,000 (or approximately 20%) more than in 1991 (Gabrovec and Bole 2009, 24). The number of cars almost doubled between 1985 and 2005 (Gabrovec and Bole 2009, 12); in 2008, there were 1.8 cars per household. Due to time, spent in traffic, mobility became an important part of daily activities. It became so important that it is slowly developing into an element of individual's lifestyle. What remains unanswered is whether the level of mobility is a question of choice, thus voluntary; or a must, caused by the distance to work, centres of provision, recreational areas and similar. The question also interferes with the relationship between our wishes (such as the residential area) and reality; it however does not play any crucial role at understanding the lifestyle.

Mobility can to a certain extent also be seen as a social category. Not all the people are mobile in the same way; we also differ in the level of mobility. It is a general belief that the changes of mobility have social reasons; they are connected to age, education and social status. Mobility is, however, also a spatial category because it stands for the ability of covering distance, which is in the first place linked to the location of our point of departure and our final destination. We believe there is a connection between the social and spatial aspect of mobility, the medium being the lifestyle. Different intensity of mobility can on one hand be seen as social characteristics of an individual and his/her lifestyle, and on the other as a consequence of the place of residence. This article is trying to show in what way mobility can be seen as a social category and how it is connected to the place of residence; in other words: how does the place of residence influence mobility and how is mobility part of daily activities. This topic touches upon the constant dilemma in terms of geographical recognition of space: is space a relevant factor that influences the social behaviour of an individual?

2 Lifestyle and mobility

Lifestyle is a »relatively stable, whole and routine way of human performance« (Burzan 2005, 105). Sociologists see lifestyle as a consequence of individual's social characteristics. However, we cannot attribute all forms of daily performance only to social characteristics, such as social, material and cultural capital, as described by P. Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1978). Instead, it is believed that a part of individual's daily life depends on the place of residence and other locations, where the individuals fulfil their needs. The crucial word in this case is »mobility«, because it means two things: 1) the ability of covering distance in space and 2) journeys or the structure of covered ways. The first characteristic is objective as it mostly does not depend on the individual but rather traffic infrastructure and network. It shows as accessibility of location and the final destination. The second lists how often an individual leaves home, the distance, covered in one day (the whole journey as well as partial trips); the frequency of journey, choice of vehicle and what is perhaps most important; the purpose of the journey. We believe the latter being a reflection of the individual's lifestyle, because the mobility structure partly stands for personal choice and not only as a consequence of objective circumstances. The most common purpose of travel depends on the individual (excluding commuting), so does the choice on the distance, covered by such journey. This includes the term »home-range« that can also be seen as an element of lifestyle and consequently mobility. It marks an area, working area, »lifestyle area« within which the individual frequently moves

(Pohl 2009, 63). The size of such »home-range« is definitely an element of lifestyle, because it to a certain extent depends on the choice of the individual regarding where to fulfil his/her needs.

3 Methodological explanations

There are two ways for defining lifestyles: 1) define types that apply to the whole activity of an individual or 2) define thematic types that apply only to a certain segment of the individual's life. In the latter, the lifestyle area shrinks to the selected content. These lifestyle types are not really a comprehensive demonstration of the society's social structure. However, they have an aim and explain a certain aspect of the society, or better said: the individual's performance. As opposed to the comprehensive lifestyles, one could perhaps talk about different ways of life that apply to chosen factors.

This research tried to find the elements of lifestyle that have a spatial character that consequently shows in the home-range. It was based on the lifestyle as such and not on social position; we defined types that are based on spatial and not social indicators. While looking for a suitable theoretical basis, a strong foundation was found in social geography and social action theory. The former suggests that human interaction includes six basic activities (living, work, education, provisioning, recreation and communication (e.g. Ruppert 1981, 89), all spatially relevant. According to activity theory, the human interaction shows in social and not physical space. Each form of interaction produces a different social space (Werlen 2000, 327), which means that each individual also operates in a social space that is typical of his/her lifestyle. The typology of lifestyles should thus list different types of life and forms of spatial inequalities. This can be summarized with three indexes that show a spatial segment of a lifestyle:

- Place of residence. Space is differentiated according to social characteristics of residents, economic activities and intensity of construction of housing areas. According to the above, one can differentiate between four areas: town, suburbs, urbanized rural area and less urbanized rural area (socio-economic characteristics of individual areas; see Drozg 2001).
- The size of the activity area: it is set by the most common areas that fulfil the needs, the distance from the place of residence to the areas that fulfil the needs.
- Frequency of fulfilling individual needs: we assumed that this index showed the interests of an individual. It is obvious that someone who shops more often has a different lifestyle from somebody who prefers recreation.

Previously listed indexes are important for formation of lifestyle types because they show 1) different preferences for the place of residence (town, suburb, rural area) and 2) a different level of mobility as a consequence of separating the place of residence from the place where other needs are fulfilled; or different distances from the place of residence to the places where the needs are fulfilled. The latter is definitely a question of personal choice; one that the individual made by having all consequences in mind. 3) The size of the activity area, being on one hand a consequence of personal habits; and on the other a consequence of the place of residence. 4) Different amount of time, an individual plans for certain activities, also depending on personal habits and the place of residence (due to space limitations, this part of research is not included in the text).

Data on lifestyle was obtained from 536 persons through a questionnaire. Each respondent provided data on the so called time and spatial structure for 5 days in the week. The questionnaire included the following data: the number of daily departures from home; the number of partial trips on one day; the distance between home and the destination (final and partial destination) for each journey; time of departure, time of arrival and time of return for each journey individually; time spent for each journey; the purpose of the journey and the means of travel. 212 persons furthermore gave additional data through an interview which revolved around places where the needs were fulfilled (very often and sometimes). Apart from data, related to mobility of the respondent, additional social background data was

obtained in the sense of: gender, age, educational level and the profession of the respondent. Regional dispersion of respondents proved to be balanced enough, even though majority came from NE and SW part of Slovenia. The emphasis was placed rather on the balance between socio-economic areas than the location of respondents, namely the number of respondents that live in towns, in suburbs, more urbanized and less urbanized rural areas seems to be rather balanced. Given that many researches on lifestyles show that the age and education tend to play a rather important role (Spellerberg 2007; Otte 2008), we tried to limit the influence of social factors where possible by comparing respondents with similar social characteristics; that is age and education from different socio-economic areas.

While getting to know a lifestyle, one can define individual types in advance or on the basis of obtained data (Otte 2008). Also relevant is the question on the number of types and related indexes. Experience from already present typologies shows that the number of indexes should not be too large, because the types would in such case be internally too heterogeneous. The best option is therefore having two or three indexes. The same applies to the number of types which should also not exceed 5; or 12 with subtypes (Otte 2008, 75). Our research defined the lifestyle types in advance on the basis of indexes for which we believed they had spatial character and answered the question of connectivity between the place of residence and the way of life. The characteristic of individual lifestyles was set on the basis of data, obtained with the questionnaire.

4 Lifestyles according to mobility (of respondents)

Lifestyles were defined by two indexes, »the number of departures from home and the number of partial daily trips« and »distance, covered from home to the most remote location of journey«. Four lifestyles were defined on the basis of this (Table 1):

- Very mobile with a large radius: a person of this type leaves home at least twice daily and makes at least three partial trips. He or she travels a minimum of 30 km daily (if living in town) or 50 km (if living in suburbs or in rural areas). This means that he/she spends more than 30 or 50 minutes daily travelling.
- Less mobile with a small radius: the person with such lifestyle leaves home only once daily, when making two partial trips. The covered distance is shorter than 30 km (if living in town) or 50 km (if living in suburbs or in rural areas) which means that this person spends between 30 and 50 minutes travelling daily.
- Very mobile with small radius: a person with this lifestyle leaves home at least three times daily, performing at least two partial trips but of shorter distance, usually amounting to less than 30 km (if living in town) or less than 50 km (if living in suburbs or rural areas). This person spends at least 30 or 50 minutes travelling daily.
- Less mobile with a large radius: a person with this lifestyle leaves home twice or less daily, while at the same time performing at least three partial trips of at least 30 km (if living in town) or more than 50 km (if living in suburbs or rural areas), spending more than 30 or at least 50 minutes in traffic.

Table 1: *Lifestyles, indexes and share of individual lifestyle among respondents.*

lifestyle	number of daily departures	travelled distance	share (n = 536)
very mobile with large radius	several (3 or more)	large (30 or 50 km and more)	28%
less mobile with small radius	few (1 or 2)	short (up to 30 or 50 km)	22%
very mobile with small radius	several (3 or more)	short (up to 30 or 50 km)	34%
less mobile with large radius	few (1 or 2)	large (30 or 50 km and more)	16%

Values that determine the individual lifestyle are mean values of all answers. The latter can be seen as methodological deficiency, because travelled distances in towns are shorter than in the urbanized rural areas – even though we are only talking about a mobile lifestyle, we could assign a less mobile lifestyle to a certain person. We thus considered two different indicators for distance and time, spent for travelling in the case of town, suburbs and rural areas.

Majority of respondents showed a very mobile lifestyle with a small radius, followed by a very mobile lifestyle with a large radius. The most common forms are thus the mobile lifestyles! The third most common occurrence is less mobile with a small radius. However, one needs to say that even a very mobile lifestyle with a small radius is quite frequent. The difference between the most and least frequent lifestyle is 18 percentage points. One need to point out that the differences in the number of travelled kilometers are more important than the number of trips.

5 Lifestyle according to the place of residence

One of the basic questions of this research was in what area would the mobility of inhabitants be the largest. Results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Presentation of lifestyles according to the place of residence of the respondents (in %).

lifestyle	town (n = 162)	suburb (n = 180)	urbanized rural area (n = 125)	less urbanized rural area (n = 66)
very mobile with large radius	18	27	21	11
less mobile with small radius	29	18	26	45
very mobile with small radius	34	18	18	13
less mobile with large radius	19	37	35	31

The largest similarity among lifestyles can be found among people, living in towns, where the difference between the most and the least common forms is only 16 percentage points. The largest difference is shown in less urbanized rural areas, where the difference among the two amounts to 34 percentage points. Suburbs show a 19 point difference, urbanized rural areas 17 percentage points. One should emphasize that suburbs and urbanized rural areas most frequently show the same lifestyle, other than that, the picture looks much different. Majority of more mobile people can be found in towns (52%) and suburbs (48%). The least amount of very mobile lifestyle was found in less urbanized rural area (24%), which is approximately one third less than in towns.

6 Lifestyle according to the gender of respondents

Considering the gender, the lifestyles in different socio-economic areas can be quite different, which shows the ongoing presence of the rather »traditional« split of work and tasks between the genders. Women are on average less mobile than men, this difference is smaller in urbanized areas and larger in rural areas (a very mobile lifestyle of women, living in suburbs is twice as common as among those, living in less urbanized areas). The analysis shows that women make on average more partial trips than men, most probably due to getting provisions and accompanying children to school. Men travel on average longer distances than women. These differences are slightly bigger in urbanized areas than in the countryside.

Table 3: Presence of lifestyle according to the gender of respondents (in %).

lifestyle	town (n = 162)		suburb (n = 180)		urbanized rural area (n = 125)		less urbanized rural area (n = 66)	
	male n = 81	female n = 81	male n = 88	female n = 92	male n = 69	female n = 56	male n = 37	female n = 29
very mobile with large radius	22	17	48	32	44	29	9	5
less mobile with small radius	21	27	9	17	19	26	57	65
very mobile with small radius	37	24	18	23	26	31	20	16
less mobile with large radius	20	32	25	28	21	14	14	14

7 Lifestyle according to age of respondents

Age is according to many researchers one of the most important indexes (Spellenberg 2007, 190), which was also confirmed by our survey (Table 4). Mobility decreases with age, which can be applied to urban and rural areas. According to our findings, the most mobile tends to be the age group 20 to 44 years, living in suburbs.

Table 4: Presence of lifestyles according to age of respondents (in %; 1 = 20 to 44 years, 2 = 45 to 64 years, 3 = 64 years and older).

lifestyle	town (n = 162)			suburb (n = 180)			urbanized rural area (n = 125)			less urbanized rural area (n = 66)		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
	n = 61	n = 58	n = 43	n = 62	n = 72	n = 46	n = 46	n = 41	n = 39	n = 26	n = 22	n = 18
very mobile with large radius	34	43	7	36	28	16	44	26	9	29	12	0
less mobile with small radius	21	21	44	6	27	46	11	22	67	17	47	91
very mobile with small radius	24	19	39	31	34	31	23	19	12	26	22	0
less mobile with large radius	21	17	10	27	11	7	22	33	12	28	19	9

8 Lifestyle according to activity of respondents

Activity and lifestyle go hand in hand. Even if we don't consider the retired people, there are large differences between different active groups regarding mobility. The most mobile are entrepreneurs, the least mobile are people, working in public administration. Differences according to the place of residence are usually the consequence of daily commute to work; the mobility in the category »other employees« is thus larger in suburbs and urbanized rural areas as in towns where work is closer.

9 Conclusions

Heterogeneity of lifestyles is no longer a specialty of urban areas as the situation is becoming similar in the rural areas, too. The whole territory of Slovenia shows all lifestyles; from least to most mobile,

Table 5: Presence of lifestyles according to activity of respondents (in %; 1 = entrepreneurs, 2 = other employees, 3 = public administrators, 4 = retired).

lifestyle	town (n = 162)				suburb (n = 180)				urbanized rural area (n = 125)				less urbanized rural area (n = 66)			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
very mobile with large radius	51	10	27	17	50	56	54	8	65	38	35	7	21	15	18	8
less mobile with small radius	5	24	19	33	7	12	7	62	4	22	21	44	9	20	17	68
very mobile with small radius	35	29	23	28	36	11	15	27	18	21	28	46	43	21	22	20
less mobile with large radius	9	37	31	22	7	21	24	3	13	19	16	3	27	44	43	4

but in different volume and size. Approximately 50% of the respondents live a very mobile lifestyle, which is probably due to large dispersion of residential areas and concentration of work in urban centers. This is shown by an above-average share of mobile lifestyles in suburbs and urbanized rural area. As opposed to this, there is an above-average share of very mobile lifestyles with a small radius in towns, where the majority of activities can be reached more easily. This data shows a gap between urbanization of inhabitants (urban way of life) and urbanization of space (accessibility of urban activities).

The share of individual lifestyles is different in socio-economic areas. What stands out is a large share of very mobile lifestyles in suburbs and in urbanized rural areas; the share of very mobile lifestyles in towns is slightly smaller, while it is the smallest in less urbanized rural areas. Such result shows the place of residence as a very relevant element of lifestyle (social relations in a wider sense), because the difference in the share of individual lifestyles seems considerable. A more detailed comparison of lifestyles within households with similar social characteristics in different areas showed their lifestyles to depend on the distance from centers of provision and work, which shows especially in time, spent in traffic on a daily basis. We believe this factor to show the connections between social and physical features, at the same time confirming space as a relevant element or modifier of social sphere. The lifestyle is a mixture of social and physical factors and the place of residence.

One should point out the methodological dispute of familiarization with lifestyles and their valuation. The term lifestyle itself is relatively wide and not completely defined yet; it can't be quantified, it cannot be compared, because it depends on »time and place, here and now.« The number of sample itself also raises some doubts in terms of regularity of results. The same can be said about values that define (quantify) individual lifestyles. One will therefore have to wait until the next similar research for adequacy and suitability of defined types.

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